

Research Article

## Optimization of Islamic Religious Education in Economic Empowerment of the People in Padangsidempuan Hutaimbaru District

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**Abstract:** Islamic religious education not only functions to shape the faith and morals of students, but also has a strategic role in encouraging independence and economic empowerment of the community. This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic religious education in Padangsidempuan District. Hutaimbaru, Contribution of economic empowerment to the Hutaimbaru community, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors of economic empowerment for the Hutaimbaru community. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research subjects include religious leaders, educators or instructors of Islamic Religious Education, community leaders, and micro-entrepreneurs who were selected purposively based on their involvement in religious and economic activities. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation as supporting data. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, with data validity maintained through triangulation techniques. The results of the study indicate that Islamic religious education plays a role in instilling the values of hard work, honesty, responsibility, and entrepreneurial spirit which are the foundation for strengthening the people's economy. Optimization is carried out through religious studies, religious guidance, social preaching, and strengthening Islamic economic values in everyday life. Obstacles faced include limited capital, low business skills, and less than optimal sustainable mentoring. Therefore, synergy is needed between educational institutions, religious leaders, and the government to strengthen the economic empowerment of the people based on Islamic values.

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### 1. Introduction

Education is essentially the process of passing on knowledge, skills, and habits from one generation to the next through learning and teaching activities. Education also serves as a means of shaping individual character, enabling them to prepare themselves to face the various dynamics of life (Zalsabella et al., 2023). Education in Indonesia is understood as a conscious and planned effort to develop human potential for the well-being of individuals, society, and the nation. Linguistically, education is defined as the process of changing the attitudes and behavior of an individual or group of people toward maturity through teaching and training activities. Education is not limited to a specific space and time, but encompasses all learning experiences that occur throughout life and can occur in various life environments (Arti et al., 2024).

Islamic Religious Education has a strategic position in shaping the personality of people who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals (Fitriani et al., 2025). Education is not only understood as a process of transferring religious knowledge, but also as a means of shaping social attitudes and behaviors that impact community life, including the economic sphere. Therefore, Islamic religious education plays a crucial role in instilling a work ethic, honesty, and responsibility as core values in economic activities (Sofiani et al., 2025).

From an Islamic perspective, economic issues are part of muamalah (transactions) that must be managed fairly and oriented towards the welfare of the community. Islam encourages its followers to work, strive, and be economically independent as a form of worship to Allah SWT. This emphasizes that the balance between spiritual and material aspects is a key characteristic of Islamic teachings (Robbani & Muttaqin, 2023). Therefore, Islamic religious education has great potential to promote the economic empowerment of the community if optimized appropriately.

Padangsidempuan District Hutaimbaru is a region characterized by a religious community with quite active religious activities. Religious study groups, religious study groups, and religious guidance continue to operate within the community (Harahap, 2021). However, in practice, these activities have not been fully integrated with systematic community economic empowerment efforts. Yet, existing social and religious potential can be utilized as social capital to encourage economic strengthening of the community.

Empowering the community's economy through Islamic religious education requires a planned and targeted strategy. The religious education curriculum must be tailored to the needs and potential of the local community (Hidayatullah & Salabi, 2025). Practice-based and role-modeling learning methods are relevant approaches in the context of empowerment. Instilling the values of economic independence and responsibility can be done from an early age through religious education. These efforts will shape a productive mindset among the community and orient it toward the common good. Religious education serves not only as a transfer of knowledge but also as an instrument of social change.

Optimizing Islamic Religious Education is also closely linked to efforts to strengthen the economy based on Sharia values. The principles of justice, blessings, and welfare are the primary foundations of the community's economic activities. Implementing these principles can create a more inclusive and sustainable economic system. Communities that understand Islamic economic concepts will be better prepared to face the challenges of the modern economy (Sugianto & Hafifuddin, 2025). Religious education plays a role in building critical awareness of economic practices that are inconsistent with Islamic values. Strengthening this aspect is an urgent need at the local level.

Based on this description, this research focuses on how Islamic religious education is implemented in Padangsidempuan District. Hutaimbaru , what is the role of Islamic religious education in Padangsidempuan District? Hutaimbaru , Contribution of economic empowerment to the Hutaimbaru community , as well as supporting factors and inhibiting factors of economic empowerment to the Hutaimbaru community.

## **2. Theoretical Review**

### **Islamic education**

The goal of Islamic Religious Education is not limited to merely fulfilling intellectual needs. This education is aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding and the ability to apply religious teachings in everyday life as a guide. This description demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education teachers have the responsibility to guide students so that Islamic values are deeply instilled. The instillation of religious values is expected to be reflected in students' attitudes, behavior, and personalities in their daily lives (Kamila, 2023). This means that Islamic religious education serves to prepare students to believe in, understand, and consistently practice Islamic teachings. This educational process is carried out through guidance, teaching, and training that are designed in a planned manner to achieve predetermined goals (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022).

### **Economic empowerment**

Empowering the people's economy can be understood as an effort to increase the community's ability to manage economic resources independently and sustainably (Bado & Zulkifli, 2021). Empowerment aims to create a society with the power, strength, and ability to determine its own future. From an Islamic perspective, economic empowerment is oriented not only toward profit but also toward justice and blessings (Sugianto, 2023). Islam places economic activity as part of worship. The values of honesty, trustworthiness, hard work, and responsibility are key principles in Islamic economics (Antonio, 2011). Islamic religious education serves as a medium for internalizing these values so that they become ingrained in the community's character. Thus, Islamic religious education can be a driving force for the economic empowerment of the community.

## **3. Research Methodology**

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena related to the role of Islamic religious education in the economic empowerment of the community in Padangsidempuan District, Hutaimbaru (Alexy J Moleong, 2021). The research subjects included religious leaders, Islamic religious teachers or instructors, community leaders, and micro-entrepreneurs in the research area. Informants were selected purposively, considering their involvement in religious and economic activities in the community (Bado, 2021).

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore informants' perspectives and experiences, observations were conducted to directly observe empowerment practices, and documentation served as supporting data (Sugiyono, 2021). Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, source and technique triangulation techniques were used.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### **The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Padangsidempuan District Hutaimbaru**

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Padangsidempuan District Hutaimbaru is carried out through various routine and structured religious activities. Regular religious studies, religious lectures, and religious study groups are the primary means of conveying Islamic values to the community. These activities take place in mosques, prayer rooms, and residential areas. The intensity of religious activities demonstrates the community's collective awareness of the importance of spiritual development. Religious education is positioned not only as a ritual activity but also as a means of character development. This implementation pattern demonstrates the strategic role of religious education in social life.

The process of internalizing Islamic Religious Education values takes place through a persuasive approach and exemplary behavior. Religious material is delivered contextually, linking Islamic teachings to the realities of everyday life. Lecture and discussion methods are used to foster deeper understanding. The delivery of religious values is not dogmatic, but rather directed at individual awareness. This encourages the community to more readily accept and practice Islamic teachings. This approach is considered effective in shaping sustainable religious attitudes and behaviors.

Honesty is one of the dominant values instilled through Islamic Religious Education activities. Honesty is understood as a fundamental foundation for social life and economic activity. Instilling this value has an impact on increasing public awareness of conducting business openly and responsibly. Economic practices oriented towards honesty are believed to foster trust between individuals. This trust serves as important social capital in the economic development of the community. Research results indicate a relationship between an understanding of honesty and more ethical economic behavior.

The value of hard work is also a primary focus in community religious development. Hard work is seen as a form of worship that is valuable in the sight of Allah SWT. This understanding encourages people to be more active in developing businesses and seeking a lawful livelihood. Islamic religious education provides spiritual motivation so that people do not rely solely on aid. An attitude of never giving up and perseverance in work is beginning to be evident in the community's economic activities. This demonstrates the contribution of religious education in developing the community's work ethic.

The values of responsibility and independence are also instilled through various religious activities. Responsibility is understood as an individual's obligation to themselves, their family, and their community. Independence is directed at the ability to manage economic potential without excessive dependence on others. Islamic religious education shapes the community's mindset to be more proactive in facing economic challenges. This awareness encourages the emergence of small business initiatives and productive activities. Research shows an increase in motivation for economic independence.

The value of mutual assistance is a crucial element in strengthening social solidarity in a community. This mutual assistance is practiced through business cooperation, small-scale capital assistance, and moral support among residents. Islamic religious education emphasizes the importance of brotherhood and social awareness in economic life. These practices strengthen social networks that support the sustainability of community businesses. The

solidarity thus developed helps reduce the risk of individual business failure. This reflects the role of religious education in building a community-based economy.

The consistently instilled values of Islamic religious education shape public awareness of the importance of a halal and ethical economy. People are beginning to understand that economic success is not solely measured by material gain. Blessings and compliance with Islamic teachings are primary considerations in business activities. This understanding encourages people to avoid economic practices that harm others. Religious education plays a role as a moral regulator in economic activities. Research results indicate a shift in attitudes toward business practices that are more in line with Islamic values.

Based on the results of the discussion, Islamic Religious Education has a real contribution to the economic empowerment of the people in Padangsidempuan District. Hutaimbaru . Instilling Islamic values can shape the economic character of a community that is honest, independent, and responsible. The implementation of religious education through religious activities has proven relevant to the community's socioeconomic needs. The role of religious leaders and religious institutions is a key supporting factor in this process. Optimizing religious education needs to be continuously developed to achieve a broader impact. These efforts are expected to sustainably improve the welfare of the community.

#### **Contribution of Economic Empowerment to the Hutaimbaru Community**

The role of economic empowerment in the Hutaimbaru community is evidenced by the development of various forms of independently managed small-scale businesses. Trade, home businesses, and family-based economic activities are the primary options for meeting basic living needs. This development is influenced by religious understanding acquired through religious education. Religious values serve as a driving force for awareness of legitimate and responsible business practices. Economic activity is not merely viewed as fulfilling material needs. A spiritual orientation forms the basis for running community businesses.

The role of religious studies and sermons is significant in building economic awareness among the community. These activities serve as a means of conveying messages about the importance of hard work and independence from others. Religious material is delivered by connecting Islamic teachings to the realities of people's economic lives. This approach helps people understand the relevance of religion in their daily activities. Religious education serves as moral motivation in the development of small businesses. This awareness encourages people to be more active and economically productive.

Optimizing Islamic Religious Education is evident in efforts to integrate religious material with the socio-economic conditions of the Hutaimbaru community . Da'wah is directed at strengthening understanding of Islamic transactions and work ethics. Emphasis is placed not only on ritual worship but also on economic and social responsibility. This understanding fosters a more balanced mindset between worldly and afterlife interests. Economic activities are conducted with an eye to the values of blessing and justice. This demonstrates the strategic role of religious education in empowering the community economically.

The above research is supported by research findings Hidayatullah & Salabi, (2025) revealed that the economic empowerment of Islamic boarding schools (dayah) can be implemented through various planned and sustainable strategies. Developing productive

business units within the dayah environment is a crucial step in creating independent sources of income for the institution. Entrepreneurship skills training for students is provided to equip them with practical skills that can be applied after completing their education. Utilizing local potential around the dayah also contributes to the success of the economic empowerment program. This strategy not only strengthens the economic independence of dayah as an Islamic educational institution, but also strengthens the economic independence of dayah as an Islamic educational institution.

### **Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Factors For Economic Empowerment of The Hutaimbaru Community**

The success of optimizing Islamic Religious Education in empowering the community's economy is influenced by several strong supporting factors. The deeply rooted religious culture in the lives of the Hutaimbaru community serves as the primary foundation for all social activities. The habit of regularly carrying out religious activities fosters a collective mindset aligned with Islamic values. A religious social environment facilitates the internalization of honesty and responsibility. This creates a conducive atmosphere for Islamic-based economic development. Religious education enjoys a significant role in community life.

The role of religious leaders is a crucial factor in supporting the process of economic empowerment. Religious leaders possess strong moral authority and command high levels of public trust. The religious messages they convey can influence citizens' economic attitudes and behaviors. The exemplary behavior of religious leaders in daily life strengthens the effectiveness of economic outreach. Islamic religious education is delivered not only theoretically but also through practical practices. This strengthens the relationship between religious values and community economic activity.

Strong social solidarity contributes to optimizing economic empowerment based on Islamic religious education. Close social ties encourage cooperation in various economic activities. Communities are accustomed to helping each other with capital, labor, and business marketing. The values of mutual assistance instilled through religious education are reflected in daily economic practices. This social capital serves as a collective strength in building joint ventures. This condition aligns with the view that social capital plays a crucial role in strengthening community economies.

However, the research also identified several inhibiting factors in optimizing community economic empowerment. Limited business capital remains a major obstacle for most small business owners. Access to financing sources that comply with Sharia principles is still lacking. This situation limits the community's ability to scale their businesses. Islamic religious education has not been fully balanced by adequate economic support. These obstacles impact the sustainability of community businesses.

Lack of managerial skills is another inhibiting factor in the economic development of the community. Some communities still have limitations in business management, financial record-keeping, and marketing strategies. The religious education received has not been fully integrated with practical economic skills training. This situation makes it difficult for businesses to develop optimally. The need for mentoring and training is increasingly important. Islamic religious education needs to be synergized with improving the community's managerial capacity.

The lack of a structured and sustainable economic empowerment program is also a significant obstacle. Empowerment activities remain sporadic and lack long-term planning. Coordination between religious institutions, the government, and the community is suboptimal. Religious education has not been fully integrated into an integrated economic empowerment strategy. This situation reduces the effectiveness of efforts to improve community welfare. More systematic planning is needed for the program to be sustainable.

In addition to structural factors, research findings indicate barriers to public understanding. Some still view religious and economic activities as separate domains. This understanding leads to the incomplete application of religious values in economic practices. Islamic religious education is not fully understood as a guideline for transactions. This situation hinders the integration of Islamic teachings and economic activities. Strengthening holistic understanding is an urgent need for community empowerment.

Based on the above description, the author can conclude that optimizing Islamic religious education for empowering the community's economy requires strengthening supporting factors and simultaneously addressing inhibiting factors. Religious culture, the role of religious leaders, and social solidarity must be continuously maintained and developed. Limited capital, skills, and structured programs require comprehensive solutions. Religious education needs to be directed in a more practical and contextual manner. Integrating Islamic values into economic activities is key to successful empowerment.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the description of the results and discussion above, the author can conclude that Islamic religious education has a strategic role in empowering the economy of the people in Padangsidempuan District. Hutaimbaru . Through the internalization of Islamic values such as hard work, honesty, responsibility, and independence, religious education can shape the community's economic awareness. Optimizing Islamic religious education, on the other hand, by integrating religious material and economic empowerment requires strengthening supporting factors and addressing inhibiting factors on a regular basis.

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