



Effectiveness of Scholarship Policy of Zakat Collection Unit at North Sumatra State Islamic University Medan

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Abstract

In this study, the effectiveness of the scholarship policy carried out by the Zakat Collection Unit (UPZ) at State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN Sumatera Utara), Medan is considered. Through qualitative research, the study examines how the policy comes into being, is put into action, is overseen and influences its targets, focusing on its aims, operational rules and results for the recipients. Information was gathered using observation, interviews and analysis of documents to find out how the program operates. Tacnet Effectiveness Measurement Theory is used which looks at four main aspects to judge how effective a policy is: the mission, who does what, availability of resources and following the rules. The scholars found that while the program is created with good intentions and backed up by strong structures, there are concerns regarding the infrastructure, openness and equal distribution. To ensure the long-term effectiveness and integrity of zakat-based aid to education, the study advises boosting stakeholder engagement, greater supervision and using online resources. As a result, the research fits into the wider discussion on the management of zakat and focuses on why proper policies play a vital role in improving Islamic higher education for all.

Introduction

A core aspect of Islam, Zakat asks people to share part of their money to support the wellbeing of others (Munandar, 2020). Law Number 23 of 2011 defines zakat as a part of wealth that a person or organization gives away and distributes following Islamic laws. Being a form of purification or cleansing, zakat means acknowledging that other people have claims on one's wealth beyond oneself. This means that whatever Allah SWT gives to people should help the community as well as themselves. In Surah At-Taubah (9:103), Allah urges the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to collect zakat from the people to make them right in the eyes of God and others.

In addition to being a religious rule, zakat supports the growth of the economy (Iqbal, 2019). There is a strong chance that it can help fight poverty, reduce inequality and improve the quality of life of people in the community (Syamsuri et al., 2022; Rizal & Pakkanna, 2023; Fauziah, 2020). Well-managed zakat can be an effective tool for improving society and this is particularly evident when BAZNAS, the National Zakat Agency, coordinates programs such as helping students financially (Iqbal & YUSDANI, 2023; Munadi et al., 2021; Ahyania et al., 2022; Takril & Othman, 2020).

According to Haikal & Musradinur (2023), main Zakat is also used to present several award programs to students who have small economic needs. They deal with access concerns and, at the same time, aim to support workers' upwards career progress and develop their skills (Baker,

2021; Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2021; Lau & Lee, 2021; Qorib, 2024; Sabates et al., 2021). Money from zakat at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN Sumatera Utara) goes into providing scholarships. It is hoped that these scholarships will help improve the financial condition of UKT students and encourage them to work well.

There are nonetheless concerns about the success and careful selection of these scholarships. Some reports have found noticeable changes in how much aid each recipient gets and uncertainty as to how selection is done. This kind of problem points out why it's important to check how each policy works within the university setting. To check the effectiveness of UPZ scholarships at UIN North Sumatra, this study applies the criteria of the Trend Effectiveness Measurement Theory (Tacnet) from Dimitru (2021) by evaluating four different dimensions: Clarity of mission, task distribution between people, availability of right resources and how well the policy follows proper procedures.

Methods

To understand social phenomena thoroughly, this study is based on qualitative research which is the best approach within their natural environment. Qualitative research looks to record and observe what individuals say and do to understand their thoughts, experiences and the meaning they give to particular phenomena (Silalahi, 2012). Using qualitative methods, the researchers in this study could fully study the success of the scholarship policy developed by UPZ at UIN Sumatera Utara. The study took place at UIN North Sumatra, because the university has started giving zakat-based scholarships for its social responsibility.

Our primary sources included scholarship recipients, those involved in awarding scholarships, administrators from UPZ and stakeholders from the universities. Experts were picked for this research because of their skills, backgrounds and knowledge about the policy and its outcomes. Thanks to this way of selecting participants, the researchers had access to a lot of detailed and meaningful data. Data was gathered using observation, one-on-one interviews and an examination of documentation. Observation gave the researchers a clear view of how the policy was being used and the environment in which it was working. We spoke with interviewees at length about the scholarship selection process, getting the money and the way supervisors oversee the scholarship program.

We reviewed policy guidelines, SOPs, meeting agendas and official communiques to confirm and back up the findings from talking with people and watching their work. To double-check their results, the researchers reviewed data that was collected differently. In the analysis, the data were classified and coded so that it matched the requirements of the indicators set by the Tacnet Effectiveness Measurement Theory. Dimitru (2021), introduced the framework, pointing out how policy effectiveness can be evaluated based on four important factors: (1) the mission is clearly set, (2) each person knows their duties, (3) required tools and resources are available and (4) the team has standard procedures to achieve organizational aims.

Results and Discussion

The effectiveness of the UPZ (zakat) scholarship policy managed by UIN North Sumatra Medan. The policy of providing scholarships through the Zakat Collection Unit has been started since 2017 and has been ongoing every year until now. The emergence of the Zakat Collection Unit scholarship policy is an effort by the State Islamic University of North Sumatra Medan to help the welfare of students who are having difficulty paying single tuition fees (UKT).

Initially, scholarships were only given to underprivileged students, then there was turmoil over injustice in the provision of the scholarships. So that in 2023, this scholarship was given to

three categories, namely (1) Dhuafa Category, (2) Achievement Category and (3) Hafiz/ah Category. UIN North Sumatra Medan places a big mission on this policy, it is hoped that students will be motivated to complete their studies on time, in addition, it is hoped that one day the recipients of zakat can improve their welfare so that they can change their status to become zakat givers.

So to find out the effectiveness of the policy, the author first conducted observations, interviews with related fields and conducted literature reviews from previously existing journals. The effectiveness indicator that will be used is the tacnet theory in Adina Dimitru's book, it is stated that there are four important points in the effectiveness indicator, namely the mission to be achieved, the tasks and roles involved in achieving the mission, support from human resources, budget and facilities and infrastructure for and the established procedure system whether it is appropriate to achieve organizational goals. Effectiveness is created to measure the extent to which the policy's capacity is in achieving goals (Futaqi et al., 2022).

Selection Process

By selecting candidates using a clear process, the UPZ scholarships at UIN Sumatera Utara ensure that distributing zakat-based funds is fair, transparent and helps reach the institution's objectives. Educational scholarships are divided into Dhuafa, Achievement and Hafiz/Hafizah (Qur'an memorizer) groups. Although each category has different qualifications, the basic steps for applying and choosing are the same.

Things start when candidates send in their necessary documents to the selection committee. Afterward, these documents are investigated by the committee, whose job is to confirm the rightness and completeness of each piece of paperwork. During this stage, the applications are checked to confirm if the candidates fulfilled the required traits like financial, academic or religious specifications. The committee takes care that each of the supporting documents is both complete and genuine and can easily be checked for accuracy (Khairat et al., 2022; Nunes et al., 2021). Checks for accuracy make sure that no Zakat funds are used irresponsibly, as these are a kind of trust necessary for certain recipient groups according to Islam.

Fairness, integrity and objectivity guide how choices are made during the process. Making sure that all the decisions are made in a way that is fair and honest is clarified. Effective selection means deciding that the people selected are those who truly need or deserve the support, based on the listed selection criteria (Pramudito et al., 2024; Roziqin et al., 2021). Otherwise, the way selection is done should express UIN Sumatera Utara's vision and mission as well as the ultimate goals for using zakat to assist in economic and social issues (Takril & Othman, 2020; Syamsuri et al., 2022).

There are multiple objectives described in the policy that focus the selection process. In the first place, one goal is to verify that those who have financial straits do receive assistance, thereby making sure no one is disadvantaged based on their finances. Second, it is important to ensure that the chosen beneficiaries follow a process that avoids mistakes and makes programming more useful. Additionally, the process is designed to prevent errors in using the zakat funds and to honor established rules of accountability. It must be seen that the committee follows a proper and ethical course of action to accomplish its objectives. Globally, educators use the same ideas as educational assistance to increase the effectiveness and fairness of scholarships.

Allowing for transparency, reviewing activities carefully and including voters are main criteria found in scholarship systems for under-served populations (Bakar et al., 2019; Chapman, 2016). Since funding comes from religious sources, it is very important that these programs

meet high standards (Ahyania et al., 2022; Iqbal & YUSDANI, 2023). To maintain consistency and fit with new needs, the process needs to be consistently updated and tweaked. When public messages give notice of the criteria and deadlines and are released on official channels, more eligible students choose to participate and people trust the process more. By using online platforms for applications and verification, we could make the process more efficient, clearer and easier for everyone (Rizal & Pakkanna, 2023; Munadi et al., 2021).

Supervision of UPZ Scholarship (Zakat) policy at UIN North Sumatra Medan

According to Madjakusumah & Saripudin (2020), supervision is an essential part of putting public policy into action, mainly when handling religious funds such as zakat. In Islam, giving zakat is a duty for the soul and also works to make things fairer for groups in need (Hadi, 2022). For this reason, making sure that zakat-based programs such as the UPZ scholarship policy at UIN Sumatera Utara are upheld and effective requires true faith and trust. When left unmonitored, these types of policies might not meet their goals, could be misused or could break down because of ethical or administrative mistakes.

Both institutional functions and community monitoring are applied at UIN North Sumatra to watch over the UPZ scholarship policy. Most oversight of zakat funds is handled by teams within the institution that are tasked with collecting and distributing the money. Such teams consist of the UPZ committee, financial and educational units at the university and compliance officers charged with managing the application of the scholarship program. They make sure the procedure for selecting recipients, handling fund transfers and sharing reports are in line with university rules and those of BAZNAS. With this style of supervision, there is order in the system and the policy cycle of planning, carrying out and reviewing is strictly kept.

In addition, community-based supervision works informally as another way to ensure policies are followed. In line with democratic and involvement principles, students, academic staff and all members of the public should be invited to help discover and comment on issues in public administration (Osborne et al., 2022). Since universities bring together critical and involved students, they support active civic supervision more easily. The use of open forums, involvement of students in assessment areas and online ways to provide comments help maintain transparency and flexibility in education. This method matches the Islamic idea of hisbah which expects all members of society to help maintain good morals and fairness (Abdullah & Noor, 2016).

Also, oversight from outside organizations is built into the bond between a university's UPZ and the National Zakat Board, making the latter the main authority responsible for supervising all aspects of zakat management. BAZNAS has prepared detailed guidelines for operating and measuring zakat-related activities and reporting as well as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). BAZNAS requires the university's UPZ to send in regular reports of its finances, how funds are allocated and the impact of the program, as directed by Ahyania et al. (2022) and Iqbal & YUSDANI (2023). In this way, all institutions comply with the national zakat framework and remain accountable in all departments, not just the local areas.

The rules for overseeing zakat are very strict. For disbursement, the UPZ needs to check qualifications, study social and financial situations, prepare plans and budgets and obtain BAZNAS's authority before dispersing scholarship funds. When more than 60% of the budget has been spent, both detailed activity and financial reports must be given. The reports are checked by both internal reviewers and BAZNAS auditors to guarantee they fulfill Islamic philanthropic rules as well as state regulations. As a result, zakat highlights that it is required by faith and also handled following clear professional rules (Munadi et al., 2021).

While formal supervision systems are in place, ensuring that supervision stays effective remains a big challenge. A main problem is that UPZs do not always have enough people to handle all the tasks involved (Suparman & Romadhon, 2019). Because many supervisors lack proper training in auditing, policy analysis or the laws of zakat, their assessments may be lacking in detail and open to mistakes. Besides, since record-keeping is manual in many UPZ offices, errors, inconsistencies and fewer opportunities to access data often result.

Syamsuri et al. (2022) noted that many difficulties with zakat institutions in Indonesia are caused by poor professionalism and lack of technology. Filling these gaps calls for a new plan to depend on digital and data monitoring (Sirozi, 2025). Many recent reports see improved governance in Islamic charity institutions by integrating technology, including dashboards, digital signing, biometric identification and blockchain for clear financial monitoring (Rizal & Pakkanna, 2023; Bakar et al., 2020). Modern technology helps UPZ units increase their ability to watch activities, lessen their workload and establish credible real-time processes for those involved.

Supervision should not be seen only as a way to guarantee results, but also as a means to develop people (Iskandar et al., 2019). The effort should be to find and address problems as well as to help people understand better, design better policies and encourage those involved to participate in the process. Having a loop where student recipients, committee members and external auditors share feedback often makes the zakat policy much more effective. This means supervision should go beyond compliance and work as an ongoing effort to improve rather than just remain unchanging.

The Role of the National Zakat Collection Agency

BAZNAS is key to Indonesia's process of ensuring zakat is treated as a religious requirement and an important device for social advancement. BAZNAS is required by the Constitution to oversee, manage and regulate keeping, distributing and using zakat funds across the country, following Law No. 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management. BAZNAS was now given the main role of managing zakat across society, making sure the practice was efficient, open and fair in all fields, including in education (Ahyania et al., 2022; Iqbal & YUSDANI, 2023).

BAZNAS has four levels of operation: national, provincial, district/city and institutional. The area of institutions includes the Unit Pengumpul Zakat (UPZ), for example, at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN Sumatera Utara). They provide a way for organizations, colleges, public offices or mosques to group, hold and distribute cash and goods. Their responsibilities are localized, but they are always held responsible by BAZNAS which sets standards for their operations, monitors them and ensures they apply standard protocols.

BAZNAS is responsible for making and broadcasting SOPs related to collecting, reporting on and distributing zakat (Fahlefi et al., 2019). They ensure that activities across the country follow the national priorities, good methods and Islam's legal and ethical rules. Complying with these SOPs is both required and deemed sacred for UPZs, because it allows zakat to meet its main objectives which are reducing poverty, distributing wealth and promoting social justice.

BAZNAS' SOPs for UPZ management are thoroughly described and exacting. UPZs must ensure that deductions or contributions for zakat are done regularly and openly when taking care of the zakat process. All of these funds should enter BAZNAS accounts without first going through other parties, since this would compromise the process. The whole process is supported by prayers for the zakat payer and by issuing a BSZ which confirms both the religious and legal status of the payment.

BAZNAS makes it mandatory to use a complete set of procedures starting with registering and confirming mustahik (zakat beneficiaries) before anything else. After that, UPZs should carry out thorough needs analysis, outline how their work will be accomplished, estimate costs and request approval from BAZNAS. Supervising from the top helps prevent unorganized and random distribution of zakat by instead using data and what is required. When a project's disbursement gets close to two-thirds of its budget or at the end of the program, UPZs have to give clear financial and program reports. As a result, there is improved transparency and an organizational culture that supports accountability and ongoing improvements (Munadi et al., 2021; Fauziah, 2020).

It's notable that BAZNAS now sees itself as a partner to governments for national and regional development, not only as a government authority. By making sure professionals are involved, using advanced technology and boosting public trust, BAZNAS has changed zakat into a useful tool for development in the nation. In the past few years, it has added new technology to make mustahik targeting more accurate, move money faster and carry out evaluations more effectively (Rizal & Pakkanna, 2023; Ahyania et al., 2022). Thanks to digital dashboards, linked databases and online reporting, maximizing Zakat funds is now much more flexible, reliable and can be enlarged.

In this sector, BAZNAS plays a part that is even more varied. UPZs established in universities by BAZNAS support university leadership in managing zakat funds to help students with their finances. This signifies a big change in what religious philanthropy does: moving from passive charitable works to prioritizing the investment in human potential. Zakat-backed scholarships help people move up in society and stay there, promoting lasting change in the community (Qorib, 2024; Baker, 2021; Sabates et al., 2021). Taking care of higher education for people in need, BAZNAS and UPZ's programs aim to make beneficiaries muzaki, helping them help society again by availing of different benefits and services later on.

There are still some issues in making sure all UPZs have the same quality standards. Because of differing institutional strength, technological resources, numbers of staff and local rules, implementation may not be the same. BAZNAS should go on with increasing its capacity-building options, support sharing of ideas among UPZs and build systems that can be used by many Upzones. Besides, encouraging BAZNAS to cooperate with academics can contribute to new and advanced concepts in zakat-based educational programs thanks to research, data usage and public engagement.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the UPZ scholarship policy at UIN Sumatera Utara was examined in this study, using Tacnet Effectiveness Measurement Theory. The results show that even though the UPZ scholarship initiative displays good goals and positive outcomes, its overall impact is affected by different factors at the system, process and condition levels that need to be explored and properly managed. Policy results were found to depend most on four important factors known as objective clarity, organization of roles, the availability of resources and following established guidelines. First, the mission and objectives of UPZ are well defined because they are often socialized to the community by the university. Yet, more frequent and widespread contact should take place to strengthen awareness of the institution among those who give zakat and to increase their commitment to the institution.

Next, each person's duties in the UPZ are well defined and implementers tend to know what they are supposed to do. Overall, the quality of role action continues to be influenced by an agent's personal skills and company assistance. All participants need regular training, well-defined roles and to meet performance expectations, in order to play a meaningful part in

making policy decisions. The sufficient and effective use of human resources, yearly budgets and infrastructure is very important for good policy implementation. While financing is considered adequate for the main services, not having enough infrastructures and employees makes it hard to deliver and monitor services effectively. Addressing these gaps helps extend the program to more people and raises the efficiency in program administration.

Fourth, the process of applying standard rules from BAZNAS has created a solid system for governance and supervision. They support the right way of choosing, handling and recording the scholarships. But, using manual processes and lacking uniform digitization makes it hard for processes to be effective and open. Greater use of technology and cleaner digital tools could increase the speed and quality of policy monitoring and reactions. The study further stresses that trust, minimizing misuse of power and policy legitimacy are maintained by good supervision both from inside and outside the organization.

As a national supervisory body, BAZNAS works to regulate UPZ, guarantee compatibility and make sure everything follows the set standards for zakat nationwide. At the same time, including more community members and considering all stakeholder insights will strengthen participatory government, promote openness and encourage everyone to share responsibility. Zakat is demonstrated in this study to serve more than just a ritual purpose—when managed honestly, wisely and including all groups, it brings meaningful social transformation. With the UPZ scholarship, there is an opportunity to uplift marginalized students, encourage social progress and grow a group of experts who might later contribute to society. Yet, if this vision is to come true, zakat should be handled both according to its rules and with the help of policy and management experts.

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