

Utilization of Zakat Funds through Distribution of Educational Scholarships (Case Study at The Polmed Ziswaf Center)

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Abstract. Education is a very important aspect of making the nation smarter, but there are still educational problems, especially for some students who have financial problems continuing their education. Several universities are trying to alleviate this problem by establishing amil zakat institutions to collect and distribute zakat funds to help students in need. The Polmed Ziswaf Center is an institution that manages zakat, infaq, shadaqoh and waqf through campus-based digital programs. The purpose of this research is to provide an overview and evaluation of the performance of the The Polmed Ziswaf Center for its success in managing ziswaf funds to empower underprivileged students who have a high desire to learn but have financial limitations at the Medan State Polytechnic through educational scholarships. This research is a type of descriptive-qualitative research. The data sources in this research were obtained through observation, interviews, and focused discussions at the The Polmed Ziswaf Center office. The informant in this research is the distribution and utilization sector on behalf of Dr. Suherman, M.Ag and Collection Division on behalf of M. Yunus, S.Pdi. The data analysis technique used in this research uses data triangulation techniques. The results of this research show that the The Polmed Ziswaf Center has distributed zakat funds for education through a scholarship program, but it is felt that it is very necessary to develop various other program targets, especially for underprivileged Medan State Polytechnic students.

Keywords: zakat, educational scholarships, islamic social finance

1. Introduction

Education has an important role in advancing the nation and state. Through education, human resources can increase, produce more productive individuals, improve the quality of the country (Hasan & Jannah, 2019). However, what is currently felt is that there is a lag in mutual education. One of the causes of this backwardness is poverty, which is caused by weak sources of income. Because education and poverty are closely related, Islam has provided solutions to humanity's problems, one of which is alleviating poverty. One of the alternative instruments offered by Islam is zakat.

Zakat is an asset issued by a Muslim from Allah's right to receive it (Santoso & Agustino, 2018). As one of the pillars of Islam, Zakat is given to groups who are entitled to receive it (asnaf). Implementing zakat is obligatory for all Muslims because zakat is part of the pillars of Islam, this obligation takes the form of spending in the form of a certain amount of assets contained in the real wealth owned by every individual Muslim which is required by Allah to be given in charity to people who can, after reaching the nisab and haul. with one social goal as an alternative solution to poverty alleviation.

According to (Siswanto & Fanani, 2017) utilization of zakat funds is one of the uses of zakat funds to create prosperity for humans. The use of zakat funds is related to how zakat institutions or managers distribute zakat funds that have been collected

appropriately to the eight asnaf groups mentioned in the Al-Qur'an Surah At-Taubah Verse 60. This is because zakat has the potential to have a great influence in helping to overcome costs. education for students who have financial problems. Zakat management that is carried out effectively and optimally will contribute to overcoming various economic problems such as poverty, destitution, and poverty (Fajrina et al., 2020) .

Distribution of zakat, infaq, alms, and other religious social funds (ZIS-DSKL) which consists of distribution and utilization activities, is one of the main activities in managing ZIS-DSKL. Based on data processed by Puskas (2023) Distribution of zakat is carried out on five main programs, namely education, health, humanity, economics, and da'wah advocacy. The distribution of ZIS funds by sector in 2021 can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of National ZIS Based on Asnaf in 2021

No	Asnaf	%
1	Pendidikan	15,78
2	Kesehatan	6,03
3	Kemanusiaan	49,58
4	Ekonomi	9,72
5	Dakwah Advokasi	18,88
Total		100

Source: Puskas Baznas

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the education sector is the main program in the distribution of zakat. If ZIS funds are channeled to the education sector, you can imagine the enormous benefits that students will obtain from using these funds. It is proven that zakat has a domino effect on people's lives, especially by freeing the poor from the poverty line and increasing income and consumption in small communities.

The collection of zakat funds cannot be separated from the zakat management organization (OPZ). based on Law Number 23 of 2011 concerning Zakat Management. Indonesia has two institutions tasked with managing zakat, namely the Amil Zakat Agency (BAZ) which was formed by the government and the Amil Zakat Institute (LAZ) which was formed by the government and the private sector. Both have the same position in managing zakat.

The government provides opportunities for BAZ and LAZ, to help strive for the welfare of the needy and poor (mustahik) so that their economic level increases, namely by utilizing zakat proceeds productively. In order to carry out this, currently there have been many zakat amil institutions that are trying to provide their funds productively with the aim of changing the condition of recipients from the mustahik category to muzaki, such as UPZ UINSU as one of the universities that manages 4 zakat which is claimed to be a UPZ that applies the concept The five work cultures of the Ministry of Religion, namely integrity, professionalism, innovation, responsibility and example. (Zulham & Hidayat, 2022) the establishment of UPZ in religious institutions is a natural thing because the entire community in it is Muslim, so they are able to collect and distribute funds through zakat to these institutions. Public state educational institutions also have great potential in building zakat amil institutions. Among them is the The Polmed Ziswaf Center.

The Polmed Ziswaf Center is an institution for collecting, managing, and distributing zakat, infaq, sadaqoh, and waqf (Ziswaf) at the Medan State Polytechnic (The Polmed). The The Polmed Ziswaf Center also acts as a partner of Rumah Zakat in collaboration with PT. Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) for managing social funds from the

Medan State Polytechnic academic community. The Polmed Ziswaf Center is located within a public educational institution. Even though The Polmed is not an Islamic educational institution, there are many Muslim people in it, such as lecturers, staff and students. This is one of the reasons why the the Polmed Ziswaf Center was established as a forum for Muslims in the the Polmed to carry out and uphold their obligations. The programs at the the Polmed Ziswaf Center are divided into three areas, namely the education, health and socio-economic sectors. Programs in the education sector include student scholarships, free education assistance, and assistance with educational infrastructure. Figure 1 is the potential of ZIS at The Polmed Ziswaf Center.



Figure 1. Potential of Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh the Polmed

Based on Figure 1. You can see the huge potential of ZIS, where if all existing lecturers, students and alumni can donate these funds every month, it will become income from funds used for the Ziswaf Center the Polmed program, one of which is channeled to educational programs in the form of assistance to students in need.

Research conducted by (Sultan Antus Nasruddin Mohammad & Febriani Eka Maulida, 2020) entitled "Utilization of Zis Funds in the Baznas Smart Student Program (Bazis) DKI Jakarta Province" obtained the results that the Utilization of ZIS to improve education at BAZNAS (Bazis) DKI Jakarta Province has been carried out well and optimally in accordance with the standards for zakat utilization, namely distribution given to asnaf sabilillah specifically in the religious sector and the poor/dhuafa, namely the underprivileged groups of society by prioritizing people who are powerless to meet basic needs first and then providing assistance with their education. Apart from that, the ZIS Utilization mechanism at BAZNAS (Bazis) DKI Jakarta Province in the Smart Student Program is implemented well and fairly in accordance with the standards for zakat utilization in Indonesia.

Apart from that, this research hopes that the existence of the The Polmed Ziswaf Center, which has great potential in raising funds, can help underprivileged students through educational programs optimally, through distribution mechanisms that are in accordance with predetermined provisions.

2. Method

This research is a type of descriptive qualitative research which aims to describe the use of zakat funds through educational scholarships at the The Polmed Ziswaf Center. This research was conducted at the The Polmed Ziswaf Center office. Data collection carried out in this research was primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from direct observation and interviews by the Ziswaf Center the Polmed

administrators in the distribution and utilization and collection fields with questions that had been previously prepared by the researcher. Meanwhile, this secondary data was obtained from a review of literature data that supports this research topic, such as books containing theories, journals and documents related to The Polmed Ziswaf Center.

3. Results and Discussions

Utilization of ZIS Funds for the Education Scholarship Program

The Polmed Ziswaf Center as an Amil Zakat Institution takes part in the struggle to educate the nation through several programs which are distributed to students who deserve to be accepted. Several The Polmed Ziswaf Center programs in the education sector include:

a. Student Scholarships

This scholarship is given by the Polmed Ziswaf Center to students to ease the burden of education because they have not been able to pay off UKT fees and are in arrears. The financial assistance provided is IDR. 1,000,000,- for one gift

b. Free Education Assistance

This scholarship is given in full to outstanding but underprivileged students for UKT group I amounting to IDR. 500,000,- until completion of education.

c. Assistance for Educational Infrastructure

This assistance is provided to support learning, the assistance is in the form of laptops, in focus, computers, whiteboards, study rooms, etc. This assistance is provided based on priority needs. However, this assistance for educational infrastructure has not been implemented, because the funds collected are still limited, so the priority of assistance is given to student scholarship assistance and free education assistance.

Data and information regarding the distribution of zakat funds in the education sector as submitted by informants is described as follows:

In 2023, student scholarships will be distributed to 10 students with a scholarship amount of IDR 1,000,000 each. So, the total student scholarship in 2023 is IDR 10,000,000. Data on student scholarship recipients in 2023 can be seen in the following Table 2.

Table 2. List of the Polmed Students Receiving Educational Assistance from the Polmed Ziswaf Center

NO	Study program	Number of Students	Assistance (Rp)/Student	Amount of Assistance
1	Business Administration	4	1,000,000	4,000,000
2	Finance and Banking	2	1,000,000	2,000,000
3	Sharia Finance and Banking	1	1,000,000	1,000,000
4	Energy Conversion Techniques	1	1,000,000	1,000,000
5	Graphic Multimedia Technology	1	1,000,000	1,000,000
6	Mechanical Engineering	1	1,000,000	1,000,000
Total number				10,000,000

Source: Data processed by researchers 2023

The next program for free education scholarships has been distributed to 12 students with a scholarship amount of IDR 500,000 each, so the total scholarship for 2023 is IDR 6,000,000. Data on free education scholarship recipients in 2023 can be seen in the following Table 3.

Table 3. List of the Polmed Students Receiving Free Education Assistance from the Polmed Ziswaf Center

NO	Major	Number of Students	Assistance (Rp)/Student	Amount of Assistance
1	Mechanical Engineering	2	500	1,000,000
2	Civil Engineering	2	500	1,000,000
3	Electrical Engineering	2	500	1,000,000
4	Computer and Informatics Engineering	2	500	1,000,000
5	Accountancy	2	500	1,000,000
6	Commercial Administration	2	500	1,000,000
Total number				6,000,000

Source: Data processed by researchers 2023

In general, the use of ZIS for educational programs carried out by the the Polmed Ziswaf Center has been assessed as good in accordance with existing utilization standards in Indonesia according to the results of interviews, observations and documentation regarding educational programs carried out by the the Polmed Ziswaf Center, where the distribution of zakat funds must be appropriate with religious provisions, especially in the priority scale of mustahik needs by prioritizing students who need funds in payment and UKT to support education. So, looking at the accuracy of the targets, the Ziswaf Center The Polmed program has been carried out optimally.

To date, there are 39 lecturers who are regular donors at the the Polmed Ziswaf Center. Funds collected from January to May 2023 are IDR 22,251,875. These funds have been distributed to underprivileged students for educational programs and compensation funds for the the Polmed cleaning service. So it can be said that the distribution of funds to educational programs has been carried out optimally.

The provision of student scholarship funds and free education assistance has been distributed clearly, by stating the number of scholarships and the major category of the recipient students. This shows transparency in the use of ZIS funds. Even though assistance for educational infrastructure is not yet fully operational due to limited funds, priority is still given to student scholarships and free education assistance.

This is in line with research (Zulham & Hidayat, 2022) with the title "Analysis of the Distribution of Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah and Waqf (Ziswaf) Funds for Education at the Amil Zakat Al Washliyah Charitable Institution in North Sumatra" which obtained the results of the aim of distributing funds for educational zakat in Lazwashal institution, North Sumatra. Among the purposes of zakat is to provide sufficiency and cover the needs of less fortunate people. Therefore, they should be given zakat in the amount that can free them from poverty, lack of ability, for this reason, improvements need to be made in terms of management institutions so that in the future there will be a significant increase and development so that the number of recipients (mustahiq) for educational programs also improving well.

Mechanism for Utilizing ZIS Funds Through Education Programs

The Polmed Ziswaf Center in carrying out its program also collaborates with Rumah Zakat which collaborates with PT Bank Syariah Indonesia in collecting and distributing Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah and Waqf. Rumah Zakat is a national zakat amil institution owned by the Indonesian people which manages zakat, infaq, alms and other humanitarian funds through integrated programs in the fields of education, health, economics and the environment, to create happiness for people in need.

The educational program run by the the Polmed Ziswaf Center has an open selection process. This program is aimed at all Medan State Polytechnic students via the registration link provided on the the Polmed website and distributed to each department. There are two stages of selection in the Education Program, the first stage is that prospective participants must fill out a registration form and the second stage is an interview. At the registration link stage, it contains personal data, last semester marksheet, proof of UKT payment, and parents' income slip.

At the next selection stage, the the Polmed Ziswaf Center provides instructions to prospective scholarship recipients to carry out the second stage of selection which must be followed by all prospective participants in the student scholarship and free education scholarship programs. In the second stage, this is the interview/interview stage, this interview is carried out to ensure the correctness of the data that the participants have previously input, with this the results will show a real picture of the participants. Interviews or interviews are conducted by the Polmed Ziswaf Center administrators who are experts and professionals in determining and assessing existing data with actual reality.

It can be concluded that the utilization of zakat, infaq and alms funds managed by the the Polmed Ziswaf Center with the mechanisms that have been implemented is quite good and can provide benefits to students in the educational aspect. By continuing to provide control, supervision and monitoring, as well as conducting training in it. Every year the The Polmed Ziswaf Center evaluates and reports the results of the activities that have been carried out, the reports are published via the the Polmed website and the the Polmed Ziswaf Center Instagram.

This is in line with research (Ramadhan & Huda, 2022) entitled Optimizing the Utilization of Zakat, Infaq and Alms Funds Through Educational Programs (Study at Laz Baitul Maal Hidayatullah Gerai Samarinda) which has succeeded in utilizing zakat, infaq and alms funds through educational scholarship programs. Smiles of Indonesian Children. With the mechanism that has been running up to now, it can be said to be good, although several efforts are needed to optimize ZIS funds in LAZ BMH.

4. Conclusions

The Polmed Ziswaf Center is an institution that manages zakat, infaq, shadaqoh and waqf through campus-based digital programs. The Polmed Ziswaf Center has succeeded in making good use of Zakat, Infaq and Alms (ZIS) funds through an educational scholarship program. This program includes several focus programs, such as student scholarships, free education assistance, and assistance with educational infrastructure. The collected ZIS funds have been distributed with a focus on students in need, especially in paying UKT (Single Tuition Fee).

The provision of student scholarships and free education assistance has been distributed clearly, by stating the number of scholarships and the recipient student's major category. This shows transparency in the use of ZIS funds. Even though assistance for educational infrastructure is not yet fully operational due to limited funds, priority is still given to student scholarships and free education assistance.

In terms of program implementation, The Polmed Ziswaf Center collaborates with Rumah Zakat and PT Bank Syariah Indonesia. There is a selection mechanism which is carried out in two stages, namely filling out the registration form and interviewing. The Polmed Ziswaf Center also carries out annual evaluations and publishes the results of activities through social media and their website.

The Polmed Ziswaf Center has succeeded in running an educational scholarship program well in accordance with utilization standards in Indonesia. ZIS funds have been optimized with continuous control, supervision and monitoring.

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