

Sufism-Based Entrepreneurship as a Model for Strengthening the Economic Independence of Pesantren Students

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the relationship between Islamic asceticism, the internalization of spiritual values, psychological motivation, and the entrepreneurial behavior of students at Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School, Mojokerto. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews, observations, documentation, and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving eight informants. The findings reveal that the practice of Islamic asceticism through dhikr, wirid, voluntary prayers, and the internalization of values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), steadfastness (*istiqamah*), asceticism (*zuhud*), and gratitude (*shukr*) fosters a spiritually grounded work ethic among students engaged in aquaculture activities. Entrepreneurial activities are understood not merely as economic endeavors but also as a form of *da'wah bil hal* (preaching through action) and *tazkiyat al-nafs* (spiritual purification), cultivating discipline, mental resilience, honesty, and social responsibility. Business setbacks are interpreted as opportunities for *muhasabah* (self-reflection) and spiritual learning, strengthening the character of resilient entrepreneurs. This study proposes a Sufism-based entrepreneurship model grounded in the psychology of *da'wah*, linking Islamic asceticism, spiritual motivation, and entrepreneurial behavior while reinforcing the paradigm of transformative *da'wah* through productive spirituality.

Keywords: *Sufism-Based Entrepreneurship, Psychology of Da'wah, Islamic Asceticism, Pesantren Entrepreneurship, Islamic Economics.*

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are socio-religious institutions that play a strategic role in educational, social, and economic transformation within society. In addition to serving as centers

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for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, pesantren have increasingly developed into agents of socio-economic empowerment grounded in Islamic values. In contemporary society, pesantren are expected not only to produce students with strong religious competencies but also to foster economic independence and contribute to the welfare of surrounding communities. Their existence has been formally recognized by the Indonesian government through Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 on Religious Education. Nevertheless, efforts to strengthen the economic function of pesantren continue to face various challenges, including limited policy support, restricted access to productive business opportunities, and the absence of sustainable economic empowerment models.¹ These challenges have encouraged the emergence of pesantren-based economic innovations that integrate spiritual values with productive entrepreneurship.

At the global level, the relationship between spirituality and entrepreneurship has attracted growing scholarly attention. Concepts such as spiritual entrepreneurship, faith-based entrepreneurship, and Islamic entrepreneurship have emerged as approaches that recognize religion and spirituality as important factors shaping economic behavior.² Spiritual entrepreneurship represents an entrepreneurial paradigm that integrates spiritual, moral, and religious dimensions into business activities. Within this perspective, business is not solely oriented toward profit generation but also toward achieving meaning in life, social welfare, divine blessings, and devotion to God. Spiritual entrepreneurs view business activities as a form of worship, moral actualization, and service to society.³

Recent studies have further demonstrated that spiritual values can be authentically integrated into modern management practices to enhance leadership effectiveness and organizational sustainability. Using a qualitative multi-method approach involving comparative case studies and document analysis of leading companies such as Patagonia, Unilever, and Mindvalley, previous research found that spiritual leadership grounded in integrity, compassion, and interconnectedness functions as a measurable determinant of organizational performance rather than merely a philosophical abstraction.⁴ Such findings suggest that authentic spiritual integration promotes ethical governance, trust, and sustainable productivity. Within the Islamic tradition, entrepreneurship is understood not merely as an economic activity aimed at generating material profit but also as a form of worship and a means of realizing social welfare (*maslahah*). Consequently, values such as honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, and the pursuit of divine blessings constitute essential foundations of Islamic economic activity.

Despite the growing body of literature on spirituality-based entrepreneurship, most existing studies remain largely normative and conceptual. Previous research has primarily examined the relationship between religion and business ethics or work motivation, while paying limited attention to how spiritual practices shape entrepreneurial behavior within Islamic educational settings. In

¹ Rayie and Ludi, "Business Incubator Management toward Economic Independence at the Boarding School (Study at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Islam, Mojokerto)," *Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Studies* 06, no. 11 (2023): 5290–94, <https://doi.org/10.47191/jefms/v6-i11-04>.

² Alifya Nurul Falach, Muhtadi Ridwan, and Muchammad Fauzan Zenrif, "Santripreneurship in Practice: A Model of Entrepreneurship Development at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School, Lamongan," *Economica: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* 14, no. 2 (2023): 205–25, <https://doi.org/10.21580/economica.2023.14.2.26006>.

³ Jozef Raco, Johanis Ohoitumur, and Kosmas Sobon, "Spirituality: The Power of Entrepreneurship," *EMAJ: Emerging Markets Journal* 9, no. 1 (2019): 28–35, <https://doi.org/10.5195/emaj.2019.161>.

⁴ Imama Zuchroh and Muniroh, "The Corporate Mystic: Integrating Spiritual Values in Modern Management for Enhanced Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Sustainability," *Journal of Economics, Management, and Accounting* 1, no. 2 (2025): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.65310/wetam788>.

Indonesia, studies on pesantren entrepreneurship have generally focused on economic empowerment, creative industries, and institutional self-reliance. Meanwhile, research on Sufism has predominantly emphasized spiritual development and character formation among students. As a result, the integration of Sufism, da'wah psychology, and entrepreneurship within pesantren economic practices remains insufficiently explored.

The limited availability of empirical studies examining the practical integration of Sufism and entrepreneurship constitutes the primary research gap addressed in this study. Existing scholarship tends to treat Sufism as an individual spiritual practice and entrepreneurship as a pragmatic economic activity. However, within the pesantren context, Sufi values not only cultivate personal piety but also shape social behavior and students' work ethics. To date, relatively few studies have examined how Islamic ascetic practices—such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *wirid* (devotional recitations), and the cultivation of sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust in God (*tawakkuh*), patience (*sabr*), and steadfastness (*istiqamah*)—are internalized within entrepreneurial activities through the mechanisms of da'wah psychology. Therefore, research is needed to explain the relationship between Sufi spirituality, character formation, and entrepreneurial behavior in productive economic activities.

Pesantren-based entrepreneurship can essentially be understood as a form of *da'wah bil hal* (preaching through action), whereby Islamic values are conveyed through practical engagement. Economic activities are directed not only toward achieving material gains but also toward fostering character development, social responsibility, and spiritual growth among students. From the perspective of da'wah psychology, entrepreneurial behavior is influenced by the internalization of religious values, spiritual motivation, and personality formation. Da'wah is therefore understood not merely as verbal communication but also as a process of psychological and social transformation that shapes work ethics, discipline, and mental resilience.

Sufism constitutes an important dimension of student character formation because it emphasizes spiritual purification, self-discipline, and moral cultivation.⁵ One of its practical manifestations is Islamic asceticism, which involves spiritual exercises such as *dhikr*, *wirid*, voluntary prayers, and the cultivation of sincerity, trust in God, patience, and steadfastness.⁶ From the perspective of da'wah psychology, Islamic ascetic practices function not only as spiritual rituals but also as mechanisms for emotional regulation, mental strengthening, and self-control in confronting life's challenges. These values are highly relevant to entrepreneurial activities, as they contribute to the development of disciplined, honest, resilient, and ethically oriented entrepreneurs.

The development of aquaculture and independent fish-feed production at Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School in Mojokerto represents a tangible example of the integration of Sufism and entrepreneurship. This pesantren was selected as the research site because of its distinctive approach to combining spiritual development with productive entrepreneurial activities. Beyond serving as a religious educational institution, the pesantren has developed aquaculture initiatives as a means of empowering students economically. These activities provide a practical context for internalizing Sufi values such as sincerity, patience, trust in God, steadfastness, asceticism (*zuhud*), and gratitude (*shukr*) within daily work and business practices.

⁵ Muhlison Muhlison, "Growing Character Through Wisdom of Heart: Implementation of Sufi Education Integration in Student Character Development," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 3 (2025): 653–69, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tjje.v6i3.1906>.

⁶ Richway, Romelah, and M. Nurul Humaidi, "Muhammadiyah Sufism: Building Students' Character and Faith Through Spiritual Education," *JIE: Journal Of Islamic Education* 10, no. 2 (2025): 564–82, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35723/jie.v10i2.363>.

Furthermore, the pesantren maintains a strong tradition of spiritual development through *dhikr*, *wirid*, voluntary prayers, *mujahadah* (spiritual striving), and Islamic studies. This environment provides an appropriate setting for examining the relationship between spiritual practices, psychological motivation, and entrepreneurial behavior. The selection of this research site was also motivated by the existing gap in the literature, as previous studies on pesantren entrepreneurship have largely emphasized economic and managerial dimensions while paying limited attention to the interplay between Sufism, da'wah psychology, and entrepreneurial character formation.

The success of Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School in developing spiritually grounded aquaculture enterprises demonstrates the existence of an empowerment model that integrates religious education, *da'wah bil hal*, and economic self-reliance. Accordingly, this pesantren provides a relevant context for developing the concept of Sufism-based entrepreneurship grounded in da'wah psychology while enriching broader discussions on transformative da'wah and pesantren-based economic empowerment.

Based on this context, the present study proposes an integrative model of Sufism-based entrepreneurship rooted in da'wah psychology to explain the relationship between Islamic asceticism, the internalization of spiritual values, psychological motivation, and entrepreneurial behavior among students. Unlike previous studies, which have predominantly adopted normative and conceptual approaches, this research emphasizes practical dimensions through an empirical examination of the implementation of Sufi values within pesantren aquaculture activities. The study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of scholarship on da'wah psychology and Sufism-based entrepreneurship, while also offering practical insights for developing spiritually grounded models of economic empowerment in pesantren.

Against this background, the central problem addressed in this study concerns how Sufi values internalized through Islamic ascetic practices contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial behavior among students through the psychological mechanisms of da'wah. Specifically, this study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) How are Islamic ascetic practices related to the development of aquaculture activities at Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School? and (2) How do students at Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School practice Islamic asceticism in the process of developing aquaculture enterprises?

Literature Review

1. A Multidisciplinary Approach to Pesantren Studies

Contemporary studies on Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have shifted from predominantly normative-religious perspectives toward multidisciplinary approaches that integrate educational, social, economic, and entrepreneurial dimensions. Pesantren are increasingly understood as socio-economic ecosystems that contribute to the development of social, spiritual, and economic capital within society.⁷

Recent scholarship indicates that pesantren have evolved into entrepreneurial ecosystems through *santripreneurship* models and institution-based economic empowerment initiatives. However, existing studies remain largely dominated by structural-functional perspectives that focus on what pesantren do rather than how internal values shape economic behavior. Consequently, an important epistemological gap persists, as pesantren studies have yet to adequately explain the

⁷ Syamsuri et al., "Five Principles of Pesantren as Social Capital to Overcome the Problems of Economic Business Development at Pesantren," *Society* 11, no. 1 (2023): 173–92, <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v11i1.467>.

internal mechanisms through which spiritual values are transformed into productive economic behavior.

2. From Schumpeterian Innovation to Islamic Entrepreneurship

In classical economic theory, Joseph Schumpeter conceptualized entrepreneurs as agents of innovation who create “new combinations” through processes of creative destruction.^{8,9} Within the framework of Sufism-based entrepreneurship, however, Schumpeter’s concept of creative destruction can be reinterpreted not merely as the replacement of outdated economic structures with innovative ones, but also as a process of inner transformation achieved through *tazkiyat al-nafs* (spiritual purification).

Whereas Schumpeterian innovation is generally viewed as a value-neutral force driving economic change, the Sufi perspective understands transformation as rooted in spiritual purification and character formation. Accordingly, what is “destroyed” is not only obsolete business models or unproductive economic patterns, but also negative personal traits such as laziness, greed, egoism, dependency, and excessive materialism that hinder individual development.

Within this framework, innovation emerges not solely from intellectual creativity but also from spiritual consciousness cultivated through practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *muhasabah* (self-reflection), patience (*sabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and steadfastness (*istiqamah*). Creative destruction thus becomes a process of spiritual renewal that fosters a work ethic characterized by discipline, honesty, responsibility, and commitment to the common good. Business failures are interpreted not merely as economic losses but as opportunities for self-evaluation and spiritual learning that encourage continuous improvement.

This perspective extends Schumpeter’s theory by incorporating moral and spiritual dimensions as fundamental sources of innovation. Innovation is no longer viewed solely as an instrument for achieving competitive advantage and economic gain, but also as a manifestation of *ihsan* (excellence in faith and conduct) and devotion to God. Consequently, entrepreneurship becomes a vehicle not only for economic growth but also for cultivating moral integrity, psychological resilience, and a commitment to divine blessings (*barakah*).

While Schumpeterian entrepreneurship remains largely value-neutral,^{10,11} Islamic entrepreneurship offers an important corrective to modern entrepreneurial paradigms that prioritize material profit. Islamic entrepreneurship places the principle of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) at the center of economic activity, viewing business not only as a means of generating income but also as an act of worship and service to God.

Furthermore, ethical principles such as honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice, and social responsibility constitute essential values in economic activities. These principles foster harmonious relationships between entrepreneurs and society while enhancing trust and long-term sustainability in business. From a spiritual perspective, economic success is measured not merely by financial returns but by the extent to which business activities generate social benefit, public welfare

⁸ Joseph Schumpeter, *The Theory of Economic Development*, The Theory of Economic Development, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003146766>.

⁹ Schumpeter.

¹⁰ Marianne Blom Brodersen, *Ritual, Rapture and Rebellion: The Making of Market, Mercy and Meaning Amongst the Gitanos of El Rastro* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2024).

¹¹ Ahmad Rafiki, Sutan Emir Hidayat, and Alfatih Gessan Pananjung, “Islamic Entrepreneurship Research Since 1990: A Systematic Literature Review,” *IQTISHODUNA: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* 12, no. 148 (2023): 39–56, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54471/iqtishoduna.v12i1.2086>.

(*maslahah*), and positive contributions to society. Entrepreneurship therefore becomes a means of both economic advancement and spiritual development.

Recent studies suggest that Islamic entrepreneurship is grounded not only in profitability but also in *maslahah*, justice, and social responsibility.¹² The synthesis of Schumpeterian innovation and Islamic entrepreneurship thus generates a broader framework in which economic innovation is understood as both a technical and a moral-spiritual endeavor. Within this perspective, innovation is evaluated not only by its capacity to produce new products, services, or markets but also by its ability to promote social welfare, justice, and ethical sustainability.

Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and social responsibility serve as foundational principles of entrepreneurial practice. Entrepreneurs therefore function not only as agents of economic change but also as agents of spiritual transformation who connect creativity, productivity, and devotion to God. This synthesis reinforces the view that sustainable economic development should be accompanied by character formation and ethical advancement.

3. Sufism Spirituality as Capital for Economic Behavioral Transformation

Studies of Sufism within economic contexts generally regard Islamic ascetic practices—such as *dhikr*, *wirid* (devotional recitations), *riyadhah* (spiritual discipline), sincerity, patience, trust in God, and steadfastness—as mechanisms for character formation.¹³ Nevertheless, most studies on spirituality and entrepreneurship remain largely descriptive and have not sufficiently explained how spirituality operates as a transformative system influencing economic behavior in everyday life.

Many studies treat spirituality primarily as a moral value or individual motivation without examining the psychological and social mechanisms through which it shapes economic action. From a critical perspective, Islamic asceticism may be understood as an internal governance system that guides life orientation, regulates material desires, and shapes emotional control in economic activities. Values such as sincerity, trust in God, asceticism (*zuhud*), and steadfastness not only cultivate personal piety but also contribute to more ethical, rational, and sustainable decision-making processes.

In this sense, Sufism can be conceptualized as a form of behavioral infrastructure that influences work culture, social responsibility, discipline, and psychological resilience in entrepreneurial practice. This understanding aligns with the concept of spiritual capital, which refers to non-material resources capable of generating economic, social, and moral value.¹⁴ Within the pesantren context, Sufi values function not merely as instruments of personal piety but also as productive resources that support economic activities. However, existing literature remains limited in explaining how spiritual capital is internalized through educational practices and concrete economic activities within pesantren. Most previous studies have focused on normative and conceptual discussions of Islamic spirituality without thoroughly examining the processes through which spiritual values are transformed into observable economic behavior among students.

¹² Muh. Hanif, Abu Dharin, and Meysia Evralita Hutaauruk, “Management of Social Entrepreneurship in Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools,” *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction* 13, no. 3 (2023): 375–85, <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.1>.

¹³ Kasmuri et al., “‘Abd Al-Qādir Al-Jīlānī’s Sufism: A Spiritual Response to Modern Crises of Meaning,” *Al-A’raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 22, no. 1 (2025): 26–64, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v22i1.11025>.

¹⁴ Nik Mohd Azim Nik Ab Malik, Hairunnizam Wahid, and Mohd Adib Ismail, “The Concept of Spiritual Capital from Islamic Economic Perspective,” *Jurnal Syariah* 30, no. 3 (2023): 323–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22452/syariah.vol30no3.4>.

Yet pesantren serve not only as religious educational institutions but also as spaces for character development, work ethic formation, and entrepreneurship education grounded in spiritual values. Values such as sincerity, trustworthiness, discipline, trust in God, and steadfastness play important roles in shaping ethical economic mindsets oriented toward social welfare. Furthermore, relatively few studies have investigated how the integration of spiritual education and productive economic activities can simultaneously foster student self-reliance and generate entrepreneurship models rooted in Sufi and Islamic moral values.

4. Models of Pesantren Economic Empowerment

Research on pesantren economics has generally employed the framework of social entrepreneurship, which emphasizes economic activities designed to generate social impact.¹⁵ This framework has been widely used to explain economic empowerment initiatives in pesantren through productive sectors such as agriculture, trade, livestock farming, and aquaculture. Social entrepreneurship is often regarded as an effective approach for promoting economic self-reliance by integrating business objectives with social missions.

In practice, pesantren function not only as religious educational institutions but also as community-based centers for economic development. Nevertheless, the social entrepreneurship framework has certain limitations because it is largely derived from secular paradigms. While social value is positioned as the primary objective of economic activity, spirituality is not always treated as the foundational source of entrepreneurial motivation and orientation.

Consequently, economic activities tend to focus on achieving social and material welfare, whereas transcendental dimensions such as divine blessings (*barakah*), sincerity, trust in God, and worship remain peripheral. Recent studies indicate that pesantren possess significant potential to develop models of Islamic social entrepreneurship grounded in the principles of *maqasid al-shariah*, integrating spiritual, social, and economic objectives.¹⁶ However, these approaches have yet to adequately address internal practical dimensions, particularly the ways in which Sufi values shape students' work ethics and entrepreneurial behavior.

For this reason, a reorientation toward spiritual entrepreneurship is needed. Unlike conventional social entrepreneurship models, spiritual entrepreneurship positions spirituality as the core of the production system rather than merely as an ethical complement.

5. Critical Synthesis: Integrating Sufism, Entrepreneurship, and Spiritual Capital

The preceding review identifies three major gaps in the existing literature. First, there is limited understanding of the internal mechanisms through which Sufi values are transformed into economic behavior. Second, entrepreneurship theory—particularly the Schumpeterian tradition—remains largely disconnected from Islamic values and spirituality. Third, the concept of spiritual capital has not been fully integrated into studies of pesantren entrepreneurship.

To address these gaps, this study proposes an integrative framework that connects Sufism as a source of spiritual capital, *da'wah* psychology as a mechanism for value internalization, and

¹⁵ Hafidloh Hafidloh, Ramadania Ramadania, and Titik Rosnani, "The Role of Kyai in Developing Islamic Social Entrepreneurship as an Effort to Achieve SDGs in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Enrichment: Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* 2, no. 10 (2025): 1144–50, <https://doi.org/10.55324/enrichment.v2i10.266>.

¹⁶ Adri and Eli Febriani, "Arah Strategi Manajemen Keuangan Syariah Di Indonesia: Tinjauan Model Teoritis Dan Aplikasi Praktis," *Krigan: Journal of Management and Sharia Business* 3, no. 1 (2025): 32–52, <https://doi.org/10.30983/krigan.v3i1.9359>.

entrepreneurship—drawing from both Schumpeterian and Islamic perspectives—as a system of economic innovation. This synthesis generates a new conceptual framework that views pesantren as a spiritual-economic innovation system in which economic activities produce not only material value but also contribute to the formation of students' spiritual character and social responsibility.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore in depth the implementation of Islamic ascetic values in the entrepreneurial practices of *santri* (Islamic boarding school students). The case study design was informed by Yin's approach to case study research, which emphasizes the holistic examination of real-life contexts, and is consistent with Creswell's perspective that positions the researcher as the primary instrument for interpreting social and religious phenomena. The study was conducted at Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School in Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia, which operates an aquaculture enterprise as part of its economic empowerment activities.

The research was carried out between April and July 2025, encompassing preliminary observations, data collection, data analysis, and verification of findings.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in both the pesantren's spiritual activities and entrepreneurial practices. The selection criteria included; 1) Students actively engaged in aquaculture activities for at least three years; 2) Students who regularly participated in spiritual development programs, including *dhikr*, *wirid*, and the cultivation of Sufi values; 3) Caregivers (*pengasuh*) or religious teachers (*ustaz*) involved in spiritual mentoring and business management; 4) Individuals responsible for managing the pesantren's aquaculture enterprise.

A total of eight informants participated in this study, consisting of two pesantren leaders and six student entrepreneurs. Participant selection was conducted through several stages. First, key actors were identified through preliminary field observations. Second, consultations were held with pesantren leaders to identify students who met the research criteria. Third, participants were selected based on their involvement in both spiritual and economic activities. Finally, additional participants were recruited through snowball sampling to enrich the data and ensure data saturation.

Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques. 1) In-depth interviews with pesantren leaders, students, and business managers; 2) Participant observation of aquaculture activities and daily spiritual practices; 3) Document analysis, including pesantren activity records, business reports, and educational materials related to Sufism; 4) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted to verify and refine emerging findings.

The use of multiple data sources enabled a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between spiritual practices and entrepreneurial behavior within the pesantren context.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis through a multi-stage coding process. First, Open coding was conducted to identify meaningful units from interview transcripts, observational notes, and documentary data. Second, Axial coding was then employed to organize codes into broader categories, including ascetic values, work ethic, psychological motivation, and entrepreneurial practices. Third, Selective coding was subsequently used to develop the core theme of the study, namely the integration of Islamic asceticism and entrepreneurship through the framework of da'wah psychology.

This iterative analytical process facilitated the identification of patterns and relationships among spiritual values, psychological mechanisms, and entrepreneurial behavior.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from students, pesantren leaders, and institutional documents. Second, methodological triangulation was applied by cross-checking findings derived from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. Third, member checking was carried out by sharing preliminary interpretations with participants to verify the accuracy of the researchers' understanding. Finally, an audit trail was maintained through systematic documentation of all research procedures, from data collection to analysis, thereby enhancing transparency and methodological rigor.

Through these procedures, the study sought to generate a comprehensive, in-depth, and trustworthy understanding of the relationship between Islamic asceticism, da'wah psychology, and entrepreneurial behavior among students within the pesantren context.

Results dan Discussion

Results

The qualitative analysis of data obtained from eight informants, consisting of pesantren leaders and student entrepreneurs, generated five major themes illustrating the integration of Sufi values and entrepreneurial practices within the aquaculture program of Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School. The findings indicate that economic activities are not conducted as isolated business endeavors but are embedded within a systematic spiritual framework.

The first theme highlights the role of classical Sufi texts, particularly *Minhajul Abidin* and *Nasboikhul Ibad*, as normative foundations for character formation among students. One participant explained "*These books are not merely studied; they serve as guidance for everyday life and all student activities.*" This finding suggests that Sufi texts function not only as educational materials but also as value systems that shape students' economic orientation and ethical conduct. The internalization of these teachings provides a moral framework that guides entrepreneurial behavior and decision-making.

The second theme concerns the integration of spiritual practices, including *dhikr*, *wirid*, and voluntary prayers, into entrepreneurial activities. A student participant stated: "*We work while remembering God through dhikr, so business activities feel like acts of worship.*" This statement illustrates how productive labor is spiritually framed as worship and devotion to God. Economic activities are therefore not separated from religious life but are understood as expressions of faith and spiritual commitment.

The third theme reveals that Sufi values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), asceticism (*zuhud*), and gratitude (*shukr*) function as psychological resources in entrepreneurial practice. One participant remarked "*When a business fails, we do not become angry; instead, we use it as an opportunity for self-reflection.*" Failure is therefore interpreted not as the termination of economic activity but as part of a broader process of spiritual learning and personal growth. These values contribute to emotional regulation, perseverance, and resilience in business activities.

The fourth theme demonstrates that aquaculture activities serve as a vehicle for character education and work-ethic development. One student explained "*At the fish ponds, we learn patience, discipline, and how not to give up easily.*" This finding indicates that entrepreneurial activities function as experiential learning spaces where practical work and character formation occur simultaneously. Students acquire not only technical skills but also moral and psychological competencies that support entrepreneurial development.

The fifth theme concerns the emergence of spiritual resilience in dealing with business uncertainty and risk. Crop failures and financial losses are commonly interpreted as spiritual tests rather than purely economic setbacks. As one participant noted “*When a harvest fails, we see it as a test from Allah, not the end of the business.*” Such interpretations demonstrate the development of a religious coping mechanism that enables students to maintain motivation and optimism despite economic challenges.

Coding Matrix of Research Findings

Data Verbatim	Open Coding	Axial Coding	Themes
“These books serve as guidance for life.”	Internalization of religious texts	Normative spiritual foundation	Tasawuf as an ethical framework
“We work while performing dhikr.”	Integration of worship & work	Spiritualized economic activity	Religious entrepreneurship practice
“We do not become angry when business fails.”	Reframing failure	Spiritual resilience	Entrepreneurial coping mechanism
“We learn patience at the fish ponds.”	Experiential learning	Character formation	Entrepreneurial character building
“It is a test from Allah.”	Religious interpretation of risk	Spiritual risk management	Islamic entrepreneurial resilience

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the pesantren has developed an entrepreneurial model grounded not only in economic objectives but also in Sufi spirituality. This reflects a systematic integration of religious values and productive economic activities. The use of classical Sufi texts such as *Minhajul Abidin* and *Nasboikhul Ibad* illustrates how Sufism functions as a normative framework for entrepreneurial ethics.¹⁷ In classical Sufi thought, this aligns with the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), which emphasizes spiritual refinement as the foundation of human conduct.¹⁸ Consequently, students’ economic activities are directed not merely toward material gain but also toward the cultivation of spiritual consciousness throughout the entrepreneurial process.

The integration of *dhikr* and business activities further reflects a transformation of work into what may be termed spiritualized labor. Entrepreneurship is understood not solely as an economic activity aimed at generating profit but also as an act of worship and devotion. This finding extends conventional understandings of Islamic entrepreneurship, which have often focused on Islamic business ethics, by highlighting the emergence of Islamic spiritual entrepreneurship. Within this framework, entrepreneurial success encompasses not only economic achievement but also spiritual growth, moral development, and social contribution.

¹⁷ Ahmad Rivauzi et al., “Integration of Sufi Epistemology and Adherence to the Sharia: A Model for Mainstreaming the Moderation of Islamization at Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah, Indonesia,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 24, no. 2 (2025): 311–30, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v24i2.15756>.

¹⁸ Mulyadi, Ismaraidha, and Bahtiar Siregar, “The Concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs (Purification of the Soul) in Al-Ghazali’s Thought and It’s Implications for Character Education,” in *Proceedings of International Conference on Islamic Community Studies*, 2025, 6533–39.

The internalization of Sufi values such as sincerity, patience, and trust in God also demonstrates the formation of spiritual capital.^{19,20} This non-material resource functions as a mechanism for regulating motivation, behavior, and emotional responses in economic activities. The findings support previous arguments that entrepreneurial success is influenced not only by financial resources and technical competencies but also by spiritual resources that strengthen resilience and ethical commitment. Sincerity encourages honesty, patience enhances endurance in the face of challenges, and trust in God provides psychological stability amid uncertainty.

From the perspective of Schumpeterian entrepreneurship theory, entrepreneurs are understood as agents of innovation who create new combinations of resources. However, the present findings suggest that innovation may also emerge from processes of spiritual transformation. In this context, entrepreneurial development is not limited to technological or economic innovation but includes the cultivation of moral and spiritual capacities. Students therefore function not only as economic actors but also as moral-spiritual agents who integrate religious values into productive activities.

The aquaculture program further illustrates the implementation of an experiential entrepreneurship education model. Through direct engagement in fish farming activities, students develop practical entrepreneurial skills while simultaneously cultivating discipline, responsibility, perseverance, and self-control. These findings support experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of learning through direct experience in the development of competencies and character.

Finally, the values of patience and trust in God function as psychological mechanisms that enhance entrepreneurial resilience.^{21,22} Business failures are interpreted as opportunities for spiritual growth rather than merely as economic losses.^{23,24} This perspective enables students to maintain motivation and continue their entrepreneurial efforts despite uncertainty and risk. Accordingly, the pesantren appears to foster a form of religious entrepreneurial resilience, integrating psychological strength and spiritual commitment in navigating entrepreneurial challenges.

Overall, the findings support the proposition that Sufism-based entrepreneurship operates through the interaction of Islamic ascetic practices, spiritual capital, and entrepreneurial learning.²⁵ This interaction generates a distinctive model of entrepreneurial development in which economic

¹⁹ Othman Sqalli Houssaini, "Integrating Spirituality and Politics: Insights from Islam and Christianity on Religiosity and Governance in Contemporary Society," *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies* 17, no. 2 (2024): 235–58, <https://doi.org/10.70908/2232-6022/17.235-258>.

²⁰ Budhy Munawar-rachman et al., "Islamic Ecotheology in Education: Institutional Practice and Contestation at Ma'had Al-Zaytun," *Focus* 7, no. 1 (2026): 23–38, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26593/8hby5d02>.

²¹ Clara Margaça et al., "The Role of Spiritual Mindset and Gender in Small Business Entrepreneurial Success," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13, no. December (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1082578>.

²² Viachaslau Filimonau et al., "Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism in a Time of a Life Event Crisis," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 32, no. 3 (2024): 457–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2022.2091142>.

²³ Adi Permadi, "Exploring islamic psychology concepts in enhancing the learning motivation of entrepreneurship students" 01, no. 05 (2025): 117–27.

²⁴ Ahmad Farid Fanani, Rifat Syauqi Efendi, and Shofiyullah Muzammil, "Tazkiyah Al-Nafs in Al-Ghazali's Thought: A Sufi Framework for Enhancing Mental Resilience among Generation Z," *Tasfiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (2026): 77–116, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiyah.v10i1.4>.

²⁵ Karol Śledzik, "Schumpeter's View on Innovation and Entrepreneurship," *Management Trends in Theory and Practice*, no. April 2013 (2013): 89–94, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2257783>.

productivity, character formation, and spiritual growth reinforce one another.^{26,27} The proposed model contributes to the growing literature on spirituality and entrepreneurship by demonstrating how Sufi values can serve as practical mechanisms for cultivating resilient, ethical, and socially responsible entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

This study concludes that entrepreneurship at the Roudhotul Muttaqin Islamic Boarding School in Mojokerto represents an integration of Sufism values and economic activities, forming a spiritual entrepreneurship based on spiritual capital. The values of sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), steadfastness (*istiqamah*), asceticism (*zuhud*), and gratitude (*shukr*) are internalized through spiritual practices and applied in aquaculture, thereby shaping the students' work ethic, resilience, and social responsibility. Theoretically, this research develops a Sufism Entrepreneurship model that integrates Sufism, the psychology of Da'wah, and entrepreneurship theory. Empirically, the findings demonstrate that Islamic asceticism contributes significantly to the formation of the students' entrepreneurial behavior. The limitation of this study lies in its single case study design, which restricts its broad generalizability. Therefore, comparative studies are needed to corroborate these findings and further develop the model.

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