



Economic Empowerment of Islamic Boarding Schools: Is It Possible?

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ABSTRACT

Pesantrens is the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia are developing very quickly and becoming more modern. Attention to Pesantrens is growing in the educational aspect but also in the economic sector. Pesantrens are expected to be independent and empower their potential to increase the economy of Pesantrens and society, including the Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Foundation Tahfidz Qur'an Pesantren. This research aims to determine and analyze forms of community economic empowerment through Pesantrens. This research is qualitative research. Data of research was carried out by means of observation, interviews and documentation. Data was analyzed by means of triangulation, member check, audit partial, and expert opinion. The results of the research show that Pesantrens have carried out empowerment but have focused more on the education sector, namely by providing free learning opportunities to students who are economically disadvantaged. Meanwhile, in the economic sector, Pesantrens have not yet maximized empowerment due to several factors, namely the age of Pesantrens which are still new, the assets owned by Pesantrens are not yet optimal to finance Pesantren operations, the financing network from Bank Indonesia also cannot be accessed properly, strengthening school web applications also still not optimal.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of Pesantrens cannot be separated from the development of Islamic belief in Indonesia, as the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, Pesantrens themselves have special treasures and have a significant role in the journey of the Indonesian nation and have a unique nature, there is no education forum in general (Haedari, 2007). Pesantrens are needed to be able to make a positive contribution by opening up jobs for the people so that they can help increase the income of residents in the boarding school environment. As a result, the existence of Pesantrens has a crucial role in the economic empowerment of residents (Nadzir, 2015). This can be passed by

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building and empowering the potential capabilities contained. So that the community needs to be given the opportunity to determine the most suitable choice of activities for their progress and welfare. But the community also needs mature assistance in mapping their potential because basically not everyone is able to explore the potential contained in them.

According to data from the Directorate of Diniyah Education and Pesantrens of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there are 30,494 Pesantrens spread throughout Indonesia for the 2020/2021 academic year period. According to the region, West Java contributed the largest number of Pesantrens in the country in that period. The number reached 9,310 Pesantrens or approximately 30.53% of the total Pesantrens nationally. Banten ranked 2nd using a total of 5,344 Pesantrens in the same period. East Java followed in third place using 5,121 Pesantrens (databoks.com). Then, as many as 3,927 Pesantrens are located in Central Java. In general, there are 1,286 Pesantrens and 904 Pesantrens in Aceh and Lampung. West Nusa Tenggara is recorded to have 730 Pesantrens. South Sumatra, South Sulawesi, and Yogyakarta each have 378, 342, and 337 Pesantrens. On the other hand, the province with the least number of Pesantrens in Indonesia is in West Papua. The number is only 18 Pesantrens. In the North Sumatra region itself is ranked number 15 most in Indonesia. Pesantren by empowering citizens means a concrete example, where Pesantrens can not only share knowledge about Islam, but also are institutions engaged in the socio-economic realm based on community empowerment more or less. As a result, the presence of Pesantren in the midst of the community is said to need to be a new breakthrough in the empowerment model, because residents in addition to being taught how to work hard on worldly things, are also given insight into science on religious issues.

The concept of economic empowerment was born to be the antithesis to the development model and the industrialization model that is less partial to dominant citizens (who are not holders of economic power). This concept is built from the framework of reason that the concentration of power is built into the origin of the center of strengthening the factors of production; the concentration of power of the factors of production will give birth to a society of workers and citizens of the periphery; power will produce the building of co-optation of knowledge systems, legal systems, political systems, and an ideology that will systematically form two groups of people. namely: empowered communities and people with disabilities (Prijono & Pranarka, 1996). This concept will lead to the creation of examples of economic empowerment of pesantren through production activities that involve several factors of production, in addition to kyai being leaders, students and ustadz become administrators as well as managers and even the participation of managers from among local residents as helpers to manage the struggle unit. The success of the Pesantren can be measured when the pesantren can create an independent business for the pesantren and empower the people more or less which can later prosper the people and result in the community having a higher biological level. Economic empowerment of citizens is an effort to change citizens so that as a better, as a result they can be free from poverty and backwardness. So there is a need for an increase in ability and an increase in terms of economic independence. This requires an active and creative role from the people (Bashith, 2012). This condition is interesting to be researched so that it is known the business process and economic empowerment in the Pesantren Tahfidz Quran Yayasan Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empowerment in Indonesian is a translation of the word empowerment from English. Empowerment in the Oxford English Dictionary contains 2 meanings, namely To give ability or anable to, which translates to giving ability, ability, or allowing. Another meaning is To give power of authority. In the context of development, the term empowerment has often been thrown since the enlightenment that human factors play a crucial role in development. The World Bank defines empowerment as an effort to provide opportunities and abilities to poor groups of people to be able and dare to voice or voice opinions, ideas or ideas as well as the ability and courage to choose something (concepts, methods, products, actions, and others) the best for his family and community. In other words, community empowerment is the process of improving the ability and behavior of community abilities. A way for citizens, communities, and organizations to be directed to control or rule over their lives (Merdikanto and Poerwanto, 2013).

The empowerment in question is to help clients (empowered parties) gain the power to reach out and determine the actions that will be taken about themselves, including reducing the influence of direct and social blows, then increased ability and confidence to use the power possessed, among others, through the transfer of power from the environment (Rukminto, 2002).

The essence of empowerment is how to produce People can build themselves and be able to improve their own lives. The term able here means empowered, understanding, motivated to have opportunities, seeing and taking advantage of opportunities, energized, able to relate, understanding to be another way, able to make decisions, dare to take risks, can search and catch news, and can act synchronously initiative. While empowerment according to Suharto has at least four things, namely planned and collective activities, having the lives of citizens, priorities for weak or disadvantaged groups and carried out through capacity building events (Oos Anwas, 2012).

Empowerment is an effort that must be followed by strengthening the potential by each citizen. In that order, more positive measures are also expected apart from those that shape the climate and atmosphere. This strengthening includes concrete steps and involves providing various kinds of inputs and opening access to various opportunities that will later make citizens more empowered. Empowerment includes three things, namely:

- 1. Development is creating an atmosphere or climate that increases the potential of developing people. Empowerment is an effort to build that potential, motivate and raise awareness of the potential possessed and strive to develop it.
- 2. Strengthening potential or power (empowerment), this strengthening includes concrete steps, and involves providing various kinds of inputs and opening access to various opportunities.
- 3. The important goal of empowerment is to self-reliant the community, enable and build the ability to advance themselves towards a better life in a sustainable manner.

Improving the quality of human resources using human resource education (HR) is an important factor that cannot be separated from a company, institution and state. Human resources are even the key to the development of a country. In essence, the origin of human resources in a country plays a role as a driving force to achieve the country's goals. Today, the origin of human resources is not only called a resource. Now human resources have been considered as capital and even an asset for a country. Understanding human resources can be divided into two, namely micro and macro. On a micro level, human resources can be defined as individuals who are members of a company or agency that is usually considered to use labor. Meanwhile, from a macro perspective, human resources can be defined as the population of a country that has entered working age (labor force), whether employed or not yet employed.

According to Sumodiningrat, empowerment is not forever, but rather the goal is for citizens to be able to become independent, then be released to be independent, even if they are far away, they will not fall again. This means empowerment through a period of learning process, until achieving independent status. (Rosmita, 2010).

Empowerment strategies have been carried out for exclusive groups, including empowerment carried out at Pesantrens, which have several roles, namely Pesantrens as centers of religious

education and Pesantrens as centers for community empowerment, Becoming centers of religious education. Pesantrens function as areas for the transmission of Islamic religious knowledge, Cultural preservation areas., and a training area for the birth of Islamic scholars. Pesantrens are centers of community empowerment, Pesantrens function as facilitators, initiators, mediators and local institutions. Pesantrens also facilitate citizens in a process of awareness thereby enabling efforts to liberate themselves from poverty and backwardness. Pesantrens are initiators, Pesantrens encourage participation and the self-help ethos of citizens (Prayitno, 2013).

Pesantren economic empowerment is an effort to increase the economic independence and welfare of Pesantrens and the surrounding residents. Pesantrens, as centers of traditional Islamic education, have great potential in spreading the local economy and empowering the people. Several tactics that can be used to realize the economic empowerment of Pesantrens include:

- 1. Skills Development: Organizing skills training for students and residents around the Pesantren to improve their abilities in various fields such as handicrafts, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc.
- 2. Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (UKM): Supporting the establishment and development of SMEs around Pesantrens by providing capital, business management guidance and market access.
- 3. Partnership with Industry: building partnerships between Pesantrens and local industry or companies to increase marketing of Pesantren products and expand distribution networks.
- 4. Agrotourism Development: Utilizing Pesantren land for agrotourism development by inviting the community to participate in agricultural, plantation and livestock activities.
- 5. Financial and Entrepreneurship Education: Integrating financial and entrepreneurship education into the Pesantren curriculum to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to manage a business.
- 6. Use of Technology: Utilizing information and communication technology to expand market reach, improve management systems, and increase efficiency in production.
- 7. Women's empowerment: giving specific attention to women's empowerment by providing skills development and providing them with access to economic resources.
- 8. Featured Product Development: Identifying and disseminating superior Pesantren products that have added value and competitiveness in the market.

Through these steps, it is hoped that Pesantrens can become sustainable economic centers and make positive contributions to economic development and the welfare of surrounding community.

The principle of empowerment is divided into two parts, namely:

- a. Empowering some of the groups who are entitled to zakat assets. This provision is intended not only to fulfill living needs, but also as business capital for those who are constrained by limited capital in business. By giving them zakat assets, they can empower them so they can meet their own needs. Zakat distribution varies according to the profession and needs of each mustahik.
- b. Empowering the poor, namely by providing a number of assets to meet their living needs and empowering those who do not have any skills.
- The World Bank also explained four pillars that can be used as a basis for observing the development of KBE in a country, including:
- a. Institutional/organizational framework and economic incentives to produce efficiency in the use of knowledge and development of an entrepreneurial spirit.
- b. Educated and trained people who are able to create, share and utilize knowledge well.
- c. An efficient technology and innovation infrastructure system, both for companies, research centers, universities, consultants and other organizations, in creating new technology.

d. Information and communication technology capable of facilitating creative work as well as the development and processing of information. (Chen & Dahlman, 2006)

2. METHOD

The approach in this research is qualitative research. The aim is to find out the extent of the work of the Tahfidz Qur'an Pesantren, Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Foundation, Tanjung Gusti Village, Galang District, Deli Serdang Regency in empowering the Pesantren economy to encourage economic independence. This type of research uses problem studies where the researcher explores the specifics of the case in an incident, whether it includes individuals, cultural groups or a portrait of life to be used as an object of study (Creswell, 2019). The qualitative approach in this research is more natural, descriptive and inductive. The approach was carried out directly with research informants, namely students and the community around the Tahfidz Qur'an Pesantren, Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Foundation, Tanjung Gusti Village, Galang District, Deli Serdang Regency. This research will be carried out at the Tahfidz Qur'an Pesantren, Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Foundation, Tanjung Gusti Village, Galang District, Deli Serdang Regency. The data source in this research was taken based on the snowball sampling concept (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020).

The selection of data sources or research subjects takes place on a rolling basis, where the researcher selects the exclusive person under consideration who will submit the required data; Next, based on the data or information obtained from previous informants, it can be decided that other samples being considered will provide more complete data. This continues until it reaches saturation, with the estimate that this research data comes from people, events, and situation at the research site. This research uses 3 data collection techniques, namely: (1) in-depth interviews, (two) participant observations, (3) study of documents (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020).

Validation of research needs to be carried out in an effort to gain credibility as a result of the research, including; a) Extension of research means increasing the time of participation in the research field until the saturation of data collection is completely fulfilled, b) Triangulation is an effort to look at phenomena from various angles, verifying findings using various sources of information and techniques, c) Member checking is checking the correctness of data by returning the data to the data source to check its correctness. Member checking can be done after recording the data on the transcript or after the draft research report is completed. Member check is intended to correct additions or deletions to data, so openness in data analysis is really needed, d) Audit trail is an investigation into the suitability of research findings with field data, through tracking report notes, data collection methods, and analysis techniques, e) Expert opinion in validation is carried out by asking for responses from experts and practitioners.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pesantren is a form of space where thoughts are studied and re-tested. So that Pesantrens in their development require innovation in order to increase the quality and quantity and above all maintain the existence of Pesantrens. So it is highly hoped that there will be renewal of Pesantrens. Economic empowerment of Pesantrens through the development of local resources that demand independence is considered appropriate as a contribution to the economic empowerment of the community. First, Pesantrens themselves have abundant human resources who have the potential to become superior human resources. Second, Pesantrens and their surrounding communities have economic resources which, if managed properly, will result in sustainable economic potential for Pesantrens and local residents. Third, Pesantrens also have networks between Pesantrens and community empowerment. This aims to spread Pesantrens, not only to become educational institutions, but also to become economic convoys for the surrounding community.

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According to Syafar (Syafar, 2012) stated that people's empowerment in development aims to carry out a process of change so that residents know the benefits and their role in development activities, are able to formulate needs using the potential/resources of the Pesantren, can choose priority problems that will be solved in accordance with their needs and potential, and is able to develop activity plans to handle or resolve the problems they face.

Community empowerment is aimed at the people who live around the Pesantren and is also aimed at the people who will ultimately form a people who are able to advance their economy for a decent living. Apart from that, it also forms the character of students so that they will become community developers (community workers) so that they are able to process their lives and future when they are required to play a role in society.

Tahfidz Qur'an Pesantren, Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Tanjung Gusti Village Foundation is a newly established Pesantren. This Pesantren was founded by Ustadz Fauzi, initially to accommodate tahfizh activities for children in the area. The conditions for children taking part in tahfizh, most of whom cannot go to school, caught Ustadz Fauzi's attention, so he encouraged him to establish this tahfizh quran Pesantren. Ustadz Fauzi, who initially managed Umrah travel, then tried to find the right one for the school. His good intentions were realized because there was 1 hectare of empty land being sold at a low price.

When the Pesantren was established, teaching and administrative staff were recruited to help run the education operations smoothly.

Apart from that, dormitories and mosques were also built for students to house and worship. The land area is relatively suitable for making a fish pond and vegetable garden, the results of which are used for the benefit of the Pesantren. Several times when this harvest will occur there will be some for sale but there are still not relatively many. The harvest is still prioritized for logistics for students. Apart from the harvest from the vegetable garden, the Pesantren also has a fish pond. However, just like what happens in a vegetable garden, the source of this pond is still used for the students' food needs. To help operational administrative and teaching and learning processes at schools, Pesantrens recruit teaching and administrative staff from the community in the immediate area of the school. These teachers and operational staff help to care for elementary level (SD), middle school (SMP) and high school (Senior High School) students.

The students at this Pesantren come from areas around Kab. Deli Serdang and even some from Riau. All students are accommodated in the dormitories that have been provided because after formal study at school they are also continuously trained and trained to memorize the Qur'an.

According to news from Pesantren managers, it is known that economic empowerment is still not optimal. Pesantrens have tried relatively hard to be able to finance themselves and even empower the people around the Pesantren. The real conditions presented by Pesantrens show that Pesantrens have made efforts to realize the economic empowerment of Pesantrens by seeking the independence of Pesantrens first. This independence can be seen with assets in the form of gardens and fish ponds which are used to support the development of Pesantrens, even though they are only able to support the adequate food needs of students and dormitory supervisors. This condition is also difficult because Pesantrens have not received financial assistance from Bank Indonesia and the Ministry of Religion.

4. CONCLUSION

The Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Foundation Tahfidz Quran Pesantren has maximized its efforts to become an independent Pesantren that can empower the community, especially the community around the location of the Pesantren. However, several things are still a problem because this Pesantren does not charge education fees for all its students.

For student education costs, foundation owners and managers try to use personal money and funds from donors. However, this is still considered inadequate, so some students are also charged education fees in the form of education fund contributions (SPP). Part of the funds from donors are also used to build facilities at the Pesantren such as classrooms and offices. Pesantrens still do not have sufficient access to funding from the Ministry of Religion and Bank Indonesia.

In terms of managing Pesantrens, teaching staff and school administration staff are also recruited. The majority of teachers and administrative staff are native residents of the area around the Pesantren. This is done so that Pesantrens can also provide benefits to the surrounding community by empowering the potential of their human resources. Among them there are those who are also dormitory supervisors who are of course at the Pesantren full time 24 hours.

As for economic independence, Pesantrens utilize empty land in the Pesantren complex by creating vegetable gardens and fish ponds. Most of the proceeds from the vegetable garden and fish pond are used to meet the food needs of the students and dormitory supervisors.

This condition illustrates that in essence new Pesantrens can also become independent Pesantrens if they have sufficient assets and are managed well. Good management will of course also reflect good Pesantren economic empowerment as well. However, in the case of the Al Fauzi Fadilah Amal Foundation Tahfidz Qur'an Pesantren, it is said that it has not been optimal because it also has few assets and of course inadequate financial assistance.

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