

## Islamic Economic Ontology and the Respiritualization of Human Development: A North Sumatra Case within the SDG Framework

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### Abstract

The growth of humanity in North Sumatra illustrates a dichotomy of quantitative progress coupled with qualitative deterioration. From 2016 to 2023, the average years of schooling rose from 9.12 to 9.82, yet the province remains 32nd out of 35 in Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI). This disparity suggests that educational and health progress has not translated into moral or spiritual growth, reflecting a crisis of meaning in development. This study aims to reinterpret Islamic economic foundations as ethical bases for respiritualizing human development in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using a qualitative philosophical-analytical approach, the research integrates Qur'anic values, classical Islamic scholarship, and empirical data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) for 2016–2023. The findings show that access to education and healthcare has expanded, but ethical awareness has weakened. The proposed Respiritualized Human Development (RHD) model unites spirituality, justice, and sustainability, offering a moral framework that redefines human development as prosperity (*falāh*).

**Keywords:** Islamic Economics; RHD; SDGs; Ethical Economics; Education and Health Sectors

### Abstrak

Pertumbuhan populasi di Sumatra Utara menggambarkan paradoks antara kemajuan kuantitatif yang pesat disertai dengan penurunan kualitas yang signifikan. Dari tahun 2016 hingga 2023, rata-rata lama sekolah meningkat dari 9,12 menjadi 9,82 tahun, namun provinsi tersebut tetap berada di peringkat ke-32 dari 35 provinsi di Indeks Pembangunan Manusia (HDI) Indonesia. Kesenjangan ini menunjukkan bahwa kemajuan pendidikan dan kesehatan belum diterjemahkan ke dalam pertumbuhan moral atau spiritual, mencerminkan krisis makna dalam pembangunan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menafsirkan kembali fondasi ekonomi Islam sebagai dasar etis untuk merespiritualisasi pembangunan manusia sejalan dengan Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDGs). Menggunakan pendekatan filosofis-analitis kualitatif, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an, kajian Islam klasik, dan data empiris dari Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) untuk periode 2016–2023. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa akses terhadap pendidikan dan layanan kesehatan telah meluas, tetapi kesadaran etis telah melemah. Model Pembangunan Manusia yang Direvitalisasi (RHD) yang diusulkan menyatukan spiritualitas, keadilan, dan keberlanjutan, menawarkan kerangka moral yang mendefinisikan kembali pembangunan manusia sebagai kemakmuran (*falāh*).

**Kata Kunci:** Ekonomi Islam; HDI; SDGs; Ekonomi Etis; Sektor Pendidikan dan Kesehatan

## INTRODUCTION

North Sumatra reflects a paradox in human development. Between 2016 and 2023, the province's average years of schooling rose from 9.12 to 9.82 years, indicating formal progress in education. However, its Human Development Index (HDI) remains low, ranking 32nd out of 35 Indonesian provinces.<sup>1</sup> This discrepancy exposes a deeper crisis: quantitative growth in education has not translated into qualitative improvement in human and spiritual welfare.<sup>2</sup> The region continues to face widespread inequality, weak educational ethics, and declining moral awareness. A materialistic orientation in public policy prioritizes economic growth and competitiveness, often at the expense of ethical formation and community well-being.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, education and health sectors increasingly serve utilitarian rather than humanistic purposes. These realities signify an urgent need to realign human development with its spiritual and moral foundations, ensuring that intellectual progress contributes to holistic well-being rooted in ethical and divine consciousness.

Current research on Islamic economics has extensively examined its principles: *tawhīd*, *'adl*, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, as foundations for ethical and equitable economic systems. Nevertheless, the majority of research concentrates on financial or institutional applications, resulting in insufficient investigation into how these principles rectify ontological and ethical shortcomings in education and health.<sup>4</sup> Recent research on sustainable development emphasizes the necessity of incorporating values and spirituality, such as Farhan (2025),<sup>5</sup> who studied economic research from the perspective of the Quran and Tafsir; yet, empirical and conceptual studies connecting Islamic economics to human development are limited. In Indonesia, particularly at the regional level, there is a paucity of understanding of how Islamic economic ontology might guide policy formulation that reconciles moral and developmental goals.<sup>6</sup> This disparity signifies a theoretical and practical disjunction between Islamic economic theory and the

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- 1 Ami Dilham and Muhammad Umar Maya Putra, "Social Economic Community Mapping Around Binjai Utara (Case Study: The People In Tandem Hilir)," in *Proceedings Of The 1st Annual International Seminar On Transformative Education And Educational Leadership (AISTEEL)* E-ISSN, 2016, 2548–4613.
  - 2 Mirjam Van Praag and André Van Stel, "The More Business Owners, The Merrier? The Role of Tertiary Education," *Small Business Economics* 41, no. 2 (August 14, 2013): 335–57, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-012-9436-x>. and Muhammad Umar Maya Putra, Azhari Akmal Tarigan, and Rahmi Syahriza, "Implementasi Indikator Kesejahteraan Dalam Kajian Surah Al-An'am Dan Al A'raf Di Propinsi Sumatera Utara," *Educational Journal of Islamic Management* 4, no. 2 (January 19, 2025): 53–59, <https://doi.org/10.47709/ejim.v4i2.5335>.
  - 3 James Adetunji Odumeru and Oladele Ayodeji Ilesanmi, "The Effects of Human Resources Development on Financial Performance of Organisations," *Asian Business Review* 2, no. 1 (March 31, 2013): 19–23, <https://doi.org/10.18034/abr.v2i1.117>. and Cristina Manole, Cristina Alpopi, and Sofia Elena Colesca, "The Strategic Role of Human Resources Development in the Management of Organizational Crisis," *Economia. Seria Management* 14, no. 1 (2011): 207–21.
  - 4 Praag and Stel, "The More Business Owners, The Merrier? The Role of Tertiary Education."
  - 5 Ahmad Abdullah Farhan, "The Qur'anic Critique of Income Distribution in the Capitalist System: A Thematic Interpretation Study of Sayyid Quthb's Perspective on Economic Verses," *Theosynesis: Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis* 1, no. 1 (2025): 49–58, <https://doi.org/10.20625/theosyn.v1n1.014>.
  - 6 Nurunnabi Abbas and Saraç Aravossis, "Exploring the Intersection of Islamic Economics and Sustainable Development: Challenges, Opportunities, and Policy Implications," *Seriat Ekonomisi* 1, no. 2 (June 7, 2024): 10–20, <https://doi.org/10.35335/wyp8gp53>.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in circumstances where moral degradation coincides with intellectual advancement, as evidenced in North Sumatra.<sup>7</sup>

This study seeks to reinterpret the philosophical underpinnings of Islamic economics, including *tawhīd* (divine unity), *‘adl* (justice), and *fitriah* (human nature), as done by Farhan (2025), as the ethical basis for revitalizing human development in North Sumatra.<sup>8</sup> It aims to examine the discrepancy between quantitative educational advancement and qualitative moral development, elucidate how Islamic economic ontology can mitigate this imbalance, and propose a conceptual framework for sustainable and spiritually grounded progress. By incorporating these principles within the framework of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), the study presents an alternative paradigm that harmonizes moral awareness with social equity. This research ultimately aims to reframe human development as a process of inner awakening, integrating societal advancement with divine purpose and ethical accountability.

The primary thesis of this paper is that authentic human development cannot be realized solely through material advancement; it must be rooted in spiritual and ethical revitalization. Islamic economics, as a comprehensive worldview, offers the ontological and axiological basis for such transformation. The incorporation of *tawhīd* guarantees that educational and healthcare systems are directed by divine unity and moral integrity. *‘Adl* advocates for justice and equitable provision of social welfare, while *fitriah* underscores the restoration of humanity’s inherent purity and moral consciousness. Through this respiritualized approach, human development is reconceptualized as *falāh*, a state of comprehensive prosperity in which material achievement is balanced with moral integrity and spiritual realization.

## Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the philosophical and ethical aspects of Islamic economics as a framework for revitalizing human development in North Sumatra. The qualitative approach has been chosen because the research aims to interpret meanings, principles, and moral frameworks rather than quantify statistical correlations.<sup>9</sup> It emphasizes the comprehension of how Islamic economic principles, *tawhīd* (divine unity), *‘adl* (justice), and *fitriah* (human nature), can shed light on the spiritual and ethical foundations of the education and healthcare sectors. The study therefore underscores conceptual rigor, interpretative insight, and contextual significance over quantitative generalization.

The research employs a philosophical-analytical methodology, incorporating ontological, axiological, and epistemological investigations. Ontologically, it investigates the essence of human development in accordance with Islamic teachings. Axiologically, it evaluates moral and spiritual values as fundamental determinants of societal advancement. Epistemologically, it utilizes the

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7 Asmul Fauzi Harahap and Nona Soraya Pasaribu, “Hubungan Antara Kemiskinan Dengan Capaian SDGs Di Provinsi Sumatera Utara,” *Al-Bay: Journal of Sharia Economic and Business* 1, no. 1 (July 18, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.24952/bay.v1i1.5780>.

8 Farhan, “The Qur’anic Critique of Income Distribution in the Capitalist System: A Thematic Interpretation Study of Sayyid Quthb’s Perspective on Economic Verses.”

9 Ahmad Fanani, Muhammad Alawi, and Retno Sari, “Islamophobia: Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Dakwah ‘Obeng-Obeng’ Di Pesisir Jawa,” *UInScof* 1, no. 1 (2023): 100–112.

Islamic tripartite approach to reasoning, which integrates revelation (*naqlī*), reason (*'aqlī*), and empirical observation (*ḥissi*) in a harmonious manner. This methodology enables the research to develop a thorough comprehension of development as both a moral and spiritual endeavor aligned with the principles of Islamic economics.

The study predominantly depends on secondary data obtained from both textual-philosophical and empirical-institutional sources. Textual sources encompass the Qur'an, Hadith, and foundational works of Islamic scholars such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and al-Shatibi, in addition to contemporary research on Islamic economics, ethics, and development. Empirical data are obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of North Sumatra, covering the period from 2016 to 2023, with a concentration on indicators such as the Average Years of Schooling and the Human Development Index (HDI). Additional references from scholarly periodicals, such as Almurni (2024)<sup>10</sup> and Qisti (2023)<sup>11</sup>, policy documents, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) reports complement these sources to offer enhanced contextual depth.

Data were collected via documentary analysis and a systematic review of the literature. The process entailed the identification, classification, and synthesis of philosophical and empirical materials pertinent to the theme of respiritualization.<sup>12</sup> Key Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions, and classical commentaries were examined to derive the concepts of human welfare (*falāh*), justice (*'adl*), and stewardship (*khilāfah*).<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously, statistical and policy data were analyzed to identify the disparity between formal educational achievement and qualitative human development in North Sumatra. The synthesis of textual and empirical findings allows the research to link theoretical frameworks with observable social phenomena.<sup>14</sup>

The research utilizes an analytical procedure encompasses contextual interpretation, conceptual classification, and philosophical integration to elucidate the moral framework inherent in Islamic economic thought. Data are examined within the framework of Islamic epistemology, which integrates divine revelation, rational inquiry, and empirical validation. The findings are conveyed in a narrative format, complemented by quantitative data, to demonstrate how the spiritual core of education and healthcare has waned despite formal advancements. Ultimately, the analysis aims to develop a Respiritualized Human Development (RHD) model that integrates Islamic ethical principles with the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 3 (Health), SDG 4 (Education), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality).

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10 Muhammad Furqon Almurni and Nurrohman Syarif, "Titik Temu Sistem Ekonomi Syariah Dan Sitem Ekonomi Pancasila Serta Filsafat Keduanya Untuk Mencapai Kesejahteraan Ekonomi Rakyat Indonesia," *Ad-Deenar: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam* 8, no. 01 (April 22, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.30868/ad.v8i01.6013>.

11 Maulidah Nur Qisti and Ahmad Budiman, "Pengaruh Reksadana Syariah, Saham Syariah, Dan Inflasi Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Indonesia Tahun 2013-2022," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 4 (May 21, 2023): 16927–40, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i4.2898>.

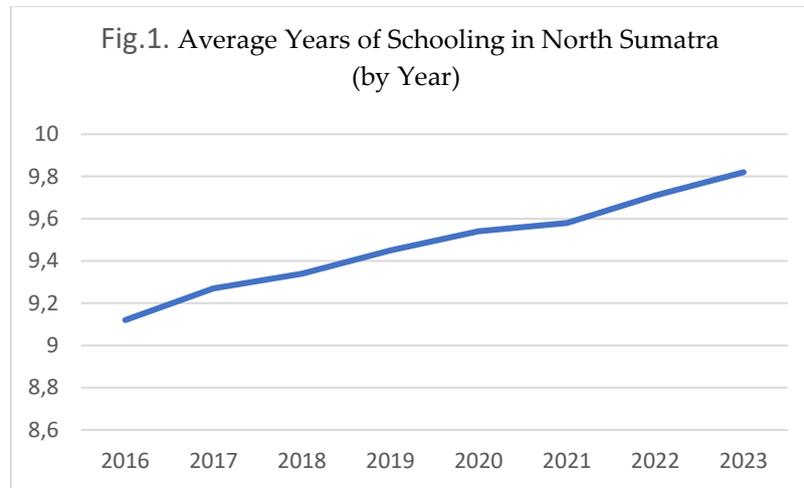
12 Anthony Ribaudo and Masami Takahashi, "Temporal Trends in Spirituality Research: A Meta-Analysis of Journal Abstracts between 1944 and 2003," *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging* 20, no. 1–2 (March 27, 2008): 16–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528030801921972>.

13 Juliyana Junaidi, Latifah Abdul Majid, and Mohd Arif Nazri, "Revisiting Social Justice: Exploring the Qur'anic Paradigm in Addressing Contemporary Challenges," *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 25, no. 2 (December 28, 2023): 153–92, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no2.5>.

14 Roberto Cipriani, "Empirical Data and Theory Construction," *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique* 118, no. 1 (April 8, 2013): 73–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0759106313476188>.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Educational Trends and the Ontological Gap in Human Development



**Figure 1.** Average Years of Schooling in North Sumatra (by Year)

*Source: BPS Sumatera Utara (2024)*

Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of North Sumatra spanning 2016 to 2023 indicate a steady increase in the average years of schooling, rising from 9.12 in 2016 to 9.82 in 2023, reflecting ongoing enhancements in educational access and engagement. At first glance, this trend signifies advancements in human capital development and corresponds with national initiatives to broaden educational access. However, this numerical growth masks an enduring qualitative shortcoming. North Sumatra's Human Development Index (HDI) positions only 32nd among the 35 provinces,<sup>15</sup> indicating that extended education has not resulted in corresponding enhancements in quality of life, civic ethics, or moral consciousness. This paradox highlights a disparity in development: while education has effectively broadened access, it has not adequately fostered the intellectual and spiritual integrity envisioned by holistic human development.<sup>16</sup> Such disparity indicates that the province's educational system continues to function within a mechanistic framework centered on cognitive development rather than moral cultivation.

The aforementioned phenomenon highlights an ontological disparity between the formal expansion of education and the moral-spiritual development of learners. Although policy reforms prioritize efficiency, accreditation, and competitiveness, the fundamental purpose of education—cultivating ethical consciousness and reinstating the innate human disposition—has been relegated to a secondary position. Islamic economic philosophy regards education not solely as a vehicle for economic advancement; rather, it is perceived as a sanctified process of self-realization, grounded

15 Adrian Sutawijaya, "Pengaruh Faktor-Faktor Ekonomi Terhadap Inflasi Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Organisasi Dan Manajemen* 8, no. 2 (March 10, 2012): 85–101, <https://doi.org/10.33830/jom.v8i2.237.2012>.

16 Dian Wahyuni and M. Umar Maya Putra, "Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics in Civil Society of Tinggi Raja District Asahan Regency," in *International Seminar and Annual Meeting 2017 Fields Of Linguistics, Literature, Arts And Culture* (Medan, 2017), 255–60, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323869336\\_ENTREPRENEURSHIP\\_AND\\_BUSINESS\\_ETHICS\\_IN\\_CIVIL\\_SOCIETY\\_OF\\_TINGGI\\_RAJA\\_DISTRICT\\_ASAHAN\\_REGENCY#fullTextFileContent](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323869336_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_AND_BUSINESS_ETHICS_IN_CIVIL_SOCIETY_OF_TINGGI_RAJA_DISTRICT_ASAHAN_REGENCY#fullTextFileContent).

in divine unity (*tawhīd*) and equitable conduct (*'adl*).<sup>17</sup> When education is disassociated from these fundamental principles, knowledge risks devolving into *'ilm ghayr nāfi'*, information devoid of virtue. In North Sumatra, this phenomenon is characterized by the dominance of instrumental reasoning and a consumerist-driven learning environment.<sup>18</sup> Educational institutions frequently prioritize academic qualifications over ethical development, resulting in graduates possessing technical proficiency but demonstrating insufficient moral understanding.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the province's educational advancements, while superficially apparent, lack substantive depth, thereby mirroring a wider existential challenge inherent in its developmental path.

From an Islamic ontological standpoint, this disparity signifies that human development cannot be assessed solely through material or cognitive accomplishments.<sup>20</sup> True progress must embody intellectual, ethical, and spiritual harmony as manifestations of humanity's divine trust (*amānah*).<sup>21</sup> The Qur'an underscores that knowledge should foster humility and virtuous conduct, rather than arrogance or misuse. Thus, the challenge confronting North Sumatra is not the expansion of educational infrastructure but the reorientation of its epistemological basis. Education must be reconceptualized as a process of *tazkiyah*, the purifying of the intellect and psyche, synthesizing faith, reasoning, and empirical knowledge. When governed by Islamic economics, education serves as a means to attain *falāh* (true prosperity), integrating individual development with social justice and ecological sustainability. Addressing this ontological chasm is thus crucial for evolving education from a utilitarian entity into a spiritually rooted framework that nurtures both knowledge and virtue as interconnected aspects of human growth.

### **The Crisis of Respiritualization in Education and Health**

The educational and healthcare sectors in North Sumatra reveal a profound crisis of spiritual orientation that extends beyond issues of policy or infrastructure.<sup>22</sup> Despite improvements in access and funding, both sectors remain trapped within a materialistic paradigm that equates progress with efficiency, competition, and measurable output.<sup>23</sup> Education is frequently reduced to a mechanism for achieving employment, while healthcare is viewed primarily as a service

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17 Imron Fathurohman et al., "Sejarah Pemikiran Ekonomi Islam Imam Al Maqrizi," *Ad-Deenar: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam* 5, no. 01 SE-Articles (March 28, 2021): 143–53, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ad.v5i01.1601>.

18 Wahyuni and Putra, "Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics in Civil Society of Tinggi Raja District Asahan Regency."

19 Almurni and Syarif, "Titik Temu Sistem Ekonomi Syariah Dan Sitem Ekonomi Pancasila Serta Filsafat Keduanya Untuk Mencapai Kesejahteraan Ekonomi Rakyat Indonesia."

20 Murtiadi Awaluddin et al., "Esensi Ilmu Dalam Filsafat Ekonomi Islam," *EKALAYA: Jurnal Ekonomi Akuntansi* 1, no. 1 (March 31, 2023): 83–92, <https://doi.org/10.59966/ekalaya.v1i1.88>.

21 Ahsanudin Lutfi and Mahmutarom Mahmutarom, "Formulasi Maqasid Syariah Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Problematika Fiqih Muamalah Kontemporer Di Indonesia (Studi Pemikiran Abdullah Bin Bayyah)" (Universitas Wahid Hasyim, 2020), <http://eprints.unwahas.ac.id/id/eprint/3965>.

22 Hendra Andy Mulia Panjaitan, Sri Mulatsih, and Wiwiek Rindayati, "Analisis Dampak Pembangunan Infrastruktur Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Inklusif Provinsi Sumatera Utara," *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Kebijakan Pembangunan* 8, no. 1 (September 22, 2020): 43–61, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jekp.8.1.2019.43-61>.

23 Ami Dilham and Muhammad Umar Maya Putra, "Pemetaan Sosial Ekonomi Masyarakat Kecamatan Medan Labuhan Kota Medan," in *Semantika (Seminar Nasional Teknik Informatika)*, vol. 1, 2017, 8–15, <https://semantika.polgan.ac.id/index.php/Semantika/article/view/2>.

industry rather than a moral duty.<sup>24</sup> This utilitarian outlook reflects the dominance of economic rationality over ethical consciousness, producing institutions that prioritize achievement over meaning. The result is an erosion of moral sensitivity and communal solidarity. Teachers and health workers, once regarded as moral exemplars, are increasingly constrained by bureaucratic targets and profit-driven systems. This condition demonstrates that modernization without spiritual grounding generates an existential vacuum—where technological sophistication coexists with ethical fragility and social alienation.

Islamic economic philosophy interprets this phenomenon as a *crisis of respiritualization*—a condition in which human development is detached from its transcendental purpose.<sup>25</sup> In Islamic thought, every social institution must embody the unity of *tawhīd*, ensuring coherence between faith, knowledge, and practice.<sup>26</sup> When this unity disintegrates, society experiences fragmentation: intellectual growth proceeds without moral depth, and healthcare improves without compassion. The absence of *tawhīdic* integration leads to what al-Ghazālī described as “knowledge without guidance,” a form of intellectual arrogance that undermines collective well-being. Within North Sumatra, such a crisis manifests in the widening disparity between formal educational achievements and ethical behavior, as well as the commodification of healthcare services.<sup>27</sup> Hospitals and universities may expand their facilities, yet fail to cultivate empathy or social justice—qualities central to Islamic understandings of human welfare (*maṣlahah*).

The decline of spiritual values in education and health also reflects a distorted understanding of human nature. In Islamic ontology, human beings are endowed with *fitrah*, an innate disposition toward goodness, balance, and truth.<sup>28</sup> However, when exposed to excessive materialism and consumerist culture, this *fitrah* becomes obscured. The obsession with success, wealth, and recognition has redefined educational and medical institutions into arenas of competition rather than compassion.<sup>29</sup> Students pursue degrees as commodities, while healthcare providers often measure their performance by financial reward rather than patient welfare. This moral inversion signifies an epistemological crisis—knowledge and practice no longer serve as means of worship or service, but as tools for self-promotion. Consequently, the social fabric weakens as individualism triumphs over solidarity, and the moral compass guiding human development is lost.

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24 Rahmatunnair Rahmatunnair, “Paradigma Formalisasi Hukum Islam Di Indonesia,” *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 12, no. 1 (February 1, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v12i1.984>.

25 Fahmi Ali Hudaefi and Neni Heryani, “The Practice of Local Economic Development and Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘ah,” *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, June 3, 2019, IMEFM-08-2018-0279, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-08-2018-0279>.

26 Nur Isnaini, “Relevansi Pemikiran Ekonomi Islam Al-Maqṣidi Di Indonesia,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam* 10, no. 1 (March 9, 2024): 239, <https://doi.org/10.29040/jiei.v10i1.11544>.

27 Achmad Rizky Bachtiar et al., “Inflasi Perspektif Ekonomi Islam,” *Jima: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1–9, <https://ejournal.penerbitjurnal.com/index.php/JIMA/article/view/1043>.

28 Sibral Malasyi, Azhari Akmal Tarigan, and Rahmi Syahreza, “Keadilan Sosial Dalam Ekonomi Syari‘ah Melalui Tafsir Surat Ar-Ra’d Ayat 11 Tentang Perubahan Sosial Dan Ekonomi Umat,” *Jurnal Al-Mizān* 11, no. 2 SE- (December 31, 2024): 298–317, <https://doi.org/10.54621/jiam.v11i2.939>.

29 Hisam Ahyani and Memet Slamet, “Respon Dunia Barat Terhadap Ekonomi Syariah Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0,” *Ecopreneur: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam* 3, no. 2 (August 28, 2022): 101–16, <https://doi.org/10.47453/ecopreneur.v3i2.311>.

The crisis of respiritualization also exposes the limitations of conventional development theories that rely heavily on quantitative indicators. Metrics such as literacy rates, life expectancy, and per capita income, while important, fail to capture the inner dimensions of human well-being.<sup>30</sup> In Islamic economics, development is not an end in itself but a means to achieve *falāh*—holistic prosperity encompassing moral, social, and spiritual fulfillment.<sup>31</sup> When progress is defined merely by numbers, the essence of humanity is reduced to economic variables. This reductionism has profound consequences: education loses its ethical mission, healthcare becomes commercialized, and policy decisions neglect spiritual welfare.<sup>32</sup> To overcome this impasse, development must be redefined through a moral-ontological lens that integrates both material and transcendental dimensions of life.

Addressing this crisis requires reorienting educational and healthcare systems toward their metaphysical purpose: realizing the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, or higher objectives of Islamic law.<sup>33</sup> These objectives—preserving intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), and faith (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*)—provide an integrated framework for value-based reform.<sup>34</sup> Incorporating these principles into curricula, professional ethics, and policy design can reintroduce spirituality as a foundation for social transformation. Education should instill not only analytical competence but also moral discernment, while healthcare must promote both physical healing and spiritual comfort. By reconnecting institutions to their ethical roots, North Sumatra can move beyond superficial progress toward a holistic model of human development. In this context, the crisis of respiritualization becomes an opportunity—a moral awakening that invites society to rediscover the sacred meaning of knowledge, service, and existence itself.<sup>35</sup>

### Islamic Economic Integration and the Model of Respiritualized Human Development

The integration of Islamic economic values with contemporary development frameworks presents a transformative opportunity for reconceptualizing human progress in North Sumatra. Islamic economics, founded upon *tawḥīd* (divine unity), *'adl* (justice), *nubuwwah* (prophetic guidance), *khilāfah* (stewardship), and *ma'ād* (accountability), positions morality as the nucleus of development.<sup>36</sup> These principles ensure that economic and social activities align with divine ethics and communal welfare (*maṣlahah*). Unlike conventional paradigms that separate spirituality from policy, Islamic economics embeds faith into governance, education, and healthcare as dimensions

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30 Deis Mahadita et al., “Hubungan Antara Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Dan Pengangguran Menurut Perspektif Islam,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi, Manajemen, Bisnis Dan Akuntansi* 2, no. 3 (2025): 180–89.

31 Abd Rauf Wajo, “Konsep Kebebasan Dalam Perspektif Ekonomi Islam,” *Al-Mizān: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Ekonomi*, 2021, 19–35, <https://doi.org/10.59115/almizan.v7i01.56>.

32 Abdulrahim Habel, “Analisis Kaidah-Kaidah Fiqih Muamalah Dan Implementasinya Di Indonesia,” *AN NUQUD* 2, no. 2 (July 30, 2023): 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.51192/annuqud.v2i2.672>.

33 Junaidi, Abdul Majid, and Nazri, “Revisiting Social Justice: Exploring the Qur’anic Paradigm in Addressing Contemporary Challenges.”

34 Lutfi and Mahmutarom, “Formulasi Maqasid Syariah Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Problematika Fiqih Muamalah Kontemporer Di Indonesia (Studi Pemikiran Abdullah Bin Bayyah).”

35 E. Elviandri, “Quo Vadis Negara Kesejahteraan: Meneguhkan Ideologi Welfare State Negara Hukum Kesejahteraan Indonesia,” *Mimbar Hukum - Fakultas Hukum Universitas Gadjah Mada* 31, no. 2 (June 3, 2019): 252, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jmh.32986>.

36 Bachtiar et al., “Inflasi Perspektif Ekonomi Islam.”

of worship (*'ibādah*).<sup>37</sup> In the context of North Sumatra, such integration implies that economic growth, educational reform, and public health must all reflect ethical equilibrium and social compassion. Reconnecting development with these metaphysical values allows society to transcend the dichotomy between material progress and spiritual stagnation, building a system that fosters both productivity and piety.

This ethical framework aligns closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offering a spiritually enriched interpretation of global objectives. For example, SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) resonates with the Islamic emphasis on *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (preservation of life), SDG 4 (Quality Education) with *ḥifẓ al-'aql* (preservation of intellect), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) with *'adl* (justice) and redistribution through *zakat* and *waqf*. Instruments such as *Green Sukuk* and Islamic social finance operationalize these values by channeling resources toward ethical, sustainable initiatives. This synergy demonstrates that Islamic economics does not reject modern development frameworks but enriches them with moral accountability and long-term vision. By internalizing Qur'anic ethics—moderation (*wasatiyyah*), stewardship (*khilāfah*), and collective welfare (*maṣlahah*)—SDGs gain a deeper normative foundation, turning policy goals into acts of moral responsibility rather than technocratic obligation.<sup>38</sup>

The proposed Respiritualized Human Development (RHD) model synthesizes these insights into a holistic paradigm that unites quantitative progress with qualitative transformation. In this model, development is defined not by income or schooling alone but by the harmony of intellect, morality, and spirituality. The RHD framework rests on three integrative pillars: ontological balance, epistemological integration, and axiological renewal. Ontologically, it views human beings as spiritual-moral agents entrusted with divine responsibility (*amānah*). Epistemologically, it harmonizes revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry as complementary paths to truth. Axiologically, it ensures that justice, compassion, and accountability guide all social and economic systems. Through this triadic synthesis, RHD redefines prosperity as *falāh*—holistic well-being that encompasses material sufficiency, ethical consciousness, and spiritual fulfillment.<sup>39</sup>

Applying the RHD model in North Sumatra requires policy innovation grounded in Islamic ethical principles. Educational institutions should embed spiritual ethics into curricula, linking science and technology to moral reasoning and social service. Healthcare systems must restore compassion and equity as the core of public welfare, ensuring that professional excellence coexists with empathy and faith. Economically, local governments can leverage Islamic financial mechanisms such as *zakat*, *waqf*, and *Green Sukuk* to fund socially responsible projects. These measures collectively operationalize *tawḥīd* and *'adl* as living principles of governance. By institutionalizing the RHD framework, North Sumatra can transform its development trajectory from material expansion toward moral elevation—creating a society that measures success not only by growth but by goodness, balance, and harmony with divine purpose.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Fathurohman et al., "Sejarah Pemikiran Ekonomi Islam Imam Al Maqrizi."

38 Harahap and Pasaribu.

39 Nidhi M Choudhary, "Managerial Effectiveness: Make and Share Best Bets about Where the World Is Going," *Dmistr*, 6 (2), 2012, 98–119.

40 Hendra Andy Mulia Panjaitan, Sri Mulatsih, and Wiwiek Rindayati, "Analisis Dampak Pembangunan Infrastruktur Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Inklusif Provinsi Sumatera Utara."

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that human development in North Sumatra remains characterized by a paradox between quantitative progress and qualitative stagnation. Data from 2016–2023 show a gradual increase in the average years of schooling, yet the province's Human Development Index (HDI) continues to rank among the lowest in Indonesia. This disparity reveals an ontological imbalance in which education and healthcare expand structurally but decline in moral and spiritual quality. The research identifies this phenomenon as a *crisis of respiritualization*, rooted in the materialist orientation of current development practices. Islamic economic philosophy—anchored in *tawhīd*, *'adl*, and *fitrah*—provides a corrective perspective, emphasizing that genuine progress requires moral coherence and spiritual awareness. When integrated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these principles offer an ethical framework that aligns social equity, educational quality, and health outcomes with the higher purpose of human well-being.

The study contributes to the discourse on Islamic economics by proposing the Respiritualized Human Development (RHD) model as a conceptual synthesis linking spiritual ethics and sustainable policy. Unlike conventional approaches that prioritize measurable indicators, the RHD model interprets development through ontological, epistemological, and axiological lenses—reconnecting knowledge and welfare to divine accountability. This framework expands the theoretical scope of Islamic economics beyond financial institutions to include education and healthcare as arenas of ethical transformation. It also contextualizes the SDGs within an Islamic worldview, demonstrating their compatibility with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. By situating moral and spiritual consciousness at the center of social development, the research provides a normative model for integrating faith-based ethics into regional policy formulation, particularly in regions where modernization has outpaced moral renewal.

Despite its conceptual depth, the study is limited by its qualitative and region-specific orientation. The focus on North Sumatra restricts the generalizability of findings, and the absence of primary data limits empirical validation. Future research should therefore employ mixed-method approaches that combine philosophical interpretation with field-based analysis, allowing for the measurement of moral and spiritual indicators in education and healthcare outcomes. Comparative studies across provinces or Muslim-majority contexts could further test the adaptability of the RHD framework. Policy-oriented research may also explore practical mechanisms—such as *waqf*-based education funding or ethical health governance—to operationalize Islamic economic principles at the institutional level. By addressing these limitations, subsequent studies can advance the integration of spirituality, ethics, and sustainability as coherent pillars of human development in the contemporary Islamic world.

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