

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Zakat Capital Assistance Programme (ZCAP) in Enhancing Asnaf Economic Empowerment: Malaysia Perspective

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Background: The Zakat Capital Assistance Programme (ZCAP) is one of the key zakat distribution initiatives designed to enhance the living standards of eligible recipients (asnaf). Unlike conventional financial aid, ZCAP provides loan-free capital assistance, allowing recipients to start or expand their businesses without the obligation to repay the funds. Despite its potential to promote entrepreneurship and financial independence among the asnaf, the number of applications for ZCAP remains significantly lower compared to cash-based zakat assistance.

Purpose: This study aims to examine the factors contributing to the success and failure of the program from both the officers' and recipients' (asnaf) perspectives.

Methodology: Through interviews: conducted with 2 zakat officers and 5 selected recipients (asnaf).

Finding: The findings reveal that several factors influence the program's outcomes. These include the recipients' attitudes and motivation, their knowledge and ability to maintain proper financial records, as well as the overall structure and implementation of the program.

Limitation: Small Sample Size: The study relies on interviews with selected zakat officers and recipients, which may not represent the broader population of all ZCAP participants across different regions or states. Lack of Longitudinal Data: The study does not track recipients over time, so it cannot fully measure the long-term impact or sustainability of the programme's success.

Originality: Unlike previous zakat studies that focus mainly on financial performance or distribution efficiency, this research highlights attitude, financial knowledge, and programme structure as key determinants of success or failure. The study enriches the growing field of Islamic social finance and zakat management by providing empirical insights that can guide improvements in capital assistance schemes aimed at economic empowerment.

Keywords: Zakat, zakat capital assistance programme, Asnaf entrepreneurs, Malaysia.