

## The Study on Zakat Collection Through Social Media Marketing: The Case of Johor

Muhammad Suhaimi Sulong<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Mustapahayuddin Abdul Khalim<sup>1,3</sup>, Mohd Shafie Mustapha<sup>4</sup>, Nur Zainatul Nadra Zainol<sup>1,3</sup>, Ahmad Zaki Mohamad Malom<sup>1</sup>, Wan Ainaa Mardhiah Wan Zahari<sup>1,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah  
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Johor, 86400, MALAYSIA

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education  
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Johor, 86400, MALAYSIA

<sup>3</sup> Centre for General Studies and Co-curriculum  
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Johor, 86400, MALAYSIA

<sup>4</sup> Zakat Collection Management Unit  
Johor Islamic Religious Council, Johor, 80990, MALAYSIA

\*Corresponding Author: [msuhaimi@uthm.edu.my](mailto:msuhaimi@uthm.edu.my)

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### Abstract

Zakat is a religious practice where Muslims donate part of their wealth to those in need. It is a mandatory responsibility imposed on financially capable Muslims as outlined in the five pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj. Thus, this study highlights the Johor Islamic Religious Council (MAINJ) in providing information and awareness on zakat to the communities by continuing the use of social media as a reliable marketing strategy for zakat collection activities in the case of Johor State. A qualitative case study research design using document analysis has been used in this study. The findings have shown that during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020 and 2021, there has been an increase in zakat collection among Muslims in Johor and shown the highest collection for the past five years. This statistically shows that the Muslim community has a high awareness of paying zakat. This has found that, MAINJ is continuously making announcements and promotions on zakat through its official Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok channels. These social media channels provided by MAIJ have been able to provide accurate input and information about zakat while also providing opportunities to pay zakat online via designated online payment platforms – eMAIJ, MyEG, SnapNPAY and FPX. In the future, the Twitter platform will be considerably used by MAINJ to expand their prospects in the zakat collection among corporate organization and private agencies.

## 1. Introduction

Zakat is derived from the Arabic word "zaka," which means purification or growth (Abd Rashid *et al.*, 2018; Ibn Manzur, 1990). It serves as a means of purifying wealth, promoting social justice, and helping those in need (Wahid *et al.*, 2017). The concept of zakat and its collection is mentioned in the Quran, the holy book of Islam. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam and is obligatory upon Muslims who meet specific wealth criteria for eligible individuals and groups. According to Islamic teachings, zakat should be distributed to specific categories of recipients, as

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outlined in the Quran and Hadiths. The Quranic views on zakat collection emphasize its importance in promoting social welfare, economic justice, and the well-being of the community. As Allah SWT said in Surah At-Tawbah Verse 103:

*"Take, [O Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them to increase, and invoke [Allāh's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing."*

[9:103]

Hadiths, the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, also provide valuable insights into the concept and practice of zakat collection. Also, guide the proper distribution of zakat to the designated recipients and the various categories of recipients. The Hadith further elaborated on the importance of zakat, its benefits, and the proper way to collect and distribute it.

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH emphasized the significance of zakat in multiple Hadiths, underlining its role in purifying wealth and assisting those in need (Ibn Kathir, 2004). For example: Narrated by Abu Huraira: The Prophet said,

*"The poor person is not the one who goes round the people and ask them for a mouthful or two (of meals) or a date or two but the poor is that who has not enough (money) to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give him something in charity, and who does not beg of people."*

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

The Hadiths also highlight the consequences of neglecting zakat, particularly for those who are financially able to give. Narrated by Ibn 'Umar: The Prophet said,

*"Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle. 2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly. 3. To pay zakat (i.e. obligatory charity). 4. To perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca). 5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan."*

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

These Hadiths highlight the ethical and spiritual dimensions of zakat collection, emphasizing its role in fostering social equity, compassion, and community welfare. They guide Muslims in understanding the proper practices and principles of zakat collection and distribution. In Malaysia, the administration of zakat falls under the jurisdiction of the individual states. Each state has its own Johor Islamic Religious Council (MAINJ) responsible for matters related to Islamic affairs, including the collection and distribution of zakat. The guidelines and practices can vary from state to state, but they are all based on Islamic principles.

Two main types of zakat can be collected based on different forms of wealth and assets: Zakat al-Mal (Zakat on Wealth) and Zakat al-Fitr (Fitrana). Both types serve as forms of charity and wealth redistribution in Islam. Firstly, Zakat al-Mal (Zakat on Wealth) is the more commonly known form of zakat, and it's calculated based on the wealth and assets that a person possesses. It's obligatory on certain types of wealth that meet or exceed a specific threshold (nisab) and have been in one's possession for a full lunar year. The nisab varies based on the value of silver or gold. The types of wealth subject to Zakat al-Mal can include money and savings; gold and silver; trade goods and merchandise; investments, stocks, and bonds; and livestock. The rate of Zakat al-Mal is typically 2.5% of the total value of the eligible wealth. This zakat is collected and distributed to the specified categories of recipients, as mentioned in the previous responses.

Secondly, Zakat al-Fitr (Fitrana) is a different type of zakat that is obligatory to give at the end of the Islamic month of Ramadan, before the Eid al-Fitr prayer. It is meant to purify the fasting person from any indecent act or speech and to help those in need enjoy the festivities of Eid. Zakat al-Fitr is a fixed amount per person, regardless of their wealth, and it is usually given on behalf of every family member. The amount may vary based on the region, but it's generally equivalent to the cost of staple food items, such as wheat, barley, dates, or other local food products. The distribution of Zakat al-Fitr is unique in that it is often given directly to those in need before the Eid prayer, allowing them to partake in the celebrations.

These are the two primary types of zakat that are collected within the Islamic framework. While Zakat al-Mal is collected throughout the year based on accumulated wealth, Zakat al-Fitr is specifically associated with the culmination of the fasting month of Ramadan and is given to ensure that all members of the community can join in the joy of Eid celebrations.

## 1.1 Financial Impact on MCO

The Movement Control Order (MCO) and similar measures were implemented in Malaysia, as in many other countries, to curb the spread of COVID-19. These measures included lockdowns, travel restrictions, and limitations on economic activities. The financial impact on the Malaysian government could include both revenue reductions and increased expenditure related to economic stimulus and healthcare measures. Figure 1 demonstrates the financial impact on MCO's by states in Malaysia.

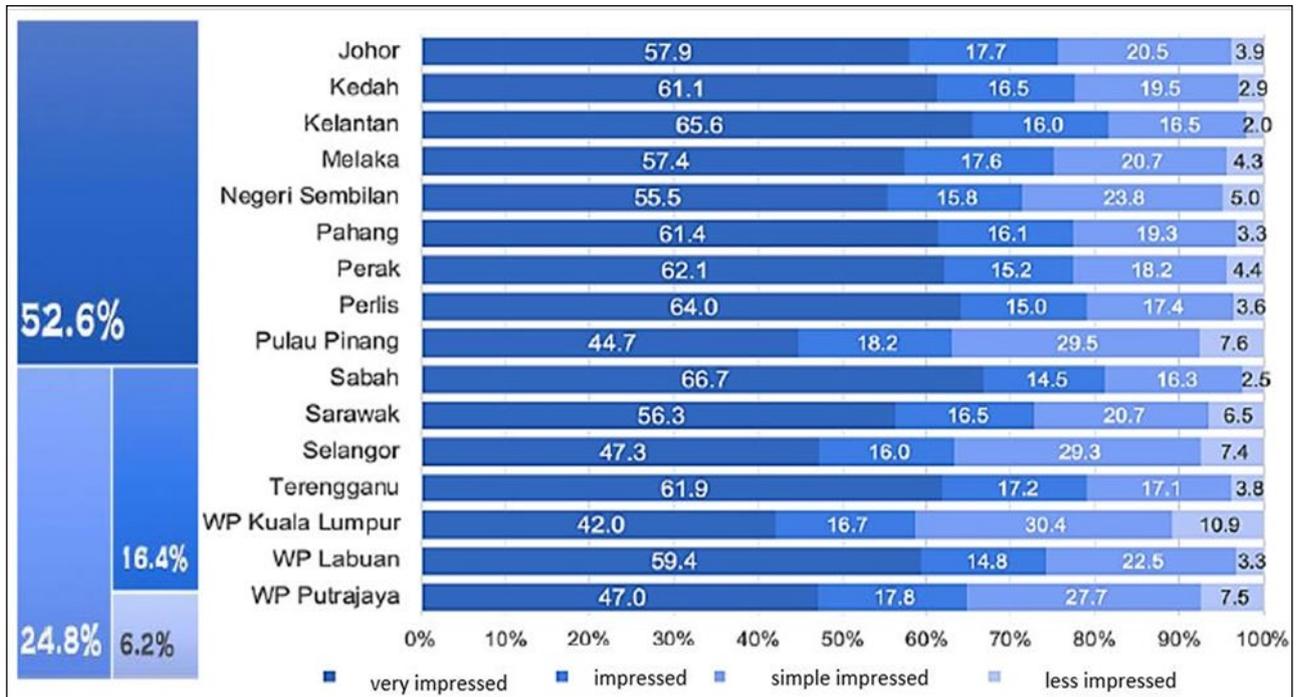


Fig. 1 Financial impact on MCO's by states

Based on Figure 1, among the 13 states and 3 federal territories in Malaysia, the state of Sabah has the largest financial impact on the MCO at 66.7%, closely followed by the state of Kelantan at 65.6% and the state of Perlis at 64.0%. Meanwhile, WP Kuala Lumpur showed the least impact on finances at 42%, followed by Pulau Pinang state at 44.7% and WP Putrajaya at 47%. Overall, Malaysia was financially impacted by 52.6% with possible revenue reduction whereby economic slowdown and reduced business activities during the MCO could lead to lower tax revenues, including income tax, corporate tax, and goods and services tax (GST). Moreover, reduced international trade and imports could lead to lower customs and import duty revenues, also a decrease in global oil prices and reduced demand could impact government revenue from oil and gas exports as Malaysia is an oil-exporting country.

Furthermore, in the increased expenditure especially in healthcare, the government may need to allocate additional funds for healthcare infrastructure, medical supplies, testing, and vaccination efforts to address the pandemic. This scenario also includes providing social assistance where economic challenges during the MCO may lead to increased demand for social welfare programs, unemployment benefits, and assistance to affected individuals, households, and businesses (Cheng *et al.*, 2020; Hidayat, 2020). Governments often introduce economic stimulus packages to support businesses and industries affected by the restrictions. The package includes grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans; and when reduced revenue is combined with increased expenditure, it could lead to a budget deficit, where government spending exceeds revenue. This can contribute to an increase in public debt if borrowing is needed to cover the deficit. Therefore, to prevent it from happening worse, one of the ways that can deal with it is through zakat.

According to Hambari *et al.* (2020), zakat institutions in Malaysia are assisting the government in resolving the COVID-19 emergency. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on zakat collection depends on several factors, including the economic conditions of a region (Siti Nurul Munawwarah Roslan, 2022), the effectiveness of relief measures, changes in donor behaviour, and the adaptability of zakat institutions. Table 1 illustrates the zakat distribution by zakat institutions in Malaysia during the pandemic COVID-19 in 2020.

**Table 1** Zakat distribution by states during COVID-19 in 2020

Zakat Institutions	Zakat Distributions (RM Million)
Federal Territory Islamic Council & Centre for Zakat Collection	34.41
Zakat Pulau Pinang	14.52
Pahang Islamic Council and Malay Heritage & Centre for Zakat Collection Pahang	12.2
Kelantan Islamic Council	12.6
Perak Islamic Council and Malay Heritage	14.35
Terengganu Islamic Council and Malay Heritage	20.2
Selangor Zakat Board	15
Johor Islamic Religious Council	7.4
Kedah Zakat Board	16.7
Negeri Sembilan Islamic Council	4.3
Zakat Melaka & Melaka Islamic Council	4.26
Perlis Islamic Council and Malay Heritage	3.98
Sabah Islamic Council	6
Baitulmal Sarawak	6

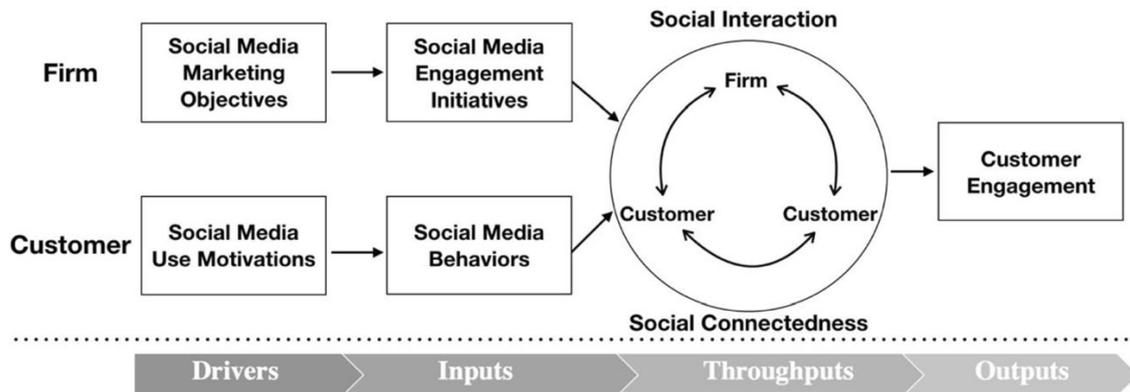
Based on Table 1, most of the zakat institutions from the states in Malaysia have contributed to the national economy in addition to helping the national finances. Among them are the Federal Territories, Terengganu, Kedah, Selangor, Penang, Perak, Kelantan, and Pahang with respective values of RM34.41 million, RM20.2 million, RM16.7 million, RM15 million, RM14.52 million, RM14.35 million, RM12.6 million and RM12.2 million. However, the need for zakat is still high by identifying the most suitable method or medium to collect zakat. Since the pandemic hit the world in 2020, social media and all forms of online mediums have been widely used in all sectors (Alves *et al.*, 2016). This gives room and opportunity to zakat institutions to collect zakat through social media.

## 2. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) has played a crucial role in increasing zakat collection by leveraging the power of digital platforms to raise awareness, engage donors, and facilitate contributions. According to Dwivedi, Kapoor and Chen (2015), social media is becoming increasingly well-known as a powerful communication tool in this digitally advanced era. It has been highly acclaimed in a variety of contexts for promoting interactive communication between companies, communities, society, organizations, consumers, and the like (Evans, 2010). This topic has gained more attention in the literature as numerous research have extended, analyzed, and documented many of its practical applications, such as SMM.

Referring to Nadaraja and Yazdanifard (2013), SMM offers a lot of advantages and disadvantages for organizations or companies to reach targeted clients or customers making it easy, effective, and instantly accessible. These advantages include low-cost marketing and free access to information (Weinberg, 2009); increased and created social interaction (Riegner, 2007 in Hill & Moran, 2011), and social networking (Burmester, 2009); interactivity of media technologies for group and individual participation (Li, Daugherty, & Biocca 2002); marketing and advertising to targeted people (Hill, Provost & Volinsky, 2006), and provide customer services and satisfaction (Gommans, Krishnan & Scheffold, 2001). Besides giving lots of advantages, SMM has its disadvantages, for example, time intensive and time investment (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010); trademark and copyright issues (Steinman & Hawkins, 2010); trust, privacy, and security issues (Hoffmann *et al.*, 1999); user-generated content for making comments (Filho & Tan 2009); and negative feedbacks and responses (Cheung, Lee, & Thadani 2009). Moreover, SMM also has impacted business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing (Lad-Khairnar, 2021). This situation may somehow affect the task and role of SMM, even so, it will bring more benefits to itself. The disadvantages and drawbacks that exist can be used as guidance and reference to improve the marketing and promotion of products and services.

The basis foundation of SMM process development is garnered from Customer Engagement Theory as mentioned by Harmeling *et al.* (2017) in Li, Larimo and Leonidou (2021). This theory states that in order to optimize customer engagement value and provide superior marketing outcomes, businesses must proactively engage in customer empowerment and motivation. Figure 2 illustrates the conceptualization process development of SMM strategy which consists of related metrics with four interlocking parts; drivers, inputs, throughputs, and outputs respectively.



**Fig. 2** Conceptualisation process development of SMM (Source: Li, Larimo & Leonidou, 2021)

Based on Figure 2, the four interlocking parts where Li, Larimo and Leonidou (2021) states “(1) *drivers*, that is, the firm’s social media marketing objectives and the customers’ social media use motivations; (2) *inputs*, that is, the firm’s social media engagement initiatives and the customers’ social media behaviors; (3) *throughputs*, that is, the way the firm connects and interacts with customers to exchange resources and satisfy needs; and (4) *outputs*, that is, the resulting customer engagement outcome” (p. 55).

As applied to zakat collection, there are ways that SMM in which social media platforms have a vast and diverse user base, allowing them to reach a larger audience compared to traditional methods. This expanded reach attracted more potential zakat contributors. Besides, social media encourages two-way communication by engaging content, live sessions, and interactive Q&A sessions (Trattner & Kappe, 2013) to create a sense of community and foster deeper connections with donors. Running targeted awareness campaigns that can educate users about zakat’s importance, how it’s calculated, and its impact on communities, can motivate those who might not have been aware of zakat’s significance to contribute. Through interactive social media, visual content such as images and videos (Trattner & Kappe, 2013) can compellingly convey the impact of zakat, evoking emotions and encouraging action by sharing stories of individuals who have benefited from zakat contributions can humanize the cause and show potential donors the tangible outcomes of their contributions. Also encourage donors to share their contributions, experiences, and stories. This fosters a sense of involvement and may motivate others to contribute as well.

By using social media, can provide real-time updates (Hall, 2012) on the amount of zakat collected and how it’s being utilized. This transparency builds trust and encourages donors to participate. Additionally, direct and clear calls to action can guide users to take the next step, whether it’s calculating their zakat, donating online, or seeking more information with regularly shared informative posts, infographics, and videos (Trattner & Kappe, 2013) that educate users about zakat and its impact. Well-informed donors are more likely to contribute. Social media also provides a platform for donors to give feedback, ask questions, and express concerns (Evans, 2010), and utilize analytics tools to track engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates (Cambria *et al.*, 2011). Responding promptly shows their input and concern for their needs is valued. Collaborating with influencers, scholars, or community leaders may amplify the message (Gillin, 2007) and their endorsement can carry significant weight.

By combining these strategies effectively, social media marketing has created a strong impact on increasing the zakat collection. However, it’s essential to ensure that any campaigns built are authentic, transparent, and aligned with the principles of zakat to build trust and credibility among donors.

### 3. Methodology

This research activity uses a qualitative approach. It is used to understand, explore, and reveal certain phenomena from research participants (Silverman, 2022). In this study, researchers used document analysis to study the zakat collection using social media marketing in the case of Johor. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), documents are frequently used as references in the form of physical, written, photographic, visual, or digital printed material appropriate to the study. The data collection was carried out using two methods, namely online articles and information from Johor State’s official platforms and relevant documents authorized by the Johor State Islamic Council through informants. The method used in this study is a case study. The use of this method aims to clarify why and how so that there is or occurs a relationship between two aspects in one situation or phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The research design for this study is illustrated in Figure 3.

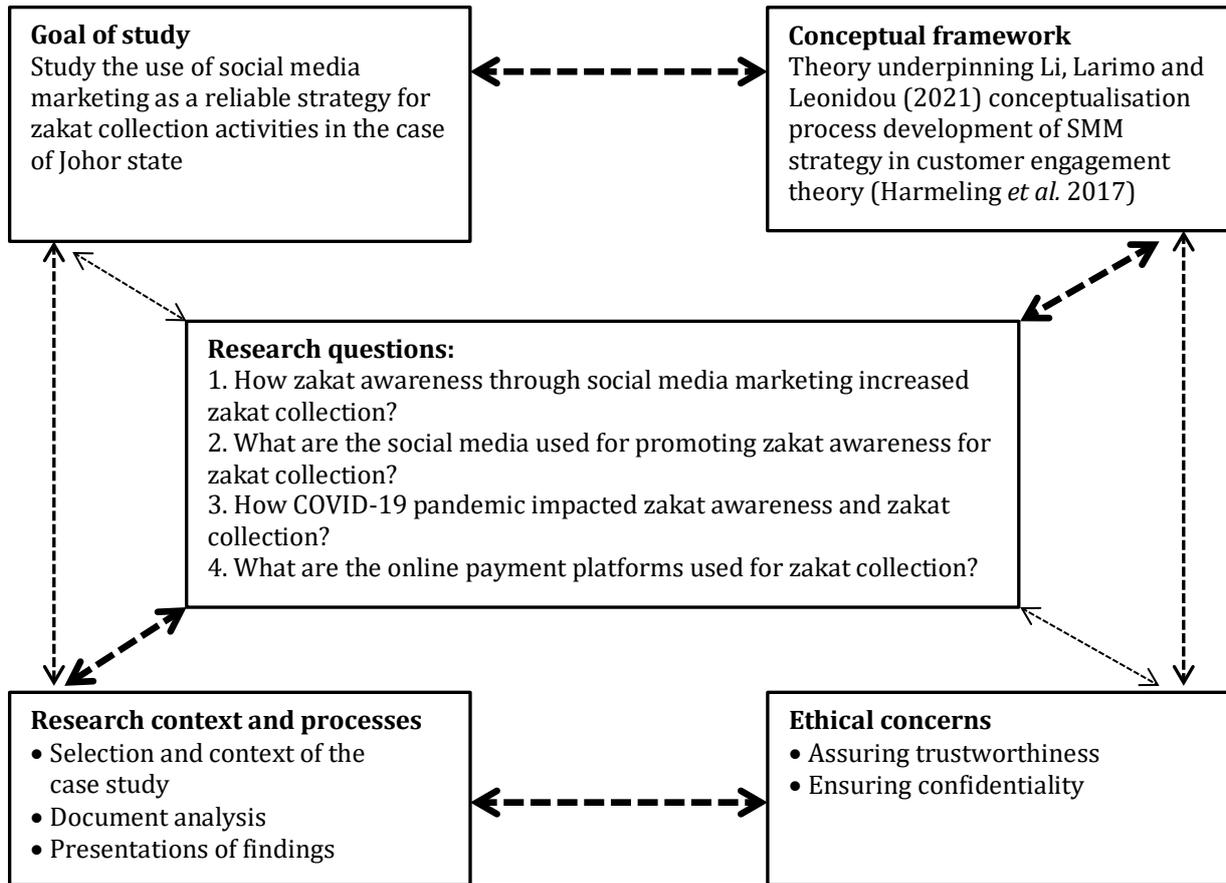


Fig. 3 Research design (adapted from Maxwell, 2005)

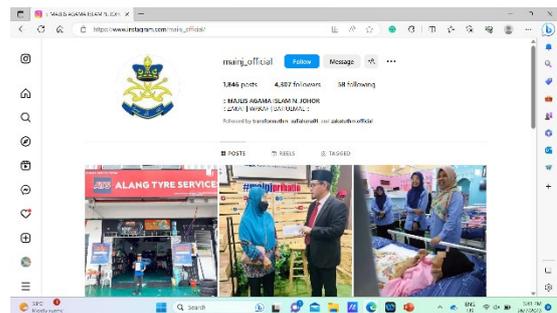
#### 4. Johor Practice on Zakat Collection Through SMM

Zakat collection using social media marketing (SMM) is a relatively new and innovative approach to fundraising within the context of Islamic philanthropy. Using social media platforms for zakat collection allows organizations and individuals to reach a wider audience, engage with potential donors, and streamline the donation process (Alves, 2016). It is a contemporary application of technology to facilitate charitable giving and engage with the Muslim community since the event of pandemic COVID-19 (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Besides, using social media for zakat awareness and perception is a strategic way to educate people about the importance of zakat, clarify misconceptions, and foster a positive attitude towards charitable giving.

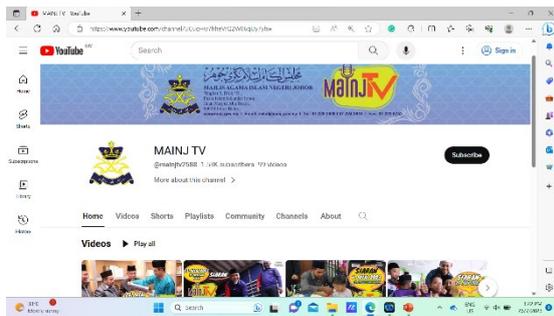
In the case of the Johor Islamic Religious Council (MAINJ), they use various mediums in social media to spread zakat awareness to the general public while encouraging zakat. Among them are FB, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok as shown in Figure 4 to attract all sorts of people in the community especially the young generation and the elderly. This is because social media platforms allow to target specific demographics, ensuring the message reaches those who are more likely to be interested in contributing to zakat.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

**Fig. 4** MAINJ social medias (a) Facebook; (b) Instagram; (c) YouTube; (d) TikTok description

Table 2 gives an insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted zakat collection and philanthropic activities in Malaysia and globally. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, zakat collection and these activities in Malaysia were influenced by factors such as economic conditions, government policies, and societal needs (Siti Nurul Munawwarah Roslan, 2022). It was typically conducted through various channels, including physical collection centres, online platforms, and collaborations with financial institutions. The amounts collected would vary yearly based on economic conditions, religious practices, and the state of social welfare programs.

**Table 2** Zakat collection in Johor from 2018 until 2022

Types of Zakat	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Income	132,998,397.22	141,545,648.35	151,097,388.65	155,758,606.61	172,680,686.22
Savings	57,578,407.54	62,990,077.58	55,108,596.57	73,260,812.84	74,244,481.88
Business	77,522,571.66	69,377,91.09	73,419,922.71	78,344,589.82	91,005,352.19
Gold/Silver	1,165,844.24	1,242,547.54	1,650,919.54	2,266,824.49	1,579,359.10
Gold Savings	-	-	-	-	877,542.56
Gold	-	-	-	-	181,012.10
Jewelries					
Silver	-	-	-	-	23,798.39
Plants	157,162.01	115,131.15	136,785.31	176,341.84	216,841.81
Livestocks	246,808.88	253,460.10	251,427.88	318,782.20	301,551.95
Minerals	9,264.20	6,884.15	7,391.20	14,910.00	14,368.70
Stock	975,529.60	1,152,190.64	1,543,931.62	2,507,958.76	1,925,490.91
EPF	66,172.00	123,092.00	140,179.61	1,462,835.66	3,803,154.85
<b>Sum</b>	<b>270,720,157.35</b>	<b>276,806,941.60</b>	<b>283,356,543.09</b>	<b>314,111,662.22</b>	<b>346,833,640.66</b>
Fitrah	15,063,937.00	19,983,924.04	16,726,281.62	19,197,247.00	20,807,668.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>285,784,094.35</b>	<b>296,790,865.64</b>	<b>300,082,824.71</b>	<b>333,308,909.22</b>	<b>367,641,308.66</b>
<b>% increase</b>		3.85%	1.11%	11.1%	10.3%

Source: MAINJ (2023)

According to Table 2, there was a dramatic increase before, during and after the MCO implementation in 2020 and 2021. For example, between the years 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021, there was a huge increase of 9.99% in zakat collections in Johor. These increments were followed by the years 2021-2022 with 9.19% compared to 3.85% between the years of 2018 and 2019 before the MCO. During the pandemic, many individuals and businesses faced financial hardships, which could have affected their ability to give zakat. At the same time, the increased demand for social assistance and charitable support highlighted the importance of humanitarian activities, including zakat, in supporting the needs of populations. It is important to note that the extent of the financial impact would depend on factors such as the duration and severity of the MCO, the effectiveness of government policies, the resilience of different sectors of the economy, and global economic conditions.

The pandemic also accelerated the acceptance of online platforms for zakat collection, as physical distancing measures limited in-person interactions. It offers several significant benefits and advantages, both for those giving zakat and for the organizations facilitating its collection. Many zakat institutions and charities turned to digital platforms to facilitate donations and reach donors where they can provide easy-to-follow donation instructions

and links to online payment platforms. The convenience of contributing online can lead to higher conversion rates of the zakat collection.

In the case of Johor State, the Johor Islamic Religion Council (MAINJ) provides four ways to pay zakat. The zakat payer can pay through an eMAIJ, an integrated website system owned and ministered by MAINJ. Also, the zakat can be paid through MyEG, an e-Government online services platform; SnapNPay, mobile apps for online payment solutions; and FPX, a real-time payment system as shown in Figure 5.



**Fig. 5** MAINJ online payment platforms for zakat collection (a) eMAIJ; (b) MyEG; (c) SnapNPay; (d) FPX

## 5. Conclusion

Zakat underscores the importance of social responsibility, justice, and empathy in Islam. It encourages believers to recognize their roles in supporting the less fortunate and promoting a just and equitable society. It is considerable to know that the pandemic's impact on zakat collection could vary based on factors like the severity of the outbreak, government responses, and the overall economic resilience of a country or region. Johor practices zakat collection through social media marketing refers to the use of social media platforms to raise awareness and facilitate the collection of zakat, a form of Islamic charity. This approach represents a modern adaptation of traditional zakat collection methods, leveraging the wide reach and engagement potential of social media channels. Strategies by MAINJ typically include creating engaging content, storytelling, using multimedia, engaging with influencers, and using call-to-action tactics to encourage donations. The impact and implications of social media marketing for zakat collection are assessed, alongside considerations such as ethical concerns and future trends. This includes the plan for having a Twitter platform as part of SMM strategy for the zakat collection by MAINJ. Overall, this approach promises to increase zakat collection efforts, offering opportunities to increase outreach and engagement with donors and zakat payers.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the paper.

## Author Contribution

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Mustapahayuddin Abdul Khalim, Muhammad Suhaimi Sulong; **data collection:** Ahmad Zaki Mohamad Malom, Muhammad Suhaimi Sulong, Wan Ainaa Mardhiah Wan Zahari; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Mohd Shafie Mustapha, Muhammad

Suhaimi Sulong, Nur Zainatul Nadra Zainol; **draft manuscript preparation:** Muhammad Suhaimi Sulong, Ahmad Zaki Mohamad Malom. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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