



# Philanthropy in Pesantren: A Review

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This study aims to map the development and direction of research on Islamic Boarding Schools & Philanthropy through a bibliometric approach. The research data is sourced from scientific journal publications indexed in the Dimensions database with the keyword "Pesantren & Philanthropy". A total of 27 relevant articles were analyzed using the VOSviewer software to identify the co-occurrence patterns of keywords, research clusters, and trends of developing research themes. The results of the analysis show that research on pesantren philanthropy is concentrated in three main clusters, namely: (1) pesantren philanthropy management, (2) human capital development in pesantren studies, and (3) pesantren based economic empowerment strategies. These findings indicate that Islamic philanthropy in Islamic boarding schools not only functions as a social assistance mechanism, but also as a strategic instrument in institutional strengthening, human resource development, and economic independence. This study makes a conceptual contribution by presenting a comprehensive research map and opening up opportunities for further research related to the integration of Islamic boarding school philanthropy with the sustainable development agenda.

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## INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia that has a strategic role not only in the transmission of knowledge and the formation of Islamic character, but also in the social and economic development of the community. In its development, pesantren is no longer understood solely as a traditional educational institution, but as a center for the empowerment of the ummah that integrates aspects of Islamic education, social, economic, and philanthropy.

Islamic philanthropy—which includes zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf—has long been an inherent part of the pesantren ecosystem. These instruments are used to support the sustainability of education, institutional strengthening, and economic empowerment of students and the surrounding community. In the contemporary context, the increasing demands on accountability, sustainability, and social impact encourage pesantren to manage philanthropic funds in a more professional and productive manner.

Along with increasing academic attention to the role of Islamic boarding schools in philanthropy and development, the number of scholarly publications on the theme of Islamic Boarding Schools & Philanthropy shows a growing trend. However, studies that systematically map research developments, dominant themes, and future research directions are still relatively limited. Most of the research is case study or contextual qualitative, so it does not provide a comprehensive picture of the structure of knowledge in this field.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a bibliometric analysis of scientific publications with the theme of Islamic Boarding Schools & Philanthropy. Through keyword mapping, research clusters, and topic trends using VOSviewer, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape of Islamic boarding schools philanthropy and identify follow-up research opportunities relevant to the Islamic sustainable development and economic agenda.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Pesantren are among the oldest and most influential Islamic institutions in Indonesia, traditionally functioning as centers for religious learning, moral formation, and community leadership. In recent decades, scholarly attention has increasingly shifted toward the non-educational roles of pesantren, particularly their involvement in Islamic philanthropy and socio-economic development (Hasan, 2021).

Philanthropic activities in pesantren encompass the collection, management, and distribution of Islamic social finance instruments such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, which support both internal educational needs and broader community welfare.

The growing literature situates pesantren philanthropy within wider discussions on Islamic social finance, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development (Kahf, 2015). Unlike conventional charitable organizations, pesantren embed philanthropy within religious authority, moral legitimacy, and long-term social relationships. This article aims to synthesize existing research on philanthropy in pesantren by addressing three main questions: (1) what religious and theoretical foundations underpin philanthropic practices in pesantren, (2) how philanthropic instruments are institutionalized and utilized, and (3) what outcomes and challenges characterize pesantren-based philanthropy.

Islamic philanthropy is grounded in Qur'anic injunctions and Prophetic traditions that emphasize social justice, wealth redistribution, and collective responsibility (ukhuwwah). Zakat represents a mandatory obligation, while infaq, sadaqah, and waqf are voluntary acts of worship (ibadah maliyyah) aimed at achieving *maslahah* (public interest) (Kahf, 2015). In the pesantren context, these principles are not merely doctrinal but operationalized through daily institutional practices.

Several studies highlight that pesantren interpret philanthropy as both a spiritual duty and a pedagogical tool, shaping students' ethical orientation toward generosity and social service (Hasan, 2021). Philanthropic engagement reinforces pesantren's moral authority and strengthens trust between religious elites (*kiai*) and surrounding communities. Consequently, philanthropy in pesantren functions simultaneously as religious observance, social capital, and institutional resource mobilization.

Beyond internal educational financing, pesantren philanthropy increasingly targets community empowerment. Several studies document pesantren-based programs supporting micro-enterprises, vocational training, and social services for marginalized groups (Zaimah, 2021). These initiatives position pesantren as local development actors rather than passive recipients of charitable funds.

Micro-waqf and Islamic microfinance initiatives affiliated with pesantren illustrate how philanthropic capital can be transformed into productive economic instruments. By integrating religious values with entrepreneurship training, pesantren contribute to



As for the mapping, the keywords that appear the most in the publication "*Pesantren & Philanthropy*" include development, waqf, management, islamic philanthropy, islamic boarding school, education, which are then divided into 3 clusters, as follows:

### **Cluster 1: Islamic Boarding School Philanthropy Management**

This cluster contains 15 keyword items, namely community, effort, environment, infaq, institution, islamic boarding school, islamic education, islamic philanthropy, management, pesantren, philanthropic fund, philanthropy, principle, student, zakat. The first cluster represents the core discourse on philanthropic governance in Islamic boarding schools, which includes zakat, infaq, and other philanthropic funds as an instrument of institutional strengthening. The dominance of keywords such as management, institutions, Islamic philanthropy, and Islamic boarding schools shows a strong focus on how pesantren manage philanthropic funds in a structured manner, based on Islamic principles, and oriented towards the sustainability of the student community and the surrounding environment.

A number of relevant studies, namely [Hardi et al \(2021\)](#), explain that the management of the Azzavirtium Endowment Fund (DAZZ) provides a sustainable pattern of Islamic social financing. In addition, it was explained that the endowment fund has had an impact on increasing sustainable charitable activism among alumni, families, and even the second generation. [Fadllan et al \(2025\)](#) examined the role of Islamic economic instruments implemented by pesantren-based microfinance institutions in overcoming economic challenges during the Covid-19 period. The results show that the economic empowerment model applied is based on philanthropy from the ummah to the ummah, by utilizing Islamic instruments such as zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf. Where it was found that zakat has a positive and significant influence on economic improvement. In contrast, infaq has no significant influence, while waqf and alms show a negative but significant partial influence on economic conditions during the Covid-19 period.

[Nafi'Hasbi & Widayanti \(2021\)](#) stated that the collected waqf funds are managed well and professionally so that the distribution of productive waqf can be carried out dialogically for the development of various business fields in Islamic boarding schools. The implementation of productive waqf has long-term implications for Islamic boarding schools, especially in

the fields of education and teaching. Developing facilities can have a great impact on improving the quality of education. Productive waqf funds also contribute to the economy of the surrounding community. [Iwan et al \(2025\)](#) conclude that effective management of Islamic philanthropic funds requires a balance between religious authenticity and operational effectiveness through adaptive planning systems, transparent accountability mechanisms, and knowledge transfer procedures.

[Zahara et al \(2025\)](#) show that the Infaq Management Institute (LMI) has a central role in integrating Islamic philanthropic principles with pesantren-based environmental management practices that have an impact on increasing students' concern for the environment, saving pesantren operational costs through energy efficiency and waste management. In addition, it was also explained that the revitalization of Islamic philanthropy through ecological pesantren can be a catalyst for change towards environmental sustainability (SDGs) and community welfare, especially in terms of increasing awareness of environmental management, poverty alleviation, and inclusive economic growth.

### **Cluster 2 : Development of Human Capital in Islamic Boarding Schools**

This cluster has 13 keyword items, namely challenge, development, economics, education, financing, hcd, human capital, human capital development, islam, role, society, university, waqf. The second cluster highlights the role of Islamic philanthropy—especially waqf—in promoting human capital development in Islamic boarding schools. The presence of keywords such as development, education, human resources, waqf, and society shows a shift in focus from just fundraising to its use to improve the quality of human resources. In this cluster, pesantren are positioned as centers for the development of Islamic-based education and economy, facing various funding challenges and playing a strategic role in community development.

Waqf provides perpetual resources through waqf such as land for agriculture or cash for investment, generating income for vocational education and training programs. Productive waqf optimizes assets for business units, ensuring long-term funding without reducing principal ([Triyawan et al., 2023](#); [Suyatno & Pakkana, 2024](#); [Palasenda & Salikurrahman, 2024](#)). The waqf fund can support the professional development of educators, recruitment, and performance evaluation, improving the

quality of teaching and the performance of institutions. For students, waqf allows scholarships, modern facilities, and entrepreneurial skills, improving employability and community empowerment (Syadiyah & Rindaningsih, 2024; Abdi & Sabran, 2025; Fitria et al., 2025).

In another study, Ritonga (2025) emphasized that despite challenges in terms of budget constraints, facilities, and variations in formal qualifications of educators, effective human resource (HR) management has had a positive impact on the quality of education. The implementation of structured human resources and the principle of open communication between Islamic boarding school managers and educators creates a conducive educational environment, increases educator motivation, and strengthens the quality of teaching. Purwanto et al (2021) also emphasized that character formation through increasing social capital and human capital already exists in education at Islamic boarding schools. This is related to the activities carried out daily in pesantren education. The application of social capital can be seen from trust in the form of responsibility and care, honest and trustworthy behavior, cooperation seen from communication, involvement and coordination. Values can be seen from discipline, hard work, togetherness, simplicity, patience, and tolerance.

Nuryana & Sirojuddin (2025) explained that the implementation of management functions such as planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating programs makes a significant contribution to the development of student competencies, especially in leadership, teamwork, and independence. The effectiveness of these roles is highly dependent on the intensity of guidance provided by the pesantren and the sustainability of the cadre system in the organizational structure. These findings show that strengthening student organizational management is an important factor in supporting the sustainable development of human resources in the pesantren environment.

### **Cluster 3 : Islamic Boarding School Economic Empowerment Strategy**

This cluster has 7 keyword items, namely aspect, bmlh ponorogo outlet, business, economic empowerment, economic empowerment program, implementation, strategy. The third cluster reflects the implementation of Islamic boarding school philanthropy in the form of economic empowerment programs. Keywords such as economic empowerment, business, strategy, and implementation indicate an orientation towards the concrete application of

philanthropic funds for productive and entrepreneurial activities. This cluster emphasizes how pesantren, through collaboration with philanthropic institutions, design and implement contextual and locally-based economic empowerment strategies. Thus, philanthropy not only serves as social assistance but also as a catalyst to strengthen the economic independence of the pesantren community.

In a number of studies, it has also been emphasized that pesantren implement philanthropy through zakat, infaq, sadaqah (ZIS), and waqf to launch economic empowerment programs, which focus on entrepreneurship, skills training, and business units for students and the community. These initiatives reduce dependency, increase income, and encourage self-reliance through transparent and accountable management (Apip et al., 2024; Havy et al., 2024; Latifah et al., 2024). Empowerment programs can include skills training, agribusiness (e.g., durian, palm sugar, mushrooms), cooperatives, and micro-enterprises such as laundries or plantations. For example, through Waqf that funds productive assets, it generates income for community operations and businesses, as seen in the Gontor and NW Al-Rahman Islamic boarding schools (Apip et al., 2024; Firmansyah, 2025).

Fahri & Sobari (2017) researched pesantren based economic empowerment through the santripreneur program. Through the santripreneur program, pesantren can indirectly increase their economic profits, with the consumers of the business being students and the surrounding community. Unless the needs of the pesantren community are met, whether for consumption, educational facilities, or other needs, it is impossible for the economy in pesantren to grow sustainably.

Al Hasyim (2019) examines the development of the creative industry in the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school, and emphasized that Islamic boarding schools have opportunities to be involved in the creative industry. Kopi Ireng (Tebuireng Photography Community) inspired Tebuireng students to establish a production house, namely Maksi (Tebuireng Production House). Kopi Ireng has won many competitions while Maksi has produced two films, namely Binar and Sakinah. Both Kopi Ireng and Maksi are efforts to regenerate the progress of the film industry in Indonesia, especially in Islamic boarding schools. Both Kopi Ireng and Maksi believe that film is a way to spread da'wah and indigenous Indonesian culture in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0.

Bawono et al (2020) examined how pesantren affect the development of the creative economy in society, focusing on traditional values, technological resources, and the role of ustadz and kyai, and found that these factors have a positive and significant impact on the creative economy of pesantren schools, so it needs to be studied further. Hannan (2019) explores the economic development of Islamic boarding schools, especially in Pamekasan, Madura, by analyzing santripreneurship rooted in local wisdom. This research highlights various creative economy activities, such as batik crafts and sharia-based initiatives, which aim to increase economic independence and sustainability in the Miftahul Ulum Islamic boarding school environment.

The results of the bibliometric mapping show that the three clusters formed do not stand separately, but are interrelated and form a complete pesantren philanthropic ecosystem. The first cluster emphasizes the governance and institutional aspects of Islamic philanthropy in Islamic boarding schools, which are the foundation for the sustainability of the management of religious social funds. Professional, transparent, and sharia-principle-based management is the main prerequisite for philanthropic funds to have a long-term impact.

The second cluster expands the philanthropic function of pesantren to the realm of human capital development. In this cluster, waqf and other philanthropic instruments are positioned as a source of strategic financing for improving the quality of education, developing student competencies, and strengthening the capacity of educators and pesantren management. This shows a paradigm shift from consumptive philanthropy to productive philanthropy oriented towards long-term social investment.

Meanwhile, the third cluster emphasized the role of pesantren as an actor of community-based economic empowerment. Philanthropy is not only used to meet the internal needs of Islamic boarding schools, but also to build business units, entrepreneurship programs, and the creative economy that involve students and the surrounding community. The integration between Islamic values, local wisdom, and economic innovation is the main character of this empowerment strategy.

Theoretically, these findings enrich the literature on Islamic economics and philanthropy by showing that pesantren function as hybrid institutions—combining the roles of education, philanthropy, and social entrepreneurship. From a practical perspective,

the results of this study provide a reference for pesantren managers and policymakers to design a more integrated, sustainable, and wide-impact philanthropic model, especially in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## CONCLUSION

This study maps the development of research on the theme of Islamic Boarding School & Philanthropy through bibliometric analysis of 27 scientific journal publications. The results of the analysis show that pesantren philanthropy research is grouped into three main clusters, namely pesantren philanthropy management, human capital development, and economic empowerment strategies. The three clusters reflect the transformation of the role of pesantren from traditional educational institutions to strategic institutions in socio-economic development based on Islamic philanthropy.

This study confirms that Islamic boarding school philanthropy has great potential as an instrument of sustainable development if managed professionally and productively. In the future, further research can be focused on quantitatively measuring the impact of pesantren philanthropy, comparisons between pesantren models, and integrating pesantren philanthropy with public policies and the global Islamic social finance ecosystem.

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