



Building Islamic Boarding School Economic Independence through Cooperatives: The Role of Edupreneurship

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of cooperatives in promoting the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools through the concept of edupreneurship. This study aims to explore how cooperatives can serve as a means to enhance the financial viability of Islamic boarding schools, as well as a platform for students to develop entrepreneurial skills. The research method employed is a qualitative approach, utilizing case studies of several Islamic boarding schools with active cooperatives. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observations, and document reviews. The results of the survey indicate that Islamic boarding school cooperatives play a crucial role in supporting economic independence by providing the financial services and resources necessary for Islamic boarding schools. Additionally, cooperatives offer students opportunities to learn about business management, financial planning, and entrepreneurship. The implications of this study suggest that strengthening Islamic boarding school cooperatives, combined with the concept of edupreneurship, can create a sustainable economic empowerment model and enhance the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools by developing practical skills relevant to market needs.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the crucial issues facing Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is their high economic dependence on external resources and a lack of financial independence (Hanafi et al., 2021; Qizam et al., 2025). This dependency poses a significant challenge to the sustainability of these institutions (Ali et al., 2021; Strielkowski et al., 2025). In the theory of economic development, particularly in models based on community empowerment, economic independence is viewed as a fundamental pillar for creating long-term sustainability in educational institutions or communities (Hariram et al., 2023; Hefniy et al., 2025). Achieving financial autonomy allows schools to have more control over their resources,

reduces reliance on fluctuating external funding, and promotes resilience in times of economic uncertainty (Aldogher et al., 2025; Dzigbede et al., 2023). However, despite this theoretical framework, many Islamic boarding schools continue to struggle with managing their finances independently (Diana & Sain, 2025). This is particularly true for schools that have not been able to fully optimize their existing economic potential, both within the education sector and through the utilization of their natural resources, which remain underdeveloped (Jianing et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021).

The gap between theory and practice arises because many Islamic boarding schools face difficulties in harnessing the full potential of their cooperatives, which could play a key role in fostering economic independence. Although various theories and previous studies highlight the importance of cooperatives in supporting the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools, the practical implementation of cooperative models in these institutions has often been ineffective. This issue is compounded by a lack of proper management, knowledge, and training in cooperative business models. Consequently, many Islamic boarding schools remain heavily reliant on external assistance, which is often unstable, unreliable, and insufficient to meet their long-term needs. This dependency limits the schools' ability to sustain their educational programs and hampers their capacity for self-sufficiency. In light of these challenges, this study aims to explore how Islamic boarding school cooperatives can be effectively utilized to alleviate this economic dependence. Specifically, it investigates how these cooperatives can serve as a solution to foster financial independence, improve the development of education, and promote the economic empowerment of students, thereby enhancing the overall sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

The real conditions in the field reveal that although some Islamic boarding schools have established cooperatives as an effort to improve economic welfare, many have not succeeded in maximizing the potential of these cooperatives. For example, Islamic boarding schools in rural areas, such as those in East Java or Central Java, although they possess land assets and facilities, often struggle to manage these resources optimally. Existing cooperatives struggle due to a lack of understanding of business management and entrepreneurship, as well as limited access to markets and capital (Baharun, 2025). However, there are also Islamic boarding schools that have succeeded in developing cooperatives by involving students in entrepreneurial activities, such as food or craft production, but this remains limited to a small scale.

This condition highlights the importance of exploring how cooperatives can be further developed through an edupreneurship approach, where students

learn directly how to manage a business and contribute to the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools.

Various previous studies have examined the role of cooperatives in the development of Islamic boarding school economies, highlighting both the potential and challenges in this sector. Research by Sulaiman (2015) on Islamic boarding school cooperatives revealed that many of these cooperatives were not operating optimally, primarily due to a lack of managerial knowledge among the staff and administrators. This lack of expertise hindered the ability of cooperatives to function efficiently, preventing them from contributing fully to the economic development of the boarding schools. In a similar vein, (Pliakoura et al., 2022; Rudberg, 2023) demonstrated that Islamic boarding school cooperatives have the potential to enhance economic welfare; however, the research highlighted that there have been no systematic efforts to integrate entrepreneurial training or education within these cooperatives. As a result, many cooperatives missed out on the opportunity to develop sustainable business models that could provide long-term benefits to the institutions and their communities (Massimo & Nora, 2022).

Further research by (Ariatin et al., 2024; Zaki et al., 2022) focused on edupreneurship-based cooperatives, showing that these types of cooperatives can significantly enhance the entrepreneurial skills of students in Islamic boarding schools. The study emphasized the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education with cooperative management to cultivate a more entrepreneurial mindset among students. However, Kusnadi's research also pointed out that many Islamic boarding school cooperatives still lacked in-depth integration with entrepreneurship education, limiting their ability to equip students with practical business skills. This gap in the system reveals a crucial opportunity for improvement. Building upon these findings, the present study aims to incorporate a more systematic edupreneurship dimension into the management of Islamic boarding school cooperatives. By doing so, it seeks to transform these cooperatives into not only economic institutions but also dynamic learning facilities that actively foster entrepreneurial skills in students, preparing them for both business and leadership roles in the future. This approach could serve as a model for improving the sustainability and effectiveness of cooperatives in Islamic boarding schools.

This study offers innovation by connecting the concept of edupreneurship with cooperative management in Islamic boarding schools. Although edupreneurship has been implemented in various modern educational institutions, its application in the context of Islamic boarding schools remains limited. This study integrates cooperative management with entrepreneurship learning, which is carried out directly by students. In this model, students not

only learn theory but are also directly involved in collaborative management, spanning from business planning and financial management to product marketing. This provides practical experience that is useful for students in developing economic independence and entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, this study offers a new contribution to understanding the role of Islamic boarding school cooperatives in building an education-based economy.

This study aims to examine how Islamic boarding school cooperatives can achieve economic independence through the application of the edupreneurship concept. The main question to be answered is: How to Build Islamic Boarding School Economic Independence through Cooperatives: The Role of Edupreneurship? This study also aims to identify the obstacles faced by Islamic boarding schools in implementing the edupreneurship-based cooperative model and to provide recommendations for the development of more effective and sustainable Islamic boarding school cooperatives.

The temporary argument in this study is that Islamic boarding school cooperatives managed with an edupreneurship approach can be an effective tool to increase the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools. By involving students in the management of cooperatives, they not only learn about entrepreneurship but also become part of the solution to overcome the economic dependence of Islamic boarding schools. Cooperatives based on edupreneurship can provide students with practical learning opportunities in business management, finance, and product marketing, which in turn can enhance their quality of life and contribute to the overall economic growth of Islamic boarding schools. This study aims to test whether the integration between cooperatives and edupreneurship can have a positive impact on the management of Islamic boarding school economies and the empowerment of students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research design employs a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study. This design was chosen because the purpose of the study is to explore in depth the role of cooperatives in building the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools through an edupreneurship approach. Case studies enable researchers to gain a more holistic understanding of the context and analyze how Islamic boarding school cooperatives function in everyday practice, considering various factors that influence their success. This study will examine the interactions and dynamics that occur in the field, as well as how Islamic boarding school cooperatives can enhance students' entrepreneurial skills through integrated business management education.

The study was conducted at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, located in Probolinggo, East Java. The reason for choosing this location is that the

Islamic boarding school has a cooperative that is already operational, supporting both the school's economy and the welfare of its students. In addition, this Islamic boarding school is also active in developing entrepreneurship programs for students, making it a relevant location to study the relationship between cooperatives and edupreneurship. The social, cultural, and economic conditions in this area also provide an interesting context for examining how cooperatives can contribute to building the financial independence of Islamic boarding schools while enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of students.

The sources of information in this study consisted of respondents, informants, and relevant texts. The primary respondents of the study were students in grades XI and XII at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School who were directly involved in cooperative activities and entrepreneurship programs. Key informants included the administrators of the boarding school cooperative, teachers involved in entrepreneurship education, and the head of the Islamic boarding school. In addition, the texts used as references included internal Islamic boarding school documents such as curriculum, cooperative business plans, learning notes, as well as online news and related articles regarding cooperatives and edupreneurship in Islamic boarding schools. The data collection process was conducted using several techniques, including observation, interviews, and the distribution of questionnaires. Observations were conducted to directly observe activities in the Islamic boarding school cooperative, including interactions among students, cooperative administrators, and educators. In-depth interviews were conducted with cooperative administrators, entrepreneurship mentors, and the head of the Islamic boarding school to explore their understanding of the role of cooperatives in supporting the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with students to gather their experiences with direct involvement in cooperative and entrepreneurial programs. Questionnaires were used to collect data on students' attitudes and perceptions regarding cooperatives and entrepreneurship education in Islamic boarding schools. Interview guidelines and questionnaires were designed to explore information about the challenges, successes, and impacts of cooperatives on the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools. Data analysis was carried out through three main stages: data condensation, data display, and data verification. At the data condensation stage, data collected from observations, interviews, and questionnaires were filtered and organized to focus on information relevant to the research objectives. At the data display stage, the condensed data was presented in the form of narratives or tables that were easy to understand, to facilitate further analysis. Finally, at the data verification stage, the researcher rechecked to ensure the validity of the data and the conformity

between the findings and existing theories. The analysis methods used were content analysis to analyze texts obtained from interviews and documents, discourse analysis to understand the interaction and communication between related parties in Islamic boarding school cooperatives, and interpretive analysis to interpret the experiences and perspectives of students and cooperative administrators in managing businesses based on edupreneurship.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurship Skills Development

Entrepreneurship skills development is an essential aspect in preparing individuals for success in the business world. In the field, this development focuses on enhancing competencies that span various disciplines, including managerial skills, resource management, marketing, and product innovation. Entrepreneurship training programs, organized by educational institutions and entrepreneurial communities, provide opportunities for participants to develop the practical skills needed to run a business effectively and sustainably. Through various activities tailored to market needs and technological advancements, entrepreneurs can acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the increasingly complex challenges of the business world.

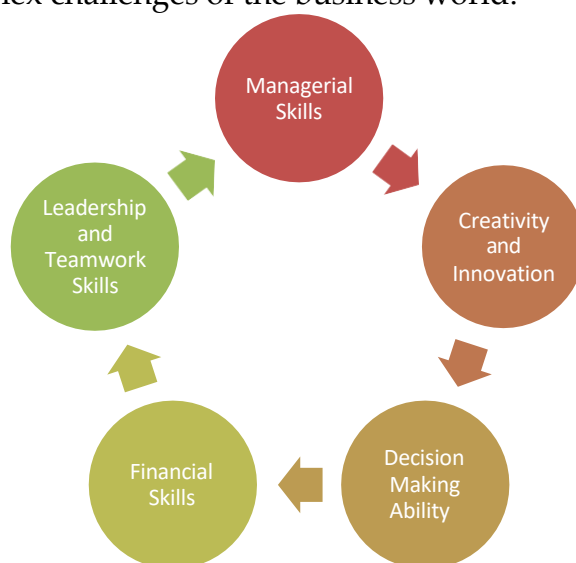


Figure.1 Entrepreneurship Skills Development

In interviews with two informants, interesting views were found regarding the development of entrepreneurial skills. The first informant, who runs a culinary business, emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship training in managing finances and expanding the market. “Entrepreneurship training helps me to manage business finances better and understand how to expand the market,” he said. The second informant, a young entrepreneur in the

fashion sector, added that branding and time management skills are also critical in business development. "I learned how good branding can attract consumers' attention, and how to manage time in running this business," said the second informant. From the interviews, it can be concluded that managerial skills, such as financial management and marketing, play a vital role in the sustainability of their businesses.

Observations made by researchers in the field revealed that participants in entrepreneurship training demonstrated significant improvements in managing their businesses. Many of them began to design more structured and detailed business plans and utilized digital technology, such as social media, to market their products. This change suggests that business actors are starting to adopt technology to expand their market reach and improve operational effectiveness. Researchers suggest that the development of entrepreneurial skills is closely tied to an individual's ability to adapt to changing technological developments.

Overall, the data obtained revealed that the development of entrepreneurial skills is not limited to technical aspects but also encompasses changes in mindset. Business actors who participate in entrepreneurship training are better equipped to face market challenges by acquiring skills in managing their businesses in a structured manner and leveraging digital technology. These skills enable them to plan and develop their businesses sustainably, thereby enhancing their ability to compete in an increasingly competitive market. In this context, the development of entrepreneurial skills has been demonstrated to play a crucial role in improving an individual's ability to succeed and thrive in the business world.

From the existing data, a pattern emerges that indicates the development of entrepreneurial skills has a positive impact on two main aspects: managerial and marketing. The majority of entrepreneurs who participated in the training showed improved skills in financial management and business planning. Additionally, they are becoming increasingly active in utilizing social media to introduce their products to a broader audience. The development of entrepreneurial skills has thus opened up opportunities for individuals to run their businesses in a more professional and organized manner, which ultimately increases their competitiveness in the market.

Opening Economic Opportunities

Opening economic opportunities in the context of this research refers to any effort made to create opportunities for individuals or groups to improve their financial well-being. This can involve developing micro-enterprises, empowering communities through skills development, and expanding access to

broader markets. In practice, opening economic opportunities means optimizing existing potential, whether it is natural resources, labor, or social capital that can be leveraged into profitable businesses. Activities such as entrepreneurship training and developing the informal sector are essential parts of this effort, as they provide communities with the tools to survive and thrive in dynamic economic conditions.

Table. 1 Opening Economic Opportunities

Observed Aspects	Observation Findings	Sources
Access to Capital	Increased availability of microloans and venture capital, particularly for startups.	World Bank
Market Expansion	New trade agreements opening markets for local businesses, especially in ASEAN.	Indonesian Ministry of Trade
Technology Integration	Adoption of digital platforms by SMEs, enhancing access to broader consumer bases.	Kemenkominfo
Government Policies	Introduction of tax incentives and subsidies to encourage entrepreneurship.	Indonesian Ministry of Finance
Skilled Workforce	Improved training programs and vocational schools creating a more skilled labor pool.	UNESCO

Two interviews with informants provide different but complementary descriptions of how economic opportunities can be opened. The first informant, a micro-entrepreneur, recounts how he utilized inexpensive local raw materials to establish his small business, which employed himself and several residents. In contrast, the second informant, a village official, emphasized the importance of government support, such as skills training or access to capital, that can expand economic opportunities in his area. From these interviews, the researcher interpreted that efforts to open economic opportunities are insufficient to rely solely on individual independence, but also require supportive government policies. Synergy between personal initiative and government support is key to creating sustainable economic opportunities.

During field observations, researchers noted that many communities were able to develop their businesses by utilizing local resources, such as handicrafts or regional food products, which are increasingly in demand. Not only that, but they also received training in digital marketing, which gave them access to a broader market, even outside their local area. Researchers observed that when individuals were trained to improve their skills and given access to market their products, economic opportunities began to emerge. This suggests that community empowerment through training and capacity building is a vital factor in creating economic opportunities.

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted, opening economic opportunities in the community involves two primary elements. The

first is the community's ability to utilize existing local potential, such as inexpensive raw materials or expertise. The second is the role of the government in providing training, access to capital, and a broader market. The synergy between the two has a significant impact on creating sustainable economic opportunities. Therefore, not only is individual initiative needed, but also supportive policies so that these economic opportunities can develop.

From all the data collected, a pattern emerges that shows economic opportunities can be realized optimally when a combination of utilizing local potential and government policy support is employed. Business actors who have the initiative to develop businesses based on local resources, supported by skills training and market access, can create a strong economic ecosystem. With this kind of support, small businesses can grow, have a positive impact on the local economy, strengthen their competitiveness, and provide long-term benefits to the community.

Creating a Practical Learning Environment

Creating a practical learning environment involves creating an atmosphere that facilitates effective and efficient learning for students. This includes the application of learning methods tailored to students' needs, the use of tools and media that support the learning process, and the selection of optimal locations and times to maximize concentration and interaction. A practical environment is one that not only facilitates an understanding of the material but also supports students in applying what they have learned easily and enjoyably.

Two informants who were interviewed gave their views on the importance of creating a practical learning environment. Informant A, a teacher, stated that "a comfortable and structured environment makes students more focused and not feel burdened". This demonstrates that a well-organized classroom arrangement can enhance student concentration. Meanwhile, Informant B, a student, said, "When learning uses interesting tools, I understand the material more easily". The researcher interpreted that the use of learning media that suits students' interests can increase their involvement in the learning process.

Observations conducted in several classes revealed that classes with simple room designs and the use of aids such as interactive whiteboards, projectors, and online modules were able to create a more interactive and enjoyable atmosphere. Researchers interpreted that effective aids and flexible room arrangements provide space for students to interact more effectively, both with their fellow students and with learning materials. Room arrangements that allow free movement, such as semicircular chair arrangements, help facilitate group discussions.

Based on interviews and observations, researchers found that a practical learning environment can be created with order and the use of media that suits students' needs. This refers to room arrangements that facilitate active interaction and the use of engaging and relevant tools to enhance student understanding. Student involvement in the learning process increases when they feel comfortable with the environment and the tools used.

The results of this study indicate that students are more active and understand the material better when a practical learning environment is employed. There is a significant pattern of increased engagement and concentration when the classroom is arranged in a way that supports interaction and uses technology that facilitates understanding. Therefore, researchers conclude that creating a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing environment has a significant impact on the effectiveness of student learning.

Social Enhancement and Network Strengthening

Social enhancement and network strengthening refer to deliberate efforts designed to expand interpersonal relationships and improve social integration within a community. These efforts aim to foster a sense of belonging, connectedness, and mutual support among individuals or groups. The process typically involves increasing individual participation in social activities, thereby creating opportunities for interaction and collaboration. It also includes forming broader networks that connect individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise, which can enhance their access to various social, economic, and professional resources. At the same time, social enhancement and network strengthening work to solidify and deepen existing relationships, promoting long-term collaboration and trust through activities that encourage mutual support and shared goals.

This concept is particularly relevant in community development and organizational settings, where strong social networks contribute to improved collective well-being and success. It is often measured through the presence of programs that bring together multiple parties, such as workshops, social events, or professional networks, with the explicit goal of fostering collaboration and strengthening ties both within and between social groups. These programs typically focus on creating environments where individuals can form connections, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects. In practice, the impact of these initiatives is seen in the increased participation of individuals in community and professional activities, as well as the establishment of new, meaningful relationships that are mutually beneficial. Ultimately, social enhancement and network strengthening serve as foundational elements for creating resilient communities and organizations.

Based on interviews with two informants, it was found that they felt more connected to the community after participating in a training program that prioritized improving social skills. The first informant, a member of a youth group, stated, "After participating in the training, I feel more appreciated and can share ideas with others who have the same vision." While the second informant, a local entrepreneur, said that this program provided an opportunity to expand his business network, "I can meet many people from different backgrounds, and this opens up opportunities for collaboration that I had not previously thought of". From this data, it can be concluded that both informants felt a positive impact on strengthening their social networks, both in personal and professional contexts.

Based on observations made during the program, researchers noted a significant increase in social interaction among program participants. Participants appeared to be more active in communicating and sharing their experiences. Several participants were frequently seen holding group discussions after training sessions, indicating the formation of a more cohesive social network. Researchers interpreted this as a sign that the program was effective in creating an environment where individuals could get to know each other and expand their relationships.

In general, the data obtained showed that the program was successful in increasing social engagement and expanding networks between participants. Interviewed informants reported feeling more connected to their community, and observations revealed the formation of stronger social ties among participants. This suggests that strengthening social networks plays a crucial role in enhancing social integration and collaboration among individuals.

The pattern that emerges from the data above indicates that strengthening social networks is closely related to increased individual social engagement. Those involved in the program interacted more often and developed new relationships, both personally and professionally. The program not only provided direct benefits to individuals but also contributed to the community's overall development, creating a broader and more interconnected network among its members.

The results of this study indicate that the social enhancement and network strengthening obtained by program participants have a positive impact on their interpersonal relationships, both personally and professionally. This finding aligns with existing literature, which highlights the importance of strengthening social networks to improve individual well-being, create more opportunities, and promote collaboration. (Zhou & Pun, 2024), strong social networks foster bonds that enhance solidarity and facilitate the exchange of valuable information. In this context, the study's results show that the training program serves as an effective

medium for increasing social connections among participants, aligning with previous research on the benefits of social engagement enhancement programs.

Moreover, the strengthening of social ties also supports participants' emotional well-being, as they benefit from a more robust support system. Literature consistently supports the idea that individuals with stronger social connections are more resilient, have greater life satisfaction, and cope better with stress (Kalaitzaki et al., 2021). The study's findings suggest that the program not only provides participants with tangible skills but also facilitates the creation of lasting social bonds that can positively influence long-term success. This aligns with (Rajkumar et al., 2022) work on the significance of weak ties, which help expand access to new opportunities. Overall, the study supports the argument that social network enhancement programs are crucial in both personal development and fostering professional growth.

However, there is a slight difference with some literature that focuses on strengthening networks at the organizational or broader community level. For example, research by (Zeng Skovhøj, 2021) highlighted the importance of “weak ties” in expanding networks, namely relationships that are not too close but can provide access to new information and opportunities. In this study, although the increase in social networks among participants was visible, the influence of “weak ties” in developing business or social opportunities was not explicitly seen in the data. This suggests that while the program was successful in strengthening relationships between individuals with similar backgrounds, the role of looser or more indirect relationships still needs to be explored further.

This finding implies that strengthening social networks through programs that bring together individuals with similar goals can create stronger and more supportive relationships. As closer networks are formed, participants not only gain social skills but also build trust that is essential for business collaboration and social activities. This finding underscores the importance of creating opportunities for individuals to interact, share experiences, and support one another, which in turn can enhance their quality of social life and expand opportunities for collaboration.

The results of this study suggest that strengthening social networks is an effective tool for increasing individual involvement in a community or group. Such programs can serve as a bridge to reduce feelings of alienation and strengthen collaboration between individuals. Conversely, if social networks are not maintained or developed, individuals tend to have difficulty in building connections that can broaden their horizons. The implications of this function of social networks are significant for the policy and planning of training programs designed to improve social welfare.

For the causal or underlying structure aspect, the presence of this training program shows a direct correlation between the opportunity to interact in an organized setting and increased social engagement. Active participation in social activities allows individuals to overcome feelings of isolation and expand their social networks. Thus, this program reveals the underlying structure of strengthening interpersonal relationships, namely, organized and directed interactions, which provide significant results in terms of building stronger social networks.

CONCLUSION

This study found that strengthening social networks and increasing social engagement can have a significant impact on strengthening interpersonal relationships between individuals, both in personal and professional contexts. The program successfully provided space for participants to interact, share experiences, and build stronger social networks. This finding underscores the importance of fostering opportunities for individuals to cultivate their social relationships, which can broaden their opportunities and open up new avenues for collaboration. Scientifically, this study contributes to renewing the perspective on strengthening social networks, with a qualitative approach through interviews and observations that provide an in-depth understanding of social engagement in training programs. Another contribution is the addition of a new perspective on interpersonal relationships in the context of training programs, which can pave the way for further research using more varied methods.

However, this study has limitations in terms of scope, as it only involved participants from one training program in a particular location, which may not be representative of the entire population. Additionally, this study did not account for variations in gender, age, and other factors that may have influenced the results. The interview and observation methods also have limitations in generalizing the findings. Therefore, further research that accommodates gender and age variations and employs survey methods will be crucial in obtaining a more comprehensive picture. These findings can serve as the basis for developing more effective policies in designing programs that cater to the diverse needs of various social groups.

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