

Reconstructing The Sharia Economic Integration Model: A Path Toward Santri Economic Independence in The Pesantren Context

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Abstract: *This study examines an integration model of Islamic economics into the curriculum of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as an effort to strengthen students' economic independence. Although many pesantren conduct economic activities and teach fiqh muamalah, these elements often operate without systematic curriculum reconstruction. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through document analysis, participatory observation, and in-depth interviews with administrators, teachers, and students. Data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding to identify patterns of integration and structural gaps. The findings reveal that integration occurs across three operational dimensions: (1) textual-normative instruction through classical fiqh muamalah texts, (2) structured economic practices via student business unit rotations, and (3) institutionalized ethical supervision mechanisms. However, these dimensions remain fragmented and are not formally embedded into measurable curriculum structures. Based on these findings, this study reconstructs a Sharia Economic Curriculum Integration Model consisting of four interrelated components: value integration, formal curriculum integration, practice-based learning integration, and institutional economic ecosystem integration. The study concludes that integrating Islamic economics in pesantren is not merely the addition of economic content but requires epistemological restructuring of the curriculum to bridge classical religious scholarship and applied economic competence. This reconstruction strengthens the role of pesantren as institutions that cultivate both religious authority and sustainable economic independence.*

Keywords: *Islamic economics; pesantren curriculum; student independence; educational integration; economic empowerment*

Abstrak: *Studi ini meneliti model integrasi ekonomi Islam ke dalam kurikulum pesantren sebagai upaya untuk memperkuat kemandirian ekonomi siswa. Meskipun banyak pesantren melakukan kegiatan ekonomi dan mengajarkan fiqh muamalah, unsur-unsur ini seringkali beroperasi tanpa rekonstruksi kurikulum yang sistematis. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui analisis dokumen, observasi partisipatif, dan wawancara mendalam dengan administrator, guru, dan siswa. Data dianalisis melalui pengkodean terbuka, aksial, dan selektif untuk mengidentifikasi pola integrasi dan kesenjangan struktural. Temuan*

menunjukkan bahwa integrasi terjadi di tiga dimensi operasional: (1) pengajaran tekstual-normatif melalui teks-teks fiqh muamalah klasik, (2) praktik ekonomi terstruktur melalui rotasi unit bisnis siswa, dan (3) mekanisme pengawasan etika yang terinstitusionalisasi. Namun, dimensi-dimensi ini tetap terfragmentasi dan tidak secara formal tertanam dalam struktur kurikulum yang terukur. Berdasarkan temuan ini, studi ini merekonstruksi Model Integrasi Kurikulum Ekonomi Syariah yang terdiri dari empat komponen yang saling terkait: integrasi nilai, integrasi kurikulum formal, integrasi pembelajaran berbasis praktik, dan integrasi ekosistem ekonomi institusional. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa mengintegrasikan ekonomi Islam di pesantren bukan hanya sekadar menambahkan konten ekonomi, tetapi membutuhkan restrukturisasi epistemologis kurikulum untuk menjembatani kajian keagamaan klasik dan kompetensi ekonomi terapan. Rekonstruksi ini memperkuat peran pesantren sebagai lembaga yang menumbuhkan otoritas keagamaan dan kemandirian ekonomi yang berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: *Ekonomi Islam; kurikulum pesantren; kemandirian siswa; integrasi pendidikan; pemberdayaan ekonom.*

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are among the most influential Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, with a vast student population and strong social legitimacy under Law No. 18 of 2019. Beyond religious instruction, pesantren are expected to contribute to community empowerment and socio-economic development. However, contemporary economic transformations; particularly the rise of the digital economy, expansion of the halal industry, and growth of entrepreneurial sectors ultimately shifted competency demands from purely normative religious mastery to adaptive and economically productive skills. In this context, pesantren graduates as a general expectancy are increasingly required not only to demonstrate religious authority but also to possess economic literacy and the capacity for independent livelihood generation.

Empirical studies indicate that graduates of religious education institutions often face structural challenges in accessing formal employment and in creating sustainable entrepreneurial ventures (Sahliah & Marpaung, 2022; Siswantoro, 2022). While pesantren successfully cultivate discipline, moral integrity, and social responsibility, the transition from religious competence to economic independence especially in the fast-evolving skill mismatch and constant relearning remain uneven. The pressure becomes more acute in the digital era, where economic participation requires financial literacy, managerial skills, and an understanding of contemporary Islamic economic instruments. The persistence of a curriculum heavily centered on classical text studies (kitab kuning) without systematic integration of applied economic competencies creates a growing mismatch between educational outputs and socio-economic realities.

Previous research on pesantren and economic development can generally be grouped into three strands. First, Group A studies focus on institutional economic management, highlighting pesantren business units, cooperatives, and productive enterprises as drivers of local economic growth (Ryandono, 2018; Hakim et al., 2025). Second, Group B emphasizes entrepreneurial mentality formation and character-based independence among santri (Fathurohman et al., 2023; Nurdiansyah & Veri, 2025). Third, Group C discusses integration between religious and general education in broader curriculum innovation (Prima et al., 2025; Mutmainnah et al., 2024).

However, these studies largely treat economic activity as an auxiliary program or environmental outcome rather than as a systematically reconstructed component of the formal curriculum structure. The literature rarely formulates an explicit integration model that connects Islamic economic values, pedagogical design, and institutional economic ecosystems within a unified curricular framework.

This absence reveals a critical gap: while pesantren are increasingly involved in economic activities, there is limited conceptual-operational analysis of how Islamic economics can be formally reconstructed within the curriculum to systematically foster students' economic independence and livelihood competence. Without such reconstruction, economic empowerment initiatives risk remaining incidental, fragmented, and dependent on institutional leadership rather than embedded within sustainable educational design. The challenge is not merely adding entrepreneurship training, but integrating Islamic economic epistemology—grounded in justice, maqashid sharia, and social welfare—into structured learning outcomes, teaching methods, and practice-based laboratories.

Based on this gap, this study analyzes the integration of Islamic economics into the pesantren curriculum and reconstructs a multidimensional integration model aimed at strengthening students' economic independence. Specifically, this research seeks to: (1) identify existing forms of Islamic economic integration in learning practices; (2) analyze structural and pedagogical challenges in its implementation; and (3) formulate a conceptual-operational reconstruction model that integrates values, formal curriculum structure, practical learning mechanisms, and institutional economic ecosystems. Through this approach, the study contributes to contemporary Islamic education discourse by positioning curriculum reconstruction—not merely institutional entrepreneurship—as the strategic locus of sustainable economic empowerment in pesantren education.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a single-case study design to examine how Islamic economics is integrated into the pesantren curriculum and how such integration contributes to students' economic independence. A qualitative case study is appropriate for investigating complex social and educational phenomena within their real-life contexts and allows researchers to explore institutional practices, value internalization processes, and curriculum implementation in depth. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic economic principles are embedded in both learning activities and institutional practices within the pesantren environment.

The research site was selected purposively based on several considerations. First, the pesantren operates institutional economic units, including cooperatives, student-managed micro-enterprises, and social finance initiatives. These activities provide a practical setting in which Islamic economic principles are not only taught but also implemented in everyday institutional activities. Second, the institution formally incorporates *fiqh muamalah* and entrepreneurship-related materials within its learning structure. Although these subjects are part of the curriculum, they have not yet been systematically reconstructed into a comprehensive model of Islamic economic integration. Third, the pesantren explicitly emphasizes the economic independence of *santri* (students) as part of its institutional vision and educational mission. These characteristics distinguish the selected pesantren from many other pesantren that primarily focus on the transmission of classical Islamic texts or operate economic units without integrating them into formal pedagogical processes.

Therefore, the selected site provides a relevant empirical context for reconstructing a model of Islamic economic integration within pesantren education.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that informants had direct experience related to curriculum implementation and institutional economic activities. The selection criteria included active involvement in curriculum design or teaching implementation, participation in pesantren economic programs or institutional business units, a minimum of two years of institutional experience for teachers and administrators, and active engagement in both learning and economic activities for students. A total of fifteen informants participated in the study, consisting of three pesantren administrators (including the curriculum coordinator and the supervisor of institutional economic units), four teachers (*ustadz*) responsible for *fiqh muamalah* instruction and entrepreneurship mentoring, and eight students (*santri*) actively involved in both formal learning and pesantren economic programs. The diversity of participants enabled the study to capture perspectives from institutional leadership, pedagogical practitioners, and students' experiential engagement in economic activities.

Data were collected over a four-month period through three complementary methods: participatory observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The use of multiple data sources allowed methodological triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the research findings. Participatory observation was conducted to examine how Islamic economic concepts were implemented in both classroom learning and institutional economic activities. The researcher observed *fiqh muamalah* classes, student participation in business units, cooperative management meetings, and selected economic training programs organized by the pesantren. These observations focused on teacher–student interactions, the practical application of Islamic economic principles, and students' participation in institutional economic practices. Field notes were systematically recorded to capture learning dynamics, economic activities, and processes of value internalization.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with all informants to explore their experiences and perceptions regarding the integration of Islamic economics within the pesantren curriculum. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent. The interview guide addressed several themes, including perceptions of curriculum integration, challenges in teaching Islamic economic principles, the relationship between religious values and economic practices, and the perceived impact of these practices on students' economic independence. The semi-structured format allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring that key research topics were consistently addressed.

Document analysis was also conducted to complement observational and interview data. Institutional documents examined in this study included curriculum outlines, lesson plans, reports on pesantren economic programs, cooperative financial summaries, and institutional policy documents related to student empowerment initiatives. These documents provided additional insights into how Islamic economic principles were formally represented within the curriculum and institutional policies and how these principles were translated into practical educational activities.

All participants were informed about the objectives of the study prior to data collection and provided voluntary consent to participate. To protect confidentiality, the identities of participants and institutional identifiers were anonymized throughout the research process.

Data analysis followed grounded theory coding procedures consisting of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, interview transcripts and observation notes were examined to identify meaningful segments of data. Each segment was labeled with initial codes representing key concepts emerging from participants' statements or observed practices. For example, statements indicating that students learn the principles of buying and selling in *fiqh muamalah* classes but encounter practical challenges when managing the cooperative generated several initial codes such as "normative fiqh understanding," "practical market challenges," "theory-practice gap," and "experiential learning." Across all transcripts and observation records, approximately 120 initial codes were identified.

During the axial coding stage, the initial codes were grouped into broader categories by identifying relationships among them. Codes related to theoretical instruction and practical challenges were categorized as a conceptual-practical disconnect, while codes describing students' involvement in cooperative management and entrepreneurial activities were categorized as practice-based learning. Other codes reflecting students' responsibility, confidence, and decision-making experiences were grouped under economic self-efficacy. Through this process, several subcategories were condensed into broader thematic clusters representing the main patterns emerging from the data.

The final stage, selective coding, involved integrating the major categories into a coherent conceptual framework. Four core themes emerged from the analysis: value internalization, formal curriculum structure, practice-based economic learning, and the institutional economic ecosystem. These dimensions formed the analytical foundation for reconstructing the proposed model of Islamic economic integration within pesantren education.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were applied. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing perspectives from administrators, teachers, and students, while methodological triangulation was achieved by integrating data from observations, interviews, and document analysis. Member checking was carried out by returning preliminary interpretations to selected informants to confirm whether the findings accurately reflected their experiences. In addition, an audit trail was maintained throughout the research process by documenting coding procedures, analytical decisions, and analytical memos. These procedures enhanced the transparency and reliability of the analysis and supported the development of the reconstructed model of Islamic economic integration in pesantren education.

Results and Discussion

Curriculum Orientation and Learning Structure

Field observations show that the pesantren curriculum remains predominantly centered on classical Islamic sciences, including fiqh, tafsir, hadith, and Arabic grammatical sciences. Learning is conducted through *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods, emphasizing textual mastery and moral internalization.

Document analysis of the formal curriculum structure indicates that no standalone Islamic economics subject is formally listed in the core curriculum. Economic content appears indirectly within fiqh muamalah discussions but without structured competency targets related to financial literacy, entrepreneurship, or applied economic management.

Open coding of curriculum documents and interview transcripts generated several initial codes that reveal the structural characteristics of Islamic economic learning within the

pesantren. These codes include “text-dominant learning,” “normative economic discussion,” “absence of a formal economic syllabus,” and “unstructured integration.” The prevalence of these codes indicates that economic issues are primarily discussed within the framework of classical jurisprudential instruction rather than being organized as an independent curricular component. Through axial coding, these codes were grouped into the category Curriculum Structural Limitation, suggesting that Islamic economics has not yet been institutionally embedded as a formal element of the pesantren curriculum.

Despite the absence of structured curricular integration, the pesantren operates several institutional economic units that provide practical economic exposure for students. These include a student cooperative, small-scale production enterprises, and social finance distribution activities involving zakat and infaq management. Observational data indicate that students are directly involved in operational activities such as inventory recording, sales transactions, and financial bookkeeping. One administrator explained that “students learn responsibility by managing the cooperative, but it is not part of the official lesson plan.” Similarly, a student noted that “we handle real transactions, but there is no formal class explaining business risk or digital marketing.”

Open coding of these interview statements produced several codes, including “learning by doing,” “experiential management,” “absence of formal assessment,” and “economic practice outside the classroom.” These codes were grouped into the axial category Informal Experiential Economic Learning, indicating that economic competencies are largely developed through practical experience rather than through structured pedagogical design.

Another significant dimension emerging from the analysis is the strong ethical orientation embedded in economic activities within the pesantren environment. Interview findings reveal that students consistently associate economic behavior with moral and religious responsibility. One teacher emphasized that “business must be based on *amanah* and *barakah*. Profit is important, but ethics comes first.” Open coding of these statements identified recurring patterns such as “amanah orientation,” “ethical transaction awareness,” “barakah principle,” and “religious moral guidance.” Through axial coding, these codes were categorized as Normative Ethical Internalization, demonstrating that Islamic ethical values strongly influence students’ understanding of economic practice.

Through the process of selective coding, the analysis produced three major thematic findings. First, there is a structural absence of a formal Islamic economic curriculum, where economic concepts remain embedded within classical jurisprudential learning rather than being structured as a competency-based subject. Second, there exists an informal practice-based economic ecosystem, in which students gain real economic experience through institutional economic activities. Third, the pesantren demonstrates a strong ethical foundation in economic behavior, although this ethical orientation is not accompanied by structured economic literacy education. These findings reveal a structural disconnect between normative religious knowledge, experiential economic practice, and formal pedagogical design.

The findings support previous studies describing pesantren economic initiatives primarily as institutional or managerial programs rather than integrated educational frameworks. Earlier research has highlighted the role of pesantren in developing community-based economic institutions and fostering entrepreneurial values among students. However, the present study demonstrates that these initiatives remain pedagogically detached from formal curriculum architecture. Unlike previous literature focusing either on institutional economic management or on the cultivation of entrepreneurial mentality, the current findings indicate that the central issue lies in the absence of systematic curriculum reconstruction. Thus, the contribution of this

study extends beyond descriptive accounts of pesantren entrepreneurship by identifying curriculum design as the strategic locus of transformation.

The analysis also reveals a conceptual-practical disconnect between normative religious instruction and real economic decision-making. Although *fiqh muamalah* is taught through classical textual traditions, students report difficulty translating normative knowledge into practical economic competencies. This observation confirms existing literature highlighting the epistemological dichotomy between religious knowledge and socio-economic application. However, the present findings further demonstrate how this dichotomy manifests operationally within the pesantren context. Economic practice occurs without competency mapping, ethical instruction is delivered without accompanying financial literacy training, and institutional business units operate without systematic pedagogical integration. Consequently, economic empowerment risks being reduced to incidental experiential exposure rather than a structured learning process.

Based on these findings, this study proposes a reconstruction model for integrating Islamic economics within pesantren education. The proposed framework consists of four interconnected dimensions. The first dimension is the normative foundation, which includes the study of *fiqh muamalah* and the ethical objectives of Islamic law (*maqashid al-sharia*). This dimension provides the theological and ethical framework guiding economic behavior. The second dimension is structured economic literacy, which includes competencies such as accounting, halal entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and digital economic participation. The third dimension is practice-based learning integration, in which institutional economic units such as student cooperatives function as formal learning laboratories. The fourth dimension is institutional ecosystem alignment, which connects pesantren economic initiatives with broader social finance programs and community-based economic empowerment.

The novelty of this model lies in transforming pesantren economic initiatives from supporting institutional programs into curriculum-embedded learning laboratories with measurable competencies. Through this transformation, economic empowerment within pesantren education shifts from incidental practice toward a structured pedagogical system.

The findings also have important implications for the development of students' economic independence. While pesantren education has proven effective in cultivating discipline, responsibility, and ethical awareness, moral formation alone is insufficient for achieving sustainable economic independence. Economic resilience requires additional competencies, including financial literacy, risk management skills, digital market adaptation, and structured entrepreneurial capability. Therefore, achieving sustainable economic independence among students requires curriculum-level reconstruction rather than merely adding economic programs at the institutional level.

Further analysis of learning practices reveals that Islamic economic integration occurs in several forms within the pesantren environment. At the conceptual level, document analysis indicates that Islamic economic content is primarily delivered through classical *fiqh muamalah* texts such as *Fath al-Qarib*, *Fath al-Mu'in*, and *Bulugh al-Maram*. These texts discuss issues related to commercial transactions, contractual agreements, and trade ethics. The materials are generally delivered through the *bandongan* method, in which the *kyai* explains legal principles such as contractual agreements (*akad*), the prohibition of *riba* and *gharar*, and the ethical obligations of trade. However, curriculum analysis and classroom observation reveal that the syllabus does not specify measurable learning outcomes related to financial literacy, accounting competence, business feasibility analysis, or digital economic skills. Consequently,

economic discussions remain embedded within jurisprudential exposition without being reorganized into a structured Islamic economics module.

At the practical level, the pesantren operates several economic units, including a student cooperative, a drinking water refill production unit, a halal culinary enterprise, and a zakat and infaq distribution unit. Student participation in these units is institutionalized through a structured rotation mechanism. Students are assigned to economic units for a three-month period and work approximately two to three hours daily after formal learning sessions. Each unit is supervised by a mentor teacher (*ustadz*), and students rotate through roles such as cashier, inventory manager, procurement coordinator, and bookkeeper. Before graduation, each student is required to complete at least two economic unit rotations.

Administrative documentation shows that financial records are maintained manually, yet no standardized accounting curriculum is formally taught. Evaluation mechanisms focus primarily on discipline, responsibility, and moral conduct rather than measurable economic performance indicators such as profit margin analysis or cost-efficiency calculations. One student stated that “we manage real money, but we were never taught how to calculate profit margins formally.” Open coding generated categories such as “structured rotation system,” “responsibility-based evaluation,” “absence of financial literacy classes,” and “learning through operational exposure.” Through axial coding, these were synthesized into the category *Experiential Economic Ecosystem Without Academic Formalization*, indicating that although the operational structure is organized and mandatory, it remains detached from formal curriculum documentation and competency-based learning assessment.

Ethical supervision represents the most institutionalized dimension of integration. Monitoring mechanisms include daily supervision by economic unit mentors, weekly evaluation forums (*muhasabah*) led by senior teachers, and corrective measures for ethical violations such as price manipulation or financial dishonesty. Operational controls include transparent pricing policies, mandatory transaction recording, prohibition of speculative pricing, and collective decision-making in procurement processes. Revenue reporting is conducted daily in group meetings to reinforce collective accountability. As one administrator explained, “if a student hides profit or manipulates price, we treat it as a moral violation, not only a financial error.” Open coding identified patterns such as “ethics-first orientation,” “collective accountability,” and “religious sanction for economic misconduct.” These were categorized as *Normative Ethical Enforcement Through Institutional Culture*, indicating that ethical internalization is structurally monitored and culturally institutionalized even though technical economic literacy remains underdeveloped.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Islamic economic integration within the pesantren operates through three interrelated dimensions: textual-normative instruction, experiential economic practice, and ethical institutional culture. While ethical values are strongly institutionalized and students gain practical economic exposure, the absence of structured curriculum integration limits the development of comprehensive Islamic economic competencies.

Cross-Dimensional Structural Analysis

The integration of sharia economics within the pesantren operates across three interrelated structural layers, encompassing conceptual, practical, and ethical dimensions. These layers reflect how Islamic economic principles are transmitted, practiced, and monitored within the institutional environment. The structural characteristics of this integration are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Structural Layers of Sharia Economic Integration

Dimension	Operational Form	Structural Status
Conceptual	Classical <i>fiqh muamalah</i> texts	Textually strong, pedagogically unstructured
Practical	Four economic units with mandatory student rotation	Operationally structured, academically detached
Ethical	Formal supervision and <i>muhasabah</i> evaluation system	Culturally institutionalized

The conceptual dimension is primarily represented through the study of classical *fiqh muamalah* texts that address commercial jurisprudence and ethical principles of trade. These texts provide a strong normative foundation for understanding Islamic economic principles. However, the learning process remains textually oriented and has not been reorganized into a structured economic curriculum with clearly defined competency outcomes.

The practical dimension is manifested through several institutional economic units that involve students directly in economic activities. The pesantren operates four economic units, including a student cooperative, a drinking water refill production unit, a halal culinary enterprise, and a zakat and infaq distribution unit. Student participation is institutionalized through a mandatory rotation system in which each student is assigned to economic units for a specific period. While this structure provides valuable experiential exposure to real economic activities, it remains academically detached from the formal curriculum framework.

The ethical dimension represents the most institutionalized layer of integration. Ethical supervision is implemented through daily monitoring by economic unit mentors, weekly evaluation forums (*muhasabah*), and corrective measures for violations of business ethics. These mechanisms reinforce values such as honesty, accountability, and trust (*amanah*) in economic transactions, thereby embedding Islamic ethical principles within institutional culture.

The uniqueness of this case lies in the combination of three institutional features: a mandatory student rotation system, diversified economic units, and formalized ethical monitoring forums. Together, these elements create a relatively robust ecosystem for experiential economic learning within the pesantren environment. However, analysis of curriculum documents indicates that none of these components are formally embedded within the curriculum architecture or linked to measurable competency outcomes.

Therefore, the central empirical finding of this study is not the absence of Islamic economic integration, but rather the absence of curriculum reconstruction capable of systematically connecting normative knowledge, practical competencies, and pedagogical evaluation. In the current structure, the relationship between these elements remains fragmented, where textual religious knowledge, economic practice, and ethical guidance operate in parallel rather than within a unified educational framework.

Ideally, Islamic economic education should develop through a structured learning trajectory that links: Textual Knowledge → Economic Skills → Operational Performance → Formal Assessment. The absence of this integrated pedagogical chain represents the primary structural gap identified in this study. Consequently, this gap becomes the main analytical basis for proposing a Reconstruction Model of Sharia Economic Curriculum Integration, which aims to systematically align Islamic economic knowledge, experiential learning, and competency-based curriculum design within pesantren education.

The Role of Curriculum Integration in Building the Economic Independence of Islamic Students

Research findings indicate that the integration of Islamic economics into pesantren learning contributes to the development of students' economic independence, both at the cognitive level, practical skills, and attitudinal orientation. This integration not only influences normative understanding of economic activity but also encourages a transformation in students' perspectives on the role of economics as part of social and religious responsibility. The learning process, which links religious values with economic practices, results in a shift in mindset that is more adaptive to the realities of socio-economic life, where economic activity is understood not merely as an effort to fulfill individual needs but as a means of contributing to collective well-being.

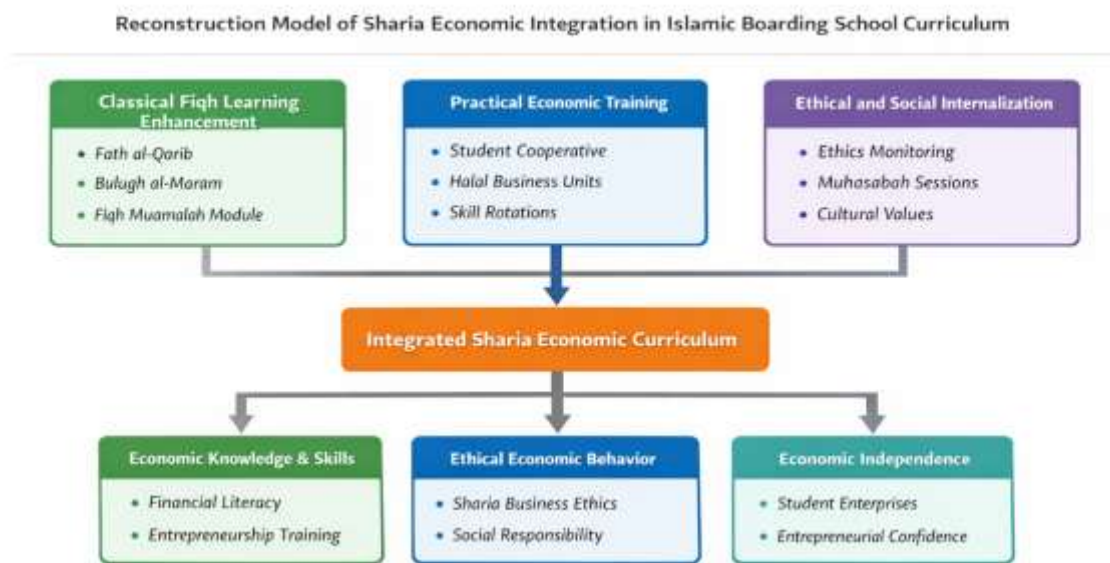


Figure 1. Reconstruction Model of Sharia Economic Integration

Changes in economic mindsets are evident in the increasing awareness of santri regarding the importance of resource management, transaction ethics, and productivity orientation in daily life. (Hakim et al. 2025) Interviews with informants indicate that understanding the concept of muamalah and pesantren economic practices shapes the students' perspectives more reflectively in making economic decisions. Students not only understand the halal and haram aspects normatively but also begin to link them to social responsibility, business sustainability, and economic benefits for the community. This cognitive transformation demonstrates that curriculum integration plays a role in building a foundation for values-based economic literacy. (Hasanah et al., 2025)

In addition to the cognitive level, integrated learning also has an impact on strengthening students' practical abilities in carrying out economic activities. (Mutmainnah, Sholahuddin, and Waston 2024) Involvement in pesantren business activities, collective program management, and simple entrepreneurial practices provides direct experience in managing production, distribution, and economic cooperation processes. (Ahmad 2024) These experiences serve as applied learning tools that strengthen communication skills, time management, and decision-making in a real economic context. (Prima et al. 2025) These practical impacts demonstrate that contextual learning has a significant contribution in building students' readiness to face economic life outside the pesantren environment. (Ach. Muqoddas et al., 2025)

Curriculum integration also plays a role in building students' economic self-confidence, namely their belief in their ability to participate in productive economic activities. (Fathurohman, Marliani, and Mahdiyan 2023) Exposure to practical experiences and reinforcement of the values of independence within pesantren culture fosters self-confidence in facing economic challenges. Several informants indicated that involvement in collective economic activities motivates them to develop independent businesses or continue productive activities after completing their education. This self-confidence serves as important psychosocial capital in the transition to a more independent economic life.

The participation of santri in business activities is also a concrete indicator of the impact of integrated learning. Involvement in pesantren business units and community-based economic activities demonstrates the translation of knowledge and experience into practical applications. This participation not only develops economic skills but also strengthens a sense of social responsibility and collective solidarity. (Sutomo et al. 2024) In this context, business activities serve as learning spaces that connect the educational dimension with social reality, thus establishing a reciprocal relationship between the learning process and life practices. (Ahmad, 2024)

These findings can be understood through a theoretical perspective on human capital, which positions education as an investment in developing individual capacity to increase productivity and economic opportunities. The integration of Islamic economics into the curriculum serves as a mechanism for developing human capital, encompassing not only knowledge and skills but also ethical values that influence economic behavior. Furthermore, within the framework of economic empowerment, learning integration can be seen as a process of increasing individual capacity to independently access, manage, and utilize economic opportunities. Meanwhile, from a transformative education perspective, changes in mindset, improved skills, and the development of self-confidence demonstrate that education produces not only knowledge but also a transformation of consciousness that enables individuals to play an active role in social change.

Thus, the integration of the Islamic economics curriculum into pesantren learning has a significant contribution to fostering economic independence among students through cognitive transformation, strengthening practical skills, and building psychosocial capacity. These findings confirm that pesantren education has strategic potential to serve as a medium for economic empowerment, although its effectiveness depends on the level of systematization of the curriculum integration. This analysis provides a foundation for further understanding the implementation challenges faced in this integration process.

Challenges of Implementing Curriculum Integration

Although the integration of Islamic economics into pesantren education shows significant potential in supporting the development of economic independence among students, research findings also reveal various challenges that impact its effective implementation. These challenges are not only technical but also relate to the structural, pedagogical, and institutional aspects inherent in the pesantren education system. Analyzing these barriers is crucial for understanding the limitations of existing practices and providing a basis for formulating a more realistic and applicable integration model.

At the human resources level, limited teaching competency in economics is one factor affecting the depth of learning integration. (Mutmainnah, Sholahuddin, and Waston 2024) Most teaching staff have strong religious backgrounds, but not all have the pedagogical or substantive capacity to deliver Islamic economics material in an applied manner. (Prima et al.

2025) This condition impacts the learning approach, which tends to be normative and conceptual, so the potential for developing students' practical skills is not fully optimized. This challenge indicates the need to increase teaching capacity through training, academic collaboration, or strengthening relevant scientific networks.

In addition to human resource factors, the structure of pesantren curricula, which are still oriented towards classical learning traditions, also poses a structural obstacle to the integration of Islamic economics. The emphasis on mastery of traditional Islamic texts as the core of education often limits the scope for curriculum innovation, so the addition of economics content is seen as an additional element that is not always a priority. The dense learning structure and adherence to traditional patterns can complicate systematic curriculum adjustments. This situation suggests that the integration of Islamic economics requires a sensitive approach to pesantren scholarly traditions to avoid being perceived as an attempt to shift the established educational identity.

In terms of supporting facilities, limited resources for practical economics learning also pose a barrier affecting the implementation of curriculum integration. Not all Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have access to infrastructure that allows for optimal development of entrepreneurial practices or economic simulations. Limited practice space, access to technology, and funding can hinder the strengthening of applied learning, which is crucial for developing students' capacity. This demonstrates that curriculum integration is not only related to learning design, but also to adequate learning environment support.

Academic culture also plays a role in shaping the dynamics of curriculum integration implementation. (Prima et al. 2025) Resistance to change can arise from concerns that curriculum innovation will diminish the focus on religious education, which is the core of pesantren. (Ahmad Mustafidin et al. 2025) This resistance is not always explicit rejection, but can manifest as institutional caution that slows the adoption of new approaches. (Barid et al. 2025) In this context, Islamic economic integration needs to be developed through a dialogical approach that positions innovation as a reinforcement of educational values, not as a substitute for existing traditions.

Furthermore, limited external economic networks also pose an institutional challenge that impacts opportunities for implementing curriculum integration. pesantren connections with businesses, Islamic financial institutions, and productive economic communities vary, resulting in unequal opportunities for students to gain broader practical experience. Limited networks can limit access to resources, markets, and collaborative learning, which are crucial for strengthening practice-based economic education.

Analytically, these challenges can be categorized into three main dimensions. Structural barriers relate to curriculum design, facility availability, and institutional arrangements that limit the scope for educational innovation. Pedagogical barriers include teacher capacity, learning methods, and instructional approaches that do not fully support the practical integration of Islamic economics. Meanwhile, institutional barriers relate to academic culture and external networks that influence the sustainability of curriculum integration. This grouping demonstrates that the integration of Islamic economics into pesantren education is a complex process that requires a multidimensional approach, not simply changes to the learning materials.

Thus, an analysis of implementation challenges not only reveals existing limitations but also provides a conceptual foundation for formulating more adaptive curriculum development strategies. Understanding structural, pedagogical, and institutional barriers is crucial for

designing an integration model that is not only conceptually ideal but also realistic in the context of pesantren educational practice.

Reconstruction of the Sharia Economic Integration Model in the Pesantren Curriculum

Based on findings regarding the form of learning integration, its impact on students, and implementation challenges, this study reconstructs the model of integrating Islamic economics into the pesantren curriculum as a multidimensional approach that emphasizes not only the learning material but also includes value formation, practical application, and strengthening the institutional ecosystem. This reconstruction aims to bridge the gap between normative religious learning and the need to contextually strengthen the economic capacity of students.

In terms of values, the integration of Islamic economics is rooted in moral principles that have become the fundamental characteristics of pesantren education, such as trustworthiness, justice, social responsibility, and simplicity. These values serve as a conceptual foundation for understanding economic activity as part of a social worship practice tied to the maqāṣid (objectives of worship). Al-Shari'ah . (Achmad Bashori, Umami, and Wahid 2024) Integration at this level ensures that the development of economic competencies is inseparable from the ethical and spiritual orientation that characterizes pesantren education. (Jazil et al. 2021) Thus, Islamic economics is not positioned as an external discipline, but as a continuation of the internalization of existing religious values.

In the curriculum dimension, the model reconstruction emphasizes the need for systematic integration of Islamic economics into formal learning structures. (Prima et al. 2025) This integration can be realized through the development of learning outcomes that include Islamic economic literacy , understanding of contracts, Islamic social financial management, and values-based entrepreneurship. This approach shifts the position of Islamic economics from merely supplementary material to a structured part of the learning design. (Hasanah, Marisa, and Mayee 2025) Curriculum integration can also be achieved through an interdisciplinary approach that connects the study of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh muamalah) with the contemporary economic context, thereby making learning more relevant to social realities. (Achmad Bashori et al., 2024)

In the practical dimension, the integration model places applied experience as a crucial part of the learning process. (Mutmainnah, Sholahuddin, and Waston 2024) Activities such as managing pesantren business units, involvement in cooperatives, or simulating sharia economic transactions can function as learning laboratories that connect theory with real-world practice. (Hakim et al. 2025) This integration of practice aims not only to develop technical skills but also to build economic self-confidence and students' adaptability in facing the dynamics of the community economy. (Ahmad 2024) Within a pedagogical framework, such practice needs to be designed as part of a structured, reflective learning process, not simply an additional activity. (Prima et al., 2025)

In the economic ecosystem dimension, curriculum integration requires institutional support that strengthens the sustainability of implementation. (Ach. Muqoddas, Fitriyani Kosasih, and Muhammad Aditya Firdaus 2025) This includes developing networks with Islamic financial institutions, business actors, and local economic communities that can become learning partners. This ecosystem allows students to gain broader experience and opens up opportunities for participation in productive economic activities. Strengthening the ecosystem also supports the transformation of pesantren into centers of community economic empowerment that function not only as educational institutions but also as agents of social development. (Hermawansyah, 2025)

Conceptually, the integration model reconstructed in this study demonstrates three main integration directions. (Adim et al. 2025) Conceptual integration connects religious values with an understanding of Islamic economics as a single epistemological whole. Pedagogical integration emphasizes learning designs that combine theory, practice, and reflection as a process of transforming knowledge into competency. Meanwhile, institutional integration places pesantren within a broader socio-economic network to support the sustainability of curriculum implementation. The synergy of these three integration directions forms a more comprehensive and contextual model than the partial approaches that have developed to date. (Qori, In'am, Romelah, & Zaimuddin, 2026)

Thus, the reconstruction of the model of integration of sharia economics in the pesantren curriculum not only provides a conceptual contribution in understanding the relationship between religious and economic education, but also offers an operational framework that can be further developed in educational practice.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for both educational theory and practice. Theoretically, this research contributes to the strengthening of Islamic education studies by demonstrating that the integration of Islamic economics can be understood as a process of curriculum transformation based on values and social context. This integration broadens the perspective of Islamic economics studies by positioning education as a strategic space for developing the economic capacity of the community. Furthermore, the approach developed in this study supports the development of a transformative curriculum framework that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions within a unified learning system.

On a practical level, this research provides several relevant recommendations for pesantren administrators. Strengthening the capacity of teachers in Islamic economics is a crucial step to improve the quality of integrated learning. Furthermore, gradual adjustments to the curriculum structure while maintaining the pesantren scientific identity can support the sustainable implementation of integrated learning. Developing practical facilities and strengthening networks with external economic actors are also strategies that can broaden the learning experience of students.

For policymakers, the findings of this study demonstrate the importance of institutional support in the form of capacity-building programs, facilitating economic partnerships, and developing an economic empowerment-based education model within the pesantren context. Further research remains open to exploring the implementation of this integration model in different pesantren contexts, as well as developing quantitative or longitudinal approaches to measure the long-term impact on the economic independence of santri.

Thus, the resulting implications not only enrich academic discourse, but also provide strategic direction for the development of pesantren education that is more responsive to contemporary socio-economic dynamics.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the integration of Islamic economics within pesantren education cannot be understood merely as the addition of economic topics to an existing religious curriculum. Rather, it requires a fundamental reconstruction of curriculum epistemology,

particularly the reconfiguration of the relationship between religious knowledge (*ulum al-din*) and socio-economic practice. The findings show that elements of Islamic economic learning already exist in three domains—conceptual instruction, practical economic activities, and ethical value internalization. However, these elements currently operate in fragmented and unsystematic forms. Without curriculum-level reconstruction, economic empowerment within pesantren education remains incidental rather than structurally embedded within the institutional learning framework.

To address this gap, the study proposes a Reconstruction Model of Sharia Economic Curriculum Integration consisting of four interdependent dimensions. The first dimension is value integration, which anchors economic behavior within the ethical framework of *maqashid al-sharia* and emphasizes responsibility, trust (*amanah*), and social welfare. The second dimension is formal curriculum integration, which transforms the study of *fiqh muamalah* from purely normative textual instruction into competency-based Islamic economic literacy. The third dimension is practice-based learning integration, which repositions pesantren economic units—such as cooperatives, small enterprises, and social finance activities—as structured pedagogical laboratories with measurable learning outcomes. The fourth dimension is institutional economic ecosystem integration, which aligns internal learning processes with broader economic partnerships, community empowerment initiatives, and sustainable financial networks. Together, these four dimensions form a systemic framework in which epistemology, pedagogy, and institutional practice are coherently aligned.

The main implication of this model is a shift from a material-oriented approach toward epistemological restructuring of the curriculum. In this perspective, Islamic economic integration should not be treated as an additional subject but as an inherent extension of Islamic moral philosophy. By bridging the longstanding dichotomy between normative religious sciences and applied socio-economic competencies, economic literacy becomes an integral component of Islamic education. Within this reconstructed framework, students' economic independence emerges not merely from entrepreneurial exposure but from a holistic curriculum that integrates textual mastery, ethical consciousness, structured skill development, and institutional economic practice.

Theoretically, this study contributes to contemporary discussions on Islamic education by reframing curriculum development as a transformative process of knowledge integration rather than simply expanding subject content. Practically, the findings offer pesantren administrators a conceptual roadmap for embedding economic empowerment within formal educational structures. The proposed model also highlights the importance of aligning ethical instruction, experiential learning, and competency-based economic education in order to strengthen the relevance of pesantren education within contemporary socio-economic contexts.

This study is based on a single-case qualitative design conducted in one pesantren with distinctive economic characteristics and structured student rotation mechanisms. Although the depth of analysis provides rich contextual insights and allows for detailed reconstruction of the integration model, the findings may not automatically represent the diversity of pesantren typologies in Indonesia. Traditional pesantren without institutional economic units or modern pesantren with fully integrated vocational systems may exhibit different patterns of economic integration. In addition, the present study focuses primarily on structural curriculum reconstruction rather than measuring the long-term economic outcomes of graduates.

Future research may therefore examine the applicability of this reconstruction model across diverse pesantren contexts or investigate its longitudinal impact on graduates' economic resilience and entrepreneurial capacity. Comparative studies involving multiple pesantren typologies may also help refine the proposed model and identify institutional factors that support effective integration of Islamic economic education.

Ultimately, the integration of sharia economics within pesantren education represents a strategic transformation of Islamic pedagogy. By systematically integrating ethical values, economic knowledge, and practical learning experiences, pesantren can evolve beyond their traditional role as centres of religious transmission to become institutions capable of producing generations that are both ethically grounded and economically independent.

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