

The Economic Gap of Muslims: The Challenges of Globalization and Sharia Solutions

Arini Alfa Hidayah¹, Muallif Masyhuri²

¹ Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara

² Institute Agama Islam Negeri Takengon

Article Information	Abstract
<p>Article History: Received : - Accepted : - Published : -</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Economic Gap, Islamic Economy, Globalization, Zakat and Waqf.</i></p>	<p>The economic disparity of Muslims is a crucial issue that is increasingly emerging in the era of globalization. Globalization on the one hand opens up opportunities for market access, investment, and technology for Muslim countries, but on the other hand deepens social inequality and dependence on the capitalistic economic system that is contrary to Islamic values. This research aims to analyze the challenges of globalization on the economy of Muslims and explore solutions based on sharia economics that can be implemented in an applicative and sustainable manner. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with literature study techniques, this study examines various relevant scientific sources to identify the root of the problem and formulate a solution strategy that is in accordance with sharia principles. The results of the study show that the economic inequality of the people is influenced by the weak Islamic financial literacy, the lack of optimal management of zakat and waqf, and the lack of regulatory support and technological innovation in the Islamic economic ecosystem. Instruments such as zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf have great potential as a mechanism for wealth redistribution, while digitalization and integration of sharia technology play a role in expanding financial inclusion. This study recommends the need for synergy between government stakeholders, Islamic financial institutions, educational institutions, and the community as well as strengthening affirmative policies and Islamic economic education to address systemic disparities. This research makes an academic and practical contribution in strengthening the sharia economy as a just, inclusive, and sustainable alternative solution in the midst of globalization challenges.</p>

✉ Correspondence Address:
arinihilda@gmail.com

© 2023 Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought great challenges to the Muslim economy, especially the dependence on the capitalist system and increasing social inequality. However, at the same time, globalization also opens up opportunities to develop sharia-based economic solutions that emphasize justice and equitable distribution of wealth through instruments such as zakat and alms (Daim, 2023).

In Indonesia, the sharia economic system faces challenges due to the dominance of the global economic system with a capitalistic and socialist pattern. The *maslahah mursalah* approach is an important strategy in strengthening the identity of sharia economic law and proving its empirical superiority (Musthofa et al., 2024).

The economic disparity among Muslims is also exacerbated by the lack of consistent standards of Islamic law and differences in interpretations between Muslim countries. For this reason, it is necessary to develop sharia-compliant digital financial products as well as improve institutional efficiency and strengthen the Sharia Supervisory Board (Cahyani et al., 2025).

Innovation in the Islamic economy through the integration of technologies such as sharia fintech and blockchain can increase transparency and access to Islamic financial services. Islamic financial literacy also needs to be improved so that people can understand and access these products effectively (Saadatirrohmi et al., 2024).

Islamic economics can narrow economic disparities through financial inclusion and ethical investment. However, a strong regulatory framework and synergy between Islamic financial institutions and conventional systems are needed so that sharia principles can be implemented effectively in the midst of the global economy (Soraya et al., 2024).

Structural obstacles such as weak regulations, low public literacy, and differences in interpretation of Islamic law have further widened the economic gap of the ummah. Therefore, an inclusive strategy and the development of fair and sustainable sharia economic policies are urgent solutions (Mashudi, 2024).

Islamic economic principles such as justice, solidarity, and sustainability are transformative solutions to social inequality and financial instability. However, resistance from the capitalist system and weak global collaboration are challenges that need to be overcome (Karimullah, 2025).

Sharia economic law provides a strong foundation for sustainable economic development. Instruments such as zakat and alms can support financial inclusion and community empowerment, creating relevant distributive justice amid the challenges of globalization (Julia et al., 2024).

The transformation of the Islamic economy in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 demands the integration of technologies such as AI, big data, and blockchain to increase the efficiency and transparency of the Islamic financial system. Rigid regulations and the lack of technological literacy must be fixed immediately (Syah et al., 2024).

Islamic economics offers an alternative to conventional economics through the principles of social justice, sustainability, and the prohibition of usury. This approach not only addresses economic inequality but also supports environmental protection and social stability as a whole (Gani, 2023).

Although Islamic economics offers comprehensive solutions, the success of its implementation is greatly influenced by institutional and regulatory readiness. In the

Indonesian context, the main obstacles are the weak enforcement of sharia economic law and the lack of optimal synergy between regulators, business actors, and Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, a strategic approach that prioritizes empirical proof of the superiority of the sharia system and cross-sectoral collaboration is needed to strengthen the position of the Islamic economy in the global arena (Musthofa et al., 2024).

The role of zakat and waqf as instruments of wealth distribution is increasingly relevant when faced with the fact that most of the Muslim population is still below the poverty line. Research shows that this mechanism is not only able to improve welfare directly, but also encourages sustainable development if managed professionally and accountably. In the long term, optimizing productive waqf in the education and health sectors can reduce structural gaps that are the root of economic inequality (Karimullah, 2025; Julia et al., 2024).

Digitalization is a strategic opportunity in answering the challenge of limited access to Islamic financial services, especially in remote areas. The use of technologies such as sharia fintech, blockchain, and sharia-compliant digital payment systems can expand financial inclusion and improve the efficiency of the Islamic economic system. However, the adoption of this technology must be balanced with increasing public literacy so as not to create a digital divide that actually creates new inequalities (Saadatirrohmi et al., 2024; Shah et al., 2024).

In the end, strengthening the Islamic economy as a solution to the economic gap of the ummah requires a multidimensional approach that includes the development of regulations, improving the quality of human resources, utilizing technology, and strengthening collective awareness. Islamic economic education that is applicative and contextual needs to be developed to create a generation that is able to manage the economic potential of the ummah in a visionary and ethical manner. With a comprehensive strategy, the sharia economy can be a real alternative in answering the challenges of economic injustice in the era of globalization (Cahyani et al., 2025; Gani, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalization and Its Impact on the Economic Gap of Muslims

Globalization has expanded market and technological access for Muslim countries, but on the other hand it has also deepened social disparities and dependence on capitalistic economic systems that are contrary to Islamic values. Daim (2023) research shows that the capitalist system exacerbates social inequality in Muslim countries, but globalization can also be used to build a fair economic system through sharia instruments such as zakat and infaq. Therefore, globalization needs to be faced with the readiness of a strong and globally competitive Islamic economic system.

The Role of Sharia Instruments in Overcoming Economic Inequality

Sharia instruments such as zakat, waqf, and non-usury financing have been proven to be able to play a role as a mechanism for fair and inclusive wealth distribution. Karimullah (2025) emphasizes that the principles of justice and solidarity in the Islamic economy can be an alternative solution to the global economic crisis and the resulting social inequality. Meanwhile, Julia et al. (2024) highlight the role of zakat and alms in increasing financial

inclusion and community empowerment, making them an important component in sharia-based sustainable economic development.

Technological Innovation and Strengthening the Sharia Economy in the Digital Era

Advances in digital technology open up great opportunities for the development of the Islamic economy, especially in the form of the integration of sharia fintech, blockchain, and fair and transparent digital financial services. Saadatirrohmi et al. (2024) and Syah et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of utilizing technology to expand access to Islamic finance and increase transaction efficiency, but this must be accompanied by increasing digital literacy and Islamic finance in the community. Without capacity building and education, technological innovation can actually widen the digital divide among Muslims.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the dynamics of economic disparities among Muslims in the context of globalization and exploring solutions based on sharia economics that can be applied applicatively. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore socio-economic phenomena contextually, holistically, and interpretively, based on empirical facts and relevant literature reviews. The focus of the research is directed to analyze the relationship between the challenges of globalization and the effectiveness of Islamic economic instruments in responding to economic inequality of the ummah.

The data sources in this study come from secondary data, namely scientific documents such as journal articles, books, research reports, fatwas, and regulations related to the Islamic economy, globalization, and social inequality issues. The data collection technique is carried out through library research or literature studies by systematically reviewing various relevant national and international academic literature. The data collected is then analyzed using content analysis techniques, which aim to identify the main themes, mindsets, and relationships between concepts that emerge from the analyzed data.

In the analysis stage, the researcher conducted data reduction, thematic categorization, and critical interpretation of findings related to the influence of globalization on the economy of Muslims and the implementation of sharia solutions. The validity of the data is maintained by triangulating sources and comparing various references from different perspectives to obtain an objective understanding. The results of this method are expected to provide a complete picture of the challenges and opportunities for Islamic economic development in the midst of globalization and provide policy recommendations that are based on sharia values and relevant to the context of contemporary Muslim society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Economic Gap of Muslims in the Era of Globalization

The economic gap of Muslims is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which is increasingly emerging in the midst of globalization. Globalization opens up opportunities as well as challenges for Muslims to participate in an increasingly integrated world economy. However, data shows that Muslims are still significantly lagging behind, both nationally and

globally. For example, in Indonesia, although the majority of the population is Muslim, the market share of the sharia economy is only around 7-8%, far from the ideal potential that should reach 20% in the next five years. This gap is not only seen in terms of income, but also in access to education, employment, and financial services in accordance with Islamic principles.(Nasikhin, 2018)

Globalization accelerates economic competition dominated by the capitalist system which tends to cause inequality. In the context of Muslims, this inequality becomes more complicated because economic disparities often go hand in hand with ethnic and religious differences, as happens in Indonesia. This poses a high socio-political risk and widens the gap of injustice. In addition, conflicts in several Muslim-majority countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Yemen exacerbate the economic conditions of Muslims regionally, which has an impact on poverty and social instability. Therefore, the challenge of globalization for Muslims is not only economic competition, but also how to overcome structural and historical inequality.(Arzam, 2022)

Islamic economic theory emphasizes the importance of social justice and equitable distribution of wealth as the foundation of economic development. This approach is different from conventional economics which focus more on economic growth without paying attention to the overall social justice aspect. In the context of globalization, the application of Islamic economic principles can be a solution to overcome the gap by balancing economic growth and social welfare. However, the realization of these principles still faces various obstacles, including a lack of understanding and consistent implementation at the policy and community levels.(Syarifuddin & Sahidin, 2021)

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that although the poverty rate in Indonesia is decreasing, economic inequality is increasing, with the Gini Ratio rising from 0.379 to 0.381 in the last six months. This indicates that economic growth has not been able to reach all levels of society fairly, especially Muslims who are the majority in the lower middle segment. This reinforces the argument that the current economic development model is not fully inclusive and requires a new, more equitable approach.(Halif & Bahana, 2025)

The great potential of the sharia economy which includes zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf (Ziswaf) has not been utilized optimally. The potential for zakat in Indonesia, for example, reaches IDR 327 trillion per year, but the realization is still far below this figure. The management of Islamic philanthropic funds that has not been maximized is one of the main causes of the economic gap of Muslims remaining high. The integration of the Islamic economy in the broader national financial system can be the key to reducing disparities and improving the welfare of the people.

The economic disparity of Muslims in the era of globalization is a major challenge that requires a holistic approach. Not only from an economic perspective, but also social and political. Globalization should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the economy of Muslims through synergy between sharia principles and modern innovations. Thus, existing gaps can be reduced and Muslims can play an active role in equitable global economic development.

2. The Challenges of Globalization to the Economy of Muslims

Globalization brings new dynamics in the world economy that affect Muslims significantly. One of the main challenges is the dominance of the capitalist economic system

which is oriented towards the accumulation of capital and profits alone, without regard to aspects of justice and social balance. In this context, the economy of Muslims is often left behind because it has not been able to effectively integrate sharia principles into a highly competitive global economic system. This has caused a widening economic gap between Muslims and other community groups.(Zunaidi et al., 2023)

One of the factors causing this gap is the lack of a strong and integrated sharia economic ecosystem. For example, in Indonesia, the market share of the sharia economy has stagnated at 7-8% over the past three decades, despite the large Muslim population. This shows that the great potential of the Islamic economy has not been optimally exploited, both in terms of regulations, infrastructure, and technological innovation. These limitations make it difficult for the Muslim economy to compete in an increasingly digital and connected global market.

The social and economic inequalities that occur in Muslim-majority countries are also exacerbated by conflict and political instability. Protracted conflicts in the Middle East such as in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen not only cause humanitarian suffering, but also destroy economic infrastructure and hinder development. This condition exacerbates poverty and widens the economic gap among Muslims in the region, thereby strengthening economic marginalization.(Septiani et al., 2022)

In the face of the challenges of globalization, Islamic economics must be able to develop a macro concept that is not only oriented towards economic growth, but also on social balance and equitable distribution of wealth. This approach demands structural reforms that integrate the values of justice and sustainability into economic and financial policies. Thus, Islamic economics can be a more humane and inclusive alternative to conventional economic systems that tend to be exploitative.

Another challenge is the management of zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf funds that are not optimal. This Islamic philanthropic fund has great potential to reduce poverty and inequality, but its management is still far from ideal. The use of digital technology and integration with sharia investment can increase the effectiveness of the distribution of these funds so that it has a wider impact on the welfare of the people.

The role of the government and Islamic financial institutions is crucial in overcoming this globalization challenge. Affirmative policies that support the development of the Islamic economy and protections for small and medium-sized enterprises can help reduce economic disparities. With the right regulatory support, the Islamic economy can grow more inclusive and sustainable, and be able to face the increasingly complex pressures of globalization.

3. Sharia Solutions to Overcome the Economic Gap of Muslims

Sharia solutions offer a comprehensive and sustainable approach to addressing the widening economic gap of Muslims in the era of globalization. The main principles of Islamic economics that emphasize justice, balance, and sustainability are the foundation for inclusive economic development oriented towards shared prosperity. In practice, this solution can be realized through strengthening Islamic financial institutions, optimizing Islamic philanthropic funds, and affirmative policies that support economic equity.(Gusti et al., 2024)

Strengthening Islamic financial institutions, such as Islamic banking and Islamic capital markets, is a strategic step to increase the financial inclusion of Muslims. By

expanding access to sharia-based financing, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can develop and contribute to poverty reduction. In addition, the development of a halal digital ecosystem is also the key to integrating the sharia economy into domestic and global value chains more effectively. This opens up new opportunities for innovation and sharia-based economic growth.

Optimizing the management of zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf (Ziswaf) is also very important. The potential of this fund is huge and can be an effective instrument of wealth distribution to reduce social inequality and improve the welfare of the poor. The use of digital technology and professional management can increase the transparency and efficiency of fund management so that the impact is more felt at the level of society in need. (Kalsum, 2018)

Affirmative policies from the government are also an important solution in overcoming the economic disparity of Muslims. The government needs to make regulations that provide special treatment for small and medium entrepreneurs and strengthen the role of the sharia economy in national development. This includes providing incentives for the development of the sharia economy and ensuring that economic policies not only benefit large groups, but also small and medium-sized communities.

Islamic economic education based on the values of justice and social balance must be strengthened to form the awareness and capacity of Muslims in facing global economic challenges. This education will equip the younger generation with a better understanding of how to manage resources fairly and sustainably. Thus, Islamic economics can be the driving force for equitable and sustainable development. (Azzahra et al., 2019)

Synergy between the government, Islamic financial institutions, and the community is the key to the successful implementation of sharia solutions. This collaboration must be supported by a shared commitment to prioritizing the principles of justice and universal welfare in economic development. If done well, sharia solutions are not only able to overcome the economic gap of Muslims, but also make a positive contribution to human civilization at large.

CONCLUSION

The economic disparity of Muslims is a complex problem that is not only triggered by internal factors such as the weak management of Islamic economic instruments, but also significantly influenced by external challenges in the form of the dominance of the capitalistic economic system in the flow of globalization. This inequality is evident in the aspects of wealth distribution, access to sharia financing, and limited participation of Muslims in the national and global economic systems. Although globalization offers opportunities such as easy access to technology and markets, Muslims still face structural and historical obstacles that hinder the realization of comprehensive economic justice.

In this context, Islamic economics exists as an alternative solution that upholds the principles of justice, balance, and sustainability. Instruments such as zakat, infaq, alms, waqf, and sharia-based financing have proven to have great potential in overcoming poverty and social inequality if managed professionally and supported by regulations that favor sharia values. Technological innovations such as the digitization of zakat, the use of sharia fintech, and the integration of blockchain in the Islamic financial system can be a driver of

increased efficiency and inclusivity. However, this must be accompanied by an increase in sharia economic literacy so as not to create a new digital divide among the people.

The success of the implementation of sharia solutions in responding to the challenges of globalization is highly dependent on synergy between stakeholders—the government, Islamic financial institutions, Islamic educational institutions, and the community. Affirmative policies, institutional strengthening, and contextual Islamic economic education are needed so that Muslims are not only spectators in the global economic arena, but are able to become the main actors of fair and sustainable economic development. With a comprehensive strategic approach, Islamic economics is not only able to answer the economic gap of the ummah, but also makes a positive contribution to a more just world economic order.

REFERENCES

- Amini, S., Tarigan, A. A., Syahriza, R., & Ismail, I. (2024). Homo Islamicus as an agent of socio-economic change: A study in the perspective of Surah An-Nisa. *Journal of Islamic Economics Lariba*, 10(2).
- Arzam, A. (2022). Riba Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur' an Dan Hadis. *Al-Qisthu: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Hukum*, 6(2), 6078. <https://doi.org/10.32694/qst.v6i2.1229>
- Azzahra, F. Y., Astuti, S., & Murbaningrum, T. (n.d.). Konsep Kewirausahaan Dalam Ekonomi Islam. 1(2023), 4051.
- Barus, D. S. (2023). Menggerakkan Kegiatan Produktif Segmen UMKM Berbasis Masjid. *Journal of Global Islamic Economic Studies*, 1(1), 19-26.
- Cahyani, A. L., Erwin, A. M., & Afsar, M. A. (2025). *Peran Al-Qur'an dan Sunnah sebagai Sumber Hukum Ekonomi Syariah. Akhlak*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.61132/akhlak.v2i2.650>
- Daim, D. (2023). *Pandangan Islam dalam Pengembangan Ekonomi di Era Digital*. *Budai Multidisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2(2), 126–131. <https://doi.org/10.30659/budai.2.2.126-131>
- Fadhila, A. F., Wahyuningsih, E., Cili, N., Rinaldi, A., Sulistiyowati, E., Susanti, S. T., Akuntansi, P. S., Ekonomi, F., Surakarta, U. M., Yani, J. A., Kartasura, K., Sukoharjo, K., & Tengah, J. (2025). Prinsip Prinsip Ekonomi Islam dalam Perspetif IPTEKS.
- Gani, A. A. (2023). *Transformation from Conventional Economics to Sharia Economics: A Conceptual Analysis*. *Endless*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.54783/endlessjournal.v6i3.199>
- Gusti, D. R., Novianti, D., & Al Kadzim, M. (2024). Peran Filantropi Islam dalam Mengatasi Kesenjangan Sosial Ekonomi. *NATUJA: Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah*, 3(2), 100. <https://doi.org/10.69552/natuja.v3i2.2407>
- Halif, M., & Bahana, A. (2025). Peran Tafsir Al-Qur ' an dalam Mengatasi Tantangan Proses Ekonomi. 331–342.
- Hrp, F. W., Hasibuan, F. A., Abrar, M. H., Ekonomi, F., Uin, I., & Utara, S. (2025). Tantangan Globalisasi terhadap Penerapan Konsep Falah dalam Ekonomi Islam. 6473. <https://doi.org/10.31332/lifalah.v3i1.1187>

- Hutagalung, S. A. (2024). From Classroom to Ideological Space: The Formation of Radicalism in the Academic Environment. *Pena Justisia: Media Komunikasi dan Kajian Hukum*, 23(3), 873-886.
- Ismail, I., Amini, S., & Misrah, M. (2024). Konsep kredit dalam bingkai pemikiran Zaid bin Ali serta relevansinya di era kontemporer. *AL-Muqayyad*, 7(2), 147-159.
- Ismail, I., Misrah, M., & Soemitra, A. (2022). Bibliometric Analysis of Zakat Development in Indonesia During the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam*, 8(2), 1357-1364.
- Julia, E., Yanti, U. D., & Al Hamdi, I. (2024). *Peran Hukum Ekonomi Syariah dalam Pembangunan Ekonomi Berkelanjutan*. *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen dan Bisnis*. <https://doi.org/10.47233/jemb.v3i2.1915>
- Kalsum, U. (2018). Distribusi Pendapatan dan Kekayaan dalam Ekonomi Islam. Li Falah: *Jurnal Studi Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam*, 3(1), 41.
- Karimullah, S. S. (2025). *Keadilan Ekonomi Islam sebagai Solusi Alternatif bagi Krisis Ekonomi Global*. *Jurnal Riset Hukum, Ekonomi Islam, Ekonomi, Manajemen dan Akuntansi*. <https://doi.org/10.61393/heiema.v4i1.273>
- Mashdurohatun, A. (2011). Tantangan Ekonomi Syariah Dalam Menghadapi Masa Depan Indonesia Di Era Globalisasi. *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum*, 11(Edsus), 282294. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jdh.2011.11.edsus.264>
- Mashudi, Y. (2024). *Complexity of Sharia Economic Problems*. Deleted Journal. <https://doi.org/10.57185/jlarg.v2i7.63>
- Maulidizen, A. (n.d.). Peran dan Tantangan Ekonomi Islam di Era Global. 6178.
- Musthofa, A. Y., Afif, F., & Karimuddin, K. (2024). *Strengthening sharia economic law in Indonesia: Challenges and strategic approaches amidst global economic dominance*. *Muamalah*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.32332/muamalah.v3i1.8521>
- Nasikhin, M. (2018). Pengembangan Ekonomi Berbasis Syariah Di Era Globalisasi (Peluang, Tantangan, Dan Kendala). *Jurnal Manager*, 5567.
- Saadatirrohmi, S. A., Harsono, P., & Bakri, A. A. (2024). *Transformation and Innovation in Islamic Economics: Responding to Challenges in the Digital and Globalization Era*. *Journal of Islamic Economy*, 27(11). <https://doi.org/10.62872/m12p3y52>
- Septiani, A., Fasa, M. I., & Suharto, S. (2022). Mengatasi Dan Menyikapi Kesenjangan Sosial Dengan Menggunakan Penerapan Ekonomi Syariah. *Jurnal Bina Bangsa Ekonomika*, 15(1), 140148. <https://doi.org/10.46306/jbbe.v15i1.130>
- Soraya, S., Windani, S., & Ayu, R. (2024). *Navigating tradition and modernity: Controversies and implications of sharia economics in the global economy*. <https://doi.org/10.35335/t30m6s92>
- Syah, M. I., Piranda, K., & Anes, M. R. (2024). *Sharia Economic Transformation in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0*. Deleted Journal. <https://doi.org/10.61166/rihlah.v1i2.20>
- Syarifuddin, M. S., & Sahidin, A. (2021). Filantropi Islam Menjawab Problem Kesenjangan Ekonomi Umat. *Jurnal Penelitian Medan Agama*, 12(2), 101. <https://doi.org/10.58836/jpma.v12i2.11506>
- Zunaidi, A. ., Humaira, V. A. ., Nabil, N. ., Saputra, G. ., Ismail, I. ., & Murliati, M. (2023). Manajemen Zakat dan Waqaf. 3(2), 4044.