

Zakat Distribution in Improving the Well-being of Asnaf: A Conceptual Review

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ABSTRACT

Despite the potential of zakat as a poverty alleviation tool, Asnaf groups continue to face socio-economic challenges such as inability to meet their basic needs, digital gaps and entrepreneurial constraints. This article conceptually explores the role of zakat distribution in improving the well-being of the Asnaf based on two main approaches, namely traditional distribution and productive distribution. The traditional approach focuses on meeting basic needs such as food, shelter and health, while the productive approach emphasizes self-development, entrepreneurship education and long-term economic empowerment of the Asnaf. This study uses a qualitative design by analyzing the content of previous literature on the concept of zakat distribution, well-being and maqasid shariah. Data was purposefully collected from journal articles, reports from zakat institutions and relevant freelance studies, especially those published in the last decade. This article also presents a conceptual framework that incorporates the principles of maqasid shariah and well-being as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of zakat distribution. The findings show that the productive approach has greater potential to lift the asnaf out of persistent poverty and strengthen the overall well-being dimension. Suggestions are also made for zakat institutions to design a highly effective distribution strategy and develop a holistic well-being assessment tool.

Keywords: zakat distribution, asnaf well-being, maqasid shariah, economic empowerment, poverty.

INTRODUCTION

Zakat is one of the pillars of Islam that plays a role in the Islamic economic system in the distribution of wealth and eradication of poverty. . In Shariah terminology, zakat is a fixed share or quota of certain assets of a Muslim that must be given at the end of each year to the beneficiaries, namely the asnaf groups, which have been determined by Allah, the Exalted, with several conditions (Haron Din, 2015). Asnaf consists of eight groups, namely the poor, the amil, the converts, the ar-riqab (slaves), the al-gharimin (indebted), the fi sabilillah (people who fight in the way of Allah) and the ibnu sabil (travelers') As in the Word of Allah SWT means:

Indeed, the alms (zakat) are only for the needy, and the poor, and the amil (trustees) who administer them, and the converts whom they tame, and for the slaves who want to free themselves, and those who are in debt, and for (spending on) the way of Allah, and the travelers (whose decisions) are on a journey. (Such is) a decree from Allah. And (remember) Allah is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. (Surah at-Taubah, 9: 60)

Through the obligation to give a portion of wealth to this eight asnaf, zakat not only fulfils the basic needs of the poor and needy, but also acts as a socio-economic development mechanism that supports the stability of society. Zakat in Malaysia and other Islamic countries has traditionally focussed on short-term relief. However, this conventional approach is increasingly limited in its effectiveness due to the rising cost of living, post-pandemic economic pressures and limited access to education and healthcare services (Hasbulah, et al., 2022;

Hishamuddin et al., 2023). Therefore, zakat institutions need to consider a more sustainable, long-term support model and call for more strategic and impactful zakat administration (Mohd Alias et al., 2024), with a focus on empowering beneficiaries through entrepreneurship development and skills enhancement to ensure the long-term economic stability and self-reliance of the Asnaf group (Hasan & Noor, 2015).

Although the potential of zakat as a social well-being catalyst is widely recognised its implementation still encounters various limitations. Studies show that the short-term and poorly targeted distribution of zakat is often limited to financial support without breaking the cycle of poverty or reducing the asnaf's dependence on support (Abdul Hamid, Dahaman@Dahlan, Rofie, 2023; Zainon et al., 2022). This phenomenon is clearly evident in the state of Kedah, where the number of asnaf fakir and miskin continues to increase despite the zakat assistance provided, indicating the need for a more holistic and sustainable approach (Abdul Hamid et al., 2023). Issues with unbalanced collection, inadequate administration and lack of long-term empowerment programmes also limit the potential of zakat in improving social mobility and financial stability of the asnaf (Rosli et al., 2018; Shahar, Azhar & Aziz, 2022).

In Malaysia, agihan zakat is generally implemented through two approaches, namely the traditional and the productive. However, the effectiveness of these two approaches needs to be reassessed as the well-being of the asnaf encompasses multidimensional dimensions that are not only financial but also spiritual, health, educational and social. Therefore, integrating the maqasid shariah framework with the concept of multidimensional well-being becomes a crucial principle to analyse the impact of zakat holistically. This article aims to review the role of zakat distribution in improving the well-being of the asnaf through a conceptual approach based on maqasid shariah. By analyzing the differences in impact between traditional and productive approaches, this study aims to provide guidance to optimize the role of zakat as an effective tool of socio-economic transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Asnaf Well-being

Previous studies have investigated Asnaf wellbeing using different approaches. Mohamed Saladin and Nurul Amyra (2021) emphasise aspects of self-efficacy, physical activity and healthy eating habits as important elements to improve the physical and mental well-being of working Asnaf. The Islamic Philanthropy Model by Maymunah et al. (2020) focuses on the establishment of health and rehabilitation centres (PSRR) to improve the quality of life of asnaf and the B40 group. The EduKomEko model by Nor Hamiza and Ijlal (2024) also proves the effectiveness of integrating education, community support and economic assistance in raising awareness of financial management among asnaf in Melaka. However, most studies focus on the direct impact of the programmes without assessing the capacity of the institutions implementing them. The question of how structural weaknesses of the zakat institutions, such as operational constraints, lack of qualified staff and weak monitoring, affect the success of the planned programmes is still rarely investigated.

The Challenge of Entrepreneurship among Asnaf

Previous studies have also shown that the Asnaf group faces various challenges that prevent them from improving their standard of living through entrepreneurship. The main challenges include capital constraints, weaknesses in business management such as unsystematic financial records, labour shortages, and weaknesses in marketing and digital skills (Hamid, Ismail, Yunus, Norizan, & Palil, 2024; Wahid et al., 2024). Psychosocial factors such as lack of family support, low technological aptitude and fear of failure also affect entrepreneurial perseverance (Joremi et al., 2023). Financially, many asnaf do not have access to formal funding and rely on zakat institutions. Lack of financial records, lack of time and reliance on manual methods distort financial reporting and hinder further funding opportunities (Zahri, Adnan, Irfan, & Kashim, 2023; Wahid et al., 2024). The digital divide is also an obstacle, especially in non-urban Asnaf circles, where many lack the skills and confidence to use technology for business purposes (Ismail, Ahmad & Othman, 2023; Omar, 2023). In addition, the issue of home ownership is also a challenge where the Asnaf are unable to fulfil the requirements for financing due to financial literacy constraints and limited goodwill. Therefore, collaboration between Islamic financial institutions and religious councils is considered important to expand access to homeownership (Amin, 2024). The lack of continuous counselling and monitoring after the provision of aid also contributes to the

failure of zakat-based entrepreneurial projects. This shows that the capacity of zakat institutions needs to be strengthened to create a comprehensive ecosystem for business support.

The Impact of Zakat Development Program on the well-being of Asnaf

Previous studies have shown that productive zakat programmes, especially those that focus on entrepreneurship development and capital support, play an important role in improving the well-being of Asnaf, especially economically and spiritually. In Indonesia, the programme implemented by Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) has proven to be successful in increasing asnaf income, reducing poverty and improving spiritual well-being. For example, a study by Sutrisno et al. (2022) reported a 26.3% increase in the income of BAZNAS Yogyakarta beneficiaries, while a study by Sinta Octavia and Faizal (2024) also confirmed the role of productive zakat in improving the living standards of mustahik.

In Malaysia, the Selangor Zakat Board (LZS) and the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP) have introduced microfinance and entrepreneurship training programmes to help beneficiaries become zakat payers. However, the results still depend on the efficiency of administration, selection of participants and continuous monitoring (Mohamed et al., 2019; Meerangani, 2019). The effectiveness of this programme is also affected by the inefficiency of zakat distribution, which can affect public confidence in the payment of zakat to zakat institutions. To ensure the effectiveness of the programme and to strengthen public confidence in Zakat institutions in Malaysia, the performance of zakat distribution needs to be measured and evaluated.

The Concept of Well-being in Islam

Islam emphasises well-being as a comprehensive concept (al-falah) that involves a balance between spiritual, material and social well-being. Well-being in Islam is not limited to worldly happiness but also includes success in the hereafter (Rizvi & Pasha-Zaidi, 2021). It is based on maqasid shariah, which aims to preserve five basic things (al-dharuriyat al-khams), namely religion, life, spirit, progeny and property (al-Ghazali, 1993; Mohamed Saladin, Siti Nurul Akma & Siti Mariam, 2020). Islam emphasises the need to satisfy spiritual needs through worship and relationships with Allah SWT, as well as material needs. Well-being (hayat al-tayyibah) is achieved through the fulfilment of inner (peace of mind) and outer (economic security) needs (Mohamed Saladin et al., 2020). Al-Quran calls people to enjoy the blessings of the world without forgetting the hereafter. As the Word of Allah SWT which means:

And claim with the wealth which Allah has bestowed upon you the reward and happiness of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion (of necessities and provisions) from the world; and do good (to the servants of Allah) as Allah has done good to you (by bestowing His abundant favors); and do not do mischief on the earth; surely Allah does not like those who do mischief. (Surah al-Qasas 28:77)

In this regard, the collection of zakat must be seen not only as an instrument of charity, but also as a strategic tool to empower the asnaf groups in all dimensions of prosperity. This approach requires restructuring the basis of zakat collection to make it more comprehensive and sustainable, in line with the maqasid objectives of Shariah and the Islamic well-being framework.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted to investigate the role of zakat distribution in improving the well-being of asnaf groups by using a qualitative approach through the literature review method. This method was chosen because it provides the researcher with a deep understanding of the concept, practise and challenges of implementing zakat based on various valid and relevant secondary sources. The data was specifically collected from academic sources such as journal articles, working papers from conferences, annual reports from zakat institutions as well as relevant previous field studies. Sources published in the last ten years were favoured, especially empirical studies conducted in Malaysia and several other Islamic countries such as Indonesia.

Data analysis was conducted using the thematic content analysis method, which involves identifying, categorising and interpreting the main themes that emerge from the reference materials. The themes identified include the form of zakat distribution (traditional and productive), the effectiveness of implementation, the

impact on the well-being of the asnaf, and the survey strategies that were found to be effective. The analysis is based on two theoretical frameworks, namely Maqasid Shariah, which emphasises the preservation of five important aspects, namely religion, life, spirit, progeny and property, and multidimensional well-being theory, which includes material and non-material dimensions such as health, education, psychological stability and social relationships.

The study found that the productive zakat distribution approach, such as business capital support, entrepreneurship training and long-term economic projects, has a greater impact in improving the living standards and well-being of Asnaf groups than the traditional distribution, which is short-term and immediate aid. This study also shows that a holistically designed and implemented Zakat distribution strategy based on a developmental approach is able to contribute to the improvement of the Asnaf from an economic and social perspective. The study suggests that zakat institutions should adopt a more comprehensive productive distribution approach that takes into account the principles of Maqasid Sharia and multidimensional well-being needs in order to achieve a sustainable impact on the lives of the Asnaf.

Conceptual Framework

Maqasid Shariah as a principle of wellbeing

The Maqasid Shariah framework emphasises five main principles, namely the preservation of religion (al-din), life (al-nafs), reason (al-'aql), progeny (al-nasl) and property (al-mal) (Chapra, 2007). These five principles form the basis for formulating a zakat distribution strategy that is not only charitable but can also trigger value-orientated development. The preservation of intellect (al-'aql), for example, can be implemented through education and qualification programmes. The preservation of property (al-mal) is implemented through capital assistance, training for entrepreneurs and micro-protection programmes (Kurnia et al., 2020; Ariyani, 2016). Each of these maqasid objectives can be operationalised through specific and measurable well-being indicators. Each of these principles reflects an important well-being aspect of human life and provides a value base for the strategic and effective collection of zakat. This approach emphasises the need to harmonise spiritual and material needs in order to achieve holistic well-being.

Theory of multidimensional wellbeing

Well-being is a multidimensional and complex concept that involves an assessment of an individual's or community's life satisfaction, which is influenced by the ability to fulfil basic needs and fulfil one's potential (Shir, Nikolaev & Wincent, 2019). Definitions of wellbeing vary depending on cultural context, specialism and theoretical perspective, but generally encompass a combination of interrelated physical, mental, social and economic elements (Rusk, 2022; Seligman, 2011). The multidimensional theory of well-being recognises that well-being is a complex and multi-layered concept that cannot be fully measured by a single indicator. The PERMA model is a framework for well-being that includes five main elements: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Transport, Meaning and Achievement. The model is multidimensional and has strong interrelationships between its components, with each domain contributing uniquely to overall well-being (Jimenez et al., 2023). This model, used in contemporary studies of well-being, is also compatible with the Islamic approach to a life of well-being (hayat tayyibah). By combining spiritual, social, economic and psychological dimensions, the Islamic approach to well-being directly supports the integration of the maqasid shariah framework with the modern theory of well-being.

The Relationship between Maqasid Shariah and Multidimensional Wellbeing

The concept of Maqasid Shariah is increasingly gaining prominence in academic and secular discourse as a holistic framework for understanding and evaluating wellbeing in life. As the primary objective of Islamic legislation, Maqasid Shariah offers a holistic approach that encompasses material, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions and is in line with the requirements of value-based and humanitarian development. Merging the Maqasid Shariah framework with modern well-being theory enables the development of a more comprehensive and relevant assessment tool. It forms the basis for a holistic and long-term result-orientated strategy proposal for zakat distribution. The Maqasid Shariah framework emphasises five main principles that

reflect the basic human needs for a life of prosperity, namely:

1. Upholding religion (al-Din): Contributing to spiritual and moral well-being by satisfying spiritual needs and leading a life based on revelation (Rasool, Irpan & Ali, 2023; Khalid et al., 2021).
2. The preservation of life (al-Nafs): Includes aspects of physical health, safety and protection from threats which are fundamental to human survival (Fauzi, Zikry & Agustar, 2024; Abdul Rahman, Mohamad & Azzis, 2022).
3. The preservation of the intellect (al-'Aql): Refers to education, intellectual development and mental health as essential conditions for social and individual balance (Zainudin et al., 2023; Harun, 2023).
4. The maintenance of lineage (al-Nasl): Includes the stability of family institutions, family values and harmonious social relationships as the basis for a prosperous society (Tuan Sayed Amran, Rasool & Ali, 2019; Fauzi et al., 2024).
5. Preservation of property (al-Mal): Emphasises aspects of economic security, financial empowerment and poverty eradication as key components of a dignified and resilient life (Khalid et al., 2021; Abdul Rahman et al., 2022).

Well-being not only focuses on material needs such as income, education and housing, but also includes non-material elements such as emotional stability, social relationships and spiritual fulfilment. The concept of the good life in Islam emphasises the importance of balancing the outer and inner dimensions in shaping a meaningful and quality life (Rasool et al., 2023; Tuan Sayed Amran et al., 2019). In the context of measuring well-being, the use of Maqasid Shariah has brought an alternative approach that is more comprehensive than conventional methods, which are usually materialistic in nature. This approach broadens the scope of the assessment by including spiritual, intellectual and social dimensions as important elements in determining the level of quality of life (Rabe et al., 2017; Khalid et al., 2021). Furthermore, integrating the Maqasid Shariah framework into the social and economic foundations allows issues of poverty and inequality to be addressed in a more comprehensive manner. It provides a solid value base for designing policies based on justice, social responsibility and general well-being (Abdul Rahman et al., 2022). Taken together, Maqasid Shariah offers a holistic, value- based and justice-based approach to well-being. The combination of Maqasid Shariah and multidimensional well-being theory forms a balanced approach between spiritual values and worldly needs. This approach not only fills the gap between concept and implementation, but also enables the development of a more holistic asnaf well-being assessment tool, in line with Islamic values and current needs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Zakat in Improving Asnaf Well-Being

Zakat plays an important role in liberating the Asnaf from the shackles of poverty and improving their well-being holistically by encompassing economic, social and spiritual aspects. Effective zakat approaches, whether traditional or productive, can have a long-term impact on the living standards of the Asnaf and contribute to the development of a more prosperous and inclusive society.

Zakat helps to fulfil basic needs

Zakat plays an important role in supporting the Asnaf, especially the needy. It serves as a financial resource that can be used to fulfil the basic needs of life such as food, clothing, shelter and education. Thus, al- Qaradawi (1926) emphasised that zakat is a very important tool in the collection of wealth to eradicate poverty and provide financial support to the needy, especially the asnaf. Zakat also plays a role in reducing the financial burden on those who face difficulties in life. Zakat plays a role in fulfilling the basic needs of the asnaf groups such as food, shelter and basic services. Harun & Farhan (2018) and Abu Bakar & Ghani (2011) stated that financial assistance from zakat helps asnaf accommodate daily expenses and improve quality of life. In the health sector, zakat is also used to help the poor get medical treatment, while improving physical and psychological well-being (Mohd Alias et al., 2024).

Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship

In addition to fulfilling basic needs, the productive distribution of zakat has shown potential in lifting asnaf out of poverty. According to al-Khin, al-Bugha & al-Syarbaji (2009), zakat helps close the economic gap in society. Zakat is also able to stimulate economic growth and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources. Zakat assistance is provided in the form of capital to help asnaf start businesses. For example, zakat-funded entrepreneurship programs in Malaysia and Indonesia have been successful in helping recipients generate income and reach the level of self-sufficiency (Rosalina & Bahri, 2022; Haron, Hassan, Jasni & Rahman, 2010). This empowerment is more effective when it involves non- cash assistance such as business capital, equipment and entrepreneurship training.

Improving Access to Education and Training

Zakat plays a role in improving the well-being of asnaf by providing funds for education and skills training. Poverty is difficult to reduce by only providing basic necessities because it is very important for zakat institutions to educate, guide, and develop asnaf based on their potential. Through zakat, asnaf are given the opportunity to improve their skills which paves the way to employment opportunities or starting a business. Zakat plays an important role in supporting the education sector through three main approaches, namely the provision of scholarships and financial assistance to students from poor families to reduce poverty (Said, 2023), the improvement of educational infrastructure in remote areas (Hidayanti et al., 2023) and the implementation of vocational training programs, teacher development, entrepreneurship and psychosocial support to empower recipients towards a more independent life (Aziz et al., 2025).

Improving the Social Well-being of Asnaf

Zakat plays an important role in improving the social well-being of the asnaf. Zakat can help reduce the feeling of marginalization among the poor, by providing them with moral and financial support. It gives the asnaf the opportunity to interact with society in a positive context and gives them a sense of being valued and accepted in society. Zakat is able to reduce feelings of marginalization and improve their social relations which directly contributes to better social integration. Cooperative management of zakat, including cooperation with mosques and other institutions, increases the impact on social well-being and community development (Ali et al., 2023). In countries such as Jordan, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, zakat

is used to finance social protection measures, with the effect varying depending on the method of citation and the involvement of the government (Al-Salih, 2020). Through zakat assistance, the asnaf feel the support of society, which reduces their feelings of alienation and improves their social relations.

Zakat Helps in Health Needs

Zakat assistance in the health sector plays an important role in improving access and quality of life of the asnaf and the poor. Zakat plays a role in fulfilling the health needs of asnaf especially for those who are unable to afford the cost of treatment or medicine needed. Zakat assistance used to cover medical expenses not only has a positive impact on the physical well-being of the asnaf, but also gives them the opportunity to get the treatment they need without having to worry about the financial burden, including free treatment, ambulance services, and assistance to patients without health insurance (Kefeli et al., 2017; Alias et al., 2024). In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, zakat institutions channeled anxiety relief to ease the burden of the affected people, including medical assistance and living necessities (Hambari et al., 2020).

Zakat Distribution: Traditional vs Productive

Zakat distribution is an important component of the Islamic economic system that aims to reduce inequality and eradicate poverty among the asnaf groups. The effectiveness of zakat disbursement is highly dependent on the implementation of a well-designed strategy, responsive to current needs, and based on shariah principles and good management. Effective implementation includes targeting approach, economic empowerment, use of digital technology and program adjustment based on local socioeconomic context. There are two main approaches in the implementation of this distribution, namely traditional and productive distribution, each of

which differs in terms of implementation philosophy, timeframe objectives and its impact on the well-being of the recipient asnaf (mustahiq).

Traditional Zakat Distribution

Zakat distribution traditionally refers to the direct provision of cash or basic goods such as food, clothing, and shelter needs. This approach focuses on the immediate relief of mustahiq's daily needs especially in situations of anxiety or poverty (Muharom, 2010; Rashid & Sulaiman, 2020; Harisah & Zainulloh, 2019). While able to reduce financial burdens in the short term, this approach is passive in terms of economic development as it is not designed to produce structural change or improve the recipients' self-reliance (Kalbarini & Tergyesa, 2023). Among the main constraints of this agihan is the inability to create a sustainable economic transformation among the mustahiq. The absence of development elements causes them to remain in a cycle of dependency, while hindering the process of transition from recipient to zakat payer (Harisah & Zainulloh, 2019; Ali, Amalia & Ayyubi, 2016).

Productive Zakat Distribution

In contrast to the productive approach, the productive distribution of zakat emphasizes economic empowerment through the provision of resources such as capital, equipment, skills training and business support facilities. The main goal is to build the self-reliance of mustahiq so that they are able to generate income and be able to get out of poverty (Ismail & Hussain, 2017; Jauhari & Wijaya, 2023). The implementation of productive zakat can be carried out through various approaches, among others, the provision of equipment or production assets (Muharom, 2010; Ismail & Hussain, 2017), useless transfer funds (al-qard al-hasan) (Jauhari & Wijaya, 2023), profit sharing based on Mudharabah or Musyarakah (Muharom, 2010), business capital assistance and entrepreneurship training for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and community-based development models such as productive village projects (Sahman et al., 2023). In addition, various empirical studies have found that productive approaches have the potential to increase household income, education levels, and mustahiq health status more effectively, compared to traditional approaches (Ali et al., 2016).

Zakat capital assistance has proven instrumental in promoting business growth among asnaf entrepreneurs, enhancing their economic resilience and gradually reducing poverty. By providing essential financial resources and entrepreneurial support, these programs not only improve income levels but also facilitate the transition of recipients (mustahiq) into zakat payers (muzakki), thereby fulfilling the transformative objectives of zakat distribution (Zahri et al., 2023; Rosalina & Bahri, 2022). Indonesia's Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) has emerged as a successful regional model for implementing productive zakat. Through programs such as Zakat Community Development (ZCD), BAZNAS combines capital provision with entrepreneurial training, close monitoring, and collaboration with Islamic financial institutions. For example, in Yogyakarta, the mustahiq economic empowerment program showed a 26.3% increase in household income within one year (Sutrisno et al., 2022). BAZNAS also provided an impact measurement model based on economic, spiritual, and social dimensions, and developed a digital information system to monitor recipient performance (Fadilah et al., 2020). These programs not only focus on economic aspects, but also aim to improve the social and spiritual well-being of the community, making zakat a holistic empowerment tool. Although both forms of distribution have their own role in meeting the needs of the asnaf, productive zakat shows a more lasting and transformative impact.

The Need for Reform in the Zakat Distribution Model

Both main approaches to zakat distribution — namely the traditional and productive approaches — are indeed beneficial to the asnaf. However, productive zakat is seen as more effective because it enables the asnaf to generate income and achieve long-term self-sufficiency, compared to the traditional approach that only provides temporary immediate assistance. The combination of these two approaches is important to meet short-term needs while simultaneously stimulating long-term growth (Mukadar, Bahrin, Sinta, & Setiorini, 2022; Arifin & Purnamasari, 2022).

While the traditional approach is still relevant in emergency situations, continued reliance on consumptive assistance can pose the risk of "aid addiction" among the asnaf. Therefore, comprehensive reforms need to be implemented to strengthen the role of zakat as an instrument of sustainable development. Among the proposed

strategic reforms are the restructuring of distribution based on results using impact indicators such as increased income and employment status, empowerment of the asnaf entrepreneurship through training, capital and market access, and the development of institutional capacity and professionalism of the amil. In addition, the zakat distribution system needs to be digitalised to increase efficiency and transparency, while policy reforms at the national level are crucial to standardise standards and best practices across the country. is used to finance social protection measures, with the effect varying depending on the method of citation and the involvement of the government (Al-Salih, 2020). Through zakat assistance, the asnaf feel the support of society, which reduces their feelings of alienation and improves their social relations.

Maqasid Shariah framework provides a comprehensive value foundation for assessing human well-being, covering five main components: preservation of religion (al-Din), life (al-Nafs), reason (al-‘Aql), lineage (al-Nasl), and wealth (al-Mal). To ensure that zakat distribution truly achieves the Shariah goals in practice, these principles need to be translated into indicators that can be empirically and consistently assessed.

Challenges and Improvement Strategies

The distribution of zakat is one of the important mechanisms in the effort to reduce poverty and improve the well-being of the asnaf groups. However, its implementation is still faced with various challenges. Among them are the continuous dependence of recipients on aid, complicated bureaucratic processes, weaknesses in monitoring, and inconsistent service quality (Abdul Hamid et al., 2023). These challenges have reduced the effectiveness of zakat as a tool to bring about overall socioeconomic change. Therefore, reforms in the management structure and distribution strategy of zakat are urgently needed so that the aid distributed actually reaches the target group efficiently and effectively.

The role of institutions is very important in ensuring that zakat distribution can be managed properly. First, the strengthening of governance aspects such as transparency, accountability, and clear division of duties can increase public trust. These corporate management practices can also ensure that the management of zakat funds is in line with the Maqasid Shariah principles, and avoid any misuse of resources (Irmawati et al., 2025). Secondly, the improvement of staff skills through regular training and strengthening of the monitoring team can enhance the professionalism of the service. In addition, an effective complaint system and community involvement in the agihan process can help ensure transparency and fairness (Lubis & Amsari, 2023).

The advancement of digital technology also plays a big role in improving the zakat distribution system. The use of specialized applications for real-time quotation, distribution, and monitoring of funds can increase transparency and accelerate the process of delivering assistance (Gustianda et al., 2024). In addition, social media and digital platforms are also used to increase awareness, facilitate requests, and accelerate the distribution of assistance to asnaf (Suhartoyo & Fauzan, 2024). The distribution approach also needs to be adapted to local needs. Cooperation between zakat institutions, government, NGOs and communities can increase the effectiveness of zakat programs. For example, the microtakaful scheme introduced by Rosli et al. (2018) shows that zakat has the potential to help foster the economic independence of asnaf through continuous protection and support.

To ensure greater impact, zakat distribution strategies need to be holistic. A combination of immediate relief and economic empowerment programs such as skills training, education, and microfinance can help asnaf escape poverty and become more self-sufficient. The efficacy of this strategy depends on integrated management, innovative management, and understanding of local conditions. This comprehensive approach not only solves short-term problems, but also makes zakat an important instrument in building economic resilience and community well-being in a holistic manner. This strategy is also in line with the Maqasid Shariah principle which emphasizes the importance of maintaining the overall virtue of life, including aspects of property, life, mind, offspring and religion.

CONCLUSIONS

The distribution of zakat plays a significant role in improving the well-being of the asnaf groups. However, the effectiveness of its implementation is highly dependent on a holistic and strategic approach. A comparison

between traditional and productive approaches shows that productive zakat offers greater potential for creating economic independence and long-term development, compared to the temporary assistance that is often used. The combination of traditional and productive zakat distribution needs to be organized based on the Maqasid Shariah framework and a well-being multidimensional approach that includes economic, educational, health, social and spiritual aspects. The efficiency of the management, the precise targeting of assistance, and the use of digital technology are important elements in ensuring that zakat management is more transparent, responsive and effective.

The combination of the Maqasid Shariah framework with multidimensional well-being theory provides a solid foundation for developing a comprehensive and relevant zakat impact assessment instrument. In addition, collaboration between zakat institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as local communities should be strengthened to ensure that zakat distribution programs are more comprehensive, relevant and impactful. Emphasis on empowerment programs such as skills training, financial education, and psychosocial support is also important to build asnaf's ability to get out of the cycle of poverty and achieve self-reliance. Concerning that, further studies are suggested to assess the effectiveness of various productive zakat distribution models implemented in different local contexts, including community-based approaches and digital initiatives. Longitudinal studies are also urgently needed to trace the long-term impact of zakat distribution on the well-being of the asnaf in an integrated and sustainable manner.

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