

Trends in Islamic entrepreneurship research: A perspective on developing the independence of Islamic boarding school students in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Islamic entrepreneurship has gained increasing attention as an approach that integrates sharia-based ethical values with economic activity, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts such as Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are socio-religious institutions that have expanded their roles beyond religious education into economic empowerment and entrepreneurial development. However, research on pesantren-based Islamic entrepreneurship remains fragmented across disciplines and often limited to localized case discussions, making it difficult to form a comprehensive understanding of research trends, program models, and determinants of institutional economic independence.

Objectives

This study systematically reviews the development of Islamic entrepreneurship research related to strengthening the economic independence of pesantren in Indonesia. It aims to identify dominant research themes, assess methodological patterns, examine internal and external factors influencing entrepreneurship implementation, and highlight underexplored areas that can inform future research and policy development.

Method

A systematic literature review was conducted using scholarly publications drawn from accredited national and international databases. Using inclusion criteria focused on thematic relevance, academic quality, and the Indonesian pesantren context, 42 eligible studies published between 2014 and 2024 were selected. The review applied qualitative thematic content analysis to classify research topics, program types, institutional roles, implementation challenges, theoretical frameworks, and reported economic outcomes.

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Results

The findings indicate a notable rise in pesantren-centered Islamic entrepreneurship research since 2019, with implementation-focused studies dominating the literature. Common program models include technical skills training, student business units, and collaboration with local micro, small, and medium enterprises. Reported outcomes suggest that entrepreneurship initiatives contribute to pesantren economic independence by increasing internal income and reducing dependence on external funding. The review also identifies persistent constraints, including limited capital access, insufficient managerial capacity, and weak external stakeholder collaboration. Evidence further suggests that human resource quality and effective entrepreneurial management strengthen the relationship between Islamic entrepreneurship practices and institutional independence.

Implications

This review underscores pesantren as strategic institutions for sharia-based economic empowerment and highlights the importance of capacity building, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem development aligned with Islamic ethical commitments.

Originality/Novelty

By providing a structured synthesis of dispersed scholarship, this study offers an integrated map of research trends and critical enabling factors, strengthening the conceptual foundation for pesantren-based Islamic entrepreneurship and supporting more contextually relevant strategies for sustainable economic independence.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, entrepreneurship has been widely recognized as a central engine of economic growth, job creation, and innovation across diverse national contexts. In Muslim-majority societies, however, the expansion of entrepreneurial activity has increasingly been accompanied by normative debates about how economic initiative should be aligned with religious ethics and social responsibility. Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-populated country, represents a particularly significant setting in which these debates become both practical and urgent. Within this landscape, Islamic entrepreneurship is not merely interpreted as market participation or profit-seeking behavior, but rather as an economic practice embedded in sharia-based moral commitments. It emphasizes the integration of spiritual and ethical values into business decision-making, requiring entrepreneurs to balance material achievement with accountability to broader moral ends. In this framework, principles such as blessing, justice, and social welfare function as foundational priorities rather than

optional considerations (Abu Bakar et al., 2024; Mulyani & Asnawi, 2022; Mustapa & Arishin, 2023; Siompu & Asfiah, 2024).

This ethical orientation has contributed to the growing scholarly and policy interest in Islamic entrepreneurship as a strategy for inclusive and sustainable economic development (Abbas & Aravossis, 2024; Filser et al., 2019; Yasmeen et al., 2024). Rather than viewing entrepreneurship as a purely individualistic pursuit, Islamic entrepreneurship highlights the social embeddedness of economic behavior and its potential contribution to collective welfare (Firmansyah, 2025; Rahayu, 2019). In Indonesia, this approach has gained prominence alongside national efforts to strengthen community economic resilience and reduce structural dependence on external assistance (Fahmi & Panorama, 2025; Hati, 2023). Consequently, Islamic entrepreneurship is increasingly discussed not only in relation to private enterprise, but also as a pathway for strengthening institutional independence in faith-based educational and social organizations (Jahar, 2015). Islamic educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), have become important sites where entrepreneurial initiatives intersect with religious learning, community engagement, and socio-economic transformation. As institutions with deep historical legitimacy and close sociocultural ties to surrounding communities, pesantren are frequently described as having strong potential to develop entrepreneurial models grounded in Islamic values and capable of producing both internal sustainability and wider social benefit (Zreik, 2023).

Pesantren have traditionally functioned as central pillars of Indonesian Muslim life, serving as institutions of religious instruction, moral formation, and cultural continuity. Yet the pressures of globalization, economic inequality, and shifting labor markets have prompted a broadening of their role beyond purely educational and spiritual functions. Increasingly, pesantren are expected to respond to economic challenges faced by their communities and to equip students (santri) with skills that support livelihood resilience (Fahmy et al., 2024; Pebriana et al., 2024; Wajdi, 2024). Within this evolving context, Islamic entrepreneurship has been positioned as a strategic instrument for enhancing pesantren economic independence through the creation and development of sharia-based business units. Such initiatives are framed as consistent with Islamic business ethics and with commitments to social justice (Costa & Pita, 2021; Fauzia, 2022). Moreover, pesantren possess internal resources—human capital, social networks, and institutional assets—that can be mobilized for entrepreneurial development. This potential has been reinforced by the growing involvement of government and private-sector actors through training programs, financing access, and business mentoring aimed at strengthening pesantren managerial capacity. The resulting transformation underscores pesantren's adaptive role as agents of social change, while maintaining continuity with the Islamic values that define their identity (Budiyono, 2025; Candra et al., 2025; Falach et al., 2023; Maftuhah et al., 2025; Priarni & Mukayat, 2022; Thoha, 2024).

Despite this growing attention, the academic understanding of Islamic entrepreneurship within pesantren remains marked by important limitations. Although various policies and empowerment initiatives have been designed to support

entrepreneurship in pesantren, comprehensive scientific studies that systematically evaluate the development of research in this field are still relatively limited. Existing scholarship on Islamic entrepreneurship and pesantren is dispersed across multiple disciplines, including Islamic economics, education, sociology, and religious studies, and is often not integrated into a single coherent analytical framework. This fragmentation constrains the ability of researchers and practitioners to build a holistic understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and institutional dynamics shaping pesantren entrepreneurship (Abubakar et al., 2025; Budiyo, 2025; Faturahman et al., 2023; Ma'arif et al., 2023; Rouf et al., 2024). As a result, important questions remain insufficiently addressed, such as how entrepreneurial practices are institutionalized within pesantren governance structures, how religious norms shape business behavior, and what conditions enable sustainability beyond short-term interventions. A structured and systematic literature review is therefore crucial for tracing research trajectories, identifying dominant themes, evaluating methodological approaches, and uncovering gaps that require further investigation.

A central research problem lies in the tension between the recognized potential of pesantren-based entrepreneurship and the limited scholarly synthesis available to guide effective development. While many studies highlight pesantren as strategic institutions for Islamic economic empowerment, the evidence base remains uneven and frequently restricted to localized case studies. Prior research has often focused on specific technical dimensions, such as sharia-compliant business models, entrepreneurship curriculum integration, or the participation of santri in micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) development. However, these studies are commonly presented as isolated findings rather than being situated within an integrated account of pesantren entrepreneurship as a complex socio-religious and economic system (Budiyo, 2025; Camelia et al., 2025; Faturahman et al., 2023; Iltiham & Rohtih, 2023; Mahmudah et al., 2025). This pattern contributes to a knowledge gap: the field lacks a consolidated understanding of how entrepreneurship in pesantren operates as a sustained institutional strategy rather than a series of disconnected programs. Consequently, there is a need for research approaches capable of mapping the broader development of scholarship, clarifying dominant themes, and identifying underexplored areas that remain critical for strengthening pesantren independence.

In response to this problem, the literature points toward a general solution emphasizing the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems that are both value-driven and institutionally sustainable. Islamic entrepreneurship in pesantren is frequently conceptualized as requiring not only individual entrepreneurial competence, but also supportive structures that enable continuity and long-term impact. Sustainability depends on the availability of structural support such as institutional policies, adequate resources, and access to financing. Furthermore, innovation in program management is required to ensure that pesantren business initiatives remain relevant amid changing external environments. The literature suggests that sustainable synergy must be cultivated among Islamic values, institutional support mechanisms, and managerial innovation, so that entrepreneurial initiatives do not

become temporary projects but evolve into enduring strategies of empowerment (Budiyo, 2025; Candra et al., 2025; Faturahman et al., 2023; Hakim et al., 2025; Mahmudah et al., 2025; Robani et al., 2022; Thoha, 2024). This perspective implies that the primary challenge is not merely initiating entrepreneurial activities, but ensuring that pesantren can maintain and scale them while safeguarding the ethical and educational missions that define their institutional character.

More specific solutions proposed by previous scholarship include programmatic interventions that integrate entrepreneurship training with institutional development. Across the reviewed literature, pesantren entrepreneurship initiatives have been operationalized through diverse mechanisms such as technical skills training, student business units, partnerships with local MSMEs, and sharia-based management training. These strategies are intended to strengthen both student competencies and institutional economic foundations. Skills training provides practical knowledge aligned with market needs, while student business units create opportunities for direct experiential learning. Collaboration with local MSMEs expands networks and strengthens linkages between pesantren and community economic structures. Importantly, these programs are typically framed as sharia-based practices, emphasizing honesty, trustworthiness, and the avoidance of usury as central principles. Thus, pesantren entrepreneurship is portrayed as an approach that does not separate economic development from ethical and spiritual formation, but instead embeds entrepreneurial empowerment within the normative structure of Islamic values (Ariatin et al., 2024).

At the same time, the literature indicates that these solutions cannot be treated as universally effective without attention to institutional readiness and contextual variation. While entrepreneurship programs may provide measurable economic benefits, their success is shaped by internal capacities such as human resources and managerial effectiveness, as well as by external conditions including stakeholder collaboration and financing availability. Research also suggests that pesantren entrepreneurship must be designed carefully to prevent unintended consequences, including potential tensions between economic orientation and the spiritual life of students. Although many studies report a strong alignment between Islamic entrepreneurial values and pesantren culture, a smaller portion of the literature warns of the risk that entrepreneurial activity could shift institutional priorities toward materialism if not implemented with appropriate safeguards. This indicates that solutions must incorporate not only technical and managerial interventions but also institutional mechanisms that preserve the primacy of spiritual education and maintain balance between economic achievement and religious formation (Ashraf, 2021).

The preceding discussion demonstrates that a substantial body of scholarship has explored pesantren entrepreneurship through multiple lenses, yet the overall knowledge remains fragmented. The absence of a unified analytical framework limits the ability to compare findings, identify consistent determinants of success, and generate evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice. Furthermore, existing studies often document challenges such as limited access to capital,

inadequate managerial capacity, and weak synergy with external stakeholders, but do not sufficiently synthesize these issues into a comprehensive account of how pesantren-based Islamic entrepreneurship can be sustained and scaled. This fragmentation is particularly evident when theoretical perspectives—Islamic entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial ecosystem frameworks—are discussed separately rather than integrated in a way that captures the multidimensional nature of pesantren as socio-religious institutions and economic actors. The resulting research gap underscores the need for systematic synthesis capable of mapping trends, clarifying thematic concentrations, and identifying methodological limitations in the field.

Accordingly, the present study is designed to address these limitations by providing a systematic and comprehensive review of Islamic entrepreneurship research in the context of pesantren economic independence in Indonesia. It aims to identify dominant research themes, evaluate methodological approaches, examine internal and external factors influencing implementation, and uncover remaining gaps that can inform future research agendas and policy development. By adopting a systematic literature review approach, this study offers a broader and more structured mapping of academic developments than previous works that focused primarily on localized cases or partial dimensions. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative synthesis across disciplines and its capacity to identify critical factors shaping pesantren entrepreneurship, thereby strengthening theoretical foundations and supporting more contextualized and sustainable empowerment strategies (Boubker, 2024; Raza et al., 2025). Within this scope, the study contributes to clarifying how Islamic entrepreneurship can be operationalized in pesantren while reinforcing both economic independence and social justice in alignment with Islamic values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Entrepreneurship: Ethical Foundations and Contemporary Relevance

Islamic entrepreneurship is commonly understood as a normative and practical framework that integrates sharia principles into business activity, aiming to produce economic value that is both ethical and socially responsible. Rather than treating entrepreneurship as a purely profit-driven endeavor, Islamic entrepreneurship emphasizes moral commitments such as justice (*adl*), honesty (*sidq*), and social responsibility (*mas'uliyah*) as guiding principles that distinguish Islamic business conduct from conventional entrepreneurship (Agustian et al., 2023; Awalluddin et al., 2025; Hartika et al., 2025; Nurlaela et al., 2025; Yohanna et al., 2025). This perspective positions entrepreneurial action as inseparable from religious accountability, where economic decisions are evaluated not only through efficiency and competitiveness but also through fairness and the welfare of others. In this way, entrepreneurship becomes an arena for applying Islamic ethics in real economic practice.

Beyond its normative basis, Islamic entrepreneurship has gained scholarly relevance because it addresses the growing demand for business models that are

compatible with religious values while remaining adaptable to modern economic challenges. Comparative studies have shown that religious attitudes can shape entrepreneurial intention, behavior, and performance, particularly among Muslim youth and university students (Dvouletý, 2024; Ezeh et al., 2019). This indicates that Islamic entrepreneurship is not only a theoretical concept but also a lived orientation influencing entrepreneurial motivation and outcomes. Within broader debates on development, this framework offers an alternative lens for understanding how entrepreneurial activity can contribute to sustainable welfare and social cohesion, especially in societies where religion remains a strong source of legitimacy and moral regulation.

Recent research has also expanded Islamic entrepreneurship into adjacent areas such as halal entrepreneurship, Islamic finance, and sustainability-oriented innovation. Scholars have argued that entrepreneurship in Muslim contexts is increasingly linked to broader ecosystem development, including the institutionalization of halal markets and the use of Islamic financing instruments to support entrepreneurship-friendly environments (Islam, 2023; Sohail & Arshed, 2025). In addition, entrepreneurship is being connected to global development priorities, including sustainable development goals, where halal entrepreneurship is framed as an avenue for inclusive growth (Umar, 2023). These developments suggest that Islamic entrepreneurship is evolving as a dynamic field that bridges religious ethics, institutional systems, and contemporary socio-economic transformations.

Pesantren as Socio-Religious Institutions and Emerging Economic Actors

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have historically served as foundational institutions in Indonesian Muslim society, primarily recognized for their role in religious education, character formation, and the preservation of local cultural values. However, as socio-economic challenges have become more complex, pesantren have increasingly been discussed as institutions capable of extending their influence into the economic domain. Their embeddedness within local communities provides them with social legitimacy and relational capital that can be mobilized for empowerment-oriented initiatives. This institutional positioning supports the argument that pesantren are uniquely situated to implement entrepreneurship models that do not merely replicate secular business practices but are shaped by Islamic ethical commitments and community-oriented objectives (Muhardi et al., 2021; Rojudin, 2023).

The literature highlights that pesantren-based entrepreneurship represents a strategic pathway for strengthening internal economic independence while simultaneously increasing community capacity. As institutions with strong sociocultural ties, pesantren are frequently described as having the potential to develop entrepreneurial models grounded in Islamic values, enabling them to act as drivers of social and economic transformation (Asiah et al., 2025; Najib & Khauldi, 2025; Nur & Yaqien, 2023). Such transformation is not limited to income generation but also reflects a broader reorientation of pesantren toward adaptive institutional roles in response to globalization and shifting development expectations. In this view, pesantren

entrepreneurship becomes an expression of institutional resilience, allowing pesantren to reduce dependence on external funding and strengthen their long-term sustainability.

This expanded role is also shaped by external dynamics, including government initiatives and private-sector engagement. Support mechanisms such as training programs, access to financing, and business mentoring have been increasingly directed toward pesantren to enhance their managerial capacity and entrepreneurial performance. These interventions indicate a growing recognition of pesantren as agents of socio-economic change rather than solely religious education centers (Hafidh & Badrudin, 2018; Ilham & Zakariya, 2022). At the same time, the literature cautions that institutional transformation requires careful alignment between entrepreneurship and pesantren's spiritual mission (Halimah et al., 2024; Kasor et al., 2017). Without such alignment, economic initiatives risk becoming detached from the values that legitimize pesantren authority and identity within Muslim communities.

Entrepreneurship Education and Institutional Capacity Building in Pesantren

Entrepreneurship education within pesantren is often framed as an effort to equip students (santri) with practical skills while reinforcing Islamic moral commitments. Rather than introducing entrepreneurship as a purely technical discipline, pesantren entrepreneurship education is typically positioned as part of broader character formation. The integration of entrepreneurial learning into pesantren settings thus involves balancing vocational preparation with the preservation of spiritual discipline. Studies that examine entrepreneurship curriculum integration emphasize that entrepreneurial competence in pesantren is expected to align with religious ethics, ensuring that business practices remain consistent with sharia-based norms and institutional priorities (Sulistianingsih, 2019; Supriyanto et al., 2022; Umam, 2016).

A major focus of the literature concerns the institutional mechanisms through which pesantren operationalize entrepreneurship education. Common approaches include skills training, the formation of student business units, and the creation of pesantren-owned enterprises. Skills training is intended to provide market-relevant competencies, while student business units offer experiential learning opportunities where entrepreneurial knowledge can be tested in real economic activities (Azizah, 2020; Maisaroh & Tatik, 2019; Syakur & Zainuddin, 2024). These initiatives are frequently framed as sharia-based empowerment strategies, where business learning is combined with ethical instruction emphasizing honesty, trustworthiness, and the avoidance of usury. This suggests that pesantren entrepreneurship education is not simply an adaptation of conventional entrepreneurship pedagogy but is shaped by religious values embedded in institutional culture.

However, entrepreneurship education alone is insufficient without broader institutional capacity building. The sustainability and effectiveness of pesantren entrepreneurship programs depend heavily on managerial competence, internal governance structures, and resource mobilization. Research underscores that training and managerial capacity are critical to the success of entrepreneurship programs in

Islamic educational institutions (Rouf et al., 2024; Sholeh et al., 2023). This emphasis on institutional capacity indicates that pesantren entrepreneurship must be treated as an organizational development process rather than a set of isolated activities. Consequently, capacity building becomes essential not only for improving program outcomes but also for ensuring that pesantren can maintain entrepreneurial initiatives over time while remaining aligned with their educational and spiritual missions.

Research Gap and the Significance of the Study

Despite increasing scholarly recognition of Islamic entrepreneurship as a strategic pathway for strengthening pesantren economic independence, existing research remains fragmented and largely context-specific. Many studies emphasize isolated aspects such as sharia-compliant business models, curriculum integration, or santri participation in MSME development, yet these findings are rarely synthesized into a cohesive understanding of pesantren entrepreneurship as a complex institutional system. Moreover, the literature is dispersed across Islamic economics, education, sociology, and religious studies, limiting the development of a unified analytical framework that accounts for pesantren's socio-religious identity alongside its economic functions. This fragmentation restricts the ability to generate evidence-based guidance for sustainable program design and policy development.

A further gap lies in the limited exploration of internal and external factors shaping the sustainability of pesantren entrepreneurship initiatives. Challenges such as limited capital access, weak managerial capacity, and insufficient collaboration with external stakeholders are frequently noted, yet empirical research that systematically proposes and evaluates solutions remains inadequate. Additionally, while Islamic entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial ecosystem theories have been discussed in parallel, their integrated application in the pesantren context remains underdeveloped. This study is therefore significant because it provides a systematic literature review that maps research trends, identifies dominant themes and methodological patterns, and clarifies underexplored areas. By doing so, it strengthens the theoretical foundation for pesantren-based Islamic entrepreneurship and supports more contextualized and sustainable empowerment strategies.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to examine the development of Islamic entrepreneurship research in relation to the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia. An SLR was selected because it provides a structured and transparent approach for synthesizing existing scholarship, allowing the study to map research trends, dominant themes, and methodological patterns in a field that remains dispersed across multiple disciplines. The review design was intended not only to summarize prior findings but also to generate an integrated understanding of how Islamic entrepreneurship has been conceptualized and operationalized within pesantren contexts. Consistent with established standards for

literature review research, the study followed sequential procedures of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis to ensure that the resulting analysis was academically rigorous and systematically accountable.

In adopting this design, the study emphasized methodological consistency and interpretive depth. Rather than treating the reviewed literature as a set of isolated references, the SLR approach enabled the author to examine patterns across studies, compare conceptual emphases, and identify gaps that require further investigation. This approach also supports the production of evidence-based insights that may inform both academic discourse and policy development regarding pesantren-based Islamic entrepreneurship. The systematic design therefore served as an appropriate strategy to consolidate fragmented research and establish a more coherent knowledge structure for future studies in this area.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using several widely recognized academic databases to ensure the validity, breadth, and diversity of sources. The primary databases included Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and the Garuda portal managed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. These databases were selected because they provide access to both international scholarship and nationally accredited publications, enabling the study to capture research developments relevant to the Indonesian pesantren context. By relying on established scientific databases, the study sought to ensure that the review was grounded in credible and academically recognized literature, reflecting contemporary developments in the field of Islamic entrepreneurship research.

To retrieve relevant publications, the search process applied a set of targeted keywords aligned with the study's thematic focus. The search terms included "Islamic entrepreneurship," "Islamic boarding school entrepreneurship," "Islamic boarding school independence," and "Islamic entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools." These keywords were designed to capture literature that explicitly addressed entrepreneurship within pesantren settings and its implications for institutional independence. The keyword-based strategy was intended to maximize recall while maintaining conceptual relevance, ensuring that the initial dataset included a broad range of potentially eligible studies for subsequent screening and evaluation.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain academic rigor and thematic precision, the study applied explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria during the screening process. Publications were included when they met three primary conditions: (a) they were directly relevant to the issue under investigation, namely Islamic entrepreneurship and pesantren independence; (b) they explicitly addressed the Indonesian pesantren context; and (c) they contained either conceptual analysis, empirical findings, or critical evaluations of Islamic entrepreneurship practices. These criteria ensured that the selected literature contributed substantively to understanding pesantren-based entrepreneurship, rather

than offering general discussions of entrepreneurship without contextual specificity. The inclusion criteria also supported the review's objective of synthesizing evidence that is both theoretically meaningful and practically informative.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria were designed to filter out sources that lacked scientific credibility or thematic alignment. Literature categorized as opinion-based without adequate academic support was excluded, as were studies that did not fit the thematic scope of pesantren entrepreneurship or the geographic focus on Indonesia. This filtering process was essential to prevent the review from being diluted by peripheral discussions and to ensure that only academically defensible sources informed the synthesis. By applying these criteria systematically, the study strengthened the validity of its evidence base and ensured that the final sample represented credible contributions to the field.

Screening and Selection Procedure

The selection process was conducted in multiple stages to ensure transparency and reduce bias in the inclusion of studies. Following the initial identification of publications through database searches, the first screening stage involved reviewing abstracts to evaluate relevance and eliminate clearly unsuitable works. This abstract-based screening served as an efficient filtering mechanism, enabling the study to focus on literature that explicitly addressed Islamic entrepreneurship in pesantren contexts. Publications that passed this stage were then subjected to a full-text review, allowing for a more detailed assessment of their conceptual focus, methodological quality, and substantive contribution. The multi-stage process ensured that eligibility decisions were based on evidence within the texts rather than assumptions derived from titles alone.

The staged procedure also supported methodological accountability by ensuring that the final dataset was not arbitrarily assembled. Each publication was evaluated against the predetermined criteria, strengthening consistency in the selection process. The full-text reading phase was particularly important for verifying whether studies genuinely addressed pesantren-based entrepreneurship rather than merely referencing pesantren as contextual background. This careful procedure was intended to ensure that the final sample consisted only of works with meaningful relevance and sufficient academic quality to support thematic synthesis and critical analysis.

Data Extraction and Analytical Categories

After the final selection of eligible studies, the review proceeded with qualitative data extraction and classification. The extraction process was conducted by organizing the content of each publication into analytical categories that reflected the objectives of the study. These categories included: (1) the research objectives stated in each study, to clarify thematic focus; (2) the methodological approaches applied, to identify dominant research designs; (3) the primary topics discussed, such as entrepreneurship curriculum integration, the establishment of business units, skills training, leadership roles, and other dimensions of pesantren entrepreneurship; (4) the main findings

reported; and (5) the implications for pesantren independence across economic, social, and institutional dimensions. This structured extraction enabled the study to identify patterns across publications and to compare findings systematically.

The extraction process was qualitative in nature, prioritizing interpretive depth over numerical aggregation. By using these categories, the study ensured that each publication was evaluated through comparable dimensions, allowing thematic trends to emerge across the dataset. This approach also facilitated the identification of underexplored issues and recurring methodological limitations, which are critical for articulating research gaps and developing future research agendas. Overall, data extraction served as the foundation for a coherent synthesis that integrates fragmented scholarship into a structured body of knowledge.

Data Analysis and Synthesis Approach

The analysis was conducted descriptively and qualitatively using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis was chosen because it enables systematic interpretation of qualitative evidence by identifying recurring patterns, dominant research concerns, and conceptual emphases across a body of literature. Through this process, the study examined how Islamic entrepreneurship has been framed in relation to pesantren independence, what types of programs and strategies have been emphasized, and which internal and external factors have been identified as critical for success. The analysis was also designed to capture shifts in research orientation, including changes in thematic priorities and methodological preferences within the literature. By synthesizing findings across studies, the research developed a more comprehensive understanding of pesantren entrepreneurship as a socio-religious and economic phenomenon.

In addition to mapping trends, the study incorporated critical evaluation of methodological strengths and weaknesses in prior research. This evaluative component was essential for identifying areas where evidence remains limited, where research designs may lack robustness, or where key dimensions of pesantren entrepreneurship have not been sufficiently examined. By combining thematic synthesis with methodological critique, the analysis provided a foundation for evidence-based recommendations and for proposing more contextually relevant future research directions. All analytical stages were conducted according to systematic and transparent review principles, supporting the scientific accountability of the study's conclusions.

RESULTS

Overview of the Reviewed Literature and Publication Trends

This systematic review synthesized findings from 42 peer-reviewed articles examining Islamic entrepreneurship within the context of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. The overall publication pattern indicates that research interest in this topic has expanded substantially in recent years. Although studies began to emerge earlier in the review period, the strongest growth has occurred since 2019, suggesting a rising

scholarly concern with entrepreneurship as a strategy for strengthening faith-based institutional independence. The concentration of publications in the most recent period further reflects a broader shift in academic attention toward Islamic economic development models that integrate ethical commitments and socio-religious institutions.

In terms of publication characteristics, the reviewed literature shows notable dominance of field-based and qualitative research. Approximately 64% of the reviewed articles were based on field studies, while 71% applied qualitative approaches. This pattern suggests that pesantren entrepreneurship has primarily been investigated through context-sensitive and descriptive research designs, often emphasizing institutional narratives, community engagement, and program implementation processes rather than large-scale quantitative testing. The methodological orientation highlights the importance of local socio-cultural dynamics in shaping entrepreneurship outcomes and indicates that scholars frequently treat pesantren entrepreneurship as an institutional phenomenon requiring interpretive depth. However, this pattern also implies that empirical generalization remains limited, reinforcing the need for more diverse methodological approaches to strengthen evidence-based conclusions about pesantren entrepreneurship practices and impacts.

Dominant Themes and Research Concentrations

The thematic synthesis reveals that the most dominant body of scholarship focuses on the implementation of entrepreneurship programs in pesantren. This theme accounts for 38% of the reviewed studies, reflecting strong academic attention to how entrepreneurship is operationalized in Islamic educational institutions. A second major theme emphasizes strengthening community economies through sharia-based entrepreneurship (29%), indicating that pesantren entrepreneurship is frequently framed not only as institutional development but also as a vehicle for broader community empowerment. A third prominent theme highlights Islamic entrepreneurial character education (21%), suggesting that many scholars interpret entrepreneurship as part of moral and character formation, rather than a purely technical economic intervention. Together, these thematic concentrations demonstrate that pesantren entrepreneurship research is largely oriented toward practical institutional strategies and value-based empowerment models.

The thematic pattern also indicates that Islamic entrepreneurship is increasingly understood as an approach that combines economic objectives with spiritual and social dimensions. The literature consistently presents pesantren as institutions capable of promoting entrepreneurship without abandoning religious identity, thus positioning entrepreneurship as a strategic mechanism for institutional resilience. At the same time, the dominance of implementation-focused studies suggests that scholars prioritize program design and institutional practices over theoretical refinement. While this practical orientation supports applied contributions, it also points to a need for deeper conceptual integration, particularly in explaining how pesantren

entrepreneurship functions as a system shaped by governance, religious norms, and external stakeholder relations.

Pesantren as the Central Institutional Focus

A key finding from the synthesis is that pesantren constitute the primary institutional setting in the majority of reviewed studies. Twenty-five out of 42 articles (59%) explicitly examined the role of pesantren in developing Islamic entrepreneurship, confirming that pesantren are widely regarded as strategic actors in Indonesia's sharia-based economic development landscape. This focus reflects the evolving role of pesantren from being primarily religious educational institutions toward becoming centers for socio-economic empowerment. The literature emphasizes that pesantren entrepreneurship is increasingly linked to institutional transformation, enabling pesantren to respond to economic challenges while maintaining their socio-religious legitimacy.

Within this group of pesantren-focused studies, 17 articles reported the implementation of business incubation initiatives. These programs included agribusiness development, sharia cooperative enterprises, and digital marketing training rooted in Islamic values. Such findings indicate that pesantren entrepreneurship is not limited to small-scale activities but can involve structured institutional programs that resemble broader entrepreneurship incubation models. At the same time, the synthesis shows uneven capacity across pesantren. Several studies describe pesantren that remain limited in their entrepreneurship role, focusing primarily on motivation-building and basic entrepreneurial counseling. This imbalance suggests that institutional readiness and resource availability vary significantly, creating different levels of entrepreneurship development and effectiveness across pesantren contexts.

Types of Entrepreneurship Programs Implemented in Pesantren

The reviewed literature identifies several dominant program types through which pesantren implement entrepreneurship initiatives. The most frequently reported programs include technical skills training (76%), the establishment of student business units (64%), and collaboration with local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) (52%). These programs generally aim to strengthen students' practical competencies while also supporting pesantren institutional sustainability. Skills training is commonly described as a mechanism for equipping students with market-relevant abilities, while student business units provide experiential learning opportunities where entrepreneurial skills can be applied directly. Collaboration with local MSMEs expands economic networks and strengthens the linkage between pesantren and surrounding community markets.

Additional program types include sharia management training (44%) and pesantren-owned business development (28%). These initiatives emphasize institutional governance and sustainability, suggesting that entrepreneurship is not solely framed as student development but also as organizational capacity building. Across these program models, entrepreneurship is consistently linked to Islamic ethical

principles, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and the avoidance of usury. This indicates that pesantren entrepreneurship programs are designed not merely as income-generating strategies but also as institutional practices intended to preserve religious identity while engaging in economic empowerment.

Economic Impact and Institutional Independence Outcomes

The synthesis provides evidence that pesantren entrepreneurship programs are associated with measurable improvements in economic independence. Eighteen reviewed articles reported significant impacts on pesantren financial sustainability, reflected in increased internal income and reduced dependence on external funding. The reported average internal income increase reached Rp 7,800,000 per month (SD = Rp 2,340,000), while reliance on external funding decreased by 37% compared to pre-program conditions. These figures suggest that entrepreneurship initiatives can function as sustainable institutional strategies rather than short-term interventions. Increased internal income enables pesantren to finance operational needs more independently, reducing vulnerability to fluctuations in donor support or government assistance.

The findings also indicate that entrepreneurship programs contribute to pesantren institutional transformation. Entrepreneurship activities are not only framed as learning mechanisms for students but also as structural tools that strengthen pesantren's economic foundations. By establishing revenue-generating business units and building stronger market connections, pesantren can enhance their capacity to manage resources and sustain institutional growth. However, the literature suggests that these outcomes depend on broader conditions, including managerial competence, access to financing, and institutional readiness.

Alignment Between Islamic Values and Pesantren Entrepreneurship

A significant result emerging from the reviewed literature concerns the alignment between Islamic entrepreneurial values and pesantren institutional culture. Approximately 83% of the reviewed studies reported a high level of normative compatibility, particularly regarding work ethic, honesty, and diligence. This alignment indicates that entrepreneurship education and practice can be integrated into pesantren settings without necessarily undermining religious values. Instead, entrepreneurship is often framed as an extension of character education, reinforcing ethical discipline and social responsibility alongside economic skills. Such compatibility supports the argument that pesantren entrepreneurship is not a disruptive innovation but rather a value-consistent institutional strategy that resonates with existing moral structures.

Nevertheless, the synthesis also highlights cautionary findings. Three articles identified potential tensions between entrepreneurial orientation and students' spiritual life, emphasizing the risk that entrepreneurship programs may shift priorities toward materialistic tendencies if not carefully governed. Although this concern appeared in a smaller proportion of studies, it represents an important institutional risk. The literature

suggests that entrepreneurship initiatives must be designed with safeguards to preserve pesantren's spiritual mission, ensuring that economic activities remain balanced with religious education.

Methodological Patterns and Emerging Research Directions

The reviewed literature demonstrates that pesantren entrepreneurship research is dominated by qualitative and field-based methods, reflecting the contextual complexity of pesantren as socio-religious institutions. This methodological pattern enables detailed exploration of institutional dynamics, community relationships, and program implementation processes. However, it also indicates that many studies remain descriptive and localized, limiting broader generalization. The emphasis on qualitative methods suggests that scholars prioritize interpretive understanding over causal testing, which may explain why research remains fragmented and unevenly integrated across disciplines.

The synthesis further indicates that research directions are shifting toward more practical and contextual concerns. Rather than focusing solely on normative ideals of Islamic entrepreneurship, recent studies increasingly examine how entrepreneurship is implemented in real pesantren settings, including challenges such as limited capital, managerial constraints, and weak external collaboration. This shift suggests a growing recognition that pesantren entrepreneurship requires not only ethical framing but also institutional strategies capable of sustaining economic initiatives over time. Consequently, the literature points toward the need for more comprehensive empirical research that evaluates program effectiveness, identifies best practices across regions, and develops integrated theoretical models that connect Islamic entrepreneurship principles with ecosystem and institutional development frameworks.

DISCUSSION

Research Trends and the Consolidation of Pesantren-Based Islamic Entrepreneurship

The findings of this study demonstrate that research on Islamic entrepreneurship within Indonesian pesantren has grown substantially, particularly since 2019, indicating an intensified scholarly focus on entrepreneurship as a pathway for institutional and community economic strengthening. The review also shows that the dominant themes revolve around entrepreneurship implementation in pesantren, sharia-based community empowerment, and Islamic entrepreneurial character education. This thematic concentration suggests that pesantren entrepreneurship is increasingly framed not merely as an auxiliary program but as a strategic institutional agenda aligned with economic independence and social transformation. Moreover, the methodological dominance of qualitative and field-based research reflects the contextual complexity of pesantren entrepreneurship, which is shaped by socio-religious identity, local networks, and institutional governance dynamics.

These findings are broadly consistent with scholarship that emphasizes the growing academic attention to Muslim entrepreneurship as a distinct and expanding field. Previous studies (Abdurrohim & Kusaeri, 2024; Falach et al., 2023; Ilham et al., 2023; Isti & Fauzan, 2023; Nisa et al., 2024) note that Muslim entrepreneurship research has developed significantly over the past decade, reflecting a wider recognition of the relationship between entrepreneurship, Islamic ethics, and social welfare. This broader trend aligns with the increased publication volume observed in this review, suggesting that pesantren-based entrepreneurship represents an important sub-domain within the wider Islamic entrepreneurship discourse (Abdurrohim & Kusaeri, 2024; Musallam & Kamarudin, 2021; Nisa et al., 2024; Pangesti et al., 2024). At the same time, the emphasis on pesantren as a primary institutional focus echoes arguments that faith-based organizations are increasingly recognized as legitimate and influential actors in shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems, especially in Muslim-majority societies where religious legitimacy remains central to institutional authority.

Theoretically, the increasing concentration of research in this area indicates that pesantren entrepreneurship is becoming an established scholarly agenda requiring stronger conceptual integration. The current dominance of implementation-oriented studies suggests that the field is moving beyond normative discussions toward applied institutional strategies, but also highlights the need for theoretical refinement that can connect program-level interventions with broader ecosystem dynamics. Practically, the trend implies that pesantren entrepreneurship has become an increasingly relevant mechanism for building internal sustainability and strengthening community resilience. From a policy perspective, the rapid growth of this research domain supports the argument that government and development stakeholders should treat pesantren not only as educational institutions but also as strategic partners in sharia-based economic empowerment initiatives, provided that interventions remain consistent with pesantren values and institutional structures.

Program Effectiveness and Economic Independence Outcomes

The results of this review indicate that pesantren entrepreneurship programs are associated with measurable economic benefits, including increased internal income and reduced dependence on external funding. Specifically, the synthesis highlights that entrepreneurship initiatives contribute to pesantren financial sustainability by enabling institutions to generate independent revenue streams through business units, training-based production activities, and partnerships with local MSMEs. The reported average increase in internal income and the reduction in reliance on external funding suggest that entrepreneurship programs function not only as educational tools for students but also as institutional strategies for strengthening pesantren autonomy. This reinforces the argument that entrepreneurship, when embedded in pesantren structures, can facilitate long-term institutional resilience.

These findings are supported by research emphasizing the importance of entrepreneurship as a mechanism for institutional empowerment and sustainability. Previous studies (Ela et al., 2025; Hotman et al., 2024; Legass & Ahmed, 2025; Sohail &

Arshed, 2022, 2023) highlight the significance of sharia-compliant financing frameworks in supporting entrepreneurship development, which is consistent with the review's conclusion that access to resources and financing is central to achieving sustainable economic independence. Additionally, the broader literature on Islamic entrepreneurship suggests that ethical business models can contribute to sustainable development outcomes when supported by appropriate institutional mechanisms (Mutmainnah et al., 2024; Umar, 2023; Yasmeeen, 2024). However, while much of the literature supports positive economic impacts, the review also indicates uneven readiness across pesantren, suggesting that economic outcomes are not universal and depend on internal capacity and external ecosystem support.

The implications of these findings extend across theoretical, practical, and policy domains. Theoretically, they reinforce the view that Islamic entrepreneurship should be conceptualized as an institutional development mechanism rather than solely an individual entrepreneurial orientation. Practically, pesantren leaders and program designers should prioritize building organizational capacity—particularly in management and governance—so that entrepreneurial activities can be sustained beyond short-term interventions. From a policy perspective, the results indicate that empowerment programs should move beyond training-only models and incorporate structural support, including financing access, mentorship, and institutional strengthening. Policies that facilitate sharia-compliant financing and strengthen partnerships with local economic actors may be particularly effective in supporting pesantren economic independence.

Internal Capacity, Managerial Readiness, and Sustainability Challenges

The synthesis highlights that the success and sustainability of pesantren entrepreneurship initiatives depend strongly on internal institutional factors, particularly human resource quality and managerial effectiveness. While entrepreneurship programs may provide tangible economic benefits, the literature reviewed in this study emphasizes that limited managerial capacity and inadequate organizational readiness remain persistent constraints. The findings suggest that entrepreneurship cannot be sustained through technical training alone, because program continuity requires governance systems, institutional planning, and the ability to adapt to market dynamics. Therefore, pesantren entrepreneurship is best understood as a long-term institutional transformation process, where internal capacities shape the extent to which entrepreneurial activities translate into sustainable independence outcomes.

These results align with studies that emphasize training and managerial capacity as critical determinants of entrepreneurship program effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions. Previous studies (Moustaghfir et al., 2020; Omotoye et al., 2022; Shehata et al., 2021) underline that entrepreneurship initiatives require strong managerial competence to ensure successful implementation, and this is reinforced by the review's emphasis on human resource and management factors. Similarly, other studies (Permanasari & Soebiantoro, 2024; Ridwan et al., 2024; Romadloni, 2024) argue

that internal institutional strength is essential for empowering pesantren economies through Islamic entrepreneurship practices. In contrast, studies that focus narrowly on entrepreneurship motivation or curriculum integration may underestimate the structural and managerial barriers that pesantren face, which explains why some pesantren remain limited in entrepreneurship development despite strong normative support.

The implications are substantial for theory, practice, and policy. Theoretically, the findings strengthen the argument that pesantren entrepreneurship should be analyzed through an organizational and ecosystem lens rather than solely through individual-level entrepreneurial intention frameworks. Practically, pesantren should invest in leadership development, management training, and institutional governance reforms to improve entrepreneurial performance. For policymakers, the results indicate that empowerment programs should include capacity-building components that target managerial competence and institutional planning, not only student skills development. Policies that provide long-term mentorship and strengthen administrative systems may increase the sustainability of pesantren entrepreneurship initiatives and reduce dependency on external interventions.

Ecosystem Support, Collaboration, and the Role of Islamic Finance

The findings demonstrate that external ecosystem support is a critical factor shaping pesantren entrepreneurship outcomes. The reviewed literature consistently highlights that entrepreneurship initiatives are more effective when pesantren have access to supportive networks, partnerships with government and private actors, and collaborations with local MSMEs. These external relationships strengthen market access, provide mentorship, and improve resource availability, enabling pesantren to expand entrepreneurial activities beyond small-scale initiatives. The results further suggest that weak external synergy remains a major challenge, indicating that pesantren entrepreneurship cannot be sustained solely through internal resources. Instead, pesantren require ecosystem-based support systems that facilitate institutional learning, financing access, and business development.

This finding is consistent with the entrepreneurial ecosystem framework, which emphasizes that entrepreneurship success depends on the interaction of actors, resources, and environmental conditions (Nicotra et al., 2018; Shwetter et al., 2019; Stam & van de Ven, 2021). It is also supported by scholarship emphasizing the importance of Islamic finance in enabling entrepreneurship-friendly environments. Sohail & Arshed (2023, 2025) argue that Islamic financing has significant potential to support entrepreneurship development, which aligns with the review's observation that financing access remains a key constraint for pesantren initiatives. In addition, Rahman et al. (2020) propose sharia-compliant equity-based crowdfunding frameworks, illustrating that innovative Islamic finance instruments may address funding barriers faced by entrepreneurial actors in Muslim contexts.

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the relevance of ecosystem-based approaches for analyzing pesantren entrepreneurship, highlighting that institutional

entrepreneurship cannot be separated from external networks and financing structures. Practically, pesantren should pursue strategic partnerships with local MSMEs, financial institutions, and government programs to expand entrepreneurial capacity and reduce isolation. From a policy perspective, the results imply that sustainable pesantren entrepreneurship requires integrated empowerment strategies that connect capacity building with ecosystem development. Policies promoting sharia-compliant financing instruments, partnership facilitation, and institutional mentorship programs could enhance pesantren entrepreneurship sustainability and strengthen their role as agents of socio-economic transformation within Islamic value frameworks.

Value Alignment, Ethical Tensions, and Institutional Identity

A major finding of this review is that Islamic entrepreneurial values are largely aligned with pesantren institutional culture. The synthesis indicates that the majority of studies report strong compatibility between entrepreneurship initiatives and pesantren norms, particularly in terms of work ethic, honesty, and discipline. This alignment supports the argument that entrepreneurship programs can be integrated into pesantren without necessarily undermining religious identity. Instead, entrepreneurship is frequently framed as an extension of character education, reinforcing ethical discipline alongside practical skills. However, the review also identifies a smaller but important set of studies highlighting potential tensions, especially the risk that entrepreneurship could shift institutional priorities toward materialistic orientations if not carefully governed.

This dual finding is consistent with broader Islamic entrepreneurship scholarship emphasizing that ethical entrepreneurship must balance economic objectives with moral accountability. Previous studies demonstrate that Islamic entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes are shaped by value-based determinants (Ashraf, 2021; Mohammadi et al., 2020; Ukil et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2023), suggesting that ethical alignment is central to sustaining entrepreneurship legitimacy. At the same time, studies on Muslim entrepreneurship highlight that entrepreneurial success is not always defined purely by profit but can involve socially constructed notions of virtue and responsibility (Abd Rahman et al., 2022; Ginting-Carlström & Chliova, 2023; Hamid et al., 2019; Olaofe, 2023; Sirat et al., 2024). These perspectives support the review's conclusion that pesantren entrepreneurship must be carefully designed to ensure that economic activities reinforce, rather than compete with, spiritual formation.

The implications of this finding are significant across domains. Theoretically, it suggests that pesantren entrepreneurship research should incorporate value-based institutional analysis, recognizing that entrepreneurship outcomes are shaped by moral legitimacy and identity preservation. Practically, pesantren leaders should establish governance mechanisms that ensure entrepreneurship programs remain consistent with spiritual objectives, including ethical monitoring and integration with religious learning. For policymakers, the results indicate that empowerment programs should not impose purely market-driven entrepreneurship models but should respect pesantren's socio-religious character. Policies supporting entrepreneurship in

pesantren should therefore prioritize ethical safeguards, institutional autonomy, and balanced development objectives to sustain legitimacy and long-term impact.

Implications for Future Research and Knowledge Development

The findings of this review indicate that while pesantren entrepreneurship research has expanded rapidly, significant gaps remain in terms of methodological diversity and theoretical integration. The dominance of qualitative and localized studies suggests that the field has produced rich descriptive insights, but still lacks sufficient comparative and quantitative evidence to test causal mechanisms or evaluate program effectiveness across diverse pesantren settings. Moreover, the fragmentation of scholarship across disciplines limits the development of a unified analytical framework capable of capturing pesantren entrepreneurship as a socio-religious, economic, and institutional phenomenon. This indicates that future research should prioritize integrative models that connect Islamic entrepreneurship principles with ecosystem and institutional development perspectives.

These conclusions align with broader scholarship emphasizing the need for stronger theoretical synthesis in Islamic entrepreneurship research. Some studies ([Javaid, 2022](#); [Raimi et al., 2025](#); [Yasmeen, 2024](#); [Younis et al., 2022](#)) argue for developing Islamic visions and ethical systems for entrepreneurship through comparative analysis, highlighting the importance of conceptual clarity and structured frameworks. Similarly, [Bamiro et al. \(2023\)](#) propose halal entrepreneurship frameworks supported by incubator services, suggesting that entrepreneurship research should increasingly focus on sustainability mechanisms rather than isolated interventions ([Di Vaio et al., 2022](#); [Filser et al., 2019](#); [Johnson & Schaltegger, 2020](#); [Muñoz & Cohen, 2018](#)). The review's findings also resonate with the broader discourse on faith-based entrepreneurship, where institutional legitimacy and religious norms shape entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes ([Raimi & Raimi, 2024](#)).

Theoretically, the study implies that pesantren entrepreneurship should be conceptualized as a multi-level system, integrating ethical values, institutional governance, and ecosystem conditions. Practically, the results encourage stakeholders to design entrepreneurship programs that combine technical training with managerial capacity building and external partnership development. From a policy standpoint, the findings support the development of long-term empowerment strategies that strengthen pesantren as both educational institutions and economic actors, while safeguarding their religious mission. Future research should therefore focus on comparative regional studies, evaluations of financing models, and the role of digital innovation in pesantren entrepreneurship to build a more robust and evidence-based foundation for sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

This study reviewed the development of Islamic entrepreneurship research that examines the economic independence of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Overall, the literature shows a clear rise in scholarly attention during the

last decade, with pesantren increasingly positioned not only as religious and educational institutions but also as strategic actors in community economic empowerment. The synthesis highlights that dominant studies focus on entrepreneurship implementation, sharia-based empowerment programs, and Islamic entrepreneurial character education. Across these themes, pesantren entrepreneurship is consistently framed as a value-based strategy that integrates economic goals with ethical commitments, reinforcing institutional resilience while remaining rooted in Islamic norms.

The review further indicates that entrepreneurship programs in pesantren are most frequently implemented through technical skills training, student business units, and collaboration with local MSMEs. Evidence from the reviewed studies suggests that these initiatives can strengthen pesantren sustainability by increasing internal income and reducing dependence on external funding sources. At the same time, the findings underscore that program success is not automatic. Internal factors—especially human resource quality and managerial effectiveness—shape whether entrepreneurial activities translate into lasting independence. External ecosystem conditions, including access to financing and multi-stakeholder collaboration, also determine sustainability and scalability.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering an integrated synthesis across fragmented disciplinary discussions, clarifying dominant research themes, and highlighting key enabling and constraining factors that shape pesantren entrepreneurship outcomes. The findings support the theoretical relevance of combining Islamic entrepreneurship with ecosystem and institutional capacity perspectives to better explain pesantren-based economic transformation. Practically, the review provides evidence-based insights for pesantren leaders, educators, and policymakers seeking to design entrepreneurship programs that remain ethically grounded while improving institutional resilience. Future research should expand empirical evaluation, strengthen comparative analysis across regions, and develop more unified frameworks for sustainable pesantren entrepreneurship.

Limitation of the Study

A primary limitation of this study is that it relies exclusively on published academic literature, meaning that its conclusions are constrained by the scope, quality, and reporting practices of the reviewed articles. Because most studies in the dataset used qualitative and context-specific approaches, the synthesis reflects strong interpretive insights but offers limited capacity to generalize causal relationships across pesantren settings. In addition, variations in research design, sample characteristics, and outcome measurement across studies restrict direct comparability. As a result, the review can identify recurring patterns and dominant themes, but it cannot fully determine which program models are most effective under specific institutional conditions.

Another limitation concerns the uneven depth of evidence across key dimensions of pesantren entrepreneurship. While many studies describe program implementation

and general benefits, fewer provide systematic evaluation of long-term sustainability, financial performance, or governance effectiveness. The reviewed literature also varies in its engagement with theoretical integration, often discussing Islamic entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, or ecosystem frameworks in parallel rather than within a unified analytical model. Consequently, the review may underrepresent emerging but less frequently studied issues such as digital entrepreneurship platforms, gendered participation patterns, and the role of regulatory frameworks in shaping pesantren business development. These limitations highlight the need for more standardized and longitudinal research designs in future scholarship.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should prioritize empirical studies that evaluate pesantren entrepreneurship programs using more robust and diverse methodological approaches. Quantitative and mixed-method designs could strengthen evidence regarding causal mechanisms, enabling researchers to test how internal capacities—such as leadership, governance systems, and managerial competence—shape program outcomes. Comparative studies across regions and pesantren typologies would also be valuable for identifying best practices and understanding how local socio-economic contexts influence entrepreneurial strategies. In addition, researchers should develop clearer indicators for measuring pesantren economic independence, including sustainability metrics, revenue diversification, and institutional capacity development over time.

Further scholarship is also needed to advance theoretical integration and policy relevance. Researchers should explore how Islamic entrepreneurship principles can be operationalized within entrepreneurial ecosystem models to explain the interaction between pesantren values, institutional structures, and external stakeholder networks. Particular attention should be given to sharia-compliant financing innovations, including cooperative models, Islamic microfinance, and equity-based crowdfunding mechanisms that may address capital constraints. Moreover, studies examining digital transformation—such as e-commerce adoption, digital marketing training, and technology-enabled halal value chains—could provide timely insights into contemporary opportunities for pesantren entrepreneurship. These research directions would strengthen both academic knowledge and practical guidance for sustainable pesantren-based economic empowerment.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization	E.J.	Resources	E.J.
Data curation	E.J.	Software	E.J.
Formal analysis	E.J.	Supervision	E.J.
Funding acquisition	E.J.	Validation	E.J.
Investigation	E.J.	Visualization	E.J.
Methodology	E.J.	Writing – original draft	E.J.
Project administration	E.J.	Writing – review & editing	E.J.

Author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was not required for this study.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT, DeepL, Grammarly, and PaperPal to translate from Bahasa Indonesia into American English and improve the clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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