

## The Economic Independence of Pesantren in Facing Economic Globalization: A Case Study of Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati, Jepara

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### Abstract

This study examines the economic independence of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in responding to the challenges of economic globalization, using Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Jepara as a case study. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with field observations, interviews, and document analysis, the research explores how pesantren develop sustainable economic models grounded in Islamic values. The findings reveal that Darul Falah Amsilati has successfully established a self-reliant economic ecosystem through diversified business units such as Amsilati Water, Amsilati Press, agriculture, livestock farming, and retail enterprises. These activities not only finance the pesantren's operations but also foster entrepreneurship among students and the surrounding community. The study highlights the relevance of Dependency Theory in explaining pesantren's historical reliance on external funding and shows how internal economic empowerment can reduce structural dependency. The pesantren's economic independence model integrates education with entrepreneurship, aligns with Sharia economic principles, and strengthens community empowerment. Therefore, pesantren can serve as alternative Islamic economic institutions capable of promoting sustainable development and self-reliance within the context of global economic transformation.

**Keywords:** *Community empowerment, economic independence, globalization, Islamic economy, pesantren*

### Introduction

Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) are among the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and have historically played a vital role in shaping the nation's intellectual, moral, and socio-economic landscape. Beyond their function as centers for religious education, pesantren serve as social and cultural institutions that contribute significantly to community empowerment and moral development. In the modern era, the rapid flow of economic globalization has reshaped the global economic system, introducing both opportunities and challenges for pesantren. While globalization allows pesantren to access global markets, digital technologies, and financial resources, it also exposes them to risks of economic dependency, market competition, and cultural shifts that may undermine their traditional values and autonomy (Stiglitz, 2002; Latief, 2019). Consequently, economic independence has become an urgent agenda for pesantren to maintain their sustainability and relevance within a competitive global environment.

Previous studies on pesantren and economic empowerment have primarily focused on their social and educational dimensions. Latief (2019) examined the philanthropic role of pesantren in promoting Islamic social welfare, while Fauzi (2021) analyzed pesantren-based entrepreneurship as a means to strengthen community resilience. Other studies, such as those by Effendi (2020) and Kurniawan (2021), emphasized the need for pesantren to

modernize their management systems and adopt digital economic practices to survive in the era of globalization. However, these studies often remained descriptive and did not provide a comprehensive model that integrates Islamic economic principles, entrepreneurship education, and institutional self-reliance within a single pesantren framework. Moreover, few studies have explored the phenomenon through the lens of Dependency Theory, which critically analyzes structural dependence between local Islamic institutions and global economic forces (Frank, 1967; Dos Santos, 1970; Cardoso, 1972).

This study introduces a new scientific contribution by linking the Dependency Theory framework with the practical implementation of pesantren economic independence. The novelty lies in analyzing how a pesantren can transform from being a recipient institution (dependent on donors, government aid, or external support) into an economically self-reliant and socially empowered institution. The research offers a contextual model of Islamic economic independence that harmonizes Sharia values, local resource utilization, and digital innovation. This approach contributes to the discourse on Islamic education and economics by presenting an integrated model of sustainable economic development within pesantren.

Based on these considerations, the main research problems are formulated as follows:

1. How is the concept of economic independence developed and implemented within the pesantren institution?
2. What strategies and practices support the achievement of economic independence at Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Jepara?
3. What are the internal and external factors influencing the pesantren's economic self-reliance in the context of globalization?
4. How can the pesantren economic independence model serve as an alternative framework for community empowerment and Islamic economic development?

The objective of this article is to analyze the concept, strategies, and implementation of pesantren economic independence in facing the challenges of economic globalization, with a specific focus on Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Jepara. Through this case study, the article seeks to demonstrate that pesantren can achieve sustainable economic independence by integrating entrepreneurship education, community empowerment, and Sharia-based economic practices within their institutional framework.

## Literature Review

### 1. *Economic Globalization*

Economic globalization is the process of global economic integration through trade liberalization, capital flow, and advances in information technology (Stiglitz, 2002). This process creates increasingly deep global economic interconnections, making geographical and cultural boundaries increasingly blurred. The impacts on Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren, are as follows:

- a. Opportunities: wider market access, investment potential, and digitalization of pesantren enterprises.
- b. Challenges: open market competition, the influx of consumerist culture, and the potential dominance of international financial institutions and donors in shaping pesantren policies.

For Indonesia, as the country with the world's largest Muslim population, economic globalization affects not only the industrial and trade sectors but also education and religion. Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have inevitably experienced the consequences of these transformations. On one hand, globalization opens opportunities for pesantren to develop economic ventures, expand networks, and increase competitiveness. On the other hand, pesantren also face challenges such as intense economic competition,

dependence on external funding sources, and the demand to manage resources more professionally (Latief, 2019).

## **2. The Impact of Economic Globalization on Pesantren**

Economic globalization has both direct and indirect effects on the existence and functions of pesantren.

### **a. Positive Impacts**

- 1) Access to technology and information expands pesantren business opportunities.
- 2) The opening of global markets allows pesantren products (agriculture, crafts, digital goods) to gain broader recognition.
- 3) Encourages pesantren to develop entrepreneurship and modern economic curricula.

### **b. Negative Impacts**

- 1) Competitive pressure from modern economic and educational institutions.
- 2) Dependence on external assistance, which can undermine pesantren independence.
- 3) Technological disparities between large and small pesantren.
- 4) The risk of infiltration of global economic values that may contradict Islamic principles.

## **3. Economic Opportunities for Pesantren in the Era of Globalization**

Pesantren have significant potential to play an active role in the global economic system through several strategies:

- a. Development of Productive Business Units: pesantren cooperatives, agriculture, printing, retail stores, and creative industries.
- b. Digitalization of Pesantren Enterprises: using e-commerce and digital platforms to market pesantren products and services.
- c. Empowerment of Students and Alumni: training students in entrepreneurship and encouraging them to establish independent businesses connected to pesantren networks.
- d. Syariah Economic Networks: pesantren can serve as hubs in Islamic financial networks, including Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT) and productive waqf institutions.

## **4. Islamic Education Policy in Responding to Globalization**

The Indonesian government enacted Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren, granting legal recognition and support for pesantren's roles, including in the economic domain. Supporting policies include:

- a. The Pesantren Economic Strengthening Program by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Cooperatives.
- b. Policies integrating entrepreneurship curricula into pesantren education.
- c. Digitalization assistance programs to encourage pesantren to go digital.

These policies signify the state's acknowledgment of pesantren's strategic role in national economic development in the globalization era.

Economic globalization presents both challenges and opportunities for pesantren. As Islamic educational institutions deeply rooted in social life, pesantren can become centers of community-based economic empowerment if they can utilize globalization opportunities strategically.

Through the strengthening of productive economic units, digital transformation, student empowerment, and supportive government policies, pesantren can enhance competitiveness, reduce external dependence, and play an active role in national economic development. Hence, globalization should not be faced passively but managed as a momentum for pesantren institutional transformation toward independence and modernity grounded in Islamic values.

### 5. *Dependency Theory*

Dependency Theory is one of the major theoretical frameworks in global political economy studies that emerged in the 1960s–1970s. It arose as a critique of modernization theory, which assumed that development could be achieved by following the path of developed countries.

According to scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank (1967), Theotonio Dos Santos (1970), and Cardoso (1972), dependency occurs when “peripheral” countries are structurally dependent on “core” countries in terms of economics, politics, and technology. This dependency is systemic and institutionalized, thereby hindering autonomous development.

Frank (1967) and Dos Santos (1970) explain that entities in the “periphery” often experience economic dependence on the “core.” In the context of pesantren, dependency on international grants, government assistance, or donor agencies may influence their policy autonomy, curriculum direction, and even ideological orientation. This phenomenon demands that pesantren strengthen their internal economic foundations to avoid being easily swayed by external interests.

### 6. *Dependency in the Context of Pesantren*

In the Indonesian context, pesantren—as traditional Islamic educational institutions—have distinctive characteristics: independence, community-based organization, and strong roots in local religious networks. However, along with the development of time and economic globalization, many pesantren have experienced various forms of dependency, whether in terms of finance, institutional management, or human resources.

Several forms of pesantren dependency can be described as follows:

#### a. **Financial Dependency**

Many pesantren rely on:

- 1) Community donations (infaq and sadaqah), which tend to be fluctuating and unstable.
- 2) Government assistance, such as BOS Pesantren (School Operational Assistance for Pesantren) or grant funds, which often come with specific administrative requirements.
- 3) Support from international donor agencies, which may carry particular agendas or orientations.

This financial dependency makes it difficult for pesantren to develop sustainable and independent economic models.

#### b. **Dependency on Curriculum and Programs**

Some pesantren adopt curricula and programs from external institutions (for instance, empowerment programs, entrepreneurship training, or capacity-building initiatives) without sufficient local adaptation. This can lead to dependency in institutional management and innovation.

#### c. **Technological and Infrastructure Dependency**

Globalization demands that pesantren gain access to information and communication technology. However, many pesantren still depend on external parties (donors, government, NGOs) for providing digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, and technological training.

From the perspective of Dependency Theory, pesantren dependency is not merely a matter of lacking resources but a structural relationship that binds pesantren to the “centers” of economic and intellectual power. In this context, the “centers” may include:

- a. Central government and donor institutions.
- b. International Organizations or foreign NGOs.
- c. The global market and large corporations.

Such dependency causes pesantren to become reactive rather than proactive toward economic and social change. They tend to be policy receivers instead of policy designers, which hinders internal innovation and makes economic sustainability difficult to achieve.

## **7. Strategies to Overcome Pesantren Dependency**

To reduce such structural dependency, several strategies can be implemented:

### **a. Strengthening Internal Productive Economies**

Pesantren need to develop independent business units such as:

- 1) Pesantren-based agriculture and livestock farming.
- 2) Santri cooperatives.
- 3) Creative and digital industries.
- 4) Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT) or Islamic microfinance institutions.

These units should be managed professionally based on Sharia principles and modern governance.

### **b. Integrating Entrepreneurship into the Curriculum**

Santri (students) must be trained to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, not merely to become aid recipients. Islamic-based entrepreneurship education can cultivate a spirit of independence and productivity.

### **c. Diversification of Funding Sources**

Pesantren can develop sustainable funding sources, such as productive waqf, technology-based enterprises, or strategic business partnerships that align with Islamic values, so they are not dependent on a single source.

### **d. Strengthening Managerial and Digital Capacity**

Pesantren need to build human-resource capacity in modern management and digital technology so they can compete and manage institutions efficiently.

### **e. Relevance of Dependency Theory to Economic Globalization**

In the era of economic globalization, Dependency Theory is highly relevant for reading the relations of global economic power and the position of local institutions such as pesantren. If pesantren only receive global flows without independent capacity, dependency will deepen. Conversely, with an understanding of Dependency Theory, pesantren can:

- 1) Recognize the structure of global relations that affect the local economy.
- 2) Design economic self-reliance strategies based on local resources and Islamic values.
- 3) Become active subjects in the global economic arena, not dependent objects.

Dependency Theory provides a critical analytical framework for the position of pesantren within the global economic system. Dependency is not only a technical or managerial issue but a structural and relational one. Therefore, efforts toward pesantren economic self-reliance must be directed at institutional transformation, strengthening productive economies, and developing Islamic education policies that support independence and sustainability. In this way, pesantren can move from a peripheral position to become strategic actors in national and global economic development.

## **Methodology**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for understanding social phenomena in a deep and contextual manner.

### **1. Research Location**

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati, located in Bangsri, Jepara Regency, Central Java. This pesantren is known for integrating classical kitab kuning studies with entrepreneurship training for students and the management of pesantren economic units.

## 2. Types and Sources of Data

- a. Primary Data: obtained through in-depth interviews with the pesantren leaders, students (santri), and managers of business units.
- b. Secondary Data: obtained from pesantren documents, economic activity reports, academic literature, and publications from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

## 3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through field observation, semi-structured interviews, and document study.

## 4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman (1994) model, through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

## Result and Discussion

### Result

#### 1. Profile of Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah (PPDF) Amsilati Jepara

This pesantren was founded by KH. Ma'ruf Khozin and is well known for its Amsilati learning system, a fast method for reading classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning). The vision of PPDF is: "To realize Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah as one of the centers of education and training capable of producing students (santri) with noble character (akhlakul karimah), strong faith (taqwa), and mastery of science and technology to achieve success in both worldly and spiritual life, seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT".

The missions of PPDF are as follows:

- a. To produce santri who master Islamic knowledge competently, in line with PPDF programs such as the Amsilati and Post-Amsilati programs, which include linguistics (Nahwu and Shorof), Fiqh, Tafsir, Hadith, Tasawuf, and languages.
- b. To produce santri who master science and technology and are competent in their fields, according to formal education programs (MI, MTs, MA).
- c. To establish cooperative relationships with relevant institutions and the industrial business sector.
- d. To develop santri who are socially aware and capable of finding solutions to social problems
- e. To nurture santri who are independent, entrepreneurial, and of noble character.

The objectives of PPDF include:

- a. Preparing santri to be Muslims with good morals wherever they are.
- b. Preparing santri to be beneficial to society in addressing social problems.
- c. Equipping santri with both religious and scientific knowledge so that they can develop independently or continue to higher levels of education.
- d. Preparing santri to become competent Muslims ready to face the era of globalization and keep pace with rapid information technology development.
- e. Forming santri who have faith and piety and master science and technology to support national development.

Within the pesantren environment, there are several formal, non-formal institutions, and dormitories. Formal institutions include MI Tahfidzul Qur'an, MTs Amsilati, MA Amsilati, and Ma'had Aly Amsilati. Non-formal institutions include Amsilati, Fan Tasawwuf, Fan Bahasa, Madin Pasca Amsilati, Takhossus Pasca Amsilati, Tahfidzul Qur'an Musa (for male students), and Tahfidzul Qur'an Az-Zahra (for female students). Additionally, there are dormitories for both male and female students.

Beyond religious education, this pesantren also develops various economic units as sources of independent funding.

## **2. Forms of Economic Independence Implementation**

The economic units developed at Darul Falah Amsilati include:

- a. Accommodation:  
There are Pondok Raudhotul Jannah (RJ) and Hotel Roudhotul Muta'allimin (RM). RJ has 28 rooms, 2 halls, and a convenience store. RM has 24 rooms and Café Arwana.
- b. Café: Café Amsilati serves as a gathering place for parents and visitors of santri.
- c. Convenience Store: Market Amsilati serves as the pesantren's shopping center.
- d. Building Supply Store: A construction materials shop open to the public.
- e. Amsilati Water: Managed by Gus Riski Al Mubarak as CEO and founder of CV Amsilati Water, its products are marketed to the general public.
- f. Multipurpose Buildings: Facilities include Paseban Hall, Pesanggrahan, and Kedaton buildings for various events.
- g. Printing and Publishing (Amsilati Press): Responsible for printing Amsilati books and other Islamic learning materials.
- h. Amsilati Convection (Garment Production): Produces uniforms for all Amsilati institutions.
- i. Pesantren Agriculture and Livestock Programs: Managed as both vocational training for santri and a source of self-produced food supplies.
- j. Digital Learning and Entrepreneurship Training Programs: Train santri to create Islamic digital content and products.

This economic self-reliance contributes significantly to the operational financing of the pesantren, allowing it to function without full dependence on external donors.

## **Discussion**

### **1. The Concept of Pesantren Economic Independence in the Context of Globalization**

The economic independence of pesantren represents the actualization of Islamic values in the field of economics, emphasizing the principles of ukhuwah (brotherhood), amanah (trustworthiness), and maslahah (public benefit). In the context of economic globalization, pesantren are expected not only to serve as educational and religious institutions but also as agents of Muslim economic empowerment (Latief, 2019). Economic globalization, as stated by Stiglitz (2002), creates global economic integration that demands high competitiveness and the resilience of local institutions against market liberalization. Pesantren, which were traditionally social-religious institutions, are now challenged to manage resources productively, professionally, and sustainably to avoid dependency on external support. Thus, the concept of pesantren economic independence must be developed through two main dimensions:

- a. Structural Dimension: Building an independent internal economic system through productive business units.
- b. Cultural Dimension: Instilling Islamic entrepreneurial values in students (santri) to cultivate independence and competitiveness.

### **2. The Relevance of Dependency Theory to the Economic Phenomenon of Pesantren**

Dependency Theory, as proposed by Frank (1967), Dos Santos (1970), and Cardoso (1972), highlights the inequality between core and peripheral countries in the global economic system. This structural dependency is also evident in Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, which often rely on government assistance, donor agencies, or community philanthropy (Fauzi, 2021).

In the context of pesantren, such dependency takes several forms:

- a. Financial Dependency: Reliance on grants and external aid.
- b. Programmatic Dependency: When curricula and economic activities are determined by external actors.
- c. Technological Dependency: Due to limited access to digital infrastructure and modern managerial skills.

According to Dos Santos (1970), such dependency limits local innovation and autonomy. Therefore, pesantren must develop an internal economic base as a form of structural emancipation, transforming from aid recipients into active participants in community economic development.

### **3. Implementation Strategies of Economic Independence at Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati**

The case study of Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Jepara demonstrates a concrete and long-term model of economic independence. The pesantren has successfully established a self-sustaining economic ecosystem through various productive units such as Amsilati Water, Amsilati Press (printing and publishing), convenience stores, agriculture and livestock enterprises, and entrepreneurship courses for santri.

The implemented strategies include:

- a. Business Diversification: Developing varied and sustainable enterprises to avoid dependence on a single income source.
- b. Integration of Education and Entrepreneurship: Embedding economic activities into the learning process to strengthen students' character and practical skills.
- c. Digitalization of the Pesantren Economy: Implementing digital learning programs and training santri to create Islamic digital content.
- d. Economic Partnerships with the Community: Expanding Islamic economic networks and positioning pesantren as centers of community empowerment (Latief, 2019).

This economic model aligns with the principles of just Islamic economics, emphasizing the balance between profit and spiritual values (masalahah). In this regard, Darul Falah Amsilati has demonstrated that a pesantren can achieve self-reliance without compromising its religious identity.

### **4. Economic Independence as a Means of Community Empowerment**

Pesantren economic independence not only ensures institutional sustainability but also serves as an instrument for community empowerment. According to Fauzi (2021), economically independent pesantren can function as community-based enterprises that promote local self-sufficiency through job creation, training, and the implementation of Sharia-based economic models.

At Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati, community empowerment is achieved through:

- a. Entrepreneurship training for students and alumni, enabling them to establish independent businesses after graduation.
- b. Local community involvement in managing pesantren business units, such as Amsilati Water distribution and agricultural projects.
- c. Establishing Sharia cooperatives and Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT) as practical embodiments of equitable Islamic economic principles.

Thus, pesantren functions not only as a spiritual educational institution but also as a productive center for social and economic transformation.

### **5. Policy Implications and Recommendations**

Pesantren economic independence carries strategic implications for national Islamic education policy. In accordance with Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren, the state officially recognizes the economic role of pesantren as part of national development.

Strategic recommendations derived from this study include:

- a. The government should expand access to funding through productive waqf and Islamic financial schemes to support pesantren enterprises.
- b. Integration of Islamic entrepreneurship curricula within pesantren education should be strengthened to equip students with modern economic competencies.
- c. The digitalization of pesantren economies should be prioritized so that pesantren can remain competitive in the digital globalization era (Stiglitz, 2002).

### **6. Synthesis: Pesantren as an Alternative Economic Model**

From the overall discussion, it can be concluded that Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati has successfully implemented an independent Islamic economic model by rejecting the structural dependency pattern described in Dependency Theory. Its strategies of business diversification, integration of education and economics, and focus on community empowerment position the pesantren as a viable alternative economic model in facing globalization.

As emphasized by Latief (2019), an independent pesantren is not merely a symbol of resistance against global economic hegemony but also a manifestation of the *islah* (reform) spirit, striving for community self-reliance grounded in Islamic values.

## **Conclusion & Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Jepara has successfully implemented a sustainable economic independence model grounded in Islamic values. Through the development of various productive business units—such as Amsilati Water, Amsilati Press, agriculture, livestock farming, convenience stores, and santri entrepreneurship training programs—the pesantren has managed to build a self-sufficient economic ecosystem that does not rely entirely on external assistance.

The pesantren's economic independence is rooted in the principles of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *maslahah* (public benefit), making its economic activities oriented not merely toward material profit but also toward social and spiritual empowerment. The success of this economic model lies in its business diversification strategy, integration of education with economic activities, and partnerships with the surrounding community.

The findings also highlight the relevance of Dependency Theory to the pesantren's economic phenomenon in the era of globalization. Structural dependency on donor institutions, the government, and global markets can only be overcome by strengthening the internal economic base of pesantren. The economic independence efforts of Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati represent a transformation from a recipient institution into an active agent of Muslim economic development. Therefore, the pesantren-based economic model can serve as a national reference for realizing an Islamic economic independence that is just, contextual, and sustainable amid the increasingly competitive forces of global economic globalization.

### **Recommendation**

#### **1. For Pesantren**

Other pesantren across Indonesia can adopt the Darul Falah Amsilati model to develop self-reliant economies. This can be achieved through business diversification based on local

potential, implementation of professional governance, and strengthening of entrepreneurship education for santri to ensure long-term sustainability.

## **2. For the Government and Related Institutions**

The government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, should expand policy and funding support for pesantren, particularly in developing productive waqf, Sharia cooperatives, and digitalization of pesantren economies. Technical assistance and modern management training are also necessary for pesantren to remain competitive in the digital economic era.

## **3. For the Community and Business Sector**

Synergy between pesantren and local communities should be fostered through Sharia-based economic partnerships. The business sector can contribute by supporting pesantren initiatives through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs focused on Muslim community economic empowerment.

## **4. For Academics and Future Researchers**

Future studies can expand this research through comparative analyses among pesantren in different regions to identify more diverse and adaptive models of pesantren economic independence that align with global and digital developments.

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