

RE-CATEGORIZING RECIPIENTS OF ZAKAT UNDER *RIQAB* FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract: *Re-categorizing recipients of zakat under riqab is essential to achieve sustainable development goals worldwide. Riqab or slavery is one of the standard categories of zakat expenditure sanctioned by Islam. Due to dynamic changes in the socio-economic and demographic, the existing categories of recipients of zakat under riqab become difficult if not impossible to identify people who may be entitled to zakat under riqab category. The existing categorization is based on traditional Fiqh literature may start as initial stage for re-categorization. This study examined the views of selected Muslim respondents on the re-categorization of zakat recipients under riqab category. By using nine statements with a Likert-like scale, and one open-ended question, the study was able to obtain an acceptable reliability (Cronbach reliability of 0.704). Data analysis using t-test shows that male and female respondents (n=70) did not differ significantly in their views, except for “freeing a prisoner of war” (p-value .002). The rating by the respondents on eligible riqab recipients ranked “freeing a person from an oppressive ruler” (4.09/5.00), and “freeing a prisoner of war” (4.03/5.00) among the top. The re-categorization of riqab recipients has a significant contribution of the research of zakat distribution which needs further deliberation of experts.*

Keywords: Riqab, Sustainability, Zakat Institutions, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

Re-categorizing recipients of zakat under *riqab* is essential to achieve sustainable development goals worldwide. *Riqab* or slavery is one of the standard categories of zakat expenditure sanctioned by Islam. Due to dynamic changes in the socio-economic and demographic, the existing categories of recipients of zakat under *riqab* become difficult if not impossible to identify people who may be entitled to zakat under *riqab* category. The existing categorization is based on traditional *Fiqh* literature may start as initial stage for re-categorization.

Zakat is mandatory obligation to all Muslims under one of the five articles of Islam. This religious duty has both spiritual and worldly dimensions. Administratively, there are collection and distribution functions. There are specified eight categories of recipients (*asnaf*). *Riqab* (slavery) is one of the standard categories of *Zakat* expenditure sanctioned by Islam.

Zakat has both individual and society components. While zakat is individual religious duty, the recipients of zakat are collective religious duty of the society. There is exchange and also relationship between individuals and other individuals in the society. In any relationship, good perception is very important (Jackson, 2019). Without good perception, then there will more suspicious in the relationship and understanding.

In any relationship, there is very important component, which is the interaction among people. This situation may reduce bad perceptions (Farid *et al*, 2019). The magnitude of bad perception is beyond rational thinking. Perception is actually blends experience and understanding (Bredemeir, 2018).

Perception about zakat is always in the distribution aspect (Muhamad *et al*, 2019). The society will always curious about the board and management of zakat institutions (Ghani *et al*, 2018). In any negativity will lead to more suspicious. Trust is reciprocal, that is to earn for the trust one has to be trusted by the stakeholders (Samargandi *et al*, 2018). Religiosity of people may contribute to good trust and perception (Yusuf *et al*, 2018).

This study explores the views of professional Muslims on re-categorizing the recipients of zakat under the category of *riqab*. This re-categorization allows for inclusivity of *riqab* category within the contemporary contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part provides epistemology aspect of the paper. Prior to epistemology, the introduction part provides ontological discussion in terms of research problems and gaps of the study. The epistemology part is essential in assuring authentic scholarly development. There are a few parts in this section.

In terms of definition, *riqab* is slavery. Freeing the slaves is a virtue both worldly as well spiritually. A few scholars, such as Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Muqatil bin Hayyan, `Umar bin `Abdul-`Aziz, Sa`id bin Jubayr, An-Nakha`i, Az-Zuhri and Ibn Zayd argued that *Riqab* can be defined as those slaves who entered into an agreement with their masters to pay a certain ransom for their freedom. This may be the interpretation during the slavery contexts.

In broad sense of *zakat*, *riqab* is one of the categories of *zakat* recipients (*asnaf*). It has been used in the 'figurative sense' (*majaz*) in which the *Qur'an*, as stated in *Surah Al Tawbah*, verse 60: "*Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage [al riqab] and in debt; in the Cause of God; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom.*" While the categorization of eight recipients of zakat has been fixed, sub categorization under each recipient, such as *riqab* is within the Quranic spirit.

Re-categorizing of recipients

Re-categorization of recipients required extensive studies. Muslims scholars have held different opinions about the meaning of *al-riqab*. Firstly, *al riqab* implicitly means to help a contracted (bonded) slave to pay his master. A contracted slave is known as *mukatab*. A *mukatab* refers to a contracted slave who has entered in an agreement with his master that upon paying the master an agreed amount of money, the slave will gain his freedom. Thus, in

this context, *al riqab* in this context refers solely to *mukatab* slave. This opinion is shared among scholars of Al Marghinani (2006, p.411) and Al Shafi'i (1993, p. 61).

According to Al Jassas (1993, p. 183), all Muslim scholars agree that *zakat* can be used to help the release of *mukatab*. However, Al Qardawy (1997) contended to use *al riqab* in the context of releasing a slave from his master as *mukatab*. According to Al Qardawy (1997), the contracted slave may be given *zakat* under the category of a person in debt (*al gharimin*) and not under the category of freeing a slave or the contracted slave. Thus, if *al riqab* means freeing slaves, so contracted slave can be considered as a sub-category of slaves.

Secondly, *al riqab* means to buy the slave outright or emancipate him or her with the proceeds of *zakat*. This task can be done by the authority of a particular place and together with a *zakat* payer. This is the opinion of Ibn Qudamah (1999) and famous opinion of Malik (cited in Al Qarnati, 1998).

According to Al Qardawy (1997), the verse (*Surah Al Tawbah*, verse 60) includes both meanings. This view also reflects the opinion of Ahmad Abdul al Jawaad. According to Mahmud al-Suud (1999), there is no dispute among Muslims that the purpose of freeing *al-riqab*, means freeing a slave. This is noblest job because freeing slaves is considered one of the prides in Islam because Islam not only encourages the abolishment of slavery systems but also using *zakat* as a way or as a mean to abolish it (slavery).

Thirdly, *al riqab* also means freeing prisoner of war. Several commentators such as Ibn Atiyyah (2001, p.81), Al Zuhri (cited by Ibn Atiyyah, 2001), and Ibn Al-Arabi (1993) do not limit the meaning of *al riqab* to freeing slave and *mukatab* slave only but they also include prisoners of war that have fallen into the hands of enemies of the Islamic state. For them *zakat* can be used to gain the freedom of Muslim prisoners. These scholars considered *al Riqab* with broader meaning. They argued that that if *zakat* is to be distributed to obtain freedom of Muslim slaves, whether *mukatab* or non-*mukatab*, owned by another Muslim in a Muslim society then freeing Muslims from an oppressive unbelieving enemy obviously takes priority. This also believed to be the opinion of Ibn Qudamah (1999, p. 322) and Ibn Al-Arabi (1993, p. 532).

Fourthly, *al riqab* also means helping people to be free from colonialism. According to Rashid Rida (1992), *al riqab* has broader meaning than just freeing prisoners of war. As for Rashid Rida (1992), freeing *al riqab* means freeing people from humiliation and oppression from the colonial power, which is mass liberation as compared with freeing of an individual slave.

Fifthly, *al riqab* can be used to liberate people from the enslavement of other people's idea, wealth and authority, such as depriving people from their freedom to use their own land. This idea is based on the opinion of Shaltut (1992, p.446). However, al Qardawy (1997) disagreed with the definition and interpretation by Rashid Rida (1992) and Shaltut (1992) on expanding the meaning of freeing slaves to such extent because the term *al riqab* should not be so loosely applied. However, al Qardawy (1997) emphasized that *zakat* fund can be used to help people under colonialism, under the category of struggling for the sake of Allah (*fi sabilillah*). According to him, the effort to help Muslims should not only come from *zakat* but also all the resources controlled by Muslim authorities and people; they should contribute towards the liberation of Muslims and their lands from colonialism.

Sixthly, *al riqab* also means to secure the release of innocent people who were unjustly detained (captivated) by the authority of the state. This context can be used as a special beneficiary whereby a Muslim rescues another Muslim such as Muslim minorities living in amid hostile majorities.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the views of some Muslim respondents on the re-categorization of zakat recipients under *riqab* category. The study developed a one page A4 questionnaire to incorporate all the seven (7) categories of *riqab*. In the instrument, the respondents were instructed to write the number that reflects his/her agreement to each of the statements using the scale: *Disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 *Agree*. The seven statements pertaining to the eligible *zakat-riqab* category are reproduced below (see Table 1).

Table 1. Proposed Zakat Recipients under Riqab

| Proposed zakat recipients | |
|---|--|
| Freeing a person from an oppressive ruler | |
| Freeing a prisoner of war | |
| Freeing a person from a colonial power | |
| Helping a non-Muslim embrace Islam | |
| Helping the family members of a prisoner | |
| Paying ransom to free a person | |
| Freeing a prisoner who did not commit <i>hudud</i> offences | |

FINDINGS

Female (74.3%) respondents outnumbered their male (25.7%) counterpart in the convenience sampling (n=70) of the survey administration (see Table 2). The students belonged to two out of three different sections of a Management subject offered during the semester; the first section comprised 45.9%, whereas the second section 36.5% of the total sample.

Table 2 Background of Respondents (N=70)

| Items | Types | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 18 | 25.7 |
| | Female | 52 | 74.3 |
| | | 70 | 100.0 |
| Class | Section 1 | 39 | 55.7 |
| | Section 2 | 31 | 44.3 |
| | | 70 | 100.0 |
| Degree | BAcc | 58 | 82.9 |
| | BBA | 6 | 8.6 |
| | BEcon | 4 | 5.7 |
| | Other | 2 | 2.9 |
| | | 70 | 100.0 |
| Malaysian | Yes | 64 | 91.4 |
| | No | 6 | 8.6 |
| | | 70 | 100.0 |

Bachelor of Accounting (BAcc) students constitute the majority (82.9%), followed by Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (8.6%) and Bachelor of Economics (BEcon)

(5.7%). Students from other degree programs were insignificant (2.9%) in the sample. Malaysian respondents (91.4%) outnumbered the international respondents (8.6%)

All the seven items (Cronbach alpha .704) met the minimum requirement of reliability of 0.70, the minimum level recommended by Nunnally (1978). The data set suggests that deletion of “freeing a prisoner of war” would improve reliability from .704 to .715. The grand means (averages) for all the nine *zakat-riqab* recipients are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Grand Means of Riqab Recipients

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|------|----------------|
| Freeing a person from an oppressive ruler | 4.09 | .737 |
| Freeing a prisoner of war | 4.03 | .780 |
| Freeing a person from a colonial power | 3.96 | .842 |
| Helping a non-Muslim embrace Islam | 3.94 | 1.020 |
| Helping the family members of a prisoner | 3.66 | .946 |
| Paying ransom to free a person | 3.60 | .923 |
| Freeing a prisoner who did not commit <i>hudud</i> offences | 3.29 | 1.118 |

Scale: *Disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 *Agree*

Pearson correlations revealed that there are a number of statistically significant relationships among the *riqab* recipients. The number of significant relationships varies from two to five, and the strength of the relationship ranges from .244 to .707 at .05 and .001 significant levels. Table 4 shows that “freeing from colonialism” is strongly (.707) and significantly (.01) related to “freeing form oppressive ruler” but not as strongly related to “freeing a prisoner” (.244, .05).

Table 4. Pearson Correlations among Riqab Recipients (N=70)

| | Number | Freeing form colonialism | Freeing form oppressive ruler | Freeing a prisoner | Freeing a prisoner of war | Helping prisoner's family members | Paying ransom | Helping embrace Islam |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Helping prisoner's family members | 5 | | .334** | | | | .239* | .355** |
| Paying ransom | 5 | | | | .419** | .239* | | .360** |
| Helping embrace Islam | 5 | | .315** | | .275* | .355** | .360** | |
| Freeing form oppressive ruler | 4 | .707** | | .304* | | .334** | | .315** |
| Freeing a prisoner | 3 | .244* | .304* | | .256* | | | |
| Freeing a prisoner of war | 3 | | | .256* | | | .419** | .275* |
| Freeing form colonialism | 2 | | .707** | .244* | | | | |

Notes: Pearson Correlation, Sig. (2-tailed) ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Factor analysis was used to identify broader categories of *riqab* recipients. This analytic procedure identified shared characteristics among the recipients. Principal Component Analysis extraction method combined with Varimax Rotation Method with Kaiser Normalization produced three categories of factors as shown in Table 5. The categories are able to explain 61.172% of the total variance. The three categories have been conveniently labeled as “Financial Welfare,” “Societal Welfare,” and “Fundamental Welfare.” The labels are created by the authors to reflect the respective categories based on their shared characteristics.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

| Factor | Labels | Component | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | Financial welfare | | | |
| | Helping prisoner's family members | .635 | .323 | .057 |
| 2 | Societal welfare | | | |
| | Paying ransom | .611 | -.060 | .522 |
| 3 | Fundamental welfare | | | |
| | Freeing form oppressive ruler | .188 | .890 | .074 |
| | Freeing form colonialism | .072 | .878 | -.034 |
| | Freeing a prisoner of war | .117 | -.134 | .810 |
| | Freeing a prisoner | -.219 | .436 | .657 |
| | Helping embrace Islam | .461 | .120 | .478 |

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Based on the results of group means (averages), the position of recipients has been ranked as shown in Table 6. With the scale *Disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 *Agree*, the means close to 5 indicate the strongest support for the item by the respondents. According to the respondents, “freeing a person from an oppressive ruler” is rated/ranked the highest (4.09 out of 5.00) to be eligible for *zakat* under *riqab* category, whereas “freeing a prisoner who did not commit hudud offences” is rated/ranked the last (3.29 out of 5.00) among the nine recipients. Factor analysis column is inserted in the table to show the association between each recipient item with the factor grouping identified by factor analysis statistical procedure.

Table 6. Group Means (N=70)

| Factor* | Items | Mean** | Std. Deviation |
|---------|---|--------|----------------|
| 2 | Freeing a person from an oppressive ruler | 4.09 | .737 |
| 3 | Freeing a prisoner of war | 4.03 | .780 |
| 2 | Freeing a person from a colonial power | 3.96 | .842 |
| 3 | Helping a non-Muslim embrace Islam | 3.94 | 1.020 |
| 1 | Helping the family members of a prisoner | 3.66 | .946 |
| 1 | Paying ransom to free a person | 3.60 | .923 |
| 3 | Freeing a prisoner who did not commit <i>hudud</i> offences | 3.29 | 1.118 |

Notes: * Factor analysis **Grand mean Scale: *Disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 *Agree*

In order to find out whether the rating between male and female respondents is statistically (really) different, a t-test analysis was performed on the survey data. The fourth column in Table 7 shows the grand mean, i.e. a combination of the means of male and female responses, and the next column (fifth column) shows the means of male and female respondents, respectively. One can easily notice that the grand means and gender means exceed the 3.00, hence reflecting overall consensus on all of the nine items.

The opinions of male and female respondents are significantly different (t -value =3.165, p =.002, 68 df) only for one item, i.e. “freeing a prisoner of war” (Male mean 4.50, female mean 3.87, grand mean 4.03) (see Table 7). Despite this, they more or less uphold the same views toward the other *zakat-riqab* recipients.

Table 7 T-test on Riqab Recipients (N=70)

| | Gender | N | Grand Mean | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------------------------|--------|----|------------|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Freeing form colonialism | Male | 18 | 3.96 | 4.06 | .998 | .235 |
| | Female | 52 | | 3.92 | .788 | .109 |
| Freeing form oppressive ruler | Male | 18 | 3.66 | 3.89 | .963 | .227 |
| | Female | 52 | | 4.15 | .638 | .088 |
| Freeing a prisoner | Male | 18 | 4.03 | 3.33 | 1.237 | .291 |
| | Female | 52 | | 3.27 | 1.087 | .151 |
| Freeing a prisoner of war** | Male | 18 | 4.03 | 4.50 | .786 | .185 |
| | Female | 52 | | 3.87 | .715 | .099 |
| Helping prisoner's family members | Male | 18 | 3.66 | 3.56 | 1.149 | .271 |
| | Female | 52 | | 3.69 | .875 | .121 |
| Paying ransom | Male | 18 | 3.60 | 3.83 | 1.098 | .259 |
| | Female | 52 | | 3.52 | .852 | .118 |
| Helping embrace Islam | Male | 18 | 3.94 | 3.94 | 1.349 | .318 |
| | Female | 52 | | 3.94 | .895 | .124 |

Notes: ** p =.002 t =3.165, 68 df Scale: Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

DISCUSSION

The operational interpretation of *riqab* is evolving (Nordin & Khairuldin, 2018) and context-based. This has been related to the mechanism and operations for distribution to *riqab* category (Rosli et al, 2018). The essence of contextual based interpretation has welfare concern (Riyaldi & Sari, 2018). For example, people with disadvantage for example people with disabilities as approved by relevant authority deserve *zakat* under *riqab* category (Ab Rahman, 2018).

While innovation for collection and distribution mechanism of *zakat* is important, there is a need for innovation (Aziz et al, 2019) in the content and context of *zakat* collection and distribution. The humanity value is essential as for human development aspect (Meerangani, 2019) with social economic merits (Al-Banna & Micheal, 2019).

IMPLICATIONS/RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There are a number of implications of the study. Firstly, it has attempted to develop scales for testing eligible *zakat-riqab* recipients. The responses by undergraduate students help confirm the reliability of the measures used. Secondly, to further validate (confirm) the scales, future research should attempt to administer the instrument on various groups of respondents, especially *Fiqh/Shari'ah* undergraduates due to their large numbers, and those involved in the formulation and implementation of *zakat*.

Secondly, while obtaining the responses from students who are not specializing in *Fiqh*, *Shari'ah*, and Islamic studies may be acceptable, they are not reflective of people who are more competent to give views on the issue, i.e. the latter group. Hence, the authors believe that by implementing to the suggestions mentioned here the results would be more convincing, and integrating the “principles” and “practice.”

CONCLUSION

The study presented seven eligible recipients of *zakat-riqab* based on the views of scholars in the field and the scales developed in the research instrument (questionnaire) confirm the internal consistency of the interpretations of the scholars, i.e. all of their thoughts are inter-related. The exploratory statistical procedure, i.e. factor analysis, condenses the nine specific categories into three broad categories of *zakat-riqab* recipients based on “purpose,” namely, “Financial Welfare,” “Societal Welfare,” and “Fundamental Welfare.”

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