



Community Economic Independence through Menthok Livestock Cultivation: A Case Study of the LAZISNU East Java Productive Zakat Program

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Abstract: Poverty remains a major economic challenge in Indonesia, particularly in East Java, where the poverty rate exceeds the national average. In the context of Islamic economics, zakat is not only a form of worship but also an instrument for poverty alleviation and empowerment. This study aims to analyze the implementation of productive zakat through the duck (menthok) farming program initiated by LAZISNU East Java and its impact on the economic independence of mustahik. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews with program managers, observations, and documentation related to beneficiaries. The findings reveal that the program provides productive assets such as ducks, feed, and cages, accompanied by regular mentoring. This approach enables the ability to develop entrepreneurial skills, increase self-confidence, and generate sustainable income. The choice of menthok farming is considered appropriate due to community familiarity, environmental suitability, and market potential. Although the program is still relatively new, initial results indicate positive behavioral changes and a shift from dependency toward independence. In conclusion, productive zakat programs such as menthok farming have significant potential to empower mustahik economically and gradually transform them into muzakki in the future

Keywords: Economic Independence; livestock cultivation; Productive Zakat

Introduction

Poverty is a persistent problem in the Indonesian economy. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of poor people in Indonesia has shown a downward trend over the past three years. In March 2023, the number of poor people was recorded at 25.9 million, or approximately 9.4% of the total population. A year later, in March 2024, the poverty rate in Indonesia decreased to 24.2 million, or approximately 8.8% of the total population. This decline continued in March 2025, with the number of poor people recorded at 23.85 million, or approximately 8.5%. (Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 2025) This trend demonstrates improvements in the national economy, but the figures still indicate that tens of millions of people still live below the poverty line. In East Java province, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded the number of poor people at 3.84 million, or approximately 9.5% of the province's population. (Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 2025) Given the continued high number of poor people in Indonesia, particularly in East Java province, where the number is higher than the national average, instruments are needed to alleviate poverty. One such

instrument is zakat, which can help reduce poverty and achieve prosperity within the Islamic economy.

The concept of zakat management is divided into consumptive and productive zakat. Productive zakat is the opposite concept to consumptive zakat. In this context, zakat funds or assets given to the mustahiq are not intended for direct consumption. Instead, these funds are developed and utilized to support their business activities. Thus, through these efforts, the mustahiq can achieve sustainable fulfillment of their living needs. (Safradji, 2018) Productive zakat is zakat given to those who are entitled to it and is not simply used up; instead, it is developed and used to support their businesses so that they can continue to meet their living needs. (Ningsih, 2022) Productive zakat is defined as the provision of zakat funds to certain individuals or communities to be managed as capital in economic activities that can improve welfare. (Komariah & Damayanti, 2015). Consumptive zakat directly helps meet the basic needs of those who mustahik (the beneficiaries) such as food, clothing, and healthcare. However, the concept of consumptive zakat is less effective because it only addresses short-term problems. Unlike consumptive zakat, productive zakat aims to stimulate the economic well-being of those who mustahik (the beneficiaries) through business capital, skills training, and other economic activities. This productive zakat concept is certainly more efficient than consumptive zakat, as it provides long-term benefits, helping those who mustahik achieve economic independence and escape poverty. (Safradji, 2018).

To reduce the number of unemployed in Indonesia, the government or social institutions can do something to stop unemployment by providing funds to those who are unemployed and do not have jobs to receive physical and mental training to meet their living needs in the future. (Faris Zubairi & Maulana Asegaf, 2022). One form of productive zakat implementation in East Java is the Menthok livestock cultivation program created by LAZISNU East Java. In this program, the institution provides capital assistance in the form of Menthok livestock seeds to mustahik and also assistance during the maintenance and marketing process (LAZISNU East Java, 2025). The results of this Menthok cultivation are expected to become a source of sustainable income and encourage economic independence for the poor. This factor makes Menthok livestock more prospective than other types of livestock that require additional skills or resources that are not necessarily mastered by the local community. Thus, this program not only provides assistance in the form of productive assets, but also optimizes local potential to be more efficient and sustainable.

Economic independence is the ability of a person or group to meet their own needs without relying on other parties. (Nurul Komariyah & Alan Su'ud Ma'adi, 2024). In Islamic economics, this independence is crucial because the mustahik should not be eternally dependent on zakat, but rather should be guided to develop into muzakki (payers of zakat). This is where productive zakat plays a significant role, as it is not only given for consumptive needs, but also in the form of business capital, training, or productive assets that can be managed sustainably. This aligns with the view that zakat is not merely an obligatory act of worship, but also a social obligation to help the poor, to create social and economic balance. Furthermore, its goal is to create prosperity,

security, and peace. Through the productive use of zakat, the mustahik are encouraged to own their own businesses, make bold economic decisions, and improve their standard of living. Thus, productive zakat not only alleviates temporary burdens but also becomes a tangible means to achieve community economic independence.

This research is crucial to determine the impact of the Muscovy duck farming program on the economic independence of its recipients. Therefore, this study aims to analyze its implementation and examine how Muscovy duck farming at LAZISNU East Java contributes to increasing community economic independence. The results are expected to provide suggestions for developing a more effective productive zakat plan in the future

Theoretical Basis

Productive Zakat

In Islam, zakat is wealth that is distributed to those classified as one of the eight categories of people. Zakat is obligatory when assets reach the nishab and haul threshold. The primary purpose of zakat is to elevate the status of the poor, help them escape the cycle of poverty, and change their status from mustahik to muzakki. (Mutmainnah, nd) Zakat can also be used as a means to improve the standard of living of the poor, which in turn will improve their health, performance, and productivity. (Fuad et al., 2025). In addition to serving as a means of economic development, zakat also serves to purify the wealth of those who pay zakat. Zakat not only serves as a channel for economic gain and ownership of economic resources, but also plays a role in productive activities for the lower classes. (Dikuraisyin & Dewi, 2021).

Zakat utilization encompasses various mutually supportive activities aimed at achieving the goal of utilizing zakat funds appropriately and in accordance with Islamic sharia principles. The concept of utilization emphasizes methods and efforts to ensure zakat yields maximum and productive results. The ultimate goal is to make zakat a vehicle for socio-economic transformation, enabling zakat recipients (mustahik) to become zakat payers (muzakki). (Musa, 2020). Productive zakat is the use of zakat funds distributed to mustahik with the aim of developing them in the long term to help the mustahik's economy, such as business capital and training. (Musa, 2020) This concept of productive zakat is certainly superior to consumptive zakat, as it provides sustainable benefits that can drive the economic well-being of those who mustahik (receiver). Because it contributes to sustainable economic development, it can also transform the status of mustahik into muzakki (receiver of zakat) in the future.

Productive zakat is considered more effective than consumptive zakat because it provides sustainable benefits and has the potential to drive the economy of those entitled to it. If zakat is managed properly, it can improve community welfare, reduce unemployment, and reduce the number of poor people. (Mustofa & Yahya, nd). To maximize the use of zakat, zakat literature states that capital provided should not only be in the form of cash. It can also be provided in the form of production facilities that can be used directly by the recipient, such as sewing machines, agricultural equipment, carpentry tools, workshops, work skills, and even plant seeds and livestock. (Musa, 2020). Zakat must be developed as a productive endeavor that must be carried out

sustainably, as this effort can achieve its objectives more efficiently. Therefore, productive zakat can serve as a driving force for achieving these goals: realizing social justice, alleviating poverty, and empowering the Muslim economy. This shows that productive zakat will essentially be more effective if it is realized in the form of business assets that can be immediately used for economic activities, so that mustahik has a greater opportunity to be independent and generate income sustainably.

According to Mahzumi, one productive zakat distribution model is the In Kind model, which provides zakat in the form of business assets such as livestock. This model offers the advantage of easy direct asset utilization by the mustahik, although it still carries the risk of failure if not accompanied by adequate guidance. In addition to the In Kind model, there are also the Qardhul Hasan and Mudharabah models, but in practice the In Kind model is more widely used in livestock-based empowerment programs because it is considered more appropriate to the characteristics and needs of mustahik.

Productive zakat has a clear legal basis, as outlined in laws and religious fatwas. Article 27 of Law No. 23 of 2011 concerning zakat utilization states that, in order to overcome poverty and improve the quality of life of the community, zakat can be managed productively. This statement demonstrates that zakat is not solely consumptive, but rather plays a strategic role in encouraging community economic empowerment. Furthermore, MUI Fatwa No. 23 of 2020 permits the distribution of zakat not only in consumptive forms such as cash or basic necessities. Zakat can also be given in the form of working capital and business capital according to the needs of the mustahik. This demonstrates that zakat not only functions as an instrument for fulfilling basic needs but can also be a means of economic development for the community. Thus, productive zakat programs such as the cultivation of Muscovy ducks initiated by LAZISNU East Java have a clear legal basis and are relevant as an effort to encourage community economic independence.

Economic Independence

Independence is essentially understood as an individual's ability to manage themselves and make decisions without excessive dependence on others. From a psychosocial perspective, independence relates to freedom of action, the ability to care for one's own needs, and responsibility for the choices made. (Arwani & Masrur, 2022). Although the concept of independence has psychological, social, and moral dimensions, in the context of this research independence is focused on the economic aspect.

Economic independence is defined as the ability of an individual or group to meet their living needs through independently and sustainably managed economic activities. For those who mustahik (beneficiaries), economic independence means the ability to utilize assistance received, whether in the form of capital, assets, or skills, to run a productive business, eliminating continued dependence on consumer assistance. The process of achieving this independence is not instantaneous, but involves stages of

learning, mentoring, and a shift in mindset from recipient to entrepreneur.(Arwani & Masrur, 2022).

According to Priambodo, economic independence has several indicators, including:

1. The existence of a business or job that is managed economically;
2. Having a sense of self-confidence in carrying out economic activities, such as trading, home industry, or entrepreneurship;
3. Involvement in long-term economic activities that provide sustainable economic strength; and
4. The courage to take economic risks, for example taking on debt with realistic calculations or daring to take advantage of business opportunities.

These indicators show that economic independence is not only measured by income, but also by the individual's economic attitudes and behavior. (Nurul Komariyah & Alan Su'ud Ma'adi, 2024).

In the context of productive zakat, economic independence does not necessarily mean that the beneficiary is immediately removed from the category of zakat recipients. Independence is better understood as a process of increasing economic capacity, characterized by the ability to manage a business, maintain sustainable income, and reduce dependence on short-term assistance. Productive zakat serves as an economic empowerment instrument that provides access to capital, business assets, and mentoring, giving the beneficiary the opportunity to build a business independently.(Safradji, 2018).

Community empowerment is a crucial element in achieving economic independence. Through empowerment, communities are given access to resources, skills, and economic opportunities that enable them to actively participate in development.(Antonius Ary Setyawan et al., 2025).In the context of zakat, empowerment is aimed at developing work ethics, skills, the ability to think in a solution-oriented way, and the economic responsibility of the mustahik.(Nurdin et al., 2018).

Productive zakat programs, such as the Muscovy duck farming program initiated by LAZISNU East Java, are concrete examples of zakat-based empowerment. The beneficiaries not only receive assistance but are also provided with productive assets and mentoring to manage economically valuable livestock businesses. This approach enables zakat to function not only as a means of fulfilling basic needs but also as a driving force for economic development, fostering gradual and sustainable economic independence for the beneficiaries.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the implementation of the productive zakat program, namely muscovy duck farming, and its role in fostering the economic independence of those entitled to receive alms. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding the meaning, process, and experiences of the research subjects through direct interaction with the researcher (Setyosari, 2010).

The case study research type was used because this research specifically examines a productive zakat program run by LAZISNU East Java, thus enabling researchers to gain a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Rahardjo (2017) states that a case study is a series of scientific activities carried out intensively and in-depth on a particular program, event, or activity to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. In this research, the case study focuses on the productive zakat program "Menthok Livestock Cultivation" implemented in the NU Integrated Village.

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The research location was the NU Integrated Village in Girimulyo Village, Gedangan District, Malang Regency, as the implementation location for the Muscovy duck livestock cultivation program, and the East Java LAZISNU office as the program management agency. This location was chosen based on the consideration that the NU Integrated Village is an integrated empowerment area for the poor and needy, who are the primary targets of the productive zakat program.

NO	Type of Informant	The Role of Informants
1	Program Manager	Management and Mentoring
2	Program Manager	Management and Mentoring
3	Mustahik	Program Beneficiaries
4	Mustahik	Program Beneficiaries
5	Mustahik	Program Beneficiaries
6	Mustahik	Program Beneficiaries

Informant Table

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on their direct involvement in the program. The informants consisted of managers of the productive zakat program at LAZISNU East Java and recipients of the muscovy duck farming program. The number of informants in this study was six, consisting of two program managers and four recipients. This number is considered adequate for qualitative research because the data obtained had reached data saturation.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used to gather information on the program's background, zakat utilization mechanisms, forms of mentoring, and changes in the mustahik's economic well-being after participating in the program. Observations were conducted to directly observe the environmental conditions of the NU Integrated Village, the muscovy duck farming activities, and the mentoring and supervision processes carried out by the institution. Documentation included program data, activity photos, and mentoring records held by LAZISNU East Java.

The validity of the data in this study was ensured through source triangulation, which involved comparing information obtained from program managers and recipients of the program. Interview data was then corroborated with field observations and program documentation. This source triangulation approach was used to minimize potential social bias, particularly given the single-case study design, and to enhance the credibility of the research findings.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively using thematic analysis techniques, which include the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. (Pahleviannur et al., 2022) The collected data were classified into themes relevant to the concept of productive zakat and economic independence, then analyzed interpretively to understand the relationship between the implementation of the productive zakat program and changes in the economic independence of mustahik.

Results and Discussion

Based on interviews and field observations, the productive zakat program, which involves cultivating Muscovy ducks, run by LAZISNU East Java, is being implemented in the NU Integrated Village area of Girimulyo Village, Gedangan District, Malang Regency. This program aims to optimize the use of zakat funds to provide long-term economic benefits for those entitled to receive zakat, particularly the poor and needy who previously lacked shelter or a steady source of income.

The NU Integrated Village is an integrated empowerment area that provides decent housing for the poor and vacant land that can be used for productive activities. Geographically, this area is located in a semi-rural area with adequate land availability and natural food sources, supporting waterfowl farming activities such as muscovy

ducks. Access to traditional markets is relatively close, approximately 2–3 kilometers away, making it easy for those entitled to market their livestock.

This program targets the poor, or "mustahik," individuals who previously lacked housing, possessions, or income. The mustahik are provided with assistance in the form of housing, land use rights, ducks, fodder, and improved housing facilities. All assistance is provided without repayment, and the proceeds of their efforts belong entirely to the mustahik.

The program's implementation is also accompanied by regular weekly mentoring by the institution, in conjunction with religious study activities. This mentoring covers technical aspects of livestock maintenance as well as strengthening the motivation and discipline of the beneficiaries. Based on the institution's observations, most beneficiaries manage Muscovy ducks as an independent business and demonstrate positive behavioral changes, such as improved livestock skills, self-confidence, and business sustainability. Some beneficiaries have even begun increasing their livestock numbers from the profits earned, although the program is still in its early stages, so its long-term impact cannot yet be fully measured.

Discussion

Research findings indicate that the productive zakat program, in the form of Muscovy duck farming, run by LAZISNU East Java, aligns with the concept of utilizing productive zakat as an instrument of economic empowerment. Safradji explained that distributing zakat in the form of business capital or productive assets is more beneficial than consumer assistance because it can provide a sustainable source of livelihood for those entitled to receive it. (Safradji, 2018) This is reflected in the Muscovy duck livestock program, where zakat is distributed in the form of relatively complete productive assets, including livestock, feed, pens, and access to land and housing, so that mustahik can immediately run a business without the burden of initial capital. One program manager stated that "this program does not only provide livestock, but also a place, pens, and mentoring so that mustahik can actually run a business" (Program Manager LAZISNU East Java). This statement shows that zakat is not positioned as short-term assistance, but rather as a means of strengthening the economic capacity of mustahik.

In terms of distribution model, this program applies the In Kind model, which provides zakat in the form of business assets that can be directly utilized by the mustahik. This model is considered appropriate for the characteristics of the mustahik of the NU Integrated Village, who already have basic experience in raising muscovy ducks, so the assistance provided is not foreign, but rather develops existing local potential. One mustahik stated that "I was used to raising one or two muscovy ducks before, so when I received this assistance, I wasn't too confused" (Mustahik). This reinforces Mahzumi's view that productive asset assistance will be more effective if tailored to the recipient's abilities and circumstances. All proceeds from livestock sales are given entirely to the mustahik and used to meet living needs and increase business

capital. This mechanism positions the mustahik as an active economic actor with full control over their business results, while minimizing the risk of dependence on consumptive assistance.

The research results also show indications of achieving economic independence for mustahik as per the indicators put forward by Priambodo, namely the existence of productive businesses, increased self-confidence in carrying out economic activities, and the courage to take business risks.(Nurul Komariyah & Alan Su'ud Ma'adi, 2024).The courage of some mustahik to independently increase their capital from the proceeds of livestock sales indicates a change in attitude from dependence on short-term assistance to more independent and sustainable business management.

Furthermore, mentoring and supervision by institutions play a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability of the program and ensuring optimal utilization of zakat assets. Musa emphasized that the success of productive zakat is largely determined by the role of amil (collectors) in managing, mentoring, and overseeing the use of zakat funds.(Musa, 2020).In this Muscovy duck farming program, mentoring is not focused on basic technical aspects of maintenance, given that most mustahik are already accustomed to caring for Muscovy ducks, but rather on aspects of supervision, strengthening commitment, and business sustainability. One program manager stated that "We provide mentoring and supervision every week, in conjunction with routine Koranic recitation activities on Thursdays or Fridays, so that livestock development can be continuously monitored and mustahik remain consistent in running the business" (Program Manager LAZISNU East Java). This mentoring approach, integrated with religious activities, demonstrates that productive zakat is not only managed as an economic program, but also as a process of social and moral development. Routine supervision allows the institution to identify business obstacles early on, while also strengthening the discipline and responsibility of mustahik in managing productive assets. Thus, the role of amil is not only administrative, but also strategic in ensuring that productive zakat truly contributes to the process of mustahik's economic independence.

Thus, the Muscovy duck farming program initiated by LAZISNU East Java demonstrates that productive zakat can serve as a vehicle for socio-economic transformation. Although the program is still in its early stages and its long-term impact has not yet been fully measured, research results indicate positive changes in the skills, attitudes, and economic independence of beneficiaries. If managed consistently and sustainably, this program has the potential to propel beneficiaries toward greater economic independence.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the productive zakat program in the form of Muscovy duck farming implemented by LAZISNU East Java has implemented productive zakat utilization through the provision of business assets (In Kind) accompanied by routine

mentoring and supervision. This program demonstrates a process towards the economic independence of mustahik, which is reflected in the sustainability of the livestock business, increased self-confidence, and the courage of some mustahik to develop their businesses independently. Although still in the initial stages and using a single case study, the research findings indicate that productive zakat has the potential to be an effective instrument of economic empowerment if managed consistently and sustainably.

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