

Research Article

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh in Reducing Poverty: A Case Study on Lazismu Sukoharjo in 2024/2025

Muhammad Irsyad Husain*, Imron Rosyadi

Department of Sharia Economic Law, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, 57162, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: g000210025@student.ums.ac.id | Phone: +6285643228794

ABSTRACT

Poverty in Sukoharjo Regency through empowerment programs run by LAZISMU Sukoharjo. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that the management of ZIS by LAZISMU Sukoharjo has transformed from a charitable approach to productive economic empowerment, through micro business capital programs, skills training, education scholarships, and health services. These programs have a positive impact on increasing mustahik income, reducing dependence on aid, and growing awareness of zakat in the community. However, some challenges are still faced, such as low Islamic financial literacy, limited human resources, and competition between ZIS institutions in the area. This research recommends the need for synergy between institutions and digitalization of the management system to expand the reach and effectiveness of the ZIS program. Thus, ZIS can be a strategic instrument in sustainable poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment; Poverty; Infaq; Shodaqoh; Lazizmu; Zakat

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy, including Indonesia. Many people have lost their jobs and experienced a decrease in income. In the research that I will write this time, zakat, infaq, and shodaqoh (ZIS) become one of the important instruments in helping to reduce poverty and economic recovery of the community (N. Hasanah et al., 2021). Lazismu Sukoharjo, as a zakat institution affiliated with Muhammadiyah, has played an active role in distributing ZIS in the midst of this crisis. Poverty is one of the most complex and fundamental challenges faced by developing countries, including Indonesia. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (Sukoharjo, n.d.), poverty is not only characterized by economic deprivation, but also by limited access to education, health, employment, and decent housing. In the midst of various government programs that have been rolled out such as Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), the Family Hope Program (PKH), and other social assistance, the reality is that the poverty rate in several regions is still high and tends to stagnate, including in the Sukoharjo Regency.

According to the latest data, the total population in Indonesia recorded in 2024 was 281.2 million people, and in Sukoharjo district, which is the place of research this time, there are 941,650 people sourced from dukcapil. Sukoharjo Regency as part of Central Java Province has unique socio-economic dynamics. Although its location is close to the center of economic growth such as the city of Surakarta, some Sukoharjo people are still struggling with the problem of economic limitations. Therefore, efforts to alleviate poverty cannot only be charged to the government, but also need to involve community participation and social religious institutions.

Islam as a comprehensive religion provides strong social solutions in overcoming poverty through the instruments of zakat, infaq and shodaqoh (ZIS). All three have tremendous potential as a source of Islamic social finance that can be mobilized for the welfare of the people (Adinugraha et al., 2023). In this context, the existence of Lembaga Amil Zakat (LAZ) becomes strategic as a manager and distributor of ZIS funds in a structured, accountable, and targeted manner. One LAZ that actively contributes to poverty alleviation in the Sukoharjo area is LAZISMU, a philanthropic institution owned by Muhammadiyah.

In the post-pandemic period, LAZISMU's role is not only limited to emergency assistance (emergency response), but has developed towards sustainable empowerment programs. The transformation of this approach emphasizes the importance of the effectiveness of the utilization of ZIS funds so that they really have an impact in reducing poverty, not just overcoming momentary needs. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the ZIS program run by LAZISMU Sukoharjo, especially in the post-pandemic context.

In Islamic history, zakat has proven to be able to reduce poverty and create social justice. Rasulullah SAW and the caliphs after him used zakat as a tool to empower the poor and poor, so as to improve the welfare and productivity of society. In the modern era, this spirit is continued by zakat institutions that are managed professionally and based on modern management principles and information technology, in order to reach more mustahik (beneficiaries) and ensure that the programs run are right on target.

Allah has stipulated that zakat has eight asnaf (recipient groups), one of which is the poor and needy. This shows that ZIS management has great potential as a tool to reduce poverty. Indonesia as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world has enormous zakat potential. Based on data from the National Amil Zakat Agency (BAZNAS), the national zakat potential is estimated to reach more than Rp 300 trillion per year (Baznas 2024, n.d.). However, the realization of zakat collection has only reached a small portion of this potential. Therefore, the existence of zakat management institutions such as LAZISMU (Lembaga Amil Zakat Infaq dan Shodaqoh Muhammadiyah) is very important to bridge the potential of zakat and the realization of poverty alleviation programs.

"Lazismu Sukoharjo is one of the regional level amil zakat institutions under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah organization. In recent years, this institution has made various efforts in ZIS-based community empowerment programs. Programs such as providing business capital, skills training, educational scholarships, health benefits, to the construction of livable houses are part of the strategy to improve the welfare of the poor in Sukoharjo," said the director of Lazismu Sukoharjo.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena, particularly the effectiveness of zakat, infaq, and shodaqoh (ZIS) management by zakat institutions in poverty alleviation efforts. This study aims to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the facts and characteristics of the research object, namely the empowerment programs by LAZISMU Sukoharjo and their impact on mustahik. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews with LAZISMU managers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to ensure that the information obtained was rich and relevant to the research theme. The research location was determined purposively, namely at the LAZISMU Office in Sukoharjo Regency, which is known for its active and trustworthy management of ZIS funds and implementation of various poverty alleviation programs, both consumptive (such as direct assistance) and productive (such as business capital grants, training, and economic empowerment). The research subjects included LAZISMU managers directly involved in program planning and implementation, as well as beneficiaries from the poor and needy, supported SME operators, and other aid recipients. Informant selection was conducted using purposive sampling, selecting individuals with knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in ZIS program management or receipt, with the number of informants adjusted until data saturation was achieved. To ensure data validity, the researcher applied source triangulation by comparing information from various informants and sources, and conducted member checks to reconfirm data interpretations with informants to align with their actual intentions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Concept of Zakat Infak and Shodaqoh in Reducing Poverty in Sukoharjo Area through Lazismu Sukoharjo

Sukoharjo is one of the districts in Central Java that still faces issues of social inequality and poverty, particularly in rural areas and peripheral regions. Factors such as limited access to education, scarce job opportunities, and reliance on the informal sector exacerbate the socio-economic conditions of some communities. Poverty in Sukoharjo is not only material in nature but also structural and cultural. Therefore, an approach that addresses various layers of society and involves various stakeholders, including religious institutions, is needed. The Role of Lazismu Sukoharjo in Poverty Alleviation Lazismu Sukoharjo is an Islamic philanthropic institution with a vision of empowering the community based on Islamic values. In managing zakat and sadaqah, Lazismu does not only focus on consumptive distribution such as cash assistance or basic necessities, but also begins to develop productive programs and economic empowerment initiatives (Awwaliyyah, 2024). Some of Lazismu Sukoharjo's strategic programs include:

- 1) Small and Medium Enterprise Empowerment and Skills Training Program: Through zakat and sadaqah funds, the poor are provided with access to business capital and job skills training.
- 2) Education Assistance and Scholarships: To break the cycle of poverty, Lazismu provides scholarships to children from underprivileged families.
- 3) Free Health Program: Addressing the basic needs of the poor who cannot afford to repair their homes or access healthcare services, such as through the introduction of mobile community service vehicles.

These programs demonstrate that Lazismu has recognized the importance of transforming its role from merely a charitable organization into a community empowerment institution rooted in spirituality.

3.1.1 Zakat

Zakat, linguistically, originates from the Arabic term *زَكَاةٌ*, which has fundamental meanings such as growth, purification, and blessing. These meanings reflect that zakat is not only a religious obligation but also has broad spiritual and social implications, including purifying the soul from stinginess and bestowing blessings upon one's wealth. According to Islamic jurisprudence, zakat is defined as the obligation of a Muslim to give a portion of their wealth to specific recipients (mustahik) in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law, such as the nisab, haul, and specific rates (El Ayyubi et al., 2023). Zakat is divided into two main types, namely zakat fitrah and zakat mal. Zakat fitrah is paid before Eid al-Fitr to purify the soul, while zakat mal comes from assets such as gold, trade, agricultural products, and others. The role of zakat is very significant in bridging economic gaps and creating equitable welfare in society.

In Sukoharjo Regency, LAZISMU serves as an active zakat collection and distribution agency, gathering and distributing zakat funds from the community. Distribution is carried out through two approaches: consumptive and productive programs. Consumptive programs include direct assistance to the poor, such as food packages and educational expense assistance, while productive programs focus on economic empowerment, such as providing business capital, entrepreneurship training, and micro-business development. Research findings indicate that the productive zakat programs implemented by LAZISMU have promoted economic independence among beneficiaries, enabling them to not only receive assistance but also develop their business potential independently. This aligns with the findings of a study by Purnamasari (2022), which concludes that productive zakat is more effective in improving long-term welfare than consumptive zakat alone (Purnamasari et al., n.d.).

More than just an instrument for distributing wealth, zakat also plays a role in building social solidarity and raising collective awareness in helping others. LAZISMU Sukoharjo has implemented a transparent and accountable zakat management system, thereby maintaining the trust of donors (muzaki). Mustahik involved in the empowerment program are not only helped economically, but also undergo mental and spiritual transformation through regular guidance. Research (Mobonggi et al., 2024) Supporting this, it is mentioned that zakat managed with a spiritual approach is capable of transforming the position of mustahik into new muzaki in the future. Thus, LAZISMU's management of zakat not only reduces poverty rates but also creates a sustainable cycle of empowerment within the Islamic community.

3.1.2 Infak

Linguistically, the term infak comes from the Arabic *أنفق - ينفق - إنفاقاً*, which generally means "to spend" wealth for a specific purpose. In the context of Islam, infak refers to the spending of wealth in the way of Allah, whether in the form of obligations or voluntary acts. Infak has a broader scope than zakat, as it is not bound by a minimum wealth threshold (nisab), has no time limit (haul), and is not restricted to specific groups such as the eight categories in zakat. According to Husain, infak encompasses all forms of expenditure, whether obligatory, such as family maintenance, or recommended, such as social assistance and the development of public facilities (Husain et al., 2019). With this flexibility, infak has become a responsive social instrument that is easily accessible to the community for sharing and helping others.

In practice, LAZISMU Sukoharjo has successfully managed infak funds from the community to finance various social and religious programs that have a broad impact. Based on interviews with managers and field observations, infak funds are used for activities such as orphan support, educational scholarships for underprivileged students, the construction of places of worship, and assistance for victims of natural disasters. Infak serves as a strategic funding source because it can be disbursed quickly and is not subject to the technical requirements of zakat. This is further supported by findings (Aderma, n.d.) which states that infak provides greater opportunities for public participation and accelerates the response of zakat institutions to emergency needs in the field. LAZISMU also established a monthly infak program for donors so that social activities can be carried out sustainably.

The role of infaq in the context of community empowerment is not limited to meeting basic needs but also serves as a means of educating people about values and social awareness. Charitable giving managed effectively by institutions like LAZISMU provides opportunities for the broader community to participate in community development without having to wait until they become wealthy or reach a certain threshold. Active community involvement in charitable giving also reflects strengthened social solidarity and a transformative religious role. According to a study by (Safitri, 2022), Transparent and participatory management of infaq can increase public trust in zakat institutions while strengthening social structures based on the values of justice and togetherness. Thus, infaq has an important contribution to creating an inclusive and empowered social environment, especially in areas such as Sukoharjo, which still face economic inequality issues.

3.1.3 Shodaqoh

Etymologically, the term shodaqoh comes from the Arabic word *صَدَقَةٌ*, whose root is the word *صَدَقَ* (صدق), meaning honesty or truth. This indicates that every act of giving alms is a reflection of a person's faith and sincerity to Allah SWT. In a terminological sense, shodaqoh is defined as any form of giving done voluntarily and sincerely solely to seek the pleasure of Allah, whether in the form of material goods, labor assistance, or soothing words. Ayyubi emphasizes that charity is a tangible manifestation of the sincerity of faith, as one who gives charity without coercion has proven their faith morally and spiritually. Therefore, charity not only serves as an instrument of good deeds but also as a means of character development and empathy within society. (El Ayyubi et al., 2023).

In the practice of managing religious social funds at LAZISMU Sukoharjo, shodaqoh plays a role that is no less important than zakat and infak. The alms collected from the community are used for emergency social and humanitarian activities such as medical assistance, urgent education costs, and disaster relief. Additionally, shodaqoh is distributed in the form of food, clothing, and other necessary assistance for the poor and orphans. Interview results indicate that shodaqoh is highly flexible in its implementation, as it is not bound by specific conditions like zakat, making it a swift alternative for addressing urgent situations in the community. A study by (Ridwanullah & Herdiana, 2018) stating that the flexibility of almsgiving makes it one of the most effective sources of social financing in meeting the daily needs of the poor.

Furthermore, the implementation of the shodaqoh program by LAZISMU also encourages the formation of a culture of mutual assistance and high social solidarity among the community. Through the "Daily Charity" campaign and the "Blessed Friday Charity" program, the community is encouraged to set aside a small portion of their wealth or food each day to assist others. This initiative not only strengthens the network of social concern but also fosters positive spiritual habits. According to (U. Hasanah, 2023) Community involvement in regular charity programs increases social sensitivity and strengthens collective awareness of the importance of sharing. Thus, the role of shodaqoh, which is strategically managed by LAZISMU Sukoharjo, has proven to be able to strengthen the social and spiritual resilience of the community and become the foundation for community development based on Islamic values.

3.2 Lazismu Sukoharjo's Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh-Based Programs in Improving the Welfare of Mustahik and Reducing Poverty in Sukoharjo

Results As an Islamic philanthropic institution, Lazismu Sukoharjo manages ZIS funds sourced from the community, ASN, business actors, and Muhammadiyah institutions. The funds are then managed transparently, accountably, and empowerment-oriented. Some of the real Islamic Social Finance programs run by Lazismu include:

- a. Mustahik Productive Economy Program, Lazismu provides business capital to MSME players from the dhuafa and poor communities. Accompanied by training, business assistance, and periodic evaluation, this program aims to turn mustahik into muzakki (from recipients to zakat givers).
- b. Scholarship and Education Assistance. This program helps children of poor families to stay in school and continue their education, so that in the long run it can break the chain of structural poverty.
- c. Free Health, Free health service programs, free ambulances, and house renovations help improve the quality of life of the poor directly.
- d. Community-based Social Movement, Lazismu also conducts disaster social movements, for example in an area affected by a disaster, for example flooding, a team from Lazismu will be sent down to conduct a survey first and then provide assistance, for example medicines and other necessary assistance.

The poverty alleviation programs run by LAZISMU Sukoharjo have proven to have a positive impact on mustahik, both from an economic and social perspective. Based on observations and internal institutional data, there is a decrease in the economic burden and an increase in mustahik family income. The success of this program is reflected in the increasing

number of micro business actors among beneficiaries, the growth of economic independence after more than one year of participating in the program, and increased public awareness to pay zakat and infaq regularly. In addition to the economic benefits, the program also helps to raise the social dignity of the poor, strengthen social solidarity, and reduce dependence on government assistance. However, the implementation of the Islamic Social Finance program by LAZISMU Sukoharjo still faces some significant challenges. Among them are low public literacy related to zakat and Islamic finance, limited human resources and technology in managing mustahik data and aid distribution, and program dependence on social funds that tend to fluctuate. To overcome these obstacles, a strengthening strategy is needed that includes digitizing the zakat collection and distribution system, establishing synergies with local governments and the private sector, and conducting training for Islamic economic da'wah cadres to increase public understanding and participation.

3.3 Supporting and Obstacle Factors in the Implementation of Economic Empowerment Programs through ZIS Funds by Lazismu Sukoharjo

The implementation of the economic empowerment program through ZIS funds by Lazismu Sukoharjo is supported by a number of important factors that strengthen the effectiveness of its implementation. One of the main factors is the high level of public trust, especially Muhammadiyah citizens, in the credibility of the institution. This encourages muzakki to channel zakat through Lazismu, and facilitates the distribution process to mustahik because of the belief that the program is really useful. In addition, Muhammadiyah's institutional network, which extends to the village level, helps in data collection, mentoring, and monitoring the program more systematically. The active involvement of cadres and volunteers is also a strength, as they serve as a bridge between the institution and the community and take part in education and training. The support of digital systems such as the mustahik database and online donation platform adds to the efficiency and accountability of the institution, while the economic empowerment model applied - based on business capital, skills training, and mentoring - ensures program sustainability for beneficiaries. However, the implementation of this program also faces a number of obstacles that need to be addressed strategically. One of the main challenges is the low level of public literacy regarding zakat, infaq and Islamic finance. This has led to the low potential for fundraising, especially from entrepreneurs and upper-middle economic groups who actually have greater capacity. On the other hand, competition between ZIS institutions in the Sukoharjo area is also an inhibiting factor. There are various other institutions such as Lazisnu, Sukoharjo Peduli Foundation, and BAZNAS Sukoharjo Regency that also collect similar funds, resulting in fragmentation of attention and participation from the community. In addition, internal challenges also arise from the characteristics of some mustahiks who still show dependence on assistance. This mentality is an obstacle in the transformation process from mustahik to muzakki, which should be the long-term goal of the economic empowerment program. To overcome these obstacles, Lazismu needs to continue to develop an educative approach, strengthen synergies between zakat institutions, and instill a spirit of self-reliance in every program that is run in order to achieve a broader and more sustainable impact.

4. CONCLUSION

The mechanism of infaq and shodaqoh distribution, when managed professionally and strategically as done by Lazismu Sukoharjo, has proven to be an effective solution in overcoming the challenges of poverty. Programs that directly touch the economic, educational, and public health aspects have had a significant impact on the lives of mustahik. Implemented systematically and professionally. Funds are collected through a network of mosques, Muhammadiyah charities, government agencies, and businesses, as well as digital fundraising. The funds collected are then channeled through programs designed based on mustahik needs, such as educational assistance, business capital, skills training, health services, and emergency social assistance. This mechanism reflects the principles of transparency, accountability, and long-term empowerment orientation. The effectiveness of Lazismu Sukoharjo's ZIS-based programs in improving the welfare of mustahik is considered quite significant. Productive economic programs, educational scholarships, free health services, and disaster management have proven to be able to reduce the economic burden on the poor and open up opportunities for increased income. Some mustahiks have even been transformed into muzakki. The effectiveness is shown through the improvement of mustahik socio-economic indicators and the positive response of the beneficiary community. Supporting factors for the implementation of economic empowerment programs through ZIS funds include full support from the Muhammadiyah network, community participation, public trust in institutions, and qualified human resource capacity within LAZISMU. The inhibiting factors include limited funds compared to the increasing needs of mustahik, the unevenness of zakat literacy among the community, and constraints in monitoring and evaluating programs in the field on an ongoing basis. Overall, the existence of LAZISMU Sukoharjo is one of the important pillars in the management of Islamic Social Finance at the regional level, and is able to show that ZIS can be a strategic instrument in sustainable poverty alleviation efforts.

REFERENCES

- Aderma, T. (2023). *Strategi Fundraising Zakat, Infak, Dan Sedekah Di Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (Baznas) Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta).
- Adinugraha, HH, Shulhoni, M., & Achmad, DU (2023). Keuangan sosial Islam di Indonesia: Peluang, tantangan, dan perannya dalam pemberdayaan masyarakat. *Tinjauan Keuangan Sosial Islam dan Kewirausahaan* , 45-62.
- Awwaliyyah, N. S., & Maksum, M. N. R. (2024). Peran LAZIZMU dalam Mengatasi Kemiskinan di Lingkungan Masyarakat: Studi Kasus LAZIZMU Sragen. *Mutiara: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Karya Ilmiah*, 2(4), 182-198.
- El Ayyubi, S., Wahyuni, E., Muljono, P., & Beik, I. S. (2023). Peran Zakat terhadap Proses Perubahan Sosial melalui Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Studi Narrative dan Bibliometrics. *AL-MUZARA'AH*, 11(1), 63-85.
- Hasanah, N., Imsar, I., & Suwandi, S. (2022). Efektivitas Program Penyaluran Dana Zakat, Infaq dan Sedekah (ZIS) Berupa Beasiswa Bagi Pelajar Muslim Kurang Mampu oleh Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) Kabupaten Langkat Tahun 2020. *Al-Kharaj: Jurnal Ekonomi, Keuangan & Bisnis Syariah* , 4 (3), 700-707.
- Hasanah, U. (2023). *Peran Fintech pada Pelaku Usaha Mikro Kecil dan Menengah (UMKM) di Parepare (Analisis Manajemen Keuangan Syariah)* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN PAREPARE).
- Husain, H., Hamzah, N., Asse, A., & Kara, M. (2019). Yusuf Al-Qaradawi Concept on Professional Zakat. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 6(6), 1-9.
- Mobonggi, A., Solong, NP, Muda, L., Hasbi, M., & Wantu, HM (2024). Model Kepemimpinan Asisten Berbasis Akreditasi dan Nilai-Nilai Spiritual dalam Layanan Akademik. *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Agama* , 16 (2), 953-968.
- Outlook Zakat Indonesia Baznas 2024.*
- Purnamasari, L., Ayuniyyah, Q., & Tanjung, H. (2023). Efektivitas Zakat Produktif Dalam Peningkatan Usaha Mustahik. *Kasaba: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* , 16 (2), 87-96.
- Ridwanullah, A. I., & Herdiana, D. (2018). Optimalisasi pemberdayaan masyarakat berbasis masjid. *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 12(1), 82-98.
- Safitri, N. *Implementasi Gerakan Sedekah Sampah sebagai upaya membangun solidaritas sosial (Studi Kasus: Remaja dan Pemuda Islam Masjid Raya Bintaro Jaya)* (Bachelor's thesis, Jakarta: FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta).
- Sukoharjo, B. P. S. K. (n.d.). *Sukoharjo 2024 Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Sukoharjo.*