

## ANALYSIS OF PESANTREN CULTURE ON THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY ECONOMY (CASE STUDY AT MANAHIJUL HUDA ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024)



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### Abstract

This research examines how the culture of pesantren contributes to supporting the economic growth of the community, using Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda as the object of study. Pesantren, besides functioning as a religious educational institution, also plays a role as a center of economic activity through programs such as the Manah Festival and Manah Laundry. With a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through field observations, interviews, and documentation to provide a comprehensive picture of the economic role of the pesantren in its surrounding environment. The findings show that the cultural values alive in the pesantren also shape an open and participatory economic system, involving students, alumni, and the local community. The entrepreneurial initiatives developed in the pesantren also encourage the improvement of skills, independence, and the standard of living of the community. In this case, the pesantren acts as a driving force for social transformation by combining Islamic teachings with community-based economic empowerment.

**Keywords:** Culture, Islamic Boarding Schools, Community Economy, Qualitative, Empowerment

## INTRODUCTION

Pondok pesantren consists of two terms, namely pondok and pesantren. Pondok comes from the Arabic term "Funduq," which refers to a place for lodging or temporary residence. Meanwhile, "pesantren" comes from the Tamil word, which originates from "santri," combined with the prefix "pe" and the suffix "-an," referring to a group of people who study knowledge. According to the term, pondok pesantren refers to "a traditional educational institution based on Islam that aims to study, understand, delve into, embody, and apply Islamic teachings, emphasizing the importance of religious ethics as a guide in daily behavior." (Zulhimma, 2013)

The system of values, norms, and habits that develop within a society and serve as guidelines in daily life is known as culture. Koentjaraningrat (2009) defines culture as a comprehensive system of ideas, actions, and human creations in societal life that are acquired through learning. In institutions such as pesantren, culture is not only related to religious customs; it also encompasses social systems, work ethics, and economic patterns that occur between the pesantren and the surrounding community.

Historically, pesantren have played an important role in educating society through religious values and social ethics. However, in recent developments, pesantren also play a role in the process of community economic empowerment. Modern pesantren not only function as places for religious learning but also play a role as drivers of community-based economic activities. As stated by Wahjoetomo (1997) in his book, modern pesantren have even implemented a modern education system, equipping students with vocational skills, including in the field of entrepreneurship.

Culture is the totality of the system of ideas, actions, and human creations in community life that is acquired through the learning process. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), culture consists of three main forms: systems of ideas or concepts, systems of activities or actions, and artifacts or creations. Culture reflects the values and norms present in society and serves as a reference in behavior and interaction in social life.

When the pesantren culture instills values such as honesty (*amanah*), discipline (*tartib*), hard work (*mujahadah*), and simplicity (*zuhud*). Through the socio-economic activities carried out by the pesantren, these values are instilled in the students and have an impact on the surrounding community (Nafilah K Zulfa, 2023). Some pesantren even establish businesses that involve students and the local community, such as cooperatives, integrated farming, and entrepreneurship training (Fauzan, 2022).

Economics itself is defined as the science that studies how individuals and groups utilize limited resources to meet unlimited needs. From a development perspective, Schumpeter stated that economic growth is closely related to innovations made by individuals or institutions, including religious institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (Croitoru Alin, 2012)

Pesantren Manahijul Huda in Rajapolah, West Java, is one example of a pesantren that actively invests in culture-based economic activities. This pesantren has contributed to local economic growth through activities such as laundry services and the Manah Festival. Where there is community involvement in production. This is in line with (Fitriana, 2019) findings, which state that the presence of pesantren can improve the welfare of the surrounding community and create job opportunities through collective economic activities.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Some previous studies have placed more emphasis on the role of pesantren as educational and character-building institutions, but have not thoroughly examined how pesantren culture concretely contributes to the economic growth of the local community. For example, Ma'arif's (2021) research only discusses the role of entrepreneurship in pesantren, but does not specifically examine the influence of pesantren culture. This creates a research gap that needs to be addressed. Specifically, this relates to how the cultural values of pesantren are connected to the economic activities of the community.

A study by Miraj (2021) found that the pesantren culture, which combines an entrepreneurial spirit, can be an important factor in community-based economic development, especially in rural areas. Thus, the culture instilled in pesantren not only shapes the religious character of the students but can also serve as a foundation for building a sustainable people's economy system.

## RESEARCH METHOD

According to Moleong (2017), the qualitative approach aims to understand social phenomena holistically by describing and interpreting the meaning of events, activities, and interactions that occur in community life. Here, the researcher acts as the key instrument in the data collection and analysis process.

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach with field research. This approach was taken because it aligns with the research objective, which is to deeply explore the phenomena and culture that develop within the Manahijul Huda Islamic boarding school environment, particularly those related to the contribution of boarding school culture to the economic growth of the surrounding community.

The research will be conducted at Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda Rajapolah, West Java. Not only that, in data collection, the researcher used structured interview techniques with the community and also the students within the pesantren environment. Conducting participatory observation and documentation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Pesantren Culture as the Pillar of Community Economy**

The culture of pesantren is a collection of values, norms, and practices that have been deeply ingrained in the daily lives of the students and the surrounding community. At Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda, this culture is not only limited to the formation of religious character but also extends to shaping independent, participatory economic mindsets and behaviors that focus on collective welfare. Values such as sincerity, responsibility, trustworthiness, and hard work are not only used as moral guidelines but also serve as the main foundation in building the pesantren's economic network. In this context, pesantren emerge as social actors capable of creating structural transformations in the local economic system. This research reveals that the pesantren culture is practically implemented in various social entrepreneurship activities. Students are not only seen as subjects of religious education but also as active participants in productive economic activities. The intense interaction between pesantren and the community also shapes an inclusive economic system, where the benefits of economic activities do not harm the elites but spread to various layers

of the surrounding society.

### **Manah Festival: Cultural Expression and Economic Catalyst**

Manah Festival is an annual event that provides a platform for creative expression and the strengthening of the cultural identity of santri. This festival demonstrates how traditional pesantren values can be expressed adaptively in a more modern, educational, and engaging format for the younger generation. In addition, the Manah Festival also serves as an important instrument in driving local economic growth.

Through activities such as bazaars, local product exhibitions, and art performances, this festival creates new economic spaces for micro and small entrepreneurs, especially those from the communities around the pesantren. Thus, the Manah Festival not only impacts the strengthening of cultural identity but also serves as a medium for the equitable distribution of economic values. This aligns with Koentjaraningrat's theory, which states that culture has interconnected social and economic dimensions.

These findings are also supported by previous research, such as the studies by (Aini et al., 2024) and (Oktavia Nurhayati, 2024) which show that cultural festivals within pesantren environments can create alternative economic spaces and expand business opportunities for the community. In this context, the Manah Festival at Pesantren Manahijul Huda serves as a concrete example of how pesantren can effectively integrate cultural preaching with economic empowerment.

### **Manah Laundry: Entrepreneurship Education and Social Business Model**

One tangible manifestation of the pesantren's economic activities is the laundry business known as Manah Laundry. This business not only offers a solution for the cleanliness needs of the students but also serves as an entrepreneurship laboratory that teaches managerial skills, customer service, and an Islamic work ethic. In its implementation, the students are actively involved in managing this business, from operations, customer service, to financial management.

The economic impact of Manah Laundry cannot be ignored. This business creates new job opportunities, provides additional income for the pesantren, and serves as a medium for character education based on practical experience. From Schumpeter's perspective, the innovations carried out by non-traditional institutions such as pesantren are a form of social entrepreneurship that can drive community economic growth.

Deeper still, ventures like Manah Laundry demonstrate that pesantren have the capacity to become centers for the development of micro-businesses based on spiritual and social values. This also simultaneously counters the notion that pesantren are limited to religious activities only. In fact, pesantren have developed into strong and flexible centers of economic empowerment.

The synergy between culture and economy at Pesantren Manahijul Huda creates a mutually supportive socio-economic ecosystem. Activities that emerge from the cultural values of the pesantren, such as mutual cooperation, honesty, and economic responsibility of the pesantren, demonstrate that the pesantren can build an economic democracy system that has strong roots in local norms and spiritual values. The strength of pesantren culture in shaping resilient entrepreneurial character is one of the keys to success in developing sustainable micro- enterprises. This model is also in line with the community empowerment thinking of (Umara F Miftahul, 2024) which emphasizes the importance of local-based economic independence as a prerequisite for the creation of shared prosperity. Thus, the

pesantren culture not only serves as a foundation of moral and spiritual values but also as a key driver in the development of an inclusive, participatory, and sustainable local economy. This shows that pesantren can become a strategic institution in building the economic future of the community, not only through sermons and religious studies but also through real economic activities that have a direct impact on society.

### **The Role of Festivals in Community Economic Empowerment**

Based on the research findings, the festival activities organized by Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda play a significant role in advancing the local community's economy. Festivals like the Manah Festival not only serve as a cultural celebration but also as a medium to create economic opportunities through various activities such as bazaars, local product exhibitions, and art performances. This can be seen from the increase in sales of local micro-enterprise products driven by the active participation of the community in these activities. This finding aligns with the theory proposed by Koentjaraningrat (1976), which states that culture has two important dimensions: the social dimension and the economic dimension. In the context of pesantren, the culture produced through festival activities serves as an economic driver, strengthens social relationships, and introduces local products to a wider community.

Previous research also confirms this, as found by Nur'aini (2023) in the study (Aini et al., 2024) which shows that cultural activities such as pesantren festivals can have a positive impact on the local economy. The pesantren festival in Central Lombok, for example, also develops the creative industry and introduces local agricultural products that have the potential to improve the economic welfare of the community. In line with this, research by Arifil Zohdi and Baidawi (2022) in the study by (Oktavia Nurhayati, 2024) shows that the development of cultural festivals also opens up new business opportunities involving students and the surrounding community in various sectors of enterprise.

### **Laundry Business as a Model of Social Entrepreneurship**

Besides the festival, the laundry business managed by the pesantren has also proven to have a positive impact on the local economy. Research shows that the laundry business at Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda not only provides additional income for the pesantren but also creates new job opportunities for students and the surrounding community. This laundry business is able to meet the daily needs of the community, while also serving as a source of income that can be used to support the social activities of the pesantren.

A study by (Wahyudi Imam, 2022) on the laundry business at Pondok Pesantren Riyadlul Jannah Mojokerto reveals that such a business, although simple, can have a significant impact on improving the economic welfare of the students' families and the surrounding community. In the context of Manahijul Huda Islamic boarding school, this laundry business also serves as a model of social entrepreneurship that prioritizes principles of justice and economic equity. As shown by (Hifziatin Hisnu, 2024), the development of pesantren-based businesses not only advances the economy of the pesantren itself but also has a direct impact on the economy of the surrounding community.

This research reinforces Schumpeter's view on innovation in the economy that can be carried out by non-traditional institutions such as pesantren. This innovation emerges not only in the aspect of education but also in the development of micro-enterprises that can positively impact local economic growth. Thus, the laundry business run by the pesantren can be seen as a form of innovation that supports a community-based economy.

### Synergy Between Culture and Economy in the Context of Islamic Boarding Schools

Overall, the synergy between cultural activities (such as festivals) and economic ventures (such as laundry) at Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda creates a mutually supportive and sustainable economic ecosystem. The cultural concept that prioritizes mutual cooperation and independence in the pesantren plays a significant role in shaping the innovative entrepreneurial character of the students. This aligns with the economic empowerment theory proposed by Umara F Miftahul (2024), which emphasizes the important role of pesantren in creating an inclusive and sustainable community-based economy. Here are the results of the interviews with the traders in the vicinity of Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda.

**Table 1.**  
**Results of the Interviews with the Traders**

No	Type of Business	Daily Income (Regular Days)	Revenue During Event	Explanation
1.	Melon Shaved Ice	Rp 300.000	Rp 700.000	Sales increased during the event.
2.	Vendor Egg Roll	Rp 300.000	Rp 500.000	Stable on weekdays
3.	Vendor Lemon Iced Tea	Rp 200.000	Rp 800.000	Drastically increased during the festival
4.	Vendor Meatball	Rp 500.000	Rp 3.000.000	Big surge during the event
5.	Vendor Stand Manah Mart	Rp 2.000.000	Rp 3.000.000	Only open during events
6.	Laundry Business (Manah Laundry)	-	Rp 800.000/month	Monthly routine effort



**Figure 1.**  
**Food Manah Mart**



**Figure 2.**  
**The Traders in the Pondok Area**



**Figure 3.**  
**Interview with the Melon Shaver Vendor**



**Figure 4. Interview with the Seller**



**Figure 5 Interview with the Egg Roll Vendor**

This research also shows that a strong pesantren culture can serve as a foundation for economic development that not only relies on the formal sector but also involves micro and small enterprises organized by the pesantren and the surrounding community. Therefore, it is important for pesantren to continue developing culture-based economic potential, whether through festivals or other businesses such as laundry, to improve the economic welfare of the community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The pesantren culture significantly contributes to supporting the economic growth of the community around Pondok Pesantren Manahijul Huda. Traditions that emphasize values such as honesty, hard work, mutual cooperation, and independence encourage the formation of an inclusive and sustainable community-based economic ecosystem. Through activities such as the Manah Festival and Manah Laundry, the pesantren not only fulfill their religious functions but also play a role as drivers of social entrepreneurship. Students, alumni, and the local community actively participate in these economic activities, which result in increased skills, income, and collective economic empowerment. Thus, the pesantren takes on a strategic role as an agent of social and economic transformation based on Islamic values, and shapes a model of people-centered economic development that is relevant in the modern era.

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