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## Awakening The Islamic Entrepreneurial Spirit Among Generation Z in Thailand

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### Abstract

*The international community service program was conducted at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School, located in Songkhla Province, Thailand. The implementation involved several stages, starting with problem identification and concluding with the preparation of a report. Activities were carried out in-person in one of the classrooms at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School, with approximately 30 students participating, whose educational level corresponds to that of junior high school. This international community service aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the importance of Islamic entrepreneurship principles and to foster their aspirations to become successful Muslim entrepreneurs. One of the key outcomes observed was the increased interest and knowledge of students in the field of entrepreneurship. Through a series of educational sessions and interactive workshops, students gained a deeper understanding of fundamental business concepts, financial management, and Islamic marketing strategies. The content emphasized entrepreneurial principles aligned with Islamic values, providing students with insights on how to conduct ethical and halal businesses.*

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### Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in driving the economic and social development of a nation. In an era of rapid globalization, the ability to innovate and create business opportunities has become essential in addressing emerging challenges and maintaining competitiveness (Jardim, 2021). Beyond job creation, entrepreneurship fosters economic growth, enhances competitiveness, and accelerates technological advancement (Galindo & Teresa, 2014). Furthermore, an entrepreneurial mindset equips individuals to become more independent, creative, and willing to take calculated risks, all of which are critical qualities for achieving success in both business and everyday life (Edwards-Schachter et al., 2014).

As future economic leaders and contributors, Generation Z faces dynamic and rapidly evolving challenges and opportunities. Entrepreneurship is increasingly important for this generation as it provides a platform to explore creativity and innovation (Gabrielova et al., 2021). With unparalleled access to technology and information, Generation Z holds the potential to devise impactful solutions and capitalize on existing market opportunities (Liñán et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship not only empowers them to build independent careers but also fosters the development of essential skills such as leadership, problem-solving, and adaptability (Anwar et al., 2024).

Hat Yai, located in Songkhla Province, Thailand, serves as one of the most prominent trade and tourism hubs in southern Thailand. With a predominantly Muslim population, Hat Yai represents a vibrant cultural mosaic, reflecting the traditions and values of a strong Muslim community. The presence of mosques, traditional markets, and cultural festivals throughout the year highlights a society deeply rooted in religious and social norms, including those in education. Songserm Sasana Vittaya School is a boarding school in Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, Thailand, offering integrated education from elementary to high school levels. As an Islamic boarding school, it emphasizes both religious education and academic excellence. Additionally, the school equips its students with various skills, including arts, sports, and technology.

Through situational analysis and initial assessments, it was identified that students at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School possess a strong desire to become entrepreneurs. To shape them into globally-minded Muslim entrepreneurs, it is essential to enhance their literacy through education and outreach that emphasizes the entrepreneurial spirit rooted in Islamic principles. In Islam, entrepreneurship transcends worldly success, aiming to achieve prosperity in both this life and the hereafter (Timur et al., 2023). As the second-largest Muslim-majority nation and the third-largest halal industry ecosystem globally, Indonesia has significant potential to transfer knowledge regarding the Islamic entrepreneurial spirit to Muslim students residing in Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, Thailand (Susilowati et al., 2023; Susilowati et al., 2023). This education and outreach initiative was designed as an international community engagement program to enhance the knowledge and entrepreneurial spirit of the students at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School. Through this program, participants are expected to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of Islamic entrepreneurship principles and to develop a stronger aspiration to become successful Muslim entrepreneurs with a global outlook.

## Literature Review

### *The Definition of Islamic Entrepreneurial Spirit*

The concept of the Islamic entrepreneurial spirit is deeply rooted in the principles of Islam, which emphasizes balance between material and spiritual goals. Islamic entrepreneurship integrates the values of tawhid (oneness of God), khilafah (stewardship), and maslahah (benefit for society) as fundamental elements guiding entrepreneurial behavior (Akram Laldin & Furqani, 2013). This distinctive approach positions entrepreneurship not merely as an economic activity but as a form of worship ('ibadah), where individuals contribute to the betterment of society while adhering to Islamic ethical standards (Rhouse, 2013). The entrepreneurial spirit in Islam is underpinned by Quranic verses and Hadith that encourage trade, innovation, and self-reliance. For instance, the Quran highlights the virtues of honesty and fairness in trade (Al-Baqarah: 275) and warns against exploitative practices such as riba (usury) (Al-Imran: 130). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), himself a merchant, set a practical example of ethical entrepreneurship. His emphasis on trustworthiness, transparency, and accountability in business transactions forms the cornerstone of Islamic entrepreneurship (Yasmeen, 2024).

Several studies have identified the core values that shape the Islamic entrepreneurial spirit, emphasizing key principles that guide entrepreneurial behavior within an Islamic

framework. Among these, honesty and integrity stand out as fundamental values, where entrepreneurs are expected to maintain transparency and fairness, ensuring that their actions align with Islamic ethical standards (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). Additionally, social responsibility is a defining characteristic of Islamic entrepreneurship, as it is inherently community-oriented, focusing on creating value for society, alleviating poverty, and promoting justice (Singh & Awasthy, 2024).

Another significant value is risk-taking with reliance on Allah (tawakkul), which highlights the balance between taking calculated risks and placing faith in Allah's provision and guidance. This perspective ensures that entrepreneurs respect ethical boundaries in their endeavors (Vallaster et al., 2019). Lastly, innovation and resilience are essential components of Islamic entrepreneurship, encouraging creative solutions that align with maqasid al-shariah (objectives of Islamic law) to promote societal well-being and sustainability (Abdullah & Azam, 2020). Together, these values create a comprehensive framework that integrates ethics, community focus, and sustainability into entrepreneurial practices.

### *Islamic Entrepreneurial Spirit & Generation Z*

The Islamic entrepreneurial spirit holds profound relevance for Generation Z, a generation marked by their exceptional adaptability to technological advancements, rapid information access, and an inherent openness to innovative solutions (Rafiki & Nasution, 2019). As digital natives, Gen Z is uniquely positioned to leverage modern tools and platforms to address entrepreneurial challenges, making the integration of Islamic principles into their entrepreneurial journey both timely and impactful (Ahmad & Malik, 2023). By aligning their entrepreneurial pursuits with the ethical and moral values of Islam, such as integrity, social responsibility, and the pursuit of barakah (blessings), they can create meaningful and sustainable business solutions (Rauf et al., 2022).

Research underscores that embedding Islamic principles into entrepreneurial education for Generation Z not only enhances their creativity but also fosters a strong foundation of ethical decision-making skills (Anggadwita et al., 2021). This integration encourages them to view entrepreneurship not merely as a means to achieve financial success but as a holistic endeavor that balances material goals with spiritual fulfillment and societal benefit. It instills in them a sense of accountability, both to their communities and to Allah, promoting fairness, transparency, and justice in their business practices (Sahni et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the Islamic entrepreneurial spirit equips Generation Z with the tools to navigate the complexities of a globalized economy without compromising their identity and values (Ahmad & Malik, 2023). In a world increasingly defined by ethical consumerism and corporate accountability, Gen Z entrepreneurs with an Islamic foundation can harness this alignment to build trust with diverse stakeholders while addressing critical global challenges (Sharif, 2016). Their openness to innovation, combined with an ethical framework, allows them to explore emerging fields such as halal technology, sustainable business practices, and Islamic fintech, which have significant potential for growth.

By grounding their entrepreneurial endeavors in Islamic values, Generation Z is not only prepared to face the competitive pressures of the global market but also positioned to lead in creating solutions that prioritize community welfare, environmental stewardship, and spiritual integrity (Nelson et al., 2017). This balance between innovation and tradition ensures that their ventures contribute to a just and equitable economy, embodying the essence of maqasid al-shariah (objectives of Islamic law) (Abdullah & Azam, 2020). In doing so, the Islamic entrepreneurial spirit provides a comprehensive framework that empowers Generation Z to

become change-makers who uphold Islamic values while driving economic and social progress in the modern world.

### Methodology

The Community-Based Research (CBR) method was employed in this community engagement initiative, emphasizing a participatory approach where the community is actively involved throughout the research process. This method focuses on empowering the community by incorporating local knowledge to address social, economic, and environmental issues they face. Within this framework, the practitioners and community members work collaboratively in planning, executing, and interpreting the outcomes of the activities. This collaboration ensures that the community plays a significant role in shaping the research agenda, choosing methodologies, and implementing intervention strategies. Such engagement enhances the study's relevance, sustainability, and overall effectiveness.

The international community engagement program took place at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School in Songkhla Province, Thailand. The program was carried out in stages, starting with problem identification and culminating in the preparation of a detailed report. Activities were conducted face-to-face in one of the classrooms, with participation from approximately 30 students, equivalent to junior high school level. The specific steps of the implementation process are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Stages of Implementation of International Community Service Activities at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School Thailand

No.	Stages	Activities	Method	Parties Involved
1	Preparation	Coordination was carried out between the Islamic Economics Study Programme Team of FEB UNESA, and the teachers and school administrators of Songserm Sasana Vittaya School Thailand related to the implementation of activities	Focus Group Discussion (through online media)	PKM Team of Islamic Economics Study Programme FEB UNESA, Teachers and school administrators of Songserm Sasana Vittaya School Thailand
4	Implementation of socialisation and education	Education and socialisation in the form of material on Islamic entrepreneurship delivered by resource persons to activity participants	Material delivery	PKM Team of Islamic Economics Study Programme FEB UNESA, Teachers and school administrators of Songserm Sasana Vittaya School Thailand
4	Evaluation	Evaluation is carried out after the activity takes place where all parties provide input to each other for activities that will be carried out next year.	Focus Group Discussion (through offline)	PKM Team of Islamic Economics Study Programme FEB UNESA, Teachers and school administrators of Songserm Sasana Vittaya School Thailand

Source: prepared by the author



## Results and Discussion

The community engagement program conducted at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School, Thailand, focusing on enhancing interest in Islamic entrepreneurship, successfully achieved its intended objectives. One of the key outcomes observed was the increased interest and knowledge among students in the field of entrepreneurship. Through a series of educational and interactive sessions, students gained a deeper understanding of fundamental business concepts, financial management, and Islamic marketing strategies. The materials presented emphasized entrepreneurship principles aligned with Islamic values, providing students with insights into running businesses that are both halal and ethical. The students demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm throughout the program, as reflected in their active participation in each session. They showed significant interest in exploring business ideas, with many confidently sharing their concepts in front of the class. This outcome highlights that the program not only enhanced their knowledge but also fostered their confidence to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors.



The support from the school community, including teachers and staff at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School, played a crucial role in the program's success. The supportive environment created a conducive learning atmosphere, enabling students to feel safe to innovate and share ideas. The school also actively facilitated the program, ensuring that students could fully benefit from the learning experience. From a long-term perspective, the increased interest in entrepreneurship among students has the potential to contribute to the development of the local economy in Hat Yai, Thailand. By understanding entrepreneurial principles rooted in Islamic teachings, students are expected to establish businesses that are not only financially viable but also socially beneficial. The integration of religious values into the learning process helps shape socially responsible entrepreneurs, who are committed to creating a positive impact on their communities.



To ensure the sustainability of the positive impact generated by this program, it is crucial for the school and the community to continue providing support and resources. Advanced training and specialized workshops should be prioritized to enable students to apply the knowledge they have acquired effectively. By taking these steps, this community engagement initiative can serve as a catalyst for the youth in Hat Yai to develop entrepreneurial skills and contribute to building a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

The community engagement program conducted at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School, Thailand, aimed to foster interest in Islamic entrepreneurship among students through an integrated approach that combined Islamic value-based education, practical training, and reinforcement of local cultural values. During the program, students were introduced to key concepts of Islamic entrepreneurship, such as the prohibition of *riba* (usury), the application of

profit-sharing systems, and the importance of justice and ethics in business. These concepts were delivered through interactive methods, including business simulations, group discussions, and case studies based on real-world challenges. This approach not only facilitated theoretical understanding but also encouraged students to directly apply Islamic principles in relevant business scenarios. By taking local Thai cultural values into account, the program adopted an approach that respected traditional norms, creating an inclusive and meaningful learning environment for students. The integration of Islamic values with local cultural practices emerged as a key factor in the program's success in introducing Islamic entrepreneurship to a diverse community (Vargas-Hernández et al., 2010).

The outcomes of this program demonstrated significant impact, as students began to show greater interest in Islamic entrepreneurship. Some students expressed a desire to develop small-scale sharia-compliant businesses, while others were inspired to pursue further education in Islamic economics. This positive impact also included an enhanced understanding of how Islamic entrepreneurship can function as both a form of worship and a means of social contribution to their communities. However, the program faced challenges such as limited time, logistical constraints, and varying levels of initial understanding among the students. These challenges were addressed through material adaptations, the development of tailored learning guides, and the flexibility of the program team in adjusting training methods. Furthermore, the program opened up significant opportunities for fostering sustainable collaboration between educational institutions and local communities, both in Thailand and internationally, to strengthen the implementation of Islamic economics. With its potential long-term impact, this initiative not only serves as a replicable model of Islamic-based community empowerment but also highlights how Islamic economics can serve as a vital instrument in sustainable social and economic development. The program inspired the younger generation to view Islamic entrepreneurship as a pathway to achieving both worldly prosperity and spiritual fulfillment, while simultaneously paving the way for expanding the contributions of Islamic economics on a global scale, with deep respect for local wisdom.

## **Conclusion**

The community engagement program conducted at Songserm Sasana Vittaya School, Thailand, successfully enhanced students' interest in Islamic entrepreneurship. Through a series of workshops, seminars, and hands-on practice sessions, participants not only gained theoretical knowledge about entrepreneurship but also acquired practical skills essential for starting a business. The increased enthusiasm and understanding of Islamic entrepreneurial values, such as shariah-based business ethics, were evident in the active participation of the students. The program also fostered awareness of entrepreneurship as a pathway to achieving economic independence and contributing positively to society. Therefore, to ensure the sustainability of the program's positive impact, this study recommends the implementation of advanced training sessions focusing on more specific topics related to Islamic entrepreneurship.

## **Author's Contribution**

First and second author: Creating and designing analyses, Collecting data, and Contributing data or analysis tools; Third and Fourth author: perform analysis; Writing paper. Fifth and Sixth: Editing; Proofread

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### **Declaration of Competing Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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