

## Tax and Zakat Compliance in Accountability Perspective: A Comparative Study

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### Abstract

Accountability is one of the main conditions in good governance. It also refers to an obligation of an individual or organization that is entrusted with responsibility and further explains their actions to the individual or organization that gave the responsibility. The objective of the study is to see the comparison of tax and zakat compliance from an accountability perspective. This study is qualitative by using documentation and observation methods. The findings of the study found that accountability is seen as the main influence in influencing tax and zakat compliance. This study is expected to provide input and indirectly increase trust and satisfaction by stakeholders. This study can also be a reference for the academy and researchers in the future in improving accountability in an organization or governance.

**Keywords:** Tax, Zakat, Compliance, Accountability, Zakat Institutions, Malaysia

### Introduction

Obedience is the act of following orders (Noresah, 2007). According to Anuj (2008), it is an enforcement and ensuring individual adherence to policies, procedures, standards, good training and planning. In addition, it can also be defined as a response or behavior that responds to a request. Individuals who need to obey, may consciously or unconsciously behave towards the encouragement or instructions given (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). This is undeniable in the current situation for each individual. He or she has to obey the things that have been set by the government. Whereas, as a Muslim, it refers to obedience to Allah SWT.

In compliance issues, there are two instruments, namely conventional and Islamic fiscal policy. Conventional fiscal policy refers to taxes, which are an economic instrument for a country to obtain revenue or income. The revenue from this tax will be used by the

government to administer and manage the country in addition to providing physical development and infrastructure for the convenience of the people and national security. It can be defined as money or property that must be paid by the household sector and firms to the government and the main source of income for the country (Haslinda, 2012).

Meanwhile, Islamic fiscal policy refers to zakat, which is one of the pillars of Islam and is an obligation that must be fulfilled by Muslims. Its legislation guarantees justice and kindness to all parts of the community in overcoming the problem of economic disparity and creating a harmonious community life. It is also a form of social security guarantee for those who are poor and in need, developing balanced economic growth through the redistribution of wealth in society, job opportunities and education (Nurudeen et al., 2020; Rini et al., 2020) and also as a form of purification and spiritual development (Patmawati, 2008).

Tax compliance and zakat are discussed a lot by previous researchers, among them in the tax field (Izzatie and Mazurina, 2020; Anto et al., 2021; Awadh et al., 2020; Savitri and Musfialdy, 2016), whereas, zakat (Abdullah and Zamri, 2019; Aidanazima et al., 2018; Hafizah, 2017; Hairi, 2017; Rizaldi et al., 2020). However, most of these studies examine compliance from a behavioral point of view and it was found that studies involving accountability, especially in Malaysia, are poorly conducted. Thus, this writing attempts to explore and analyze the comparison of tax compliance and zakat from the accountability point of view to identify future research needs. This is intended to be a reference and further study by researchers in the future related to zakat.

### **Literature Review**

Accountability is one of the main conditions in good governance (UNESCAP, 2008). According to Gray and Jenkins (1993) it is an obligation of the individual or organization entrusted with the responsibility and further explain their actions to the individual or organization that gave the responsibility.

From a fiscal perspective, it is seen as an important element for social well-being in a country and is considered an important pillar for society's view. Among them, the most important factors affecting tax compliance are government accountability, transparency and the reduction of corruption in the governance of a country (Adeyeye and Otusanya, 2015; Cartens, 2005). Accountability is also a concept related to external standards that determine the correctness of bureaucratic actions (Widodo, 2001). In addition to bureaucracy, it is also evaluated in the context of the government's responsibility in providing appropriate services to the community (Bird et al., 2008; Feld and Frey, 2007; Luttmer and Singhal, 2014).

Whereas, from an Islamic perspective, accountability is comprehensive (Roszaini and Abdullah, 2011) because it involves the participation of various stakeholders, namely accountability to Allah SWT and also the community (Abdullah et al., 2018; Hameed, 2000). In the context of zakat institutions, accountability means the institution's responsibility in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it. As a large trustee institution, the concept of accountability is identified and evaluated, especially from the aspect of zakat distribution so that it can be channeled to the eight categories of asnaf that have been set, as the words of Allah SWT which means

*“Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed for it and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler – an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise”.*

Recently, many studies involve trust and effectiveness from an accountability perspective. Among them, involves the institution of zakat because it is a large Islamic institution as a holder of public funds and indirectly always receives the attention of the public regarding its accountability. One of them is related to the disclosure of financial information (Fadhli and Hairunnizam, 2018; Fairuz et al., 2016; Fadzilah et al., 2016; Roshaliza et al., 2016; Saunah et al., 2014). According to Fadhli and Hairunnizam (2018), there are reporting differences in the financial statements of zakat information at the State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN).

In addition, the management and administration aspects of governance are also disputed by the community. Among them, irregularities and misbehavior among officials and authorities are important in implementing accountability (Azharudin et al., 2019; Dzarfan et al., 2020). This is because it gives the impression of high trust by the community in terms of the quality of administration and good governance management.

The findings of this study prove that the importance of the element of accountability is displayed in the institution of zakat. However, research on this matter is quite limited and is still at the evaluation and recommendation stage, especially in Malaysia. Therefore, this study needs to be conducted to provide an explanation for transparency, trust and confidence from stakeholders in the future.

## Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with documentation and survey methods to obtain information related to the discussion topic. It involves analytical discussions using literature methods where the main reference sources are taken from scientific articles, journals, book reports and information on websites such as Scopus and Web of Science (WOS). Next, the information obtained is analyzed conceptually by using the inductive method to meet the objectives of the study. The researcher made a comparison between conventional (tax) and Islamic (zakat) compliance to see the influence of accountability in both fiscal policies. Next, the findings are obtained and presented in the form of a table to facilitate understanding and discussion.

## Studies and Findings

### 1. Tax Compliance from an Accountability Aspect

Some of the findings from previous studies discuss tax compliance from the accountability aspect. Among them are as in the following table

Table 1

#### *Tax Compliance from Accountability Aspects*

No.	Researchers	Countries	Findings
1.	Frey and Torgler (2007)	Eropah	Voice and accountability, political stability, absence of violence, government effectiveness, quality of enforcement/regulation, proper laws and control of corrupt activities are determinants of tax behavior.

2. Izzatie and Mazurina Malaysia (2020) The researchers identified the religious system and the perception of leaders as having a significant relationship among tax compliance. The proceeds of the collection will be returned to the citizens in the form of public services and quality infrastructure such as programs and projects that are specific to the public or the community only.
  3. Anwar et al (2021) Borneo Find the four forces of governance quality tested, namely voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness and the rule of law. The results found that only political stability and legal regulations have a positive relationship with taxpayer behavior.
  4. Anto et al (2021) Indonesia There are four significant systems for tax compliance, namely taxpayer awareness, tax-related knowledge, tax restrictions and public service accountability.
  5. Gachter and Renner UK (2018) The study found that leaders are a strong influence on individual beliefs to act. Therefore, a person's behavior depends on the beliefs displayed by a leader.
  6. Adeyeye and Otusanya Nigeria (2015) Leader accountability, transparency and reduction of corrupt activities will increase voluntary tax compliance.
  7. Lois (2019) Greece The majority of respondents showed a positive perspective on tax compliance towards tax administration officials. However, the fairness of the tax system indicates a deeper problem of system influence and behavior, including the characteristics of tax administration employees and attitudes/perceptions.
  8. Babu and Chariye Ethiopia (2015) The results of the study show that there is a significant and positive relationship between the attitude of taxpayers to the legal system and the quality of governance, to tax morale in Ethiopia. The attitude of taxpayers towards the legal system and the government has a significant positive effect on tax morale which is one of the systems that influence tax morale.
  9. Nkundabanyanga et al Uganda (2017) Government effectiveness, tax transparency systems, voice and accountability have a significant relationship with tax compliance.
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**Zakat Compliance from the Aspect of Accountability**

Some of the findings from previous studies discuss zakat compliance from the accountability aspect. Among them are as in the following table

Table 2

*Zakat Compliance from Accountability Aspect*

No.	Researchers	Countries	Findings
1.	Ummulkhayr et al (2017)	Nigeria	Zakat non-compliance is influenced by the lack of government or institutional support resulting in ignorance, attitudes and organizational problems.
2.	Asri et al (2017)	Malaysia	Trust in the institution of zakat, the level of understanding and attitude of significant influence on the intention to pay zakat.
3.	Nafillan et al (2019)	Indonesia	Payer trust affects corporate governance compliance. Corporate governance as a mediating variable to compliance through payers' trust in zakat institutions.
4.	Hasan et al (2019)	Indonesia	The strength of the zakat payer's intention to pay zakat is influenced by the zakat institution's reputation, transparency, religiosity and trust.
5.	Widiyanto et al (2020)	Indonesia	The reliability of management and understanding the concept of zakat plays an important role in shaping the behavior of zakat payers.
6.	Amalia (2019)	Indonesia	The transparency factor is the most important contributor in determining good governance followed by other factors such as accountability, responsibility and independence.
7.	Noraini and Suhaily (2021)	Malaysia	Accountability is seen from the effectiveness of corporate governance policies, not just financial information.
8.	Rini et al (2021)	Indonesia	Emphasizing the most important measure of accountability is financial statements followed by other factors such as performance, government, public information, compliance and involvement.

Referring to Table 1 and 2, the study found that both conventional and Islamic fiscal policies identify accountability as one of the factors that influence tax and zakat payment compliance. Apart from the behavior of the payer itself, they will also identify the management and administration in an organization. This is because organizations or institutions whether government or private, the role of governance is considered as a body responsible for managing and governing with full integrity, honesty, fairness and always prioritizing balance

in the context of the world and the hereafter without any interests for oneself and the company, even the entire community or stakeholders in general.

Researchers also found that many studies related to zakat compliance were conducted in western countries and Indonesia. However, there are not many studies related to accountability in Malaysia. Therefore, for future studies, this study needs to be improved because it involves the management of large financial funds and it is certain that the community wants to obtain transparent information, especially related to finance and fair and equitable management for all parties.

### **Conclusion**

Conventional fiscal policy (tax) and Islamic fiscal policy (zakat) play an important role in improving the country's economic objectives toward economic growth, wealth distribution and price stability. Therefore, to achieve this objective, accountability needs to be highlighted and proven to the community or stakeholders. This is because accountability has an important role and influence in compliance. The higher the accountability, the higher the payer's compliance with taxes and zakat.

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