


Enhancing Educational Quality through Strategic Philanthropy: A Case Study of LAZISMU Umbulharjo, Yogyakarta

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article history: Received: 06/12/2023 Revised: 06/19/2023 Accepted: 06/29/2023</p>	<p>Purpose – This study aims to analyze the role of the LAZISMU Umbulharjo Philanthropic Institution in enhancing educational quality within Umbulharjo Subdistrict, Yogyakarta.</p>
<p>Keywords: <i>Educational Philanthropy, LAZISMU Umbulharjo, Quality Education, Scholarship Programs</i></p>	<p>Design/methods– Employing a qualitative descriptive research design, this study conducted field observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis between March 7, 2023, and April 2, 2023. Primary and secondary data were gathered from the LAZISMU Umbulharjo office and its staff, particularly the Head of the LAZISMU Office.</p> <p>Findings – LAZISMU Umbulharjo, established in 2015, has made significant strides in advancing educational quality through various programs, including the Mentari Scholarship, Sang Surya Scholarship, and Peduli Guru initiative. These programs focus on different aspects of education, from scholarship provision to teacher training and facility enhancement.</p> <p>Research implications/limitations – This study highlights the potential of philanthropy in educational development. However, it is limited to one philanthropic entity in a specific locale, suggesting the need for broader research across diverse settings.</p> <p>Practical implications – The findings indicate that comprehensive and community-focused philanthropic approaches can effectively address educational inequalities and foster sustainable development.</p> <p>Originality/value – This study contributes to understanding philanthropic institutions' role in enhancing education quality, offering insights for policymakers and educational stakeholders in implementing similar initiatives.</p>
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Introduction

Quality education is a fundamental right, enshrined in various international and national declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of the respective country (United Nations, 1948; Constitution of Country, 1945). Despite these guarantees, access to education remains unequal, particularly in developing regions, where economic barriers often prevent students from pursuing higher education (B. L. Lewis & James-Gallaway, 2022). This disparity hinders individual growth and impedes societal progress, emphasizing the need for interventions to bridge these educational gaps (Hogan & Thompson, 2023). Philanthropic institutions play a pivotal role in this context, offering alternative funding sources for education (McLaren, 2020). The effectiveness of such philanthropic endeavors in improving educational quality is a subject of ongoing academic debate (Barkan, 2013).

The historical perspective on philanthropy in education reveals diverse approaches and impacts across different contexts. In the early modern era, schools in regions like Lincolnshire functioned as charitable institutions, reflecting shifting attitudes towards charity and the development of legal language around trusts (Euler, 2019). The role of philanthropy in cultural institutions, such as the Norwich School, further highlights the multifaceted nature of educational philanthropy (Hemingway, 1988). For instance, philanthropic ventures in the U.S. have significantly influenced education policy, particularly in business education, promoting managerial ideologies (McLaren, 2020). Conversely, studies have critiqued the limitations of white philanthropy in adequately supporting African-American education (Barkan, 2013; B. L. Lewis & James-Gallaway, 2022). Additionally, the role of philanthropy in augmenting disparities in public school systems through parental fundraise has been observed (Hogan & Thompson, 2023).

The concept of venture philanthropy in education has garnered attention for its transformative potential and controversies. Venture philanthropy's influence in reforming teacher education in the U.S. challenges traditional approaches, proposing transformative strategies to strengthen public education systems (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). This form of philanthropy has also been instrumental in restructuring relationships between government and policy networks in Australian public schools (Rowe, 2023). However, the approach has faced criticism for reinforcing market-driven ideologies and exacerbating educational inequalities (Au & Ferrare, 2014; Barkan, 2011). The intersection of philanthropy with policy initiatives, as seen in the case of charter school reform networks, further illustrates the complexity of its role in education (Scott, 2009). These insights underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of philanthropy's impact on educational landscapes.

Philanthropy's influence extends to education governance, policies, and public opinion. The involvement of national philanthropic organizations in events like the Atlanta school board elections demonstrates their impact on educational governance (DeBray et al., 2020). Philanthropy also affects educational practices and norms, as seen in the case of tourism partnerships with South African schools, which align educational norms with the tourism industry (Smithers, 2023). For example, the PISA for Schools initiative illustrates how education policy and governance are increasingly influenced by private actors and agencies (S. Lewis, 2017). Additionally, the role of philanthropy in corporate tax practices and its relationship with local schools highlights the complex interplay between corporate interests and education (Guthrie et al., 2008). These examples underscore the multifaceted nature of philanthropy's role in shaping education policy and practice.

Philanthropy's historical evolution in education reflects broader societal and economic changes. The transformation of schools operated by associations in Macau from charitable to philanthropic institutions mirrors societal and economic development (Tang et al., 2022). The emergence of high-performance philanthropy programs in medical schools showcases

evolving strategies for enhancing philanthropic revenue (Schiele, 2014). Similarly, the rise and challenges of philanthropic fundraise in law schools between 1880 and 1930 provide insights into the changing landscape of educational philanthropy (Kimball, 2013). The advent of Silicon Valley-style 'pioneer schools' funded by technology corporations and venture philanthropy highlights the increasing role of technocracy and algorithmic imagination in education (Williamson, 2018). These historical perspectives offer valuable context for understanding current philanthropic practices in education.

Contemporary challenges and criticisms of educational philanthropy further illuminate its complex role. Critiques of how corporate philanthropy shapes school-based solutions to childhood obesity issues often mask less altruistic interests of the private sector (Powell, 2019). The professionalization of social sciences, as seen in the development of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, illustrates the evolving disciplinary boundaries and social contributions of educational institutions (MacLean & Williams, 2012). The role of philanthropy in women's education in colonial India, as exemplified by the Bethune School in Calcutta, reveals the interaction between philanthropy, education, and nationalist politics (Singh, 2000). Moreover, the influence of philanthropic elites in urban policymaking, particularly in underfunded education systems like Detroit's, demonstrates the market-based approaches promoted by philanthropy, often to the detriment of students (Cohen, 2021). These critiques highlight the need to examine philanthropy's role in education critically.

This study aims to analyze the role of LAZISMU Umbulharjo, a philanthropic institution in Indonesia, in enhancing educational quality in the Umbulharjo district of Yogyakarta. By examining the effectiveness of Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah (ZISKA) in educational empowerment, the study seeks to contribute to the discourse on philanthropy in education. The focus on LAZISMU Umbulharjo's approach provides an opportunity to explore how Islamic philanthropic practices intersect with global educational challenges and opportunities. This research seeks insights into effective philanthropic strategies and their potential implications for educational equity and quality.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, following the approach outlined by Sugiyono (2015), who defines qualitative research as a method to investigate natural conditions with the researcher as the vital instrument. Qualitative research aims to understand situations or phenomena experienced by subjects through descriptions in words and language, utilizing methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. The research was conducted from March 7, 2023, to April 2, 2023, at the LAZISMU Umbulharjo office in Yogyakarta. The research subjects, known as informants, included the Staff Program and Utilization Officer of the LAZISMU Umbulharjo office. Data were categorized as primary, obtained directly from observations, interviews, and discussions, and secondary, including the LAZISMU Umbulharjo office's profile, financial reports, organizational structure, and related documents.

Procedures involved a literature and document review for contextual understanding, followed by field observations and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the Head of the LAZISMU Office. Observational data were recorded in field notes, and interview transcripts were coded and thematically analyzed for content. To ensure reliability and validity, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking were utilized, as well as cross-verification of information from different sources and validation of findings with participants.

Results

1. Profile of LAZISMU Umbulharjo

a. History of LAZISMU Umbulharjo

The Muhammadiyah Charity Institution for Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah (LAZISMU) Umbulharjo is a LAZISMU office in the Umbulharjo Subdistrict. The LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office is a social institution that manages zakat, infaq, and sadaqah, cash waqf, corporate CSR, and humanitarian funds within the Umbulharjo Subdistrict. The collected funds are distributed to those in need as part of productive economic empowerment programs through initiatives in proselytizing, health, education, economic empowerment, environmental care, disaster response, and Islamic community development. The LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office is located at Jl Glagahsari No. 136, Warungboto, Umbulharjo Subdistrict, Yogyakarta City, with postal code 55164.

The LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office was officially established in 2015, per the applicable decree. It underwent several name changes, aligning with government regulations and directives from Muhammadiyah. Initially named LAZISMU PCM Umbulharjo, it was later renamed LAZISMU UPZ Umbulharjo. However, this name was short-lived due to issues with the UPZ designation, as LAZISMU is outside the direct command of BAZNAS. In 2016, it reverted to LAZISMU Unit Layanan Umbulharjo, coinciding with the enactment of the Zakat Law No. 23 of 2011.

b. Vision and Mission

The Muhammadiyah Charity Institution for Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah (LAZISMU) Umbulharjo Service Office has a vision and mission. Its vision is to become a Trusted Zakat Amil Institution. Its mission includes three key objectives: first, the optimal management of Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah (ZISKA) in a trustworthy, professional, and transparent manner; second, the optimal utilization of ZISKA in a creative, innovative, and productive way; third, the optimal service provision for donors.

c. Strategic Policies

Each institution has its policies and strategies for advancement. The LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office has several strategic policies, including; Creating a high-quality socio-economic life for the Muslim community as a defense against poverty, backwardness, and ignorance through various programs developed by Muhammadiyah; Prioritizing beneficiaries from the poor, needy, and *fisabilillah* groups; Programmed, prioritized distribution of ZISKA, focusing on education, health, economy, proselytizing, and social, humanitarian issues; Synergy with MLO and AUM; Collaboration with institutions and communities outside Muhammadiyah; Minimizing charity aid except in emergencies, disasters, and rescue efforts; Realizing Muhammadiyah's vision for 2025 of an actual Islamic society; Mobilizing the institutionalization of the ZISKA Movement across all Muhammadiyah structures and charitable works.

d. Management Structure

The administrators or managers of the Muhammadiyah Charity Institution for Zakat and Sadaqah (KL LAZISMU) Umbulharjo Subdistrict consist of Office Head, Administration and Finance, Administration and Front Office, Program, Fundraising, and Digital Fundraising Units.

2. Work Programs of LAZISMU Umbulharjo

The LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office runs several programs to support its vision and mission of empowering the economically disadvantaged community of Umbulharjo. As a Zakat Amil Institution, it focuses on six pillars:

a. Education Program Pillar

The education program pillar aims to improve human resources and national and Islamic community leaders through educational activities, scholarship provision for students,

teacher training, and strengthening the role of education by enhancing school facilities at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. This includes the Mentari Scholarship, the Sang Surya Scholarship, and the Peduli Guru program.

b. Health Program Pillar

The Health Program is directed at improving services for the community, especially the less fortunate, in the health sector. This includes curative and preventive actions (such as counseling) and campaigns, like providing free ambulance services for humanitarian purposes, health services at Posyandu (Integrated Health Service Post), and offering nutrition and necessities support to needy families.

c. Economic Empowerment Program Pillar

The economic empowerment program promotes self-reliance, increases income and welfare, and fosters entrepreneurial spirit. It involves economic activities and establishing halal and empowering businesses, including revolving business aid, business capital provision, and strengthening businesses through partnership schemes with individuals or business groups.

d. Proselytizing Program Pillar

The proselytizing program focuses on societal proselytizing movements that directly impact the creation of Islamic society and engage the active participation of vulnerable communities in urban poor and remote areas with an Islamic proselytizing spirit. This includes building a civil society based on the Tahfidzul Qur'an for social, cultural, and educational independence, emphasizing local wisdom.

e. Humanitarian Social Program Pillar

The humanitarian, social program prioritizes addressing disasters and humanitarian missions, encompassing preparedness, emergency response, rehabilitation, and reconstruction systematically, involving various internal and external partners of Muhammadiyah. This program includes setting up aid stations, refugee camps, public kitchens, health services, places of worship, and distributing necessities.

f. Environmental Program Pillar

The environmental program focuses on distributing ZakatMu and InfaqMu for environmental quality improvement. In this pillar, LAZISMU is committed to enhancing environmental quality. This includes the Rumah Smart initiative, aimed at collecting usable second-hand items for redistribution to those in greater need, benefiting various aspects of community life.

3. Education Program of LAZISMU Umbulharjo

According to data and its relation to our group's mini-research, the LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office has successfully promoted and improved educational quality in the Umbulharjo Subdistrict. LAZISMU has effectively fulfilled its responsibilities as a zakat amil institution through the education program pillar. The education program pillar includes several initiatives, such as:

a. Mentari Scholarship

The Mentari Scholarship is a social movement program ensuring the continuity of education for students from underprivileged families. It provides educational expenses on a monthly or semester basis, tailored to the educational level and other needs of the students. The target of the Mentari Scholarship includes elementary and high school students in the Umbulharjo Subdistrict.

b. Sang Surya Scholarship

The Sang Surya Scholarship aims to improve access to quality higher education. It offers opportunities to high-achieving students facing economic barriers to continue their education. The scholarship covers educational expenses for diploma and higher education programs, both private and public, for one year or more.

c. Peduli Guru (Care for Teachers)

The Peduli Guru program is a social and educational movement to enhance the quality and welfare of teachers, including honorary, religious, and volunteer teachers. It provides capacity-building or appreciation for teachers' dedication to national education. Efforts to improve teachers' capacity and quality include training, economic empowerment, and providing allowances for teachers in the Umbulharjo Subdistrict.

The role of the education program pillar in influencing education quality includes, First, Quality Teachers. Quality teachers play a crucial role in enhancing educational standards. They possess sound knowledge and skills in teaching and can create effective learning environments. LAZISMU Umbulharjo contributes by supporting teachers with training and professional development, thereby improving their teaching competencies. The second is the Relevant Curriculum. A curriculum relevant to student needs and contemporary developments is also crucial in enhancing education quality. LAZISMU Umbulharjo contributes by providing scholarships for students to access quality education, including training aligned with relevant curricula.

Third, Facilities and Resources. Adequate facilities and resources are essential for supporting education quality. Through scholarships, the LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office helps improve students' and teachers' access to educational facilities and resources, such as books, equipment, and necessary infrastructure. Fourth, Parent and Community Involvement. Parent and community involvement in education significantly impacts education quality. The LAZISMU Umbulharjo Service Office acts as a bridge between students, teachers, parents, and the community through its scholarship programs. Involving parents and the community, this philanthropic institution can create a supportive educational environment and strengthen stakeholder relationships.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to analyze the role of the LAZISMU Umbulharjo Philanthropy Institution in enhancing educational quality in the Umbulharjo Subdistrict. The importance of philanthropy in education is well-documented, with various studies highlighting its influence on educational resources, governance, and policy shaping (Hogan & Thompson, 2023; B. L. Lewis & James-Gallaway, 2022; McLaren, 2020). As Barkan (2013) and Euler (2019) noted, philanthropy's role in education has historically been crucial, from supporting African-American education to changing attitudes towards charity and trust law in schools. This study builds upon these foundations, examining how LAZISMU Umbulharjo's philanthropic initiatives contribute to educational improvement in a specific locale. Understanding the impact of such institutions is vital, considering the varying effects of philanthropy on educational quality and governance (S. Lewis, 2017; Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015).

The research revealed that LAZISMU Umbulharjo's programs, including the Mentari Scholarship, the Sang Surya Scholarship, and the Peduli Guru program, significantly improve education in Umbulharjo. These findings are noteworthy, given the importance of adequate funding and control over resources in educational institutions, especially in marginalized communities (Barkan, 2013; B. L. Lewis & James-Gallaway, 2022). The study's results align with previous findings emphasizing the need for targeted philanthropy to address specific educational challenges (Hogan et al., 2023; Ivanoff et al., 2013). Additionally, the

comprehensive approach of LAZISMU Umbulharjo, addressing various educational aspects, from scholarships to teacher training, highlights its effectiveness in improving education quality.

Comparing the results of this study with previous research, it is evident that LAZISMU Umbulharjo's approach differs from traditional philanthropic models. Unlike the cases discussed by Barkan (2013) and B. L. Lewis & James-Gallaway (2022), where philanthropy often fell short in adequately supporting African-American schools, LAZISMU Umbulharjo's initiatives demonstrate a more effective and community-driven model. This resonates with Hemingway's (1988) findings on the role of cultural philanthropy in creating Norwich School and contrasts with the managerialism ideology influenced by the Ford Foundation in American business schools (McLaren, 2020). LAZISMU Umbulharjo's model aligns more closely with the transformative approach proposed by Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval (2015), emphasizing community engagement and sustainable development.

Further comparison with previous studies reveals that LAZISMU Umbulharjo's strategic focus on education aligns with the successful practices of philanthropic institutions. For instance, Morrissey (2017) highlights the efforts of the Education Above All Foundation Qatar in providing quality education in Southeast Asia, a similar goal to that of LAZISMU Umbulharjo. Additionally, the emphasis on economic empowerment and community involvement in LAZISMU Umbulharjo's programs is consistent with the findings of Euler (2019) and Rose (1991), who discussed the evolution of charitable schools and the influence of evangelical philanthropy in educational institutions, respectively. These comparisons underscore the significance of LAZISMU Umbulharjo's role in providing financial support and fostering community involvement and sustainable development in education.

The findings of this study indicate that LAZISMU Umbulharjo's multifaceted approach to improving education quality is highly effective. This approach, which includes scholarships, teacher training, and community engagement, resonates with the best practices in philanthropy outlined by Powell (2019) and Schiele (2014). However, it is important to interpret these results cautiously, considering the diverse impacts philanthropy can have on educational institutions, as demonstrated by studies on corporate philanthropy's influence on public school reform (Au & Ferrare, 2014; Barkan, 2011) and the complex relationship between philanthropy and public education administration (Rowe, 2023; Schachter, 2011). This nuanced understanding of philanthropy's educational role is crucial for developing effective and sustainable educational interventions.

Continuing the explanation of the findings, LAZISMU Umbulharjo's success can be attributed to its strategic focus on key areas such as teacher quality, relevant curriculum, and adequate facilities and resources. These factors are consistent with the critical elements for improving education quality identified in previous studies (Gibson, 2008; Ivanoff et al., 2013; Smithers, 2023). The importance of parent and community involvement, as demonstrated by LAZISMU Umbulharjo's initiatives, echoes the findings of Brieland (1975), who emphasized the role of philanthropy and fundraise in educational institutions. Additionally, the study's results align with Tang et al., (2022) research on the transformation of education from charity to philanthropy in Macau, highlighting the evolving nature of philanthropic contributions to education.

The implications of this study are significant for the field of educational philanthropy. The success of LAZISMU Umbulharjo in enhancing educational quality in Umbulharjo suggests that a comprehensive and community-focused approach to philanthropy can yield positive outcomes. This finding is particularly relevant in light of the global challenges faced by educational institutions, as discussed by Cohen (2021) and Fisher (1978), regarding the influence of philanthropic elites and institutions on urban policymaking and the expansion of imperial influence, respectively. When strategically applied, the study underscores the potential of philanthropy to make a meaningful difference in education, supporting the notion

that well-targeted philanthropic efforts can address inequalities and promote sustainable educational development (Hogan et al., 2023; Singh, 2000; Williamson, 2018).

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the role of the LAZISMU Umbulharjo Philanthropic Institution in advancing educational quality in the Umbulharjo Subdistrict. The findings underscore the significant contributions of LAZISMU Umbulharjo, established in 2015, in this regard. The institution has markedly improved educational standards through strategic policies and a range of programs concentrating on education, health, economic empowerment, proselytizing, humanitarian, social work, and environmental care. The education program pillar, which includes the Mentari Scholarship, Sang Surya Scholarship, and Peduli Guru initiative, has played a pivotal role in elevating the quality of education in Umbulharjo.

The implications of this research are substantial for the realm of educational philanthropy. LAZISMU Umbulharjo's success illustrates that a comprehensive, community-centered approach to philanthropy can produce significant positive educational results, a finding that resonates in the face of global educational challenges. Strategic philanthropy can effectively address inequalities and foster sustainable educational development. However, this study is limited by focusing on a single philanthropic entity in a specific locale. Future research should broaden its scope to include similar institutions across diverse settings, providing a more holistic understanding of philanthropy's impact on education. Further investigation into the long-term outcomes of these educational programs on beneficiaries' academic and professional achievements would also be valuable. LAZISMU Umbulharjo's efforts in Umbulharjo Subdistrict serve as a model for philanthropic engagement in education, demonstrating the potential of such endeavors to surmount educational challenges and promote equitable, sustainable educational growth.

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