



Analysis of High School Learners on Zakat and Waqf Management Program at Islamic Higher Education: A Mixed Methods Approach

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Abstract

The Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program always tries to socialize this Study Program to high school students or equivalent, so that the Study Program is in demand by students who want to continue to the university level. If this Study Program is not recognized by high school students, then the tendency is to get challenges in students' interest in it. This study aims to explain the perceptions of high school students towards the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program at Islamic Religious Universities. This type of research is mixed methods with an explanatory mixed method design approach. Data collection techniques through questionnaires, interviews and documentation. The number of informants for questionnaires and interviews was 99 people. Data analysis techniques through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Quantitative data analysis techniques use SPSS while qualitative data analysis techniques use thematic methods. Data validity assurance techniques through source triangulation. Both data analysis results show that the perceptions of most informants are positive and good towards this Study Program. Regarding the percentage index of the perception variable items, the average percentage index is 79.92. Thus it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval means good, because it is in the interval 60-79.99%. Based on in-depth interviews conducted, information was obtained that in general, high school students in Tanah Datar Regency had a good perception of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. The benefit of this research is to help the development of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program in socializing it to high school students.

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INTRODUCTION

Education, both formal and informal, from primary to higher education, serves as a fundamental means of learning (Gunawan et al., 2023). Through

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education, individuals develop character, acquire the ability to plan for the future, and enhance their decision-making skills in various aspects of life. Formal education refers to a structured and sequential educational pathway, encompassing basic education, secondary education, and higher education (Lestari et al., 2022; Syukkur & Fauzan, 2021). Basic education serves as the foundation for subsequent educational levels and includes Primary Schools and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah or their equivalents, as well as Junior High Schools and Madrasah Tsanawiyah or equivalent institutions (Herdiansyah et al., 2019; Mardhiyya et al., 2024; Sudarmo et al., 2021). Secondary education follows basic education and consists of Senior High Schools, Madrasah Aliyah, Vocational High Schools, or equivalent institutions (Maulana et al., 2019; Sayler, 2021; Sitorus & Sojanah, 2018). Meanwhile, higher education refers to the level of education pursued after secondary education, including diploma, bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral programs offered by universities.

Higher education not only functions as a center of science, research, and community service, but also as an academic institution that must be able to adapt in the face of the dynamics of global competition (De Wit, 2019; Hart & Rodgers, 2023; Marginson, 2016a; OTA, 2018). Like other entities, universities are faced with challenges in maintaining quality, cost efficiency, and service quality. Despite their non-profit nature, universities still require effective management strategies to ensure their sustainability and relevance. Therefore, higher education management is an important aspect in managing academic institutions to ensure competitiveness and contribution to society (Nursanjaya, 2019).

Higher education is the level of education pursued after completing secondary education. Higher education plays a role in developing students' academic and professional competencies and improving the skills acquired during secondary education (Maulana et al., 2019; Rahman & Sohel, 2019). Currently, the education system at the senior high school level or equivalent is still general, while the available vocational education has not fully prepared graduates with work-ready skills. Therefore, for high school graduates who want to pursue a career in the academic sector or government and private institutions, the undergraduate route is a more relevant option (Alsharari, 2018; Marginson, 2016b; Monaco et al., 2021). Meanwhile, graduates of Vocational High Schools or other vocational institutions are better advised to pursue vocational education that is oriented towards strengthening practical skills in accordance with the fields they have previously studied. Thus, secondary education still acts as an initial stage that needs to be complemented by further education so that graduates have optimal work readiness (Almarashdi et al., 2023; Simarmata et al., 2023).

Indonesia faces the challenge of many university graduates who have not yet obtained decent jobs and are in accordance with the fields of study they have taken. While the number of graduates increases every year, the availability of jobs is relatively limited, resulting in some graduates not being absorbed in the world of work (Pasaribu, 2017). Competition in the world of work is also getting tighter, where one job position can be demanded by thousands of applicants, reflecting the high level of competition in obtaining employment (Gouëdard et al., 2023; Motlagh et al., 2020; Winanti et al., 2023). In the context of zakat management, optimism remains along with the growth and development of Organisasi Pengelola Zakat consisting of the Badan Amil Zakat Nasional and Lembaga Amil Zakat, which require a large number of amil personnel.

In facing these challenges, senior high school students try to prepare

themselves optimally to realize their dreams by choosing a study program that suits their interests and career prospects (Engkizar et al., 2023; Zang et al., 2022). This preparation is done through tutoring or independent learning. Universities, both public and private, offer a variety of study programs that can be chosen by prospective students. The decision of high school graduates in choosing a study program is influenced by various factors, including their perception and interest in a field of science.

Relevant theory states that perception plays a role in the decision-making process. Perception as an impression obtained by individuals through the five senses, which is then analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated so as to produce meaning. Research findings also show a significant relationship between student perceptions of study programs in higher education and the suitability of interest in choosing a study program (Baloch et al., 2023; Marhamah, 2022; Putra & Melkias, 2022).

One of the universities providing higher education in Tanah Datar Regency is Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. This institution has experienced significant development, starting from the Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Batusangkar, which then transformed into the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Batusangkar based on Presidential Regulation No. 147 of 2015. In 2022, through Presidential Regulation No. 84 of 2022, this institution officially transformed into Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. As the only State Islamic Religious College in Tanah Datar Regency, the university has four faculties and one postgraduate program. Currently, there are 27 undergraduate study programs and one Teacher Professional Education study program, as well as six master study programs (S2) and one doctoral study program (S3).

One of the study programs offered is the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, which was established in 2017 and is the only study program of its kind in West Sumatra. This study program has shown its existence by obtaining B accreditation. The existence of this study program aims to answer the need for professionals in the management of zakat and waqf in the midst of social and economic complexity. As a relatively new study program, the main challenge faced is the low level of recognition among the community, especially high school students. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for related parties in the future development of this study program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have been conducted related to student perceptions of educational institutions. One of them is a study conducted by Moonti et al (2022) regarding the influence of student perceptions on interest in continuing their studies in the Economics Education S1 Study Program, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. The results showed a positive and significant influence between students' perceptions of their interest in continuing their studies, with a correlation coefficient of 0.835 and a coefficient of determination of 0.696. This finding indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables. In addition, the calculated t value of 8.962 which is greater than the t table of 2.030 indicates a statistically significant effect.

Similar research was conducted by Komalasari et al (2018) Bakti Komalasari and her colleagues, who examined the perceptions of students from Islamic Senior High School Curup and Islamic Senior High School Aliyah Ar-Rahmah toward the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Study Program at Sekolah Tinggi Agama

Islam Negeri Curup. The results revealed a range of perceptions, from those who viewed the study program as sufficiently good to those who doubted its quality or were unfamiliar with it. These varying perceptions were influenced by several factors, including experience, motivation, interests and needs, expectations, and stereotypes.

Furthermore, [Asbari et al \(2020\)](#); [Firdaus et al \(2020\)](#); [Sembiring et al \(2020\)](#) examined students' perceptions of their interest in continuing their studies in tourism colleges. The results showed that of the total respondents, 58% were male students and 42% were female students. Respondents from Vocational High School amounted to 53%, while those from Senior High School amounted to 47%. Statistical analysis in this study found that the correlation coefficient between students' perceptions and their interest in continuing their studies at tourism colleges was only 0.184 or 18.4%, indicating a relatively low relationship between the two variables.

Another study conducted by [Wardana et al \(2018\)](#) and his colleagues highlighted the influence of high school students' perceptions on their interest in choosing Mulawarman University as a place to continue their higher education. The results showed that there was a significant influence between students' perceptions on their interest in choosing Mulawarman University. However, the level of influence is relatively low with a correlation coefficient of 0.256, which indicates that other factors also influence students' decisions in choosing universities.

In addition, [Hidayat \(2016\)](#) examined the perceptions of high school students in Parepare City toward the sekolah tinggi agama Islam Negeri Parepare. The results showed that most students (63.47%) had limited knowledge about the institution. A total of 53.11% believed that the study programs at the sekolah tinggi agama Islam Negeri Parepare focused solely on religious studies, while 26.76% had read about the institution in the local newspaper, Pare Pos. Additionally, 20% of respondents reported seeing broadcasts about the college on CTV Pare, and 14.44% expressed interest in continuing their studies there. Furthermore, 36.53% of students considered the college a top choice in the region. Among the various study programs available, the most preferred by Parepare high school students were the Computer Science Study Program (34.78%) and the English Education Study Program (48.13%).

The last research conducted by [Sitanggang et al \(2021\)](#) highlighted the relationship between students' perceptions of study programs in college and their self-concept in determining the suitability of interest in choosing a study program. The results showed a significant relationship between student perceptions of study programs and suitability of interest in choosing, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.702 and an F value of 45.249 ($p = 0.000$). In addition, there is a significant correlation between student perceptions of study programs and suitability of interest in choosing, as indicated by the r_{x1y} value of 0.606 ($p = 0.000$). A significant relationship was also found between self-concept and suitability of interest in choosing a study program, with an r_{x2y} value of 0.596 ($p = 0.000$).

Research conducted by [Rafikasari \(2019\)](#) with the title Analysis of Student Perceptions of SiMBA Adoption, Department of Zakat and Waqf Management, Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Tulungagung revealed that students of the Department of Zakat and Waqf Management, Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Tulungagung State Islamic Institute have a positive perception of the adoption of the Sistem Informasi

Manajemen Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (SiMBA) technology. Students consider that the use of SiMBA is useful in facilitating the management of zakat management. In addition, support from the department and the availability of facilities also support the ease of operation of SiMBA. However, although the perception of the benefits is quite good, the implementation of the use of this technology in academic practice is still limited, which can be seen from the low frequency of use of SiMBA by students. The main factor that causes this is the non-optimal integration of SiMBA in lecture activities.

Another study conducted by [Masykuroh & Sudrajat \(2022\)](#) with the title *Competitiveness Strategy to Increase Interest in the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program* discusses strategies to increase the competitiveness of this study program. The results showed that the strategies that can be applied include cost advantage, differentiation, and focus, each with its advantages and disadvantages. Based on the results of the analysis, the strategy that is considered most suitable for the current conditions is the differentiation strategy, which allows the study program to have its own uniqueness compared to other study programs.

Furthermore, research conducted by [Masykuroh et al \(2019\)](#) and her colleagues with the title *Development of the Zakat and Waqf Department at Universitas Islam Negeri SMH Banten* highlighted prospective students' interest in this department. The results showed that most respondents, both from senior high schools, vocational high schools, and public and Islamic high schools, had a high interest in continuing their studies to a higher level, with a percentage reaching 83.1%. Furthermore, 49.2% of respondents expressed interest in continuing their studies at the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri SMH Banten if the Zakat and Waqf Management major was opened. The most popular field in this study program is management, with a preference level of 76.3%. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the opening of the Zakat and Waqf Management major at the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business, Universitas Islam Negeri SMH Banten has considerable potential to attract prospective students.

Based on the previous studies that have been stated, this research has an element of novelty in terms of the focus of study, namely the perception of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program. The approach used in this study is also different compared to the majority of previous studies which tend to use quantitative methods, while this study applies mixed methods that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. In addition, this study examines perceptions using indicators of attentional, functional, and structural factors. Despite differences in methodology and focus of study, this research remains in line with previous research in contributing to the development of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program.

METHODS

This type of research is mixed methods with an explanatory mixed method design approach ([Engkizar et al., 2018](#); [Johannes et al., 2024](#); [PH. and Chang, 2009](#); [Salajegheh et al., 2024](#); [Snelson, 2016](#)). The population of this study amounted to 10,166 high school students in 2020 in Tanah Datar Regency. The sample selection technique used in this study was random sampling from a population of 10,166 high school students in Tanah Datar Regency. Thus the source of quantitative and qualitative data from high school students. Based on calculations using the Slovin

formula, the sample amounted to 99 people.

Data collection techniques through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Quantitative approach instruments through questionnaires with indicators of attention, functional, and structural factors (Sabrina et al., 2023; Yaumas et al., 2023). Qualitative approach instruments through interview guides and documentation. Data analysis techniques through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data that is numerical will be analyzed quantitatively by making a recap and percentage according to the type of data. The data is grouped to make it easier to filter which data is needed or not. After grouping the data is described by the formula;

$$\text{Index (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{Y} \times 100$$

The score interval ranges from 0% (lowest) to 100% (highest) (Hamid, 2011). To deepen the results of the analysis, this study also used interviews with respondents. After the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed, conclusions were drawn to answer the research problems. Data validity was guaranteed through source triangulation techniques (Dalei, 2023; Engkizar et al., 2024; Marshall et al., 2020; Venkataramanan et al., 2018).

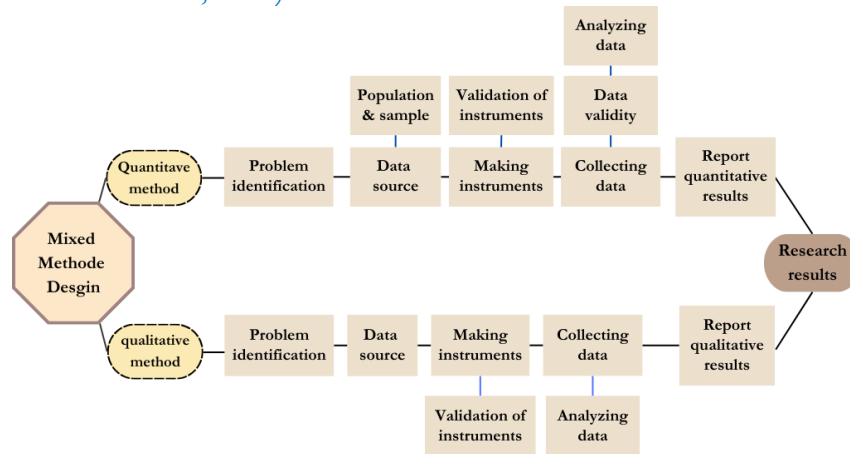


Fig 1. Research thinking framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the following, the author presents the results of both studies, both quantitative findings (survey) and qualitative findings (case studies). To make it easier to understand, the author will present the Quantitative results first and followed by the qualitative results.

Based on the results of the research, three themes related to the factors of students towards the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program at State Islamic Religious Universities were found. The three factors are: i) Attention factors, ii) functional factors, iii) structural factors. As shown in Figure 2 below.



Fig 2. Criteria for choosing a spouse according to religious guidance

Attention factors

The items of this attention factor are described in the following points, the perceptions of Senior High School students based on the following attention factor indicators:

Table 1. Student Perceptions Based on Attention Factor Indicators

Item	Index % (Total Score/ Y x 100%)	Interpretation
Students' Perceptions of the existence of Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar as a University in West Sumatra	$426/495 \times 100\% = 86\%$	Very good
Number of Interested Students at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar	$402/495 \times 100\% = 81\%$	Very good
Students' Perception of the Statement that the Good Position of Graduates from Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar in the Community	$399/495 \times 100\% = 80,61\%$	Very good
Student Perceptions of the Existence of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program	$417/495 \times 100\% = 84,24\%$	Very good
Students' Perceptions of the Prospects of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program	$405/495 \times 100\% = 81,82\%$	Very good
Students' Perception of the Importance of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program Holding Events Involving High School Students Such as Competitions and the Like	$434/495 \times 100\% = 87,68\%$	Very good

Regarding the percentage index in table 1 above, it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval means very good, because it is in the interval 80-100%. This shows that respondents have a very good perception of the importance of the existence of Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar as a university in West Sumatra, the number of people interested in studying at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, students' perceptions about the statement that the good position of graduates from Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar in the community, students' perceptions about the existence of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, students' perceptions about the prospects of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, and the importance of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program holding events involving high school students such as competitions and so on (Menghayati, 2022; Ramli et al., 2022; Syadali, 2023; Utami, 2019).

In line with the quantitative data above, based on interviews with respondents, information was obtained including the following:

... The number of people interested in studying at Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University in my neighborhood tends to increase from time to time (Informant 1). ... The position of graduates from Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar is very good in my village, graduates work in various fields including the State Civil Apparatus, employees of State-Owned Enterprises, the private sector, and so on (Informant 2). ... The Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program is a good study program, I am interested in exploring it (informant 3). ... I consider the prospect of the Zakat and Waqf Management

Study Program to be good, because many zakat institutions already exist. ... I consider the prospect of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program to be good, because many zakat institutions already exist (informant 4). ... In order for the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program to be increasingly recognized by high school students, the Study Program also needs to socialize through competitions involving many schools (informant 5).

Thus it can be stated that the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program must maintain its existence in the community, try to increase the interest in the Study Program from time to time by socializing. This Study Program and collaborating with related parties, the profile of alumni who have taken part needs to be released continuously as a testimonial of the Study Program. the prospects for the Study Program are very good with the collaboration with various parties, and the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program always innovates to introduce this Study Program through linear events with direct socialization and socialization using social media (Alsharari, 2020; Aziz et al., 2014; Elkhaira et al., 2020; K, 2019).

Functional factors

The items of this functional factor are described in the following points, the perceptions of Senior High School students based on the following functional factor indicators:

Table 2. Student Perceptions Based on Functional Factor Indicators

Item	Index % (Total Score/ Y x 100%)	Interpretation
Students' perceptions of brochures as promotional media for the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program	333/495x100%=67,27%	Good
Students' perceptions of the internet as a medium for promoting the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program	349/495 x100%=70,51%	Good
Students' perceptions of friends as a medium for promoting the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program	345/495x100%=69,70%	Good
Students' perceptions of the Universitas islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar campus as a campus that is centered in a cool and comfortable area that supports the concentration of taking Education	425/495x100%=85,86%	Very good
Students' perceptions about education at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, especially the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, can be a provision for them in living their future lives.	414/495x100%=83,64%	Very good
Students' perceptions about the need for graduates of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program along with the development of zakat and waqf management	409/495x100%=82,63%	Very good

Regarding the percentage index in table 2 above, it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval is categorized as good, which means that respondents have a good perception for the items of student perceptions about brochures as a medium for promoting the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, student perceptions about the internet as a medium for promoting the Zakat and Waqf Management

Study Program, and student perceptions about friends as a medium for promoting the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program because they are in the interval 60-79.99%. In addition, for the other three items, it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval is categorized as very good, which means that respondents have a very good perception for the item Student Perceptions of the Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar campus as a campus centered in a cool and comfortable area that supports concentration on education, Students' perceptions about education at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, especially the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program can be a provision for them in living their future lives, and students' perceptions about the need for graduates of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program along with the development of zakat and waqf management because they are in the 80-100% interval.

In line with the quantitative data above, based on interviews with respondents, information was obtained including the following:

...We need to read the special brochure of this Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program so that the information we get is clearer and more complex (Informant 6). ... Maybe it will be easier for students to access information, if the means of promotion of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program is through the internet or social media. Promotional information on social media needs to be viralized (informant 7). ... I know information about the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program from friends who have studied in the Study Program (informant 8). ... I consider that the Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar campus is a good, safe, and comfortable campus for studying (informant 9). ... Studying in the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program will certainly shape me into a professional zakat manager, I feel this is good for the development of Islamic economics (informant 10). ... the number of zakat institutions certainly also requires a lot of manpower to manage them (informant 11).

Thus it can be stated that the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program needs to prepare innovations in promoting this Study Program either through brochures, internet media, social media, word of mouth. The Study Program also needs to promote more intensively about the beauty and comfort of the campus location, the Study Program is also expected to convey to the public that the potential of zakat and waqf in Indonesia is very high and thus professional personnel are needed to manage it (Ali et al., 2021; Muqorobin & Urrosyidin, 2023).

Structural factor

The items of this structural factor are explained in the following points, the perceptions of high school students based on the following structural factor indicators:

Table 3. Student Perceptions Based on Structural Factor Indicators

Item	Index % (Total Score/ Y x 100%)	interpretation
Students' perceptions about the cost of education at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar which is lower than other public universities.	385/495x100%=77,78%	Good

Students' perceptions about the benefits of continuing education at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, especially the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, then students' skills will increase	420/495 x100%=84,85%	Very good
Students' Perception of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program as the Only Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program in West Sumatra	372/495x100%=75,15%	Good

Regarding the percentage index in table 3 above, it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval is categorized as good, which means that respondents have a good perception for the item of student perceptions about the cost of education at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar which is lower than other public universities and student perceptions about the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program as the only Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program in West Sumatra, because it is in the interval 60-79.99%. As for one other item, it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval is categorized as very good, which means that respondents have a very good perception for the item Perception of Students about the Benefits of continuing Education at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, especially the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, then students' skills will increase because it is in the interval 80-100%.

In accordance with the quantitative data above, based on interviews with respondents, information was obtained including the following:

... I consider that the cost of education to study at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar is more affordable than other universities. This is supported by many scholarships, affordable living costs in Batusangkar, and so on (informant 12). ... I consider that by studying in the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program, it will help zakat and waqf institutions to prepare themselves to become professional zakat and waqf managers (informant 13). ... I did not get information on the existence of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program in West Sumatra other than at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar (informant 14).

Thus it can be stated that the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program needs to always provide information about fee waivers in education or various scholarships for students with certain categories, the urgency of the Study Program in the development of Islamic philanthropy, and its existence in fostering the birth of professionals in the field of zakat and waqf (Abdullah, 2020; Cupian & Najmi, 2020; Menghayati, 2022; Widarjono, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Both data analysis results show that the perceptions of most informants are positive and good towards this Study Program. Regarding the percentage index of the perception variable items, the average percentage index is 79.92, thus it can be interpreted that the percentage score interval means good. Meanwhile, based on in-depth interviews conducted, information was obtained that in general, high school students in Tanah Datar Regency had a good perception of the Zakat and Waqf

Management Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, both on attention, functional, and structural factors. The benefit of this research is to help the development of the Zakat and Waqf Management Study Program in socializing it to high school students.

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