

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN IMPROVING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF TAXPAYERS IN UPT REGION VI OF THE REGIONAL REVENUE AGENCY OF MEDAN CITY

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Abstract

Tax is the main source of income for the state to finance development and public services. However, public awareness of the obligation to pay taxes is still low. This is clearly seen in UPT Region VI of the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of Medan City, which causes a low level of public compliance in fulfilling tax obligations. This study aims to explore the role of education in increasing public awareness of taxpayers, as well as providing recommendations that can be implemented by Bapenda in an effort to improve tax compliance in the area. This study uses a qualitative approach, with a literature review approach. The results of the study show that tax education is very important to increase public awareness of the obligation to pay taxes. The education strategy implemented by UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City includes the formation of a field team, providing taxpayer notification letters, education about taxpayers, assistance in registering as taxpayers, assistance in paying taxes, and tax socialization.

Keywords: Education, Awareness, Taxpayers

INTRODUCTION

Tax is one of the main sources of income for the state which is used to finance various development programs and public services. In Indonesia, the obligation to pay taxes is regulated by law, but the level of public awareness of this obligation is still relatively low. This phenomenon is clearly seen in UPT Region VI of the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of Medan City, where the author found that many people do not understand the importance of paying taxes. This has implications for the low level of public compliance in fulfilling their tax obligations.

One of the factors contributing to low public awareness is the lack of education and understanding about taxes. According to research conducted by Sari and Rahardjo (2020), effective tax education can increase public knowledge about taxes and encourage them to be more compliant in paying taxes. The study shows that educational programs that directly involve the community can increase tax awareness and compliance.

Tax education not only serves to provide information, but also to build awareness of the importance of tax contributions to regional and national development. This is in line with research conducted by Prabowo and Sari (2019), which states that a good understanding of taxes can change people's attitudes

towards their tax obligations. Thus, education is key to increasing public awareness of taxpayers.

Given the conditions in UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City, it is important to develop a more effective and comprehensive education strategy. This study aims to explore the role of education in increasing public awareness of taxpayers, as well as to provide recommendations that can be implemented by Bapenda in an effort to improve tax compliance in the area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education

Education can be defined as a learning process that aims to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals in various aspects of life. In this context, education not only functions as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a systematic effort to shape character and moral values that are important for individuals in interacting with society. According to Supriyadi (2020), education is a process that aims to develop individual potential through structured and systematic learning, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. This shows that education has broad dimensions, including intellectual, emotional, and practical skills.

Dimiyati and Mudjiono (2018) emphasized that education must be adjusted to the needs and socio-cultural context of the community in order to have a significant impact on everyday life. Thus, relevant and contextual education will be more easily accepted by the community and can encourage their active participation in the learning process. Therefore, it is important to develop an educational strategy that not only focuses on academic aspects, but also pays attention to the social and cultural values that exist in the community.

Taxpayer Awareness

According to Wardani and Rumiayatun (2017:17), taxpayer awareness can be interpreted as an individual's good intention to fulfill the obligation to pay taxes based on his/her sincere conscience. The higher the level of awareness possessed by taxpayers, the better the understanding and implementation of their tax obligations, which in turn can increase the level of compliance. Tax awareness is a condition in which a person not only knows and acknowledges the applicable tax provisions, but also respects and obeys these rules, and has a strong desire to fulfill the obligation to pay taxes (Muliari, 2011). Thus, tax awareness reflects the attitude of taxpayers, both individuals and institutions, to understand the importance, function, and purpose of paying taxes. This shows that tax awareness has a significant positive impact on taxpayer compliance, where with this awareness, taxpayers take the initiative to fulfill their tax obligations (Tene et al., 2017).

Tax awareness is a fundamental aspect of the tax system that reflects taxpayers' deep understanding of their social and legal responsibilities. According to Priambodo's perspective (2017), tax awareness can be broken down into three crucial interrelated dimensions:

1. Tax awareness as a manifestation of social contribution. Tax is not merely an administrative obligation, but a strategic instrument to encourage national development and improve the collective welfare of society. Every rupiah paid is a direct investment in infrastructure development, education, health, and various strategic programs that have a positive impact on the quality of life of citizens.
2. Awareness of the consequences of delaying or reducing tax payments. Delaying or reducing tax payments is not just an administrative violation, but an action that can significantly hinder the acceleration of national development. Every delay has the potential to reduce the government's capacity to implement planned development programs, which in turn has a negative impact on the progress and welfare of society.
3. Awareness of the legal aspects of taxation. Taxes are not merely voluntary contributions, but rather legal obligations that are comprehensively regulated by law. Every citizen has a constitutional responsibility to fulfill their tax obligations in accordance with applicable provisions. This awareness reflects the commitment of citizens to comply with the legal system and actively participate in national development through tax contributions.

Thus, tax awareness is not just a theoretical concept, but a real practice that shows the maturity of the nation and state. This requires a comprehensive understanding, social awareness, and legal compliance from every taxpayer in supporting sustainable development.

The awareness to pay taxes should arise from within the taxpayer himself, without the need for reminders from other parties or threats of punishment. This awareness is influenced by the public's understanding of existing legal regulations. The public can be considered to have awareness when they understand the function of taxes, such as land and building taxes, in the context of the state and nation (Ramadhanti, Suharno, and Widarno, 2020). Taxpayer awareness is a condition in which they know, understand, and implement tax provisions correctly and voluntarily (Lestari, 2016). Thus, awareness to pay taxes can be understood as a moral attitude that reflects a contribution to the state in supporting development, not only as a technical obligation related to tax audits or tax rates, but also as a willingness to fulfill tax obligations in accordance with applicable provisions.

Taxpayer awareness is a multidimensional concept that can be analyzed through a number of comprehensive indicators. Referring to Marjan's perspective (2014), there are four fundamental dimensions that describe tax awareness in the context of national development:

1. Tax is seen as a mechanism for social contribution of society that is directly used to support infrastructure development and improve the collective quality of life. This contribution is not just a financial transfer, but a strategic investment that provides sustainable benefits for all levels of society.
2. Taxes are considered as an instrument for funding government general expenditure. Through this mechanism, the government obtains resources to carry out public service functions, ranging from education, health, to strategic infrastructure that supports the progress of the nation.
3. Taxes are identified as the main source of state revenue. Tax contributions are the backbone of national development financing, filling the state treasury which is then distributed to various strategic programs that benefit the wider community.
4. Paying taxes is perceived as a constitutional obligation of every citizen. It reflects social responsibility and commitment to supporting national development through measurable and sustainable financial contributions.

According to Putri (2023), taxpayer awareness can be broken down into seven fundamental dimensions that describe the complexity of tax behavior:

1. Legal Knowledge: Taxpayers have a thorough understanding of applicable tax laws and provisions, demonstrating comprehensive legal literacy.
2. Understanding the Function of Taxes: They understand the strategic role of taxes in state financing, recognizing their contribution to national development.
3. Regulatory Compliance: Awareness to carry out tax obligations in accordance with applicable provisions, without external coercion.
4. Contributive Awareness: Understanding that every tax payment is a significant contribution in supporting the country's development programs.
5. Voluntary Reporting: Willingness to calculate, pay, and report taxes voluntarily, without administrative intervention or pressure.
6. Reporting Accuracy: Commitment to calculating, paying, and reporting taxes with high accuracy and honesty.
7. Complex Behavior: Tax awareness is a psychological construct involving a dynamic interaction between knowledge, beliefs, and rational reasoning, as well as a tendency to respond to tax system stimuli with positive attitudes.

Thus, taxpayer awareness is not merely an administrative concept, but rather a complex manifestation of social understanding, legal commitment, and civic responsibility in supporting sustainable national development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore and analyze in depth the topic of the Role of Education in Increasing Public Awareness of Taxpayers at UPT Region VI of the Medan City Regional Revenue Agency through systematic collection, evaluation, and synthesis of various relevant library sources. The research process is carried out by identifying, collecting, and critically reviewing scientific journal articles, books, research reports, and related academic sources published from various electronic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and other digital libraries.

According to Bogdan and Taylor, as quoted by Lexy J. Moleong, qualitative research is a research process that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behavior (Moleong, 2010). The data obtained is analyzed thematically to identify factors that influence public awareness of tax obligations and the effectiveness of the educational strategies implemented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational Strategy of UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City in Increasing Public Awareness of Taxpayers

1. Forming a Field Team

One of the main strategies implemented by UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City in increasing public awareness of tax obligations is the formation of a field team consisting of experienced tax officers. This team has an important task to conduct surveys and data collection in the field to identify potential taxpayers who are not yet registered or have outstanding tax obligations. With this direct approach, the team can obtain accurate information about the tax conditions in the community, as well as understand the challenges faced by taxpayers in fulfilling their obligations. Through direct interaction, the team can also build better relationships with the community, thereby increasing their trust and awareness of the importance of paying taxes.

2. Providing Taxpayer Notification Letter

After the identification process is complete, the field team of UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City sends a notification letter to the selected taxpayers. This letter contains important information regarding the tax obligations owned by the taxpayer, including the amount of tax to be paid and the payment deadline. By

providing clear and detailed information, it is hoped that taxpayers can understand their obligations and not miss the payment deadline. This notification letter also serves as an effective reminder, so that the public is more aware of their tax responsibilities.

3. Providing Education about Taxpayers

The field team also provides education to taxpayers about the importance of tax compliance and its positive impact on regional development. This education includes an explanation of the types of taxes that must be paid, the procedure for filling out tax forms, how to calculate the amount of tax to be paid, and the legal consequences of tax violations. By providing a deep understanding of taxation, UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City seeks to increase public awareness of the important role of taxes in infrastructure development and public services. This comprehensive education is expected to encourage the public to be more compliant in fulfilling their tax obligations.

4. Assisting in Registering Taxpayers

For taxpayers who have not been officially registered, the UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City field team also provides assistance in the registration process as taxpayers. The team helps them fill out the tax registration form and submit the required documents to the tax office. This easy and transparent registration process is expected to encourage more people to register as taxpayers, thereby increasing the regional tax base.

5. Helping with Tax Payments

After receiving education about their tax obligations, the field team also assists taxpayers in making tax payments. The team provides information about the various payment methods available, including cash payments at the bank, through an online payment system, or directly at the UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City office. By explaining the payment process in detail, it is hoped that the community will not only understand their obligations, but also feel more comfortable and confident in making tax payments.

Overall, the educational strategy implemented by UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City shows a strong commitment to increasing public awareness of tax obligations. Through an integrated approach, starting from taxpayer identification to assistance in the payment process, it is expected that the level of public tax compliance can increase, which in turn will contribute to increasing regional income and sustainable development.

Role Education of UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City in Increasing Public Awareness of Taxpayers

Taxpayer awareness is a key factor that influences their level of compliance in fulfilling tax obligations. Previous research by Anjasari (2019) showed that there is a significant relationship between taxpayer awareness and their compliance. When people have a high awareness of the importance of paying taxes, they tend to be more compliant in fulfilling these obligations. Conversely, a lack of awareness can lead to a decrease in the level of compliance, which has a negative impact on regional tax revenues.

In this context, education conducted by UPT Region VI Bapenda is very important. Through structured education programs, Bapenda strives to improve public knowledge and understanding of taxes. Anjasari (2019) also emphasized that knowledge and understanding of taxation have a direct impact on taxpayer compliance. By providing clear and easy-to-understand information about tax obligations, UPT Region VI Bapenda can help the public realize the importance of their contribution to regional development through tax payments.

Effective education not only raises awareness, but also equips the public with the knowledge needed to fulfill their tax obligations. For example, through seminars, workshops, and information campaigns, Bapenda can explain various aspects of taxation, including the benefits obtained from the taxes paid. Thus, the public not only understands their obligations, but also feels the positive impact of their contribution to regional development.

Overall, the educational role carried out by UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City is very crucial in increasing public awareness of tax obligations. By increasing tax awareness and knowledge, it is expected that the level of taxpayer compliance will also increase, which in turn will contribute to increasing regional income and sustainable development. This study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive and sustainable educational strategy in creating a society that is aware and compliant with their tax obligations.

In increasing public awareness of taxpayers, there are several recommendations that can be carried out by the UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City, namely:

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1. Developing a data-based education program, before launching an education program, Bapenda can conduct a survey or study to understand the level of public knowledge and perception about taxes. This data can be used to design a more targeted education program, address specific knowledge gaps, and overcome any mistrust that may exist.
2. Training of educators and experts, ensure that educators and experts involved in delivering educational programs have adequate knowledge of the tax system and effective communication skills. Regular training can help them stay informed about changes in tax regulations and the best communication methods.
3. The understanding of prospective taxpayers towards digital media and digital content needs to be optimized so that they can understand the purpose of the service information delivered by tax officers of UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City. Thus, they will have comprehensive knowledge of the general provisions of tax payments and reporting.
4. Intensive digital services are a strategy of UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City to bridge information and increase active participation of prospective taxpayers. By utilizing digital media in the concept of tax services and education, tax officers can make it easier for prospective taxpayers to consult on time. A digital approach that utilizes technological developments will enable direct monitoring and provide education that is in accordance with the times.
5. Effective and comprehensive socialization aims to increase public awareness of the importance of taxes. UPT Region VI Bapenda Medan City uses various communication channels, including social media, mass media, panel discussions, seminars, and symposiums to explain the role of regional taxes and levies in supporting the wheels of government and sustainable development of Medan City.
6. The application of strict legal sanctions is an effort to encourage taxpayer discipline in fulfilling tax obligations. Tax sanctions are designed as an effective deterrent instrument to prevent violations of tax laws. Taxpayers are expected to be careful, thorough, and disciplined, considering that sanctions are the most feared consequences in terms of tax non-compliance.

CONCLUSION

Tax education is very important to increase public awareness of the obligation to pay taxes at UPT Region VI of the Medan City Regional Revenue Agency. Although there are laws that regulate tax obligations, many people still do not understand the importance of paying taxes, which has an impact on their low level of compliance. Through various educational strategies, such as forming field teams, sending notification letters, and providing counseling on taxes,

Bapenda strives to increase public understanding. This study shows that if the public has a high awareness of taxes, they will be more compliant in fulfilling their tax obligations.

The recommendations provided include the development of more targeted educational programs, training for educators, utilization of digital media, and increasing socialization and fair law enforcement. With these steps, it is hoped that the level of tax compliance of the community can increase, which will help increase regional income and support sustainable development. Good and continuous education is the key to creating a society that is aware of and compliant with tax obligations

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