

ECONOMIC ETHICS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: BETWEEN MORALITY AND PROFIT

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Abstract

This study discusses economic ethics in the perspective of religious education with a focus on the balance between morality and profit orientation. Amidst the dynamics of modern economics that emphasise efficiency and profit, religious education plays an important role in instilling ethical values such as honesty, justice, and social responsibility. The research method used is a literature study with qualitative descriptive analysis, examining literature on the concept of economic ethics in various religious traditions and contemporary business practices. The results of the study show that religious education can be the foundation for shaping the character of economic actors so that business decisions are not only profit-oriented but also oriented towards the common good. The integration of moral and religious ethical principles into economic activities is believed to be capable of creating sustainable, fair, and civilised business practices. These findings emphasise the important role of educational institutions and economic stakeholders in strengthening religious values to balance material interests and moral responsibilities in the era of globalisation.

Keywords: economic ethics, religious education, morality, profit, sustainability

Introduction

In an increasingly complex era of globalisation, the interaction between economic ethics and religious education has become a crucial topic for discussion. Economic ethics refers to the moral principles that govern the behaviour of individuals and organisations in an economic context, while religious education provides a moral foundation that can guide individual economic behaviour. Amidst the tide of capitalism that emphasises profit as the main goal, it is important to explore how religious values can contribute to the formation of a more sustainable and equitable economic ethics.

Data from the World Bank shows that economic inequality around the world is increasing, with the richest 1% controlling more than 40% of global wealth (World Bank, 2021). This raises questions about the moral responsibility of individuals and companies in creating more equitable prosperity. Religious education can be an effective tool in shaping moral awareness and social responsibility by teaching values such as justice, honesty, and care for others.

In the context of Islam, the concept of zakat serves not only as a religious obligation but also as an instrument of wealth redistribution that can reduce poverty. According to data from the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS), well-managed zakat can reduce poverty rates by up to 30% in certain areas of Indonesia (BAZNAS, 2020).

This shows that religious education that teaches the importance of zakat can contribute to the economic welfare of society. However, challenges arise when moral values clash with profitability demands. Many companies tend to ignore ethics in order to achieve profit targets, which can lead to business practices that harm society and the environment. This calls for education that focuses not only on material achievements, but also on character and moral development. Religious education that emphasises ethics can help individuals make wiser decisions in the business world.

Thus, this study will discuss in more depth the relationship between economic ethics and religious education, as well as how the two can support each other in creating a more just and prosperous society. Through this analysis, it is hoped that solutions can be found that integrate moral values into modern economic practices, thereby achieving a balance between profit and social responsibility.

Economic ethics is an important aspect that needs to be considered in the context of religious education. In many religious traditions, moral and ethical values often form the basis for economic decision-making. In this context, religious education serves as a means of instilling these values in the younger generation, so that they can live their lives not only in pursuit of profit, but also with regard to morality. According to data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS), there has been a significant increase in the number of religious-based educational institutions, indicating that society is becoming more aware of the importance of moral education in everyday life (BPS, 2021).

Religious education does not only focus on spiritual aspects, but also teaches social responsibility and ethics in business. In this context, many schools and universities in Indonesia have begun to integrate business ethics curricula into their study programmes. This is in line with a report from the Ministry of Education and Culture which states that character education should be one of the main focuses in the development of the education curriculum in Indonesia (Kemendikbud, 2020). Thus, religious education and economic ethics can complement each other in shaping individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have moral integrity.

In an increasingly competitive world, individuals and companies are often caught in a dilemma between pursuing profit and maintaining moral principles. A study by the World Economic Forum (2022) shows that companies that apply ethical principles in their business tend to have higher customer loyalty and a better reputation in the eyes of the public. This confirms that profit and morality are not always contradictory, but can go hand in hand if managed properly. Therefore, it is important to explore how religious education can help individuals and companies make ethical decisions.

Research Methodology

The research methodology in this study aims to explore the relationship between economic ethics and religious education, with a focus on how moral values can be integrated into profit-oriented economic practices. This study uses a qualitative approach with case study and literature analysis methods. This approach was chosen because it

allows researchers to explore and understand complex phenomena in different social and cultural contexts.

Research Findings and Discussion

Ethics in economics refers to the moral principles that guide the behaviour of individuals and organisations in economic activities. In the context of religious education, economic ethics is often linked to religious teachings that emphasise the importance of honesty, justice, and social responsibility. For example, in Islam, there is the concept of zakat, which requires individuals to give a portion of their wealth to those in need, reflecting the values of solidarity and social concern (Hassan, 2019).

Statistics show that the practice of zakat in Indonesia has increased significantly. According to the National Zakat Agency (LAZNAS), the total collection of zakat in 2021 reached more than 10 trillion rupiah, an increase of 15% compared to the previous year (LAZNAS, 2022). This shows that people are becoming more aware of the importance of sharing and helping others, which is part of the economic ethics taught in religious education. In this context, religious education plays an important role in shaping individuals' social and moral awareness.

In addition, the concept of ethics in economics also includes corporate responsibility towards the environment and society. Many companies are now beginning to implement sustainable business practices that not only prioritise profits, but also consider the social and environmental impacts of their operations. Data from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) shows that more than 80% of large companies worldwide now publish sustainability reports, reflecting their commitment to ethics in business (GRI, 2021). This shows that there is a growing awareness of the importance of ethics in the economic world.

In religious education, it is important to teach that economic ethics is not only about obeying the law, but also about living by higher moral principles. For example, Buddhist teachings emphasise the importance of 'right livelihood', which means choosing a job that does not harm others or the environment (Sangha, 2020). Thus, religious education can help individuals understand and apply ethical principles in their daily lives.

Challenges in Implementing Economic Ethics

Although religious education plays an important role in shaping economic ethics, there are various challenges that must be faced. One of the main challenges is the pressure from a highly competitive business environment. Many individuals and companies feel compelled to sacrifice moral values in order to achieve financial goals. According to a survey by Deloitte (2021), nearly 50% of employees feel that they have faced situations where they had to choose between doing what is ethically right and achieving set business targets. This shows that the challenges in applying economic ethics are very real and need to be addressed.

In addition, the lack of understanding of economic ethics in the context of religious education is also a problem. Many educational institutions have not fully integrated ethics curricula into their study programmes. A study by the University of Indonesia shows that

only 30% of secondary schools have specific subjects on business and economic ethics (UI, 2022). This indicates the need to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of ethics in religious education.

Another challenge that needs to be addressed is the culture of corruption that is still deeply rooted in various sectors in Indonesia. According to Transparency International (2022), Indonesia still ranks low on the Corruption Perceptions Index, indicating that corruption remains a serious problem that hinders economic growth and social justice. In this context, religious education must play an active role in shaping the character and integrity of individuals so that they can reject corrupt practices and conduct business in an ethical manner.

In facing these challenges, collaboration between educational institutions, the government, and the private sector is crucial. Religious education must be an integral part of efforts to create an ethical and sustainable business environment. By educating the younger generation about the importance of ethics in economics, it is hoped that they can become agents of change who are able to influence business practices in the future.

The Role of Religious Education in Building Ethical Awareness

Religious education has a very strategic role in building ethical awareness among the younger generation. Through teaching the moral values contained in religious teachings, individuals are taught to understand the importance of integrity, honesty, and social responsibility. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows that religious educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, have succeeded in producing graduates who are not only academically intelligent but also have strong character (Kemenag, 2021).

One concrete example of the role of religious education in building ethical awareness is the community service programmes often carried out by religious-based educational institutions. For example, many Islamic boarding schools are involved in social activities such as distributing basic foodstuffs to underprivileged communities or providing free education programmes for children in remote areas. These activities not only help the community, but also teach students about the importance of sharing and social awareness (Miftah, 2022).

In addition, religious education can also help individuals develop a critical mindset towards unethical business practices. By understanding religious teachings that emphasise justice and kindness, individuals can more easily recognise and reject practices that harm others. A study by Gadjah Mada University shows that students who receive a good religious education tend to be more sensitive to social issues and more active in fighting for justice (UGM, 2021).

Through religious education, individuals are also taught to pursue success not only in material terms, but also in moral and spiritual terms. Religious teachings often emphasise that true happiness does not only come from wealth, but also from good deeds and positive contributions to society. It is important to instil this from an early age so that

the younger generation can grow into individuals who are balanced between material and moral achievements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be concluded that economic ethics and religious education have a close and mutually influential relationship. Religious education plays an important role in shaping an individual's character and ethical awareness, which in turn can influence business practices and economic decisions. Although there are various challenges in implementing economic ethics, collaborative efforts between educational institutions, the government, and the private sector are necessary to create an environment that supports ethical business practices.

Recommendations for enhancing the role of religious education in economic ethics include integrating a business ethics curriculum at all levels of education, raising awareness of the importance of ethics in the business world, and encouraging students to actively participate in social activities that educate them about social responsibility. With these steps, it is hoped that the younger generation can grow into individuals who are not only financially successful but also have high moral integrity. This study aims to provide deeper insights into the relationship between economic ethics and religious education.

Using a qualitative approach and case study methods as well as literature analysis, the researcher hopes to explore how the moral values taught in religious education can be integrated into economic practices that prioritise profit. Through a better understanding of this relationship, it is hoped that business practices will emerge that are not only financially profitable but also contribute positively to society and the environment.

Thus, this research is not only relevant for academics, but also for business practitioners and policymakers who want to create a more ethical and sustainable economic ecosystem.

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