

Optimizing the Use of Zakat, *Infaq*, and Alms Funds Based on the Empowerment of *Pesantren*

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Abstract. The management of zakat, *infaq* and alms funds has not been optimal, due to the collection and distribution constraints. This article aims to identify the management of zakat, *infaq*, and alms based on empowerment of *pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School). The method used is a qualitative approach. Primary data source through interviews, while secondary data through literature search. The data analysis technique used a descriptive approach. The results show that the collection is obtained through *zakat fitrah*, *zakat maal*, *infaq* boxes and alms, and funds from the management's business. Meanwhile, the allocation is through the *Santri Mulia* Scholarship, *Mulia Mandiri* Economics, and *Insan Sehat Mulia*. The allocation focuses on four sectors, such as education, health, socio-religious and economic programs. Fund management constraints include low public awareness, lack of socialization, rejection from *muzakki*, lack of human resources, and criminal practices. Strategies for improving management through outreach and education to the community.

Keywords: *Zakat*; *Infaq*; Alms; Islamic Boarding Schools; Empowerment; Utilization

1 Introduction

Zakat is a pillar of Islam which has two dimensions [1], namely the world and the hereafter [2]. The dimension of the hereafter is related to obligations to Allah SWT, where the purpose of zakat is to clean one's property and soul [3]. The world dimension is related to human relations (*hablumminannas*), as a means of helping each other as a instrument of philanthropy [4]–[6]. Zakat in the perspective of social interests is managed in two ways, namely consumptive and productive [7], [8]. Management in productive activities aims to improve the welfare and economic independence of the people [9], [10]. Zakat is one of the characteristics of the Islamic economic system which contains the principle of justice [11], [12], namely the transfer of income from *muzakki* to *mustahik* [13], [14]. The hope is that the transfer of income, if managed productively, can turn a *mustahik* into a *muzakki* [15], [16]. So far, the utilization of zakat, donations and alms that focuses on poverty alleviation through empowerment [17], [18]. Various patterns of empowerment have been carried out, ranging from providing capital, business assistance, training to improve skills, providing scholarships,

workshops, seminars and incubation programs, as well as various activities to provide understanding of productive activities. The results of these programs were not a few that were successful, but not a few were failures [19]. The most significant failures have to do with the sustainability of the program. The average failure rate was because the program was only partial and unsustainable. Some of the factors that led to this failure included the lack of human resources both in terms of quantity and quality [20], lack of coordination between institutions [21], competition between institutions in showing their existence [22], lack of awareness of muzakki, institutional problems [23], problem of legality [2], [24], [25], problem of trust [26]–[28], lack of synergy between institutions and government [29]–[31], etc.

Productive activity-based empowerment has been going on, whether successful or not [32]. Another pattern that needs to be further developed is education-based empowerment. Why is that, because one of the factors causing poverty is low education [33], [34]. One of the institutions that started to manage zakat, donations and alms is the pesantren. Pesantren is an educational institution that prioritizes education based on scientific integration, both general and religious sciences [35]. With this pattern, it is hoped that the students will have provisions for life both in terms of the world and the hereafter. From the world side, the students are equipped with entrepreneurial skills for economic independence. Entrepreneurial skills do not refer to specific jobs, but are taught how to create their own jobs. Meanwhile, the aspect of the hereafter is related to the provision of life after death. This article focuses on pesantren-based zakat management. The purpose of this article is to identify collection and utilization management, and identify strategies for optimizing the management of zakat, infaq, and alms funds based on empowerment of pesantren.

2 Methodology

This article uses a qualitative method. The data sources used are primary and secondary. Primary data is through interviews with the management and mustahik Amil *Zakat, Infaq* and Alms Institution (LAZIS) At-Tasyrif Warrohman Semarang, while secondary data is through literature searches, such as books, research results, internet sources, and other relevant sources. Data collection techniques through in-depth interviews and observations. The in-depth interview technique emphasizes unstructured interviews. Observation technique through non-participant observation. The data analysis technique used a descriptive analysis approach, using the Miles and Huberman model. This model emphasizes that the researcher analyzes respondents' answers during the interview process. If you have not found an answer to the problem, the researcher can ask questions until they find credible data. Miles and Huberman's analysis model consists of three stages [36]. First, data reduction, namely the process of summarizing, selecting main points, focusing on important data, and eliminating irrelevant data. Second, presenting the data with a brief description and relationships based on categories. Third, drawing conclusions based on various data that has been collected in the field.

3 Result dan Discussion

3.1 Management of Collection and Distribution of Zakat, *Infaq* and Alms

The Amil Zakat, Infaq, and Alms (LAZIS) at-Tasyrif Warrohman Semarang is a philanthropic institution that focuses on developing Islamic boarding schools, under the At Tasyrif Warrohman Foundation. The history of LAZIS At-Tasyrif Warrohman begins with the establishment of the At Tasyrif Warrohman Islamic boarding school. The background of the establishment of this institution is due to the poverty of the community. The main objective of this institution is to alleviate poverty [37], through the empowerment of Islamic boarding schools which are intended for orphans. Empowerment is carried out by providing the education they deserve. One of the reasons for poverty is lack of education. This approach is interdisciplinary, namely by increasing knowledge and skills, with the hope that later they will have the ability to compete and gain equal access to other children. In addition, this institution was established in order to increase public awareness of giving zakat. This institution has several programs, among others, the BASAM Program (*Santri Mulia* Scholarship), which is a scholarship aimed at students and the less fortunate community. There are several scholarships, namely full and partial scholarships. Full scholarships are intended for children who live and live in Islamic boarding schools, while partial scholarships are for children who do not live. The IMAM program (*Ekonomi Mandiri Mulia*) is a community empowerment program through productive business activities. Several activities that have been realized include; instant powder herbal medicine, catfish farming, plastic recycling, etc. The ISHAM program (*Insan Sehat Mulia*) is a health program, both for students and orphans who live in Islamic boarding schools.

The collection of funds is obtained through several sources, such as: (a) Infaq alms boxes entrusted to stalls and shops. The charity boxes totaled 1,000 boxes which were distributed in various regions. The collection of funds through the charity box is carried out once a month, with an average of Rp. 35,000, - per month. (b) Zakat Fitrah during the month of Ramadan and the Eid al-Fitr holidays. (c) Zakat of assets (maal) of the people who have the obligation to pay them. Based on the results of interviews, more zakat maal was obtained from people outside the region, because the local economy was less well off. (d) Fund from the management's business, through a productive fund scheme. Fund distribution is given to mustahiq, which is allocated to several sectors, including: education, social-community, religious and economic sectors. The education sector is carried out through a scholarship program for boarding school children, meeting educational needs such as purchasing uniforms, stationery, and other school needs. The social program includes donations for orphans and underprivileged widows, through the provision of basic necessities. Activities in the religious sector include the purchase of books to help sustain students' learning activities, and the construction of mosques. The economic sector program is channeled through productive activities, which are managed by the board, such as catfish farming, red ginger products, plastic processing, opening boarding houses. The proceeds are used as additional funds to meet the daily needs of students and orphans.

3.2 Constraints and Management Strategies of Zakat, *Infaq* and Alms Funds

The collection and utilization of Zakat, Infaq and Alms funds, the management is constrained by several factors, including (a) Low public awareness, especially channeling through institutions. (b) Lack of community support, indicated by the small amount of funds

collected, because the local community is less well off. (c) There were rejection from several parties, for example the stall owner refused when leaving the charity box. (d) The existence of a criminal act, such as taking a charity box by a party claiming to be an officer. (e) Lack of human resources as management, both human resources that focus on collection and distribution. The constraints in managing zakat, infaq and alms funds are mainly related to the lack of socialization and education, which causes the public to be less familiar. Thus, the strategic focus focuses on socialization and education. In more detail, the strategy can be done by making stickers and calendars that are given to the community and shop owners. The hope is that the community can get to know more, and can increase their confidence in channeling funds to institutions.

3.3 Optimizing the Use of Zakat, Infaq, and Alms Funds in Islamic Boarding School-Based Empowerment

The successful use of zakat, infaq, and alms is determined by the management system, both collection and distribution. The empowerment program has been researched a lot, but each institution has its characteristics, so the handling must be different. Ways to optimize collection by increasing the quantity, such as expanding the collection area and increasing collection instruments. To expand the collection area, it is done by utilizing information technology, for example by utilizing digital applications. On the other hand, distribution optimization focuses on improving the quality of programs to empower mustahik, and improve the quality of human resources in managers. The biggest challenge for the Amil Zakat, Infaq, and Alms Institute refers to sustainable programs, because the programs carried out are short-term. In fact, to create an empowered society, it needs special treatment and takes a long time.

The empowerment program is one of the alternative solutions in alleviating poverty [38]. Basically, when someone pays zakat, infaq and alms is part of investment activity, namely investing in the hereafter. In line with the utilization of LAZIS At-Tasyrif Warrohman Semarang, where the allocation focuses on empowerment programs to alleviate poverty [39]. The focus of empowerment based on pesantren, where children who are unable to be empowered by these institutions, hope that they will have the ability and economic independence. The objective of empowerment to alleviate poverty can be carried out in several sectors, including: education, health, socio-religious, and economy. One of the factors causing poverty is the low level of education. The correlation between poverty and education is quite significant, because education is the initial capital for a person to have abilities, through mastery of knowledge and skills. Efforts to alleviate poverty in the field of education, namely allocating funds to finance schools for students (underprivileged children). Poverty alleviation through education is the best decision, because the root of poverty is related to education [40]. Increasing welfare is also carried out through the provision of basic foodstuffs to orphans and widows around the institution. In the economic sector, zakat, infaq and alms funds are allocated through the provision of venture capital. Provision of venture capital is distributed only to the management, to be managed through the business, where the proceeds will be allocated to the institution.

4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion shows that fund collection is through zakat fitrah, zakat maal, alms infaq box media, and funds from the management. Meanwhile, the allocation of funds is through the BASAM program (*Santri Mulia* Scholarship), IMAM (*Mandiri Mulia Economics*), and ISHAM (*Insan Sehat Mulia*). The allocation of these funds focuses on four sectors, namely education, health, socio-religion and economy. Management constraints, such as low public awareness, lack of socialization, rejection from muzakki, lack of human resources, and criminal practices. The strategy of improving management focuses on socialization and education to the community (muzakki).

Suggestion

Management of pesantren-based zakat, infaq and alms funds needs to work in synergy with various related parties, so that educational operations do not rely solely on these funds. In addition, to improve management, it can be done using the media of information technology, so that education and outreach can be broader.

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