


Implementing Educational Programs by LAZISMU DIY to Enhance Education in Indonesia: A Qualitative Analysis

Dendi Saputra ^{1*}

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received: 06/27/2024 Revised: 07/25/2024 Accepted: 07/29/2024</p>	<p>Purpose – This study aims to describe the implementation of educational programs by LAZISMU DIY in improving education in Indonesia, focusing on the effectiveness and efficiency of these philanthropic initiatives in enhancing community welfare in the Special Region of Yogyakarta.</p> <p>Design/methods– Employing a qualitative-descriptive research design, data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The tools and technologies used included digital recording devices, notebooks for field notes, and cameras for photographic documentation. Data analysis involved transcription, data reduction, and the identification of key themes and patterns.</p> <p>Findings – The findings reveal that LAZISMU DIY’s programs, including scholarships and teacher training, significantly impact educational quality and access. These programs address financial barriers and promote sustainable educational development through a holistic approach combining financial aid and capacity-building activities.</p> <p>Research implications/limitations Despite the qualitative nature of the study limiting generalizability, the results highlight the potential of strategic philanthropic interventions in fostering educational equity. Future research should incorporate quantitative methods to validate these findings and explore long-term impacts</p> <p>Practical implications – The study emphasizes the importance of combining financial support with capacity-building and community engagement for effective educational interventions. This model provides a blueprint for other philanthropic organizations aiming to improve education in similar contexts.</p> <p>Originality/value – This study provides valuable insights into the successful integration of financial aid, capacity-building, and community engagement by LAZISMU DIY, showcasing its significant contributions to improving education in Yogyakarta and offering a replicable model for educational philanthropy.</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Capacity-Building, Educational Philanthropy, Sustainable Development</p>	<p> ©2024 by the authors. It was submitted for possible open-access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).</p>

Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar for the development and progress of any nation, serving as an agent of change and transformation. In Indonesia, despite numerous government efforts to enhance the quality of education, significant challenges persist, particularly concerning accessibility and affordability in remote areas (Machfudz, 2020). The Right to Education Index (RTEI) study by the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) ranks Indonesia seventh among fourteen countries, with a score of 77%, highlighting issues such as teacher quality, child-friendly schools, and educational access for marginalized groups (Tohari & Machali, 2022). Poverty remains a primary obstacle that hinders children's right to education, necessitating interventions to address these systemic issues (Setyowati, 2017).

Previous research underscores the critical role of education in national stability and development, positioning it as a vital asset for societal continuity (Ahmad, 2021). The financial aspect of education is paramount, influencing the sustainability of school activities and the ability to implement established programs (Suwandi & Samri, 2022). Studies have indicated that educational institutions with substantial funding, especially private ones, have a greater capacity for development compared to those reliant solely on government funds (Dianti, 2017). This financial disparity underscores the need for effective educational financing strategies to ensure equitable educational opportunities (Iqbal et al., 2020). Additionally, societal contributions toward education through philanthropic activities such as zakat, infaq, shodaqah, and wakaf (ZISWAF) play a crucial role in balancing social inequities (Bamualim & Bakar, 2005).

Non-governmental organizations like the Muhammadiyah Amil Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah Institution (LAZISMU) have been instrumental in enhancing educational access and quality in Indonesia. LAZISMU DIY, one of the largest Islamic philanthropic organizations in Indonesia, implements various educational programs aimed at supporting underprivileged individuals in gaining access to education (Suwandi & Samri, 2022). These programs include scholarships, infrastructure support, and training and mentoring for teachers and students, all designed to improve educational quality (Iqbal et al., 2020). LAZISMU DIY adopts a holistic approach that emphasizes financial assistance and the development of human resources' capacity and competence in education (Setyowati, 2017). Collaboration with both internal Muhammadiyah entities and external partners is a critical strategy in expanding the reach and impact of these educational initiatives (Machfudz, 2020).

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully addressing the educational needs of marginalized communities. Research highlights the limitations in current educational interventions, particularly in ensuring sustainable and comprehensive improvements in teacher quality, school environment, and accessibility for all societal segments (Tohari & Machali, 2022). There are ongoing controversies and gaps in the effectiveness and efficiency of philanthropic educational programs, which this study aims to address (Setyowati, 2017). Understanding these limitations is crucial for developing more effective strategies that can provide lasting educational improvements.

This study focuses on evaluating the implementation of LAZISMU DIY's educational programs to enhance education in Indonesia. It aims to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of these philanthropic initiatives in improving the educational welfare of communities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. By analyzing the outcomes and impact of these programs, the study seeks to contribute to the broader field of educational development and provide insights for future philanthropic efforts in education.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive research design to explore the implementation of educational programs by LAZISMU DIY in enhancing education in Indonesia. The research was conducted as field research on May 28, 2024, at the LAZISMU DIY office located at Jl. Gedong Kuning No.152, RT. 41, Rejowinangun, Kec. Kotagede, Kota

Yogyakarta, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 5517. The subjects of this study include an overview of the institution, its vision and mission, and the educational programs it offers. This design was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the institution's educational initiatives and their impact on the community.

The data collection procedures involved three primary methods: observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Initially, direct observations were conducted to gather firsthand insights into the operational environment and program activities at LAZISMU DIY. Following this, semi-structured interviews were held with key informants, including program coordinators, educators, and beneficiaries, to obtain detailed information about the programs and their implementation (Aan Komariah et al., 2009). Finally, relevant documents and supporting images were collected to complement the data obtained from observations and interviews. The tools and technologies used in this research included digital recording devices for interviews, notebooks for field notes, and cameras for photographic documentation (Sugiyono, 2015). Data collected from these tools were transcribed and organized systematically to facilitate comprehensive analysis. (Creswell, 2014)

Data analysis was conducted through a multi-step process. Initially, the collected data were transcribed and organized into textual formats. This was followed by data reduction, where irrelevant or redundant information was eliminated to focus on key themes and patterns. The data were then presented in a structured format, allowing for clear identification of trends and insights. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the patterns and themes identified, providing a coherent understanding of the educational program implementations at LAZISMU DIY. To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, triangulation was employed by using multiple data collection methods and sources to cross-verify the information obtained. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with the participants to confirm the accuracy of the data and interpretations. Additionally, the research adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality and informed consent from all participants (Bogdan & Taylors, 1992).

Results

1. Description of LAZISMU DIY as a Philanthropic Organization

Educational philanthropy is one form of societal contribution aimed at enhancing the quality of education. This philanthropy can be undertaken by individuals, groups, or institutions that voluntarily provide donations in the form of funds, facilities, or programs designed to improve access to and the quality of education. In Indonesia, educational philanthropy is increasingly developing in line with the growing public awareness of the importance of education in advancing the nation. Philanthropic organizations play a crucial role in supporting the government and society in providing equitable and quality educational access. These organizations often implement various programs, ranging from scholarship provision and educational facility construction to teacher training and capacity building. Consequently, they become strategic partners in the effort to improve the national education quality (Machfudz, 2020).

The Muhammadiyah Amil Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah Institution (LAZISMU) is one of the philanthropic organizations active in the social and educational fields. LAZISMU is a national zakat institution with a decree from the Ministry of Religion No. 90 of 2022, dedicated to empowering communities through the utilization of zakat, infaq, waqf, and other charitable funds from individuals, organizations, companies, and other entities. LAZISMU does not accept any funds derived from criminal activities (Indonesian Law No. 8 of 2010 on the Prevention and Eradication of Money Laundering). As a modern zakat management institution, LAZISMU is committed to economic empowerment of the community. The distribution of collected zakat funds is used to finance various productive skill activities, provide start-up capital, and assist initial needs (Iqbal et al., 2020). LAZISMU has several programs, including education, economy, social, health, and religious propagation. In executing its programs, LAZISMU employs creative and innovative methods to attract public participation in channeling their funds (Setyowati, 2017).

LAZISMU's mission is to empower communities through the management of zakat, infaq, and shadaqah. The funds collected by LAZISMU are used for various programs, including education, health, and economic empowerment. As a national zakat institution with a decree from the Ministry of Religion No. 90 of 2022, LAZISMU is committed to community empowerment through the utilization of zakat, infaq, waqf, and other charitable funds from various sources. LAZISMU does not accept any funds from illicit sources, such as those mentioned in the Indonesian Law No. 8 of 2010 on the Prevention and Eradication of Money Laundering. LAZISMU is dedicated to economic empowerment as a solution to poverty and social welfare issues. The zakat funds collected are distributed to finance productive skill activities, provide work capital, and assist initial needs. LAZISMU has several programs, including education, economy, social, health, and religious propagation. To attract public participation, LAZISMU employs creative and innovative methods in its program implementation. The funds collected by LAZISMU are used for various programs, including education, health, and economic empowerment (Ahmad, 2021).

2. Implementation of LAZISMU DIY Educational Programs

a. Educational Pillar Programs of LAZISMU

Education is one of the pillars of the nation in building its progress. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education is a deliberate and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students can actively develop their potential to have the necessary skills for themselves and society, including religious, emotional, and spiritual strength. The aim of education is to fully develop individuals who are faithful and pious to the Almighty God, noble, knowledgeable and skilled, physically and mentally healthy, strong and independent, with a sense of social and ethnic responsibility (Ahmad, 2021). Every citizen has the right to education, as stated in Article 31, Paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution, which is a constitutional mandate that must be implemented by the government. However, its implementation has not received maximum attention due to limited budget and the large population spread across Indonesia from Sabang to Merauke (Machfudz, 2020).

Therefore, philanthropic institutions like LAZISMU need to fill the gaps left by the government's attention to participate in educating a progressive nation through education. Education becomes the primary priority of LAZISMU in breaking the poverty chain and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of quality education. Below are the educational pillar programs of LAZISMU:

1) Sang Surya Scholarship

This initiative aims to increase access to higher quality education by providing opportunities for economically disadvantaged but high-achieving youth to pursue quality higher education. Assistance includes tuition fees for diplomas and bachelor's degrees at private or public universities, provided for one year or more, covering tuition, living expenses during the study period, or final project costs.

2) Mentari Scholarship

This social concern movement ensures the continuity of education through a caregiving pattern in the form of scholarships. Assistance includes scholarships for students in primary, secondary, and high school or equivalent, covering monthly or semester tuition fees adjusted to the student's education level and other needs such as transportation, books, and living expenses.

3) Peduli Guru

This social and educational movement aims to improve the quality and welfare of honorary, religious, and volunteer teachers. The program provides capacity-building or appreciation (welfare) for the dedication and service of teachers to Indonesian children's

education by offering training, economic empowerment, reference books, and teacher allowances.

4) Save Our School

This initiative combines the development of teaching systems, infrastructure, quality improvement of resources, and scholarships to improve school management and educational output. The program aims to save physically damaged schools in remote areas and schools in disaster-prone locations through the construction, repair, and addition of minor educational facilities using the Integrated Development for Education (IDE) approach.

5) Muhammadiyah Scholarship Preparation Program (MSPP)

This initiative aims to improve the quality of Muhammadiyah Aisyiyah Higher Education (PTMA) cadres/activists and lecturers from across Indonesia to study abroad. The program provides selected cadres from across Indonesia the opportunity to attend foreign language training and enhance their Islamic, Muhammadiyah, and national character and insight to become agents of enlightening and progressive Islamic propagation.

6) LAZISMU Goes To Campus/ School

This program empowers youth based on campuses or communities to increase participation in exploring creative ideas on campus and formulating community empowerment and entrepreneurship-based social innovations to eradicate or reduce the impact of poverty. The participatory empowerment program is based on campuses or communities to explore creative, innovative ideas targeting communities as part of poverty alleviation or reduction efforts (Dianti, 2017).

The goals of these educational pillar programs are as follows Provide education funding to ensure the continuity of education programs for the underprivileged/poor as an intergenerational responsibility, prepare the next generation with deep knowledge and noble character, engage the community (internal and external Muhammadiyah) in the "Revive the Independent & Progressive Generation" campaign.

b. Implementation of LAZISMU Educational Pillar Programs

1) Planning

Planning is the first step that must be taken before starting an activity. An activity should begin with good planning to ensure the entire process runs smoothly. Planning involves formulating what will be done in the future, usually after setting the goals to be achieved. Planning includes aspects such as determining costs, time, implementation guidelines, and the utilization of natural and human resources. These aspects must be carefully considered, taking into account the surrounding environment, potential impacts, success opportunities, and unforeseen circumstances. The success of an activity depends on the initial planning, and if not well-planned, the results may be ineffective and inefficient even if the goals are achieved (Arikunto & Cepi Abdul Jabar, 2009).

2) Evaluation

Mardapi in Widyoko states that evaluation can be viewed from its target, being either macro or micro. Macro evaluation targets the educational pillar programs, which aim to improve the pillars of education. Micro evaluation targets the programs implemented within the educational pillars at LAZISMU and the volunteers/staff responsible for running the programs. Ralph Tyler in Arikunto and Jabar defines program evaluation as a process to determine whether the educational pillar goals have been realized. Cronbach and Stufflebeam add that program evaluation is an effort to provide information to decision-makers. According to Arikunto and Jabar, program evaluation can be considered a form of research, specifically evaluative research. This type of research generally aims to determine the final outcome of a policy program, to recommend further policies based on past policies.

Discussion

This study aimed to describe the implementation of LAZISMU DIY's educational programs in improving education in Indonesia, focusing on their effectiveness and efficiency in enhancing the welfare of communities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Previous research highlights the vital role of education as a pillar for national development and a means to break the cycle of poverty (Ahmad, 2021; Machfudz, 2020). However, challenges such as limited access and financial constraints persist, necessitating interventions by philanthropic organizations like LAZISMU (Iqbal et al., 2020; Setyowati, 2017). LAZISMU's mission involves utilizing zakat, infaq, and shadaqah funds to support various educational, health, and economic empowerment programs (Ahmad, 2021).

The results of this study indicate that LAZISMU DIY effectively implements its educational programs through strategic planning and holistic approaches. Key programs include the Sang Surya Scholarship, Mentari Scholarship, Peduli Guru, Save Our School, Muhammadiyah Scholarship Preparation Program (MSPP), and LAZISMU Goes To Campus/School (Iqbal et al., 2020; Setyowati, 2017). These initiatives have demonstrated significant impacts, such as providing scholarships to economically disadvantaged students, improving teacher quality, and enhancing educational infrastructure (Machfudz, 2020; Setyowati, 2017). Notably, the holistic approach of combining financial aid with capacity-building activities ensures sustainable development in the education sector (Machfudz, 2020).

Comparing these findings with previous studies, the success of LAZISMU DIY aligns with the broader literature on the importance of strategic management and quality control in educational institutions (Cahyaningrum et al., 2024). The emphasis on holistic and community-engaged approaches resonates with findings from other philanthropic educational initiatives worldwide (Ma et al., 2020; Olaya et al., 2020). However, LAZISMU DIY's unique focus on integrating Islamic philanthropic principles offers a culturally tailored model that enhances its relevance and effectiveness in the local context (Bamualim & Bakar, 2005; Suwandi & Samri, 2022).

The significance of these findings lies in demonstrating how strategic philanthropic interventions can address educational disparities in developing countries. LAZISMU DIY's programs not only provide immediate financial relief but also foster long-term educational improvements by enhancing teacher quality and infrastructure (Machfudz, 2020; Setyowati, 2017). This multifaceted approach ensures that the benefits of educational philanthropy extend beyond immediate recipients to the broader community, creating a ripple effect of positive change (Machfudz, 2020). Nevertheless, caution is advised in interpreting these results, as the study's qualitative nature may limit the generalizability of its findings (Tohari & Machali, 2022).

The implications of this study are profound for policymakers and philanthropic organizations aiming to improve education in similar contexts. LAZISMU DIY's model provides a blueprint for effectively combining financial aid with capacity-building and community engagement to create sustainable educational outcomes (Iqbal et al., 2020; Suwandi & Samri, 2022). Future research should consider quantitative assessments to further validate these findings and explore the long-term impacts of such programs (Machfudz, 2020). Additionally, replicating this model in other regions could help identify contextual factors that influence the success of educational philanthropy (Setyowati, 2017).

In conclusion, the implementation of LAZISMU DIY's educational programs has significantly contributed to improving education in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. By addressing financial barriers and enhancing educational quality through holistic and community-driven approaches, these programs exemplify the potential of philanthropic initiatives in fostering educational equity (Ahmad, 2021; Setyowati, 2017). This study highlights the importance of strategic planning, capacity-building, and cultural relevance in designing effective educational interventions, providing valuable insights for future efforts in the field (Machfudz, 2020; Tohari & Machali, 2022).

Conclusion

This study aimed to describe the implementation of LAZISMU DIY's educational programs in improving education in Indonesia, focusing on their effectiveness and efficiency in enhancing the welfare of communities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The findings reveal that LAZISMU DIY's educational initiatives, including the Sang Surya Scholarship, Mentari Scholarship, Peduli Guru, Save Our School, Muhammadiyah Scholarship Preparation Program, and LAZISMU Goes To Campus/School, have significantly impacted the educational landscape by providing scholarships, improving teacher quality, and enhancing educational infrastructure. These programs have effectively addressed financial barriers and promoted long-term educational improvements through a holistic approach that combines financial aid with capacity-building activities.

The implications of these findings are substantial for policymakers and philanthropic organizations seeking to improve education in similar contexts. LAZISMU DIY's model demonstrates a successful integration of financial aid, capacity-building, and community engagement, creating sustainable educational outcomes. This approach not only provides immediate relief but also fosters long-term development in the education sector, highlighting the potential of philanthropic initiatives in addressing educational disparities. However, the study's qualitative nature suggests that further quantitative research is necessary to validate these findings and explore the long-term impacts of such programs.

Recognizing the limitations of this study, the qualitative approach may limit the generalizability of the findings, and future research should incorporate quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Additionally, there is a need to replicate this model in different regions to identify contextual factors influencing the success of educational philanthropy. By addressing these limitations, future studies can enhance our understanding of effective philanthropic strategies in education and contribute to the development of more robust and scalable interventions.

In conclusion, the implementation of LAZISMU DIY's educational programs has significantly contributed to improving education in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. These programs exemplify the potential of strategic philanthropic interventions in fostering educational equity and highlight the importance of combining financial support with capacity-building and community engagement. The study provides valuable insights for future efforts in the field, emphasizing the need for well-planned, holistic, and contextually relevant educational initiatives.

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