

# Braille Module of Zakat Management Education for the Blind: An Effective Tactile Islamic Learning Innovation

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## Abstract

Learning zakat is very important for every Muslim, whether normal or disabled. However, with limited vision, blind people experience challenges in learning the knowledge of zakat better. They also do not have enough resources as reading materials related to zakat. Therefore, a Braille Module for Zakat Management Education for the Blind has been produced by MAIPk in collaboration with UKM. To identify the level of effectiveness of using this module in helping blind people understand zakat, three interviews were conducted with three informants among blind people. After conducting a thematic analysis of the transcripts produced, the findings show that the module meets the needs of blind people in terms of comprehension impact, module presentation and appropriate content. Based on the findings of this study, it is hoped that many more modules will be produced using braille to facilitate the understanding of the blind.

**Keywords:** Blind, Education, Zakat, Module, Tactile

## Introduction

Living life as a blind person requires strong physical and mental strength. If we ever meet blind people on the street or in certain premises, it can be seen that they often use technological materials for the continuity of movement and daily activities. Such an atmosphere shows that technology plays a good role in helping blind people manage their lives. With technology, this group succeeds in doing many things, especially in communicating. Various sound stimulation applications have been created and have been in the market which are very helpful in providing guidance to blind people (Norazmi et al., 2023). The rapid development of technology has made blind people understand their surroundings well. It seems to give light to the darkness of the blind. Despite the limitations in vision, this

kind of technology becomes a fiber for blind people to be kinesthetic, explore the environment and imagine the audio they receive. The contribution of the inventors of this technology is very significant in providing a better life for the visually impaired.

In general, blind people need senses other than sight as a medium of learning. As a result of losing sight, the senses of hearing and touch become very important for blind people. Auditory and tactile elements stimulate blind people's ability to understand the environment and improve their communication (Mosbiran et al., 2021). Both of these elements can work more effectively when both can be combined with the intuition and feelings of the blind person's heart. The imagination that may be formed in the memory of the blind will be aided by the sense of the heart, and so interpret the environment almost accurately. Therefore, technology that focuses on the auditory function of blind people will be able to improve their ability to interact with the environment and increase self-confidence to do something. With the help of such sensitive hearing, blind people can enjoy life more brightly. Collectively, the presence of these technological materials should be welcomed by blind people in guaranteeing the harmony of their lives (Nordin et al., 2023). Recently, with the availability of more advanced technology such as the use of artificial intelligence (AI), the benefits are enormous for blind people. They can use it to interpret the environment, help give early signals, control the direction of movement, communicate and even carry out daily routines.

However, not all conditions of the blind need to rely solely on auditory technology. It should be explained again that the strength of the blind lies in the sense of the heart, hearing and even touch. If they only rely on the sense of hearing in doing daily activities, then the power of touch may gradually disappear and this condition will also affect certain aspects for blind people. Based on efforts to optimize the ability of blind people as a whole, the sense of touch should be emphasized in parallel with their hearing ability. In simple terms, the best technological equipment for the blind needs to combine auditory and tactile elements for some situations. This combination greatly helps blind people to be more aware of the environment and communicate two-way.

### **Problem Statement**

The lives of the blind are largely driven by tactile and auditory materials. As a result of the loss of the sense of sight which is the mainstay of the kinesthetic element, the elements of sound, smell and touch become the main mediators for their movement. The same goes for learning and education for the blind. As you already know, raised writing produced through a braille machine helps blind people learn a lot. In fact, braille is also widely used by blind people around the world. In fact, the braille is also the main medium of writing and communication for the blind. Various scientific materials such as articles, books and Al Quran are produced using braille. With these products, it helps blind people to gain knowledge. Braille helps blind people read and with the help of audio and explanations from literate people, their understanding becomes better (Rani et al., 2022). This situation can also help blind people learn religion well. As we already know, zakat is one of the Pillars of Islam that must be implemented by its followers. Some blind people also belong to the asnaf group who are eligible to receive zakat. However, after receiving zakat money, they cannot manage it themselves and need someone else to manage it (Anuaruddin et al., 2023). This situation is due to the lack of specific education in guiding them to manage zakat (Rejab et al., 2023). Based on a preliminary survey of blind people in Malaysia, they expressed the need to have a book or module in braille to facilitate their reference regarding their zakat management (Bhari et al., 2023). Of course the best step is to attend certain lectures or courses related to zakat,

but specific references should also be provided to the blind for their own use. Therefore, a specific module is proposed to be produced to facilitate the understanding and self-reference of blind people regarding their zakat management. After that, its effectiveness was tested to confirm its applicability to blind people.

### **Braille Module of Zakat Management Education for the Blind**

The Braille Module of Zakat Management Education for the Blind is produced based on the existing zakat management education module that is updated to suit the abilities of the blind. This module is written in braille format. This production is innovative by improving the content, sentence structure and delivery method. Since braille writing requires a large space to write each word cell, the number of pages will increase compared to a normal module. The production of this module involves three braille writers consisting of braille writing experts and teachers of visually impaired options. In addition, in order to maintain the quality and standard of braille writing, the Malaysian Blind Foundation (YOBM) was also invited as a quality advisor for the production of this module.



*Pic 1: Panels discuss for the best structures module for the blind*

To begin with, a series of meetings were held together with stakeholders such as the Perak Council of Islamic Religion and Malay Customs (MAIPk), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) braille experts and YOBM for coordination. A series of research and article publications related to the production requirements of this module were also carried out to further strengthen the academic nature of this project. Once a consensus is reached, the panel will be appointed to option teachers and related unionized individuals. Then, after the agreement and appointment are completed, materials for the production of this module such as braille paper and print software are provided. With the availability of all the necessary materials, the panel are called for a workshop to prepare the module in stages and be fully completed within 10 months. This module has been registered as intellectual property jointly owned by UKM and MAIPk. Fund contributors can also print the module to be distributed to blind people in need.



*Pic 2: Module in printing process*

In total, this module has 60 pages printed in braille on both sides of the page. The front page is decorated with the logo and name of the publisher, funder and also the project lead institution. The content of this module includes explanations related to two types of zakat, namely Zakat Fitrah and Zakat Harta. The explanation covers each sub-category for both types of zakat, the evidence, the basis for paying zakat, how to calculate and the wisdom of giving zakat (Rejab et al., 2023). This module is also supplied with tables related to the type and method of calculation. This simplified content does not affect the requirements and important contents related to zakat. Produced in the size of braille paper, makes it easy for blind people to access and also carry it by holding it with one hand or placing it in a bag. In order to meet ethical values, the front page of this module is printed with tactile logos and background images related to zakat and blind people.



*Pic 3: Partially Printed Module*

### **Methodology**

This study is conducted with a completely qualitative approach, which is through interviews conducted with three blind people who use this module in real life. The opinions and suggestions of the three informants were used as raw data in this study before being analyzed and the final results determined. The three blind people involved are school teacher, blind activist and a public blind people. They are between 35-47 years old and have a history of blindness since birth. They are also zakat payers and have a basic knowledge of zakat. Their selection was also made because the researchers know them and have exposure to braille software and reading materials. The researcher distributed the module to the informants

involved and asked them to read the module sheet by sheet to get their views related to the module. After finishing reading the module, the three informants were interviewed separately to obtain data. This semi-structured interview is conducted for 30 to 60 minutes with the informant. Among the main questions asked are the general opinion of informants related to the module, the content of the module, sentence structure, suitability of the module and also the impact on the reading of blind people related to zakat based on the module. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, before the thematic analysis was conducted.

### Findings and Discussion

Based on the interview transcripts produced, a thematic analysis was carried out to obtain data related to the content of the module, the presentation of the module and the effect on understanding related to zakat.

#### *Content of the module*

Table 1

#### *Thematic analysis related to module content*

Informants	Statements	Themes
In1	<i>A simple explanation</i>	Simple
	<i>Glad to understand, glad I read</i>	Easy to understand
	<i>The content of this module is compact</i>	Important contents
In2	<i>Content that is easy for me to understand</i>	Easy to understand
	<i>Only what is necessary and appropriate is explained</i>	Important contents
	<i>Content about zakat is compact, not long</i>	Simple
In3	<i>I understand after I read it</i>	Easy to understand
	<i>Simple and concise sentences</i>	Simple
	<i>Only important content is explained</i>	Important contents

Table 1 shows a summary of findings for the thematic analysis conducted on the interview transcripts of the three informants. Based on table 1, there are three main themes that explain the content of the module, that is, simple, easy to understand and important content. All three informants agree that this innovation module is user-friendly because its content is simple, easy to understand and includes only important content.

#### *Presentation of the Module*

Table 2

*Thematic analysis related to presentation of the module*

Informants	Statements	Themes
In1	The arrangement is interesting, the size of the braille code is also easy	Interesting
	Braille paper size, easy to carry	Nice to bring
	Easy, simple	User friendly
In2	I'm glad to read it	User friendly
	Well organized	Interesting
	Happy to bring. Not very big	Nice to bring
In3	Good at arranging the position of topics, sub topics	Interesting
	Blind people love to read this	User friendly
	I think I can carry it in my bag	Nice to bring

Table 2 shows the results of the thematic analysis conducted on the three interview transcripts related to the presentation of this module. Based on the table, there are three themes related to the presentation of modules namely interesting, user friendly and nice to bring. This proves that the module produced meets the needs of use for the blind. They also clearly state that this module is very suitable to carry and useable when travelling. With an optimal size with a hand grip, this module is also easy to carry in a bag.

*Impact on the understanding of zakat*

Table 3

*Thematic analysis related to impact on the understanding of zakat*

Informants	Statements	Themes
In1	Apparently there is a lot of zakat income	New knowledge
	This module gives me more knowledge	More understand
In2	Happy to count zakat	New knowledge
	What I know so far is explained in the module	More understand
In3	I think all income should be zakat before this	New knowledge
	I understand zakat better now	More understand

Table 3 shows the results of the thematic analysis produced on the three interview transcripts of the informants. The research found that there are only two themes that represent the impact on the understanding of zakat, namely new knowledge and more understanding. These two themes are found from the statements made by all the informants of this study. Through the results of this analysis, it proves that this braille module is very suitable for use by blind people in strengthening knowledge related to zakat as well as correcting their existing zakat practices.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the use of tactile reading materials, especially with braille, gives the optimal meaning and effect to the understanding of blind people. Auditory materials available in the market can also help the acquisition of knowledge by the blind, but tactile materials

complement and stabilize the memory of the blind. The same goes for the learning of Islam by the blind, who also need tactile materials for reference and additional reading materials. Due to the importance of zakat practice, blind Muslims also need to learn zakat knowledge more perfectly. With the existence of this produced module, the process of spreading knowledge of zakat to the blind becomes more meaningful and can keep the input longer in their memory. Through the feedback obtained from the informants involved, it was clearly found that the use of a tactile module with braille writing is very necessary for the blind in the process of learning zakat. If this kind of module method can be expanded further in various disciplines, then blind people will not be left behind in the current of change and understanding of Islamic religious knowledge.

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