



The Optimal Role of Sharia Economics in Alleviating Social Inequality in Jabodetabek

(Survey Analysis and Structural Model Approach)

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality in Jabodetabek using a structural model approach. Social inequality in the region as measured by the Gini Index shows a significant level of inequality, triggering serious challenges for social justice. Islamic economic principles such as zakat, the prohibition of usury, and Islamic microfinance are considered to have great potential in addressing such inequality. This study uses a quantitative survey method with 1031 respondents from Jabodetabek, and analyzes the relationship between people's understanding, perceptions, and expectations of the role of Islamic economics with a structural equation model (SEM-PLS). The results show that people's understanding and positive perceptions contribute significantly to high expectations of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality, especially through zakat (29.3%) and Islamic microfinance (34.4%). This research provides practical and theoretical contributions by recommending strengthening Islamic financial literacy and optimizing zakat distribution as key strategies to improve social inequality in urban areas. Policy implications and further development recommendations are also presented to support a more effective implementation of Islamic economics.

Keywords: Islamic Economics, Social Gap, Zakat, Islamic Microfinance

1 Introduction

Social inequality is one of the crucial issues faced by many developing countries, including Indonesia, especially in urban areas such as Jabodetabek. The region's high Gini Index, which reached 0.432 in March 2024, reflects the highly unequal distribution of income, with stark differences between the rich and poor (BPS, 2024). This poses a major challenge for inclusive economic development and increases the potential for social instability due to dissatisfaction and feelings of injustice among the population [1]. Therefore, efforts to address social inequality have become increasingly urgent. One approach that has begun to be widely discussed is the application of Islamic

economic principles as a more equitable and sustainable alternative to wealth distribution.

Islamic economics, with its foundation of justice and equality, has great potential to be a solution to economic inequality. The basic principles of Islamic economics such as the prohibition of usury, the obligation of zakat, and the profit-sharing system are designed to create a balance in wealth distribution and promote equitable distribution of wealth [2,3]. Through zakat, for example, the redistribution of wealth from the well-off to the less well-off is expected to significantly reduce economic disparities. These principles make Islamic economics relevant in the context of widening inequalities, especially in urban areas such as Jabodetabek, where economic disparities and access to resources are sharp.

However, although Islamic economics has been applied in various financial sectors, its implementation in reducing social inequality in Indonesia, especially in Jabodetabek, is still not optimal. Many studies show that people's literacy towards Islamic economics is still low, which results in limited participation in utilizing Islamic financial products such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and Islamic microfinance [4,5]. Therefore, a better understanding of people's expectations of the role of the Islamic economy is essential for designing strategies and policies that can increase the effectiveness of the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality [6].

This study aims to analyze the expectations of people in Jabodetabek towards the role of the Islamic economy in overcoming social inequality. This research seeks to answer key questions related to how people's understanding, perceptions and expectations of Islamic financial instruments, such as zakat and Islamic microfinance, affect their views on the effectiveness of the Islamic economy in creating social welfare. The main research question is: "What are the expectations of Jabodetabek society towards the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality?" To answer this question, this research is focused on several key aspects, namely:

1. How do respondents' profiles affect their understanding, perceptions and expectations of the Islamic economy?
2. What are the understanding, perceptions and expectations of the people of Jabodetabek towards Islamic economics?
3. What is the relationship between people's understanding and expectations of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality?
4. What is the public perception of social inequality in Jakarta?
5. What are the specific expectations of the Jabodetabek community towards the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality in Jakarta?

Based on the existing literature, there are many studies that support the potential of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality. A study by Fitriani (2021) shows that zakat and Islamic microfinance have a significant impact in alleviating poverty in urban areas, especially through empowering underprivileged groups [7]. This research is also in line with the study conducted by Alam et al. (2022), which emphasizes the importance of financial inclusion through Islamic microfinance in expanding access to capital for low-income communities [8]. However, some studies also show that the effectiveness of zakat and microfinance is still hampered by the lack of Islamic financial literacy and problems in the management of zakat funds that are not yet optimal [6].

This research is expected to make important contributions in two main aspects. Theoretically, this research provides a better understanding of Jabodetabek people's expectations of the Islamic economy, especially in the context of alleviating social inequality in urban areas. Practically, it provides policy recommendations that can be used by the government and Islamic financial institutions to improve wealth distribution and strengthen existing Islamic economic instruments. Therefore, this research is expected to serve as a foundation for the development of more effective strategies in the implementation of Islamic economics in Indonesia, especially in urban areas that have high levels of social inequality.

2 Literature Review

Islamic economics has become a topic of increasing attention, especially in the context of efforts to address social inequality in various countries, including Indonesia. The basic principles of Islamic economics such as justice, equitable distribution and social welfare are considered as potential solutions to the problems of economic injustice often generated by conventional economic systems [2,3]. One of the main pillars of the Islamic economy is zakat, which directly serves as a wealth redistribution mechanism from the well-off to the less well-off, with the aim of reducing social inequality and empowering the economies of vulnerable communities. Another important principle is the prohibition of usury and the implementation of profit-sharing systems, which are intended to create economic justice and encourage equitable risk sharing in economic activities [3].

In various literatures, zakat and other Islamic financial instruments, such as infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, are often mentioned as the main tools in reducing social inequality. Zakat, for example, is considered effective in improving social welfare due to the direct distribution of wealth to those in need, thus reducing poverty [9]. Research by Imaniyati (2023) shows that zakat has successfully helped low-income communities improve their living standards through the provision of economic assistance that can be used to fulfill basic needs or business capital. However, the effectiveness of zakat is still hampered by several problems, such as suboptimal management and distribution as well as low public literacy about the obligation to pay zakat [6].

Besides zakat, Islamic microfinance is also considered as an instrument that has great potential to address social inequality, especially among people who do not have access to the conventional banking system. Islamic microfinance provides access to capital for low-income people with a system that complies with sharia principles, such as profit sharing and interest-free. The study by Alam et al. (2022) shows that Islamic microfinance has successfully empowered the poor by providing access to capital that was previously difficult to obtain [8]. In addition, Islamic microfinance also encourages entrepreneurship and economic independence among its beneficiaries. However, the study also revealed that limitations in the products and services offered by Islamic microfinance institutions are often an obstacle in increasing broad community participation [10].

Existing literature also shows that one of the main obstacles in the development of the Islamic economy is the low level of Islamic financial literacy among the public. For example, a study by Agus (2023) found that the low level of Islamic financial literacy leads to low public understanding of Islamic financial products, which in turn hinders their participation in utilizing Islamic financial services [11]. This research is in line with the findings by Gustiana et al. (2023), which showed that people with low financial literacy tend to prefer conventional financial products due to a lack of understanding of the advantages of Islamic products [12]. Therefore, improving Islamic financial literacy through public education and campaigns is considered an important step to increase public participation in the Islamic economy and optimize the role of the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality.

Previous research has also highlighted the importance of people's perceptions of the Islamic economy in encouraging their participation in Islamic financial products and services. The study by Schurz et al. (2021) shows that positive perceptions of the Islamic economic system can encourage greater public participation in using Islamic financial products and services [13]. Conversely, negative perceptions or distrust of the system may hinder people's participation. Therefore, building positive perceptions through education and transparency in Islamic financial management is essential to increase public participation. In the Indonesian context, low levels of Islamic financial literacy and less positive perceptions of Islamic financial products often pose challenges to the development of the Islamic economic sector [14].

On the other hand, government policies and regulations also play an important role in supporting the development of the Islamic economy. Several studies show that although the Indonesian government has supported the development of the Islamic economy through various policies, the existing regulations still do not fully support the growth of this sector [15]. For example, support for the development of Islamic financial instruments such as sukuk and waqf is still limited so that the full potential of these instruments cannot be optimized [16]. Therefore, efforts to strengthen regulations and policies that support the Islamic economy need to be increased in order to reduce social inequality more effectively.

Overall, the literature suggests that the Islamic economy has great potential to reduce social inequality, especially through instruments such as zakat and Islamic microfinance. However, to achieve this full potential, greater efforts are needed in improving Islamic financial literacy, building positive public perception, as well as strengthening regulatory support. Based on this literature review, this study aims to further examine Jabodetabek society's expectations of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality and identify the factors that influence the gap between expectations and implementation of Islamic economics.

3 Methodology

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to analyze the expectations of Jabodetabek people towards the role of Islamic economics in reducing

social inequality. The quantitative approach was chosen because it is able to provide an objective and measurable picture of the relationship between the variables under study, including people's understanding, perceptions, and expectations of the Islamic economy. In this study, the **Structural Equation Modeling** (SEM) method based on **Partial Least Squares** (PLS) was used to analyze the relationship between variables simultaneously and test the proposed hypotheses. This method allows researchers to handle complex models with multiple latent variables, and is suitable for data that are not normally distributed and relatively small samples.

3.1 Research Design

This study was designed as a cross-sectional survey, where data was collected from a large number of respondents at one specific time. The cross-sectional design was chosen because it is in line with the research objectives that want to explore the relationship between people's understanding, perceptions, and expectations of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality in Jabodetabek. This survey was conducted to get a representative picture of the Jabodetabek community population. This design also allows researchers to analyze the relationship between variables more effectively in the context of limited time.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study is people who live in the Jabodetabek area, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, where the inclusion criteria included individuals who were over 18 years old and had at least a high school education. This criterion was chosen because individuals with a high school education level are assumed to have a better understanding of Islamic economic concepts compared to those with lower education levels. The total sample used in this study was 1031 respondents, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis using SEM-PLS. With this sample size, the study is expected to achieve sufficient generalizability to represent the overall population of Jabodetabek society.

3.3 Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire consisting of three main sections. The first section included demographic questions, such as age, gender, education level, and monthly income in the Greater Jakarta area. The second section contains questions designed to measure respondents' understanding and perceptions of Islamic economics, including basic principles such as zakat, profit sharing, prohibition of usury, and the differences between Islamic and conventional financial products. The third section contains questions related to respondents' expectations of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality, such as the accessibility of Islamic financial products and the role of Islamic financial institutions in economic empowerment programs.

Variable measurement uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to capture the respondent's level of agreement or disagreement with the statements presented. This scale was chosen as it allows respondents to provide responses with a finer degree of distinction and allows for more detailed statistical analysis [17]. Prior to use, the questionnaire was pilot tested on a small sample to ensure clarity of instructions and content validity of the instrument.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted during July 2024. The questionnaire was distributed online through social media and email to respondents who fit the inclusion criteria, as well as offline in several public places in the Greater Jakarta area. This data collection strategy was designed to reach a wider population, both demographically and geographically. The use of a combination of online and offline methods is expected to reduce bias that may arise due to limited access to technology in some community groups. Data collection was conducted over a period of 4 weeks to ensure an adequate number of respondents.

3.5 Validity and Reliability Test

Prior to analysis, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was carried out using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while the reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The validity test results show that the AVE values for all constructs are above 0.5, which indicates adequate convergent validity. Meanwhile, the Cronbach's Alpha value for all variables is above 0.7, which indicates that the instruments used have good reliability.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data that has been collected is analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the help of Smart-PLS software version 3. SEM was chosen because it is able to handle complex relationships between latent variables, and allows testing several hypotheses simultaneously. PLS-based SEM is suitable for this study because the data collected is not normally distributed, and allows researchers to work with relatively small sample sizes compared to covariance-based SEM methods.

The data analysis process was conducted in two main stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated to ensure that the constructs used in this study were valid and reliable. Testing includes measuring convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. The second stage is the evaluation of the structural model, in which the hypotheses proposed in this study are tested. Path coefficients are used to test the relationship between latent variables, with the hypothesis considered accepted if the p value is <0.05 .

3.7 Research Hypothesis

Based on the literature review and the developed conceptual framework, this study tests several hypotheses as follows:

- H1:** There is a positive influence between respondents' profiles (age, education level, income) and their understanding of Islamic economics.
- H2:** There is a positive influence between people's understanding of Islamic economics on their perception of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality.
- H3:** There is a positive influence between people's perceptions of the Islamic economy on expectations of the effectiveness of the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality.

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

In this section, the research results are presented in several stages of analysis, which include demographic descriptions of respondents, descriptive analysis of research variables, and structural model analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). Each stage of this analysis aims to provide a clear picture of the characteristics of the respondents, as well as the relationship between the variables studied, namely understanding, perceptions, and expectations of the community towards the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The sample consisted of 1031 respondents spread across the Greater Jakarta area. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1, which includes information on gender, age, education level, and monthly income. The majority of respondents were female (59.3%), with the largest age group being in the 18-25 years range (66.7%). Most respondents had at least a bachelor's degree (SMA) (63%), and an average monthly income of less than Rp5 million (61.8%).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	420	40.7
Female	611	59.3
Age		
18-25 years old	688	66.7
26-35 years old	157	15.2
36-45 years old	107	10.4
46-55 years old	74	7.2
> 55 years old	5	0.5

Education		
High school	650	63
Diploma	57	5.5
Bachelor	284	27.5
Master	35	3.4
Doctorate	5	0.5
Monthly Income		
< IDR 5 million	637	61.8
IDR 5-10 million	245	23.8
IDR 10-29 million	89	8.6
IDR 20-50 million	37	3.6
> IDR 50 million	23	2.2

Source: Primary data processed

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

This study measures three main variables: people's understanding, perceptions and expectations of the Islamic economy. Each variable was measured using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Descriptive analysis shows that in general, respondents have a fairly good understanding of Islamic economics, with an average score of 3.14. Respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality were also quite positive, with an average score of 3.02. However, people's expectations of the role of Islamic economics in addressing social inequality are slightly higher, with an average score of 3.3. (See Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Variables	Average	Standard Deviation
Understanding of Islamic Economics	3,14	0,64
Perception of Islamic Economics	3.02	0,65
Expectations for Islamic Economics	3.30	0,57

Source: Primary data processed

Measurement Model test

Evaluation of the measurement model is carried out to ensure that the constructs used in this study are valid and reliable. The convergent validity test shows that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all variables is above the 0.5 threshold, which indicates good convergent validity. In addition, the reliability test shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value for all variables exceeds the 0.7 threshold, which indicates that the instrument used has good reliability. The Composite Reliability (CR) value is also above 0.7, which further strengthens these results. (See Table 3).

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variables	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
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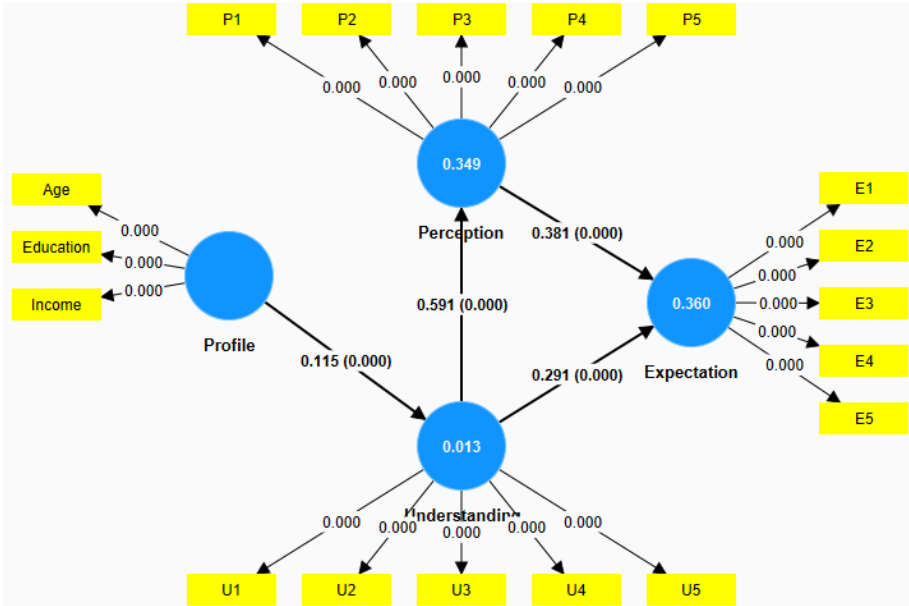
Understanding of Islamic Economics	0,57	0,81	0,87
Perception of Islamic Economics	0,53	0,78	0,85
Expectations for Islamic Economics	0,64	0,86	0,89

Source: Primary data processed

Structural Model Test

The structural model test was conducted to test the relationship between the variables under study. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1. Overall Path Diagram



Source: Primary Data

The results of the analysis show that people's understanding of Islamic economics has a positive and significant effect on their perceptions of the effectiveness of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality (path coefficient = 0.59, $p < 0.001$). In addition, people's perceptions of the Islamic economy also have a positive and significant effect on their expectations about the role of the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality (path coefficient = 0.38, $p < 0.001$). The direct effect of understanding on expectations is significant (path coefficient = 0.29, $p < 0.001$). (See Table 4).

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	p-value	Results
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H1: Profile → Understanding		< 0,00	Accepted
H2: Understanding → Perception	0,59	< 0,00	Accepted
H3: Perception → Expectation	0,38	< 0,00	Accepted
H4: Understanding → Expectation	0.29	< 0,00	Accepted

Source: Primary data processed

Poepole's Perceptions of Social Inequality in Jakarta

This study examines public perceptions of social inequality in Jakarta through a survey involving 1,031 respondents. Descriptive analysis was conducted on two main indicators, namely the level of social inequality and aspects that reflect the gap.

1. Level of Social Inequality in Jakarta

The survey results show that the majority of respondents perceive the level of social inequality in Jakarta to be at an alarming level. A total of 49.2% of respondents rated the level of social inequality in Jakarta as "high", while 24.7% considered it "very high". Cumulatively, 73.9% of respondents believe that social inequality in Jakarta is at a significant level. (See Table 5).

Table 5. Perceptions of Social Inequality in Jakarta

Statement	Very High	High	Medium	Low
	Frequency (%)			
The current level of social inequality in Jakarta	255 (24.7)	507 (49.2)	217 (21.0)	52 (5)

Source: Primary data processed

Meanwhile, 21.0% of respondents rated the level of social inequality in Jakarta as "medium", and only 5.0% considered it "low". This data indicates a strong consensus among respondents that social inequality is a substantial issue in Jakarta.

2. Aspects of Social Inequality in Jakarta

The research also identified respondents' perceptions of the aspects that most reflect social inequality in Jakarta. Income differences: 33.5% of respondents considered this to be the main aspect of social inequality. Access to decent work: 20.7% of respondents highlighted this aspect. Living conditions: 20.3% of respondents viewed this as a significant indicator. Access to education: 14.5% of respondents emphasized this aspect. Access to health services: 11.1% of respondents identified this aspect. (See Table 6).

Table 6. Aspects Reflecting Social Inequality in Jakarta

Statement	Frequency (%)
Income difference	345(33.5)

Access to decent work	213 (20.7)
Living conditions	209 (20.3)
Access to education	150 (14.5)
Access to health services	114 (11.1)

Source: Primary data processed

Specific Expectations of the Jabodetabek Community Toward Sharia Economics in Reducing Social Inequality in Jakarta

This study examines people's expectations of the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality in Jakarta. Descriptive analysis was conducted on three main aspects: potential Islamic economic instruments, the role of Islamic financial institutions, and challenges in implementation.

1. Potential Islamic Economic Instruments

The survey results show variations in respondents' perceptions of the Islamic economic instruments that have the most potential to reduce social inequality. (See Table 7).

Table 7. Sharia Economic Instruments

Statement	Frequency (%)	Cumulative (%)
Islamic microfinance	355 (34.4)	34.4
Zakat	302 (29.3)	63.7
Sukuk (Sharia Bonds) for infrastructure	175 (17.0)	80.7
Sharia Micro Insurance	177 (11.3)	92.0
Waqf	82 (8)	100
Total	1031 (100)	100

Source: Primary data processed

Islamic microfinance: 34.4% of respondents chose this instrument, showing confidence in the role of financing in empowering the community's economy. Zakat: 29.3% of respondents believe in the effectiveness of zakat, reflecting hope for the Islamic system of wealth redistribution. Sukuk (Islamic bonds) for infrastructure development: 17.0% of respondents chose this instrument, indicating awareness of the importance of infrastructure development. Islamic microinsurance: 11.3% of respondents chose this option, indicating concern for risk management for low-income people. Waqf: 8.0% of respondents chose this instrument, indicating the potential of waqf that still needs to be optimized.

2. Role of Islamic Financial Institutions

Respondents identified several key roles of Islamic financial institutions in reducing social inequality. (See Table 8).

Table 8. Role of Islamic Financial Institutions

Statement	Frequency (%)	Cumulative (%)
Providing easy financing for MSMEs	234 (22.7)	22.7
Collaborate with the government on poverty alleviation programs	133 (12.9)	35.6
Optimizing zakat collection and distribution	93 (9.0)	44.6
Support education and skills training programs	85 (8.2)	52.9
Providing easy financing for MSMEs, Optimizing zakat collection and distribution, Offering affordable investment products for all, Supporting education and skills training programs, Collaborating with the government in poverty alleviation programs.	66 (6.4)	59.3
Offering affordable investment products for all	55 (5.3)	64.6

Source: Primary data processed

Providing easy financing for MSMEs: 22.7% of respondents emphasized this role, indicating a focus on empowering the MSME sector. Collaborating with the government in poverty alleviation programs: 12.9% of respondents chose this option, reflecting the hope for synergy between Islamic financial institutions and the government. Optimizing zakat collection and distribution: 9.0% of respondents emphasized this role, indicating the unutilized potential of zakat. Supporting education and skills training programs: 8.2% of respondents chose this option, indicating the importance of human resource development. Offering affordable investment products for all: 5.3% of respondents emphasized this role, reflecting the need for democratization of investment.

3. Challenges in Optimizing the Role of Islamic Economics

Respondents identified several key challenges. Lack of public understanding: 44.2% of respondents highlighted this issue, indicating the need for more intensive education and socialization. (See Table 9).

Table 9: Optimizing the role of Islamic economics

Statement	Frequency (%)
Lack of community understanding	456 (44.2)
Limited products and services that meet the needs	229 (22.2)
Regulations that do not yet support	164 (15.9)
Lack of synergy between related institutions	134 (13.0)
Inadequate infrastructure	84 (4.7)

Source: Primary data processed

Limited customizable products and services: 22.2% of respondents identified this challenge, indicating the need for product innovation. Unsupportive regulations: 15.9% of respondents emphasized this issue, reflecting the need for stronger regulatory support. Lack of synergy between relevant institutions: 13.0% of respondents highlighted this challenge, indicating the importance of collaboration and coordination. Inadequate infrastructure: 4.7% of respondents identified this issue, indicating the need for supporting infrastructure development.

4.2 Discussion

The results of this study confirm that Islamic economics has significant potential in reducing social inequality, especially in urban areas such as Jabodetabek. In general, this study successfully shows that people's understanding of Islamic economic principles, such as zakat, Islamic microfinance, and the prohibition of usury, contribute significantly to people's positive perception of the role of Islamic economics in reducing economic inequality. This finding is consistent with previous literature that emphasizes that Islamic economics, through its instruments, can promote a fairer distribution of wealth and reduce social inequality [2,6].

Respondent Profile

Gender. Based on the demographic characteristics table, the majority of respondents are female, with 611 respondents (59.3%), while male respondents total 420 (40.7%). This indicates a significant disparity in the proportion of male and female respondents, with females dominating the respondent group.

Age. Most respondents fall within the 18-25 age group, comprising 688 respondents (66.7%), followed by the 26-35 age group with 157 respondents (15.2%). The 36-45 age group accounts for 107 respondents (10.4%), while the 46-55 age group and those

older than 55 represent only a small portion, with 74 respondents (7.2%) and 5 respondents (0.5%), respectively. These data show that the majority of respondents are young, predominantly between 18-25 years old.

Education. In terms of educational attainment, most respondents have completed high school, with 650 respondents (63%), followed by those with a Bachelor's degree totaling 284 respondents (27.5%). Respondents with a Diploma (D3) account for 57 individuals (5.5%), while 35 respondents (3.4%) have a Master's degree, and only 5 respondents (0.5%) hold a Doctorate. This suggests that the majority of respondents possess either a high school education or an undergraduate degree.

Monthly Income. The majority of respondents have a monthly income of less than IDR 5 million, with 637 respondents (61.8%). Those earning between Rp 5-10 million rank second, with 245 respondents (23.8%). Only a small portion of respondents earn between Rp 10-20 million (89 respondents, 8.6%), Rp 20-50 million (37 respondents, 3.6%), and more than Rp 50 million (23 respondents, 2.2%). These data indicate that most respondents fall into the lower-middle income category, earning less than Rp 5 million per month.

Analysis of Understanding, Perception, and Expectation of Jabodetabek Community towards Sharia Economy

The Role of Understanding Islamic Economics

The assertion that an improved understanding of Islamic economics positively influences public perception regarding its effectiveness in addressing social inequality is well-supported by numerous studies in the fields of Islamic finance and economics. Research consistently demonstrates that Islamic economic literacy is a crucial factor in increasing public engagement with Islamic financial systems. For instance, studies indicate that individuals with higher levels of financial literacy are more likely to comprehend the benefits of Islamic economic instruments such as zakat and Islamic microfinance, both of which are essential for wealth redistribution and poverty alleviation [3,14].

Furthermore, the educational aspect of Islamic economics plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions. Educational initiatives that raise awareness and improve understanding of Islamic economic principles can foster a more positive view of Islamic financial systems, subsequently encouraging broader participation in Islamic financial products and services [18]. This aligns with Alhammadi's findings, which stress that the primary objective of Islamic economics is to promote social justice and reduce economic disparities, achievable through enhanced public understanding and participation in Islamic financial practices [3].

Rijal's bibliometric analysis further corroborates the significance of Islamic financial literacy in promoting public engagement, emphasizing the potential of Islamic economic frameworks to effectively address socio-economic challenges [14]. This is especially relevant in regions where educational initiatives are lacking, as increasing financial literacy in underprivileged areas can lead to higher participation in Islamic financial systems, contributing to poverty alleviation and wealth redistribution [19].

Public Perception of Islamic Economics

The assertion that public perception of Islamic economics significantly influences expectations regarding its role in reducing social inequality is strongly supported by existing literature. Research indicates that public perception is a key determinant shaping individuals' expectations of Islamic economics, particularly its effectiveness in addressing economic disparities. Studies have shown that positive perceptions of Islamic finance can lead to increased participation in Islamic financial products and services, thereby strengthening the role of these systems in promoting social equity [20,21].

The findings of Widiastuti et al. (2021) underscore the importance of public perception regarding the fairness and effectiveness of the Islamic economic system as a critical motivator for individuals to engage with Islamic financial practices [21]. This aligns with broader financial decision-making literature, which suggests that individuals who perceive Islamic finance as fair and effective are more likely to participate in Islamic financial systems. Such engagement is crucial for addressing social inequality, as participation in these systems helps redistribute wealth and provide financial inclusion [22].

Various factors influence public perception, including education level, income, and prior experience with Islamic financial products. Research shows that individuals with higher education levels tend to have more favorable perceptions of Islamic economics compared to those with lower educational attainment [23]. This highlights the moderating effect of education on the relationship between understanding and perception, indicating that educational initiatives can significantly enhance public understanding and positively influence perceptions of Islamic economics [24].

Improving Islamic financial literacy plays a crucial role in fostering positive public perceptions. Educational programs and awareness campaigns are essential for increasing understanding of Islamic economic principles and their impact on social inequality [25,26]. For instance, Suseno et al. emphasize the importance of targeted educational strategies to improve public knowledge of Islamic financial products, particularly for individuals with lower levels of education [20]. By enhancing financial literacy, stakeholders can empower the public to make informed decisions, increasing their engagement with Islamic financial systems.

The role of government and Islamic financial institutions in promoting financial literacy is also vital. Collaborative efforts between these entities can help cultivate a culture of financial literacy, encouraging public participation in Islamic finance [27,28]. This is especially important in regions with limited educational resources, where improving financial literacy can raise awareness and utilization of Islamic financial products [29].

The interaction between public perception, education, and Islamic financial literacy is critical in shaping expectations of Islamic economics' role in reducing social inequality. Evidence suggests that targeted educational initiatives aimed at improving public understanding of Islamic economics can significantly enhance perceptions and encourage broader participation in Islamic financial practices. Therefore, it is essential for stakeholders to prioritize financial literacy programs that cater to diverse

educational backgrounds, fostering a more inclusive and equitable financial landscape [30].

People's Expectations of the Role of Islamic Economics

The assertion that public expectations of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality are notably high, particularly within the Jabodetabek community, is supported by various studies that highlight the community's hope for Islamic economics to serve as an effective solution to income inequality and social welfare improvement. Research indicates that there is a strong belief among the public regarding the potential of Islamic economic instruments, such as zakat and Islamic microfinance, to empower economically disadvantaged groups and enhance financial inclusion [31].

The findings of Sunarya and Rusydiana emphasize that zakat and Islamic microfinance have significant potential to address financial exclusion and empower marginalized communities [31]. This aligns with the broader literature that recognizes the critical role of these instruments in promoting social welfare and reducing economic disparities. The expectation that Islamic economics can effectively tackle issues of income inequality is particularly relevant in the context of Indonesia, where the community's aspirations reflect a desire for equitable economic solutions.

However, the study also reveals a gap between public expectations and the actual implementation of Islamic economic principles. Despite the high hopes for the role of Islamic economics, challenges persist in the effective management and distribution of zakat and Islamic microfinance. Research has shown that the effectiveness of zakat in alleviating poverty is often hindered by issues related to inefficient distribution and management practices. This discrepancy highlights the need for improved operational frameworks and better access to sharia-compliant financial products to meet public expectations [32].

Moreover, the literature underscores the importance of addressing these challenges to bridge the gap between public expectations and the realities of Islamic economic practices. For instance, Soemitra discusses the necessity of aligning Islamic economic principles with contemporary economic needs to enhance their effectiveness and public trust [32]. Similarly, the work of Furqani and Echchabi illustrates the potential of Islamic economic frameworks to empower individuals, provided that the implementation is managed effectively and inclusively [33].

While public expectations of Islamic economics in addressing social inequality are high, the realization of these expectations is contingent upon overcoming existing challenges in the implementation of Islamic economic instruments. The community's aspirations for zakat and Islamic microfinance to serve as tools for economic empowerment highlight the critical need for effective management and accessibility of these resources. Therefore, stakeholders must prioritize enhancing the operational efficiency of Islamic economic practices to fulfill public expectations and contribute meaningfully to social welfare [34].

Analysis of the Relationship between Understanding and Public Perceptions of the Expected Role of Islamic Economics

The analysis of the complex dynamics between people's understanding, perceptions, and expectations of Islamic economics reveals a significant positive relationship among these constructs. Understanding Islamic economics plays a pivotal role in influencing both perceptions and expectations regarding its effectiveness in addressing social inequality. This conclusion aligns with existing literature, which underscores the importance of public literacy in shaping perceptions and expectations of Islamic economic systems [32,35].

The implications of these findings are particularly important for policymakers and stakeholders engaged in the development of Islamic economics. First and foremost, improving public literacy and understanding of Islamic economic principles should be prioritized. A structured educational program can enhance public comprehension of the mechanisms and benefits of Islamic economics, thereby fostering more positive perceptions and setting realistic expectations [36,37]. Educational initiatives of this nature would empower individuals to engage more effectively with Islamic financial products and services, contributing to the broader adoption of Islamic economic practices.

Second, shaping positive perceptions through demonstrable benefits of Islamic economics is essential. Implementing visible and measurable programs that clearly showcase the effectiveness of Islamic economic instruments—such as zakat and Islamic microfinance—can significantly influence public expectations. In addition, effective communication strategies that highlight successful case studies and the positive impact of Islamic economics on social welfare can enhance public trust and engagement [38].

Moreover, it is crucial to align public expectations with the actual capacity and potential of the Islamic economy. While increased understanding and positive perceptions may elevate expectations, ensuring that these expectations remain realistic and achievable is vital. This alignment prevents potential public disappointment and disillusionment regarding the effectiveness of Islamic economic practices [39].

Further research is needed to explore external factors that may moderate the relationship between understanding, perceptions, and expectations. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into how specific interventions aimed at improving understanding and shaping perceptions influence the evolution of public expectations over time. Additionally, such research could examine how public sentiment towards Islamic economic practices shifts in response to changing socio-economic conditions.

Analysis of Public Perceptions of Social Inequality in Jakarta

The analysis of social inequality in Jakarta reveals that economic inequality, particularly in terms of income disparity and access to employment, is perceived as the most prominent manifestation of social inequality. This finding is consistent with various studies that emphasize the multidimensional nature of social inequality, which extends beyond economic factors to include non-economic aspects such as living conditions, access to education, and health services [35,40]. The descriptive analysis

shows a strong perception among respondents in Jakarta, with a significant majority (73.9%) rating the level of social inequality as high or very high, highlighting the urgent need to address this critical issue [41,42].

The recognition of social inequality as a pressing concern aligns with the literature that underscores the importance of addressing both economic and non-economic indicators to develop a holistic understanding of social disparities. For example, research demonstrates that living conditions, educational opportunities, and healthcare access are key components contributing to the public's perception of social inequality [43]. This multidimensional view is crucial for formulating effective policies aimed at reducing social inequality, especially in urban settings like Jakarta.

The implications of these findings suggest that a comprehensive approach is required to tackle social inequality in Jakarta. Policies should not only focus on promoting income equality and job creation but also prioritize improving access to education, healthcare services, and better living conditions [44]. Such a multifaceted strategy is essential for addressing the root causes of inequality and ensuring that all segments of society benefit from economic growth and development.

Moreover, the study highlights the need for further research to explore the underlying factors that contribute to the high perception of social inequality. Understanding these factors will inform the development of effective strategies to bridge the gaps in social equity. Comparative studies with other major cities in Indonesia or internationally could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of social inequality and the effectiveness of various interventions [3].

Analysis Specific expectations of the Jabodetabek community on the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality in Jakarta

The descriptive analysis indicating significant expectations of the Islamic economy's role in reducing social inequality in Jakarta highlights the perceived potential of Islamic microfinance and zakat as key instruments for financial access and wealth redistribution. This perspective is supported by numerous studies emphasizing the importance of these tools in addressing social disparities within the framework of Islamic economics [45,46].

Islamic financial institutions are expected to play a multifaceted role, particularly in empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), collaborating with government entities, and optimizing zakat distribution. This broader expectation reflects a holistic approach to mitigating social inequality, as research underscores the potential of zakat and Islamic microfinance to enhance financial inclusion and support economic empowerment [47,48].

However, the analysis also identifies several challenges that hinder the effectiveness of these instruments. Public understanding of Islamic financial products, the suitability of these products to local needs, and the adequacy of regulatory support are critical barriers that must be addressed to realize the full potential of Islamic finance. The findings suggest that improving public education, fostering product innovation, and strengthening the regulatory framework are essential steps for optimizing the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality [49].

The implications of this study highlight the necessity of a comprehensive strategy involving various stakeholders, including government agencies, financial institutions, and community organizations, to leverage the potential of the Islamic economy in addressing social disparities. This strategy should prioritize public education initiatives, develop tailored financial products that meet local needs, and strengthen synergies between institutions to create a more inclusive economic environment [50].

Further research is needed to explore the specific effectiveness of various Islamic economic instruments within Jakarta's context. Identifying successful implementation models from other regions could offer valuable insights for enhancing the impact of Islamic economics on social inequality. Comparative studies with conventional economic systems could also yield important lessons to inform future strategies [51,52].

Policy Implications

Based on the findings of this study, several policy implications can be considered to enhance the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality. First, there is a need for the government and Islamic financial institutions to strengthen Islamic financial literacy programs to ensure that the public has adequate understanding of Islamic financial products and services. This can be achieved through public awareness campaigns and educational programs focused on improving Islamic financial literacy, particularly among communities with lower educational attainment.

Second, improvements in the management and distribution of zakat are essential to ensure it reaches the targeted beneficiaries more effectively. The government and zakat management institutions should enhance transparency and accountability in zakat fund management to ensure that zakat is distributed efficiently and reaches those in need.

Third, there is a need for the development of more inclusive Islamic financial products that are easily accessible to the broader population. For example, Islamic microfinance could be expanded by offering more flexible and affordable products to low-income groups. Additionally, the government could provide incentives to Islamic financial institutions to expand their product offerings and increase public access to Islamic financial services.

By addressing these areas, Islamic economics can play a more substantial role in reducing social inequality and contributing to broader economic empowerment.

Research Limitations

While this study provides significant contributions to the literature on the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality, several limitations should be noted. First, the study employs a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to capture changes in public perceptions and expectations over time. Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to examine how public perceptions of Islamic economics evolve over a longer period.

Second, this study is limited to the Jabodetabek region, and as such, its findings may not be generalizable to other areas in Indonesia. Future research could expand to include

other regions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of public perceptions and expectations regarding Islamic economics across different contexts.

5 Conclusion

The study concludes that people's understanding and perceptions play an important role in shaping their expectations of the role of the Islamic economy in reducing social inequality. Demographic factors, such as education level and income, have a significant effect on people's understanding of Islamic economics. To increase the effectiveness of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality, efforts are needed to increase Islamic financial literacy, improve the management of zakat and Islamic microfinance, and strengthen regulations that support Islamic economics in Indonesia.

Three concrete recommendations to optimize the role of Islamic economics in reducing social inequality in the Jabodetabek region:

1. **Enhancing Islamic Financial Literacy:** Improving public understanding of Islamic financial instruments, such as zakat and microfinance, through targeted education campaigns is crucial. Collaboration between Islamic financial institutions, the government, and community organizations will help ensure widespread awareness and participation.
2. **Optimizing Zakat Management:** Greater transparency and efficiency in zakat management and distribution are needed to ensure resources reach those in need. The use of digital platforms can streamline collection and distribution, ensuring effective impact.
3. **Developing Inclusive Financial Products:** Expanding access to flexible and affordable Islamic financial products, particularly for low-income communities, is essential. Government incentives can encourage innovation and product development to enhance financial inclusion.

These recommendations will help strengthen Islamic economics' role in reducing inequality and promoting financial inclusion in Jabodetabek.

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