

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PESANTREN IN EMPOWERING THE PEOPLE'S ECONOMY (Analytical Study of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia)

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Abstract : Pesantren have been an important part of the history of Islamic education in Indonesia since the 14th century AD. In addition to functioning as centers of religious education, pesantren also play a strategic role in economic and social empowerment. This research uses a qualitative method, by applying descriptive analysis research type. Descriptive analysis research is a method used as a framework for thinking to obtain research results. This research is included in the library research area, where researchers analyze the contribution of pesantren in the economic empowerment of the people. This research uses primary data from book references and scientific articles using the Publish or Perish application tool. The results of the study found; first, since the 14th century AD, pesantren were established as centers of Islamic education, preaching, and people's struggle. In the 17th century, Sultan Agung gave special attention to pesantren to create a conducive learning environment; second, the role of pesantren in supporting the welfare of the people through education, economy, and social; third, developing an integrated economic empowerment model based on cooperation and waqf-based economic programs. The findings of this study confirm that pesantrens have great potential in improving the economic independence and welfare of the people.

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Introduction

At the beginning of its existence, pesantren was a *non-formal* place. In the past, the purpose of pesantren was to facilitate people who had just embraced Islam and wanted to learn religious practices or rituals, such as

prayer, and reading the Qur'an (Nasution, 2019) . The presence of pesantren in the archipelago developed parallel to the spread of Islam, such as the Ampel Denta pesantren founded by Sunan Ampel where the establishment of the pesantren was to prepare Islamic scholars, preachers, and leaders who were ready to spread the teachings of Islam widely. Over time it seems that pesantren in the archipelago have not experienced a decline but have grown rapidly and are now institutions that continue to move massively without leaving the joints of Islam as they were at the beginning of their existence, although it cannot be denied that the pesantren system today has many updates that are tailored to the needs of the times (Maesaroh & Achdiani, 2017) .

Pesantren in the modern era have a fairly complex vision in the sense that they not only prepare cadres of ulama', preachers, or Islamic leaders but also project their graduates to become historians, politicians, scientists, artists and economists. Where this is a form of pesantren response to meet the needs of society, as it does not only focus on teaching religious sciences but also general sciences (Maesaroh & Achdiani, 2017) . Currently, pesantren have the task of preparing resources and funding sources to fulfill the facilities so that learning activities can run well because without the support of adequate facilities, it will not only have an impact on the obstruction of learning but will also result in the lack of interest of applicants.

The adjustment of pesantren to the needs of the community not only has a positive effect on education but the community's economy is also encouraged because the presence of pesantren in an area is able to create a new market share with a larger volume than before (Fathoni & Rohim, 2019) . This increase is caused by the concentration of new consumers (santri) who come from various regions in one place, thus providing opportunities for the community to open businesses that suit the needs of the new market. Based on Law Number 6 of 2014, village community empowerment is defined as an effort to increase community independence and welfare through strengthening knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior, abilities, and collective awareness, with the aim of increasing community potential, increasing participation, and building civilization and independence (Chamidi, 2023)

The role of pesantren in building or empowering the economy may not be clearly visible because the main focus of pesantren is not on the economy but education, however, it does not mean that pesantren turn a blind eye to economic empowerment (Mochammad Afifuddin, 2022) . The potential of pesantren economic empowerment can be further developed to advance the economy of the community around the pesantren

according to Nadzir, there are at least three functions of pesantren, namely becoming a *center for* the cadre of religious thinkers (*center of excellence*), forming superior human resources, and empowering the community (*agent development*) (Nadzir, 2015) .

These three strategic functions can be the reason that pesantren can grow the economy and can even be an indicator in alleviating poverty in an area. Referring to some of the same research conducted by Muhammad Anwar and Fathoni on the role of pesantren in the economic empowerment of the people in Indonesia. Second, research conducted by Sugandi, et al on the role of modern pesantren in community empowerment. Third, Yoyok Rimabawa's research on pesantren and the economy. All of these studies provide conclusions that pesantren have the ability to empower the economy of the community in an area.

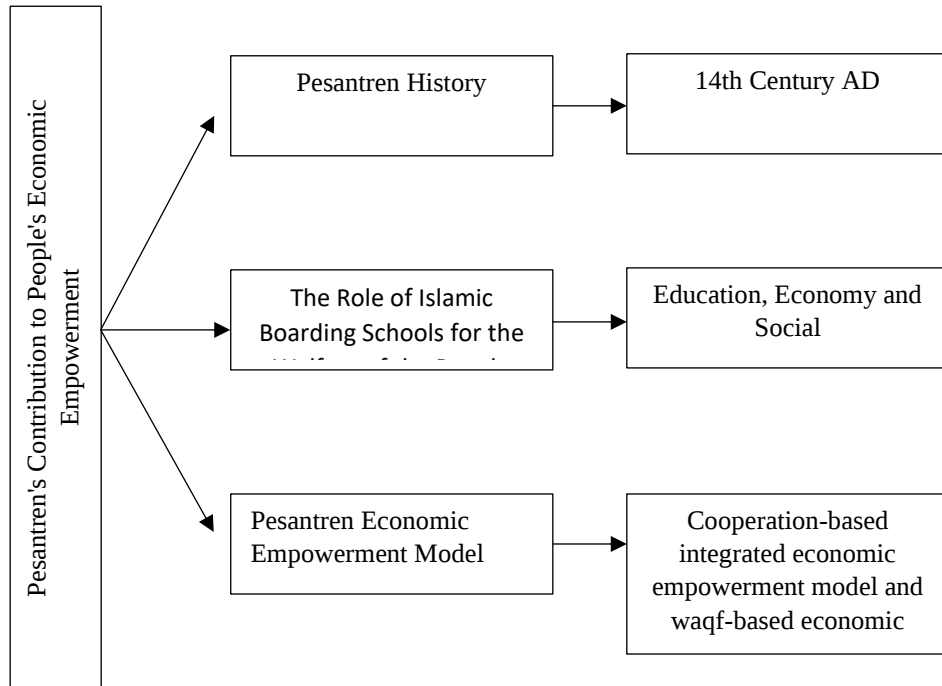
The background and research above provide an overview of the role of pesantren in economic empowerment. The next research will discuss the title "The Contribution of Islamic Boarding Schools in the Economic Empowerment of the People" with the focus of discussion on the History of the Presence of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia, the Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Improving the Welfare of the People, and the Islamic Boarding School Economic Empowerment Model. These three objectives are different from the previous literature review. This goal is expected to help pesantren to explore their potential because by understanding the potential and being able to maximize existing resources, it will be able to make pesantren more developed (*on the way for progress*) and easy to help improve the community's economy.

Research method

This research uses a qualitative method, with a literature study approach and applies a descriptive type of research analysis regarding the Contribution of Islamic Boarding Schools in the Economic Empowerment of the People. Descriptive analysis research is a method used as a framework for thinking to obtain research results. This research uses primary data from book references and scientific articles using the *Publish or Perish* application tool. Drawing conclusions in this study using *content analysis* from various references that have been collected.

Results and Discussion

Findings



Discussion of Results

The History of the Pesantren in Indonesia

Since its establishment in the 14th century AD, the pesantren has played a role as an educational institution and cadre of ulama, a center for da'wah, and a base for the people's struggle against colonialism (Misbah, 2021) . In the 17th century AD in the Mataram Kingdom led by Sultan Agung (1613-1645 AD), pesantren received special attention, because Sultan Agung provided special land to create a healthy and safe environment for santri to live in to sharpen their Islamic intellectuality (Misbah & Bahru Rozi, 2022) . Currently, the number of active pesantren in Indonesia according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) has been recorded at around 36,600 with a total of 3.4 million students and 370 thousand (ustad/kiai). The number is quite fantastic and impressive, considering that the civilization of pesantren from the beginning of its existence was quite difficult and now it can reach this number.

The number of pesantren spread is a reminder to the sarungan people that the strength of the pesantren teachings has its own specialty so that it can make pesantren the only oldest institution that can survive until now. As a strong Islamic religious education institution, the strategic role of

pesantren continues to grow with the changing times (Hamdan Ridwan, 2023) . During the New Order era, pesantren not only functioned as a center of education but also as a center of community empowerment, while in the 2000s, pesantren played a role in the development of the people's economy by establishing cooperatives, from which Kopontren was born, an institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs that supports various pesantren cooperative activities. Today, in the millennial era, pesantren continue to show their vital role in the dynamics of social and economic change. The pesantren stands tall as an institution that participates actively in alleviating economic problems and poverty with its strategies.

The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Improving People's Welfare

Pesantren have a strategic role in improving the welfare of the people through education, economic empowerment, and social (Idris et al., 2023) . As an Islamic educational institution, pesantren not only equip students with religious knowledge, but also skills that can be applied in everyday life. One of the pesantren programs developed is entrepreneurship, as Pondok Pesantren Alam Saung Balong Al-Barokah Majalengka, apart from acting as an educational institution, also functions in the field of entrepreneurship, this pesantren actively contributes to the surrounding community by creating employment opportunities through various business units developed in the pesantren environment based on sharia, such as agricultural training, animal husbandry, and handicrafts, which aim to create economic independence for students and the surrounding community (Haerisma et al., 2021) .

The case studies above are indicators that economic development in Islamic boarding schools is not a new concept. For a long time, pesantren have been known as centers of Islamic knowledge and spirituality, then developed into influential social institutions in Indonesia. Furthermore, pesantren play a role as a center for community empowerment until finally carrying out the function as the driving force of the people's economy. This development shows that pesantren are always open to innovation and have a high response to the dynamics of the times.

Pesantren in the economic field also develop cooperatives, micro-enterprises, and productive zakat programs as an empowerment effort. These activities help people gain access to capital and business guidance to improve their standard of living. Pesantren also often establish partnerships with the government, Islamic financial institutions, and philanthropic organizations to support community-based business development. The pesantren-based economic model is able to create new jobs and reduce social disparities in the surrounding environment.

Pesantren also participate in strengthening the solidarity and welfare of the people through various social and da'wah programs. The provision of health services, assistance for the poor, and assistance to communities in need are part of the pesantren's contribution in improving the quality of life of the people. With this role, pesantren is not only a center of religious education, but also an agent of change that contributes to building the overall welfare of the people.

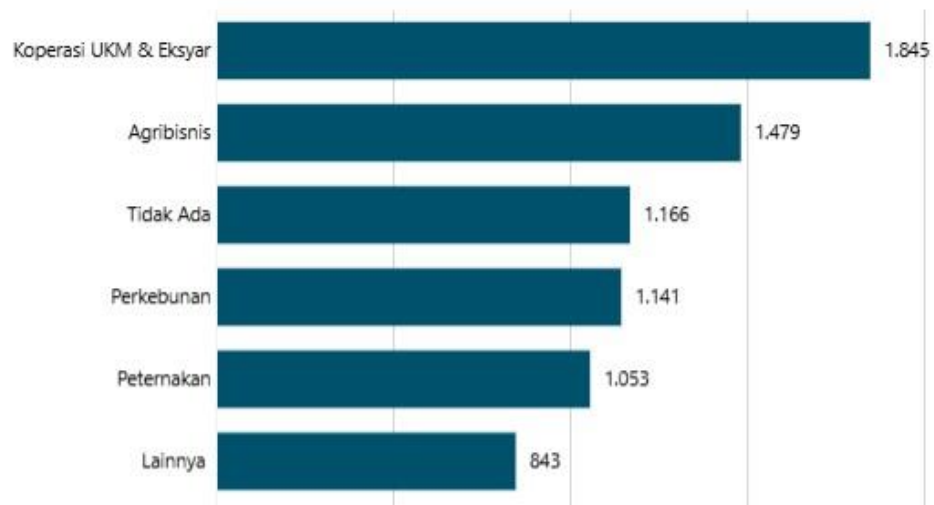
Pesantren Economic Empowerment Model

The word *empowerment* is taken from English, namely (*empowerment*) with the basic word power which means strength or ability. Meanwhile, in KBBI empowerment is defined as a process or way of empowering. Adam (2003) defines empowerment as a means and method used by individuals, groups, or communities that make them able to manage the environment so that they can achieve a goal. Therefore, it can be understood that empowerment is a process of empowering something done by a community or community group to overcome a problem.

Today, the term empowerment is closely related to the problem of poverty alleviation, which until now continues to find a solution (Qalbia & Saputra, 2023) . Empowerment has long been an instrument that is often used by governments, institutions, and organizations in achieving a goal (welfare). In this case, the portrait that will be seen is the empowerment carried out by pesantren because pesantren consciously take an active role in empowering the community's economy. One example is Pesantren Al-Ittifaq Bandung, which makes economic development, business, and community empowerment an integral part of its mission expansion. This pesantren developed an integrated, gradual and sustainable economic empowerment model based on the principles of Inpekbi and strengthened by a solid network of cooperation between elements (Fauroni, 2011) .

Another example is the Mamba'us Sholihin Islamic Boarding School with an Islamic values-based empowerment model in fostering santri through hands-on practice, training, and work opportunities in various business units owned by the pesantren. Meanwhile, the empowerment of the surrounding community is carried out through pesantren social institutions, which include basic food assistance, routine studies, Ramadan guidance, free medical services, and assistance for victims of natural disasters. The economic independence of pesantren is reflected in their ability to finance operations independently through profits from the business units managed (Basit & Widiastuti, 2020) .

Image. Economic Potential in Pesantren (2021)



Source: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id>

Data from 2021 shows that the largest economic potential in pesantren is in the SME Cooperative & Sharia Economy sector with 1,845 units, followed by Agribusiness with 1,479 units. The sector without economic businesses is also quite significant, reaching 1,166 pesantren. Plantations and livestock have the potential of 1,141 and 1,053 units respectively, while other sectors recorded 843 units. This figure reflects the strategic role of cooperatives and agribusiness in the economic empowerment of pesantren as well as development opportunities in other sectors to increase the economic independence of pesantren.

Not less than the two pesantrens above, Annes, et al. conducted research Annes Nisrina Khoirunnisa et al.,(2023) . on the economic potential of entrepreneurship-based pesantrens through waqf media, the results show that around 319 pesantrens in Yogyakarta have made efforts to empower the economy and the expected poverty alleviation is almost perfect because there are still many evaluations found by researchers, but it is not impossible that in the future the efforts of pesantrens in Yogyakarta will not be successful.

The next pilot pesantren is Pondok Pesantren Al- Mawaddah Jekulo kudas which carries out empowerment by opening pesantren business units, entrepreneurship seminars, and entrepreneurial training to increase knowledge and economic stabilization. Although through several obstacles, Al-Mawaddah can continue to develop its potential in the pesantren-based economic empowerment sector until finally Al-Mawaddah is able to become a community *stakeholder* in alleviating poverty (Umiyah et al., 2023) .

The various forms of empowerment above are proof that the power of pesantren economic empowerment has high potential because *based on* pesantren is not only an educational institution but also carries Islamic, social, and cultural values. Therefore, pesantren empowerment can be a preventive solution option in poverty alleviation programs both regionally and nationally.

Conclusion

Pesantren have played a strategic role in the history of Islamic education in Indonesia since the 14th century AD until today. In addition to functioning as a center of religious education, pesantren also act as agents of change in the community with their educational, economic and social work. Pesantren is also a form of community economic empowerment by using various models applied in creating community economic independence, one of which is an integrated economic model based on cooperation and waqf-based economic programs. The great potential possessed makes pesantren a solution in poverty alleviation efforts both regionally and nationally.

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