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Islamic Financial Inclusion Model in Papua: Evidence from Micro Waqf Bank and Islamic Social Finance

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Abstract

Islamic financial inclusion remains a significant challenge in promoting equitable economic development, particularly among underserved Muslim communities. Although Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) possess substantial potential to foster local economic empowerment, empirical evidence on pesantren-based Islamic financial inclusion models remains limited. This study aims to examine the Islamic financial inclusion models implemented by Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School and Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School and to explore their contribution to expanding access to Sharia-compliant financial services. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving ten purposively selected informants, including pesantren administrators, managers of Islamic financial and philanthropic institutions, and service beneficiaries. Data were analyzed using an inductive approach through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the pesantren-based Islamic financial inclusion model operates through two complementary dimensions: Islamic commercial financial services and Islamic social finance. Commercial services are provided through the Micro Waqf Bank, Yaa Bunayya Mart, and Bank Muamalat mobile branch services, while social financial inclusion is strengthened through collaboration with Baitul Maal Hidayatullah in managing zakat, infaq, and sadaqah funds. This integrated ecosystem demonstrates how pesantren can effectively combine commercial and social Islamic finance to broaden financial access and enhance community welfare.

Keywords: Islamic Financial Inclusion; Micro Waqf Bank; Islamic Social Finance

1. INTRODUCTION

The potential of Islamic finance in Indonesia offers great promise for economic growth in the country. The 2019-2024 *Indonesian Islamic Economic Master Plan* (MEKSI) clearly demonstrates that Indonesia has a world-leading roadmap for Islamic economic development (Komite Nasional Keuangan Syariah (KNKS), 2019). However, this potential is not in line with Islamic

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finance's market share, which is only 10.69% of the national finance market (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan, 2022). Several factors have contributed to the weakening position of Islamic finance in Indonesia, including the relatively limited availability of Islamic banking facilities and low levels of financial inclusion. Furthermore, prioritizing the development of financial infrastructure to address barriers to financial services is crucial (Miranti & Asdiyanti, 2026).

The low Islamic financial inclusion index in Indonesia is due to the limited number of Islamic financial institutions, limited public access to them, and low public knowledge and ability to use Islamic financial services (Azwar, 2017). As part of a national strategy to drive economic growth, Islamic financial institutions must increase public knowledge and confidence. Financial inclusion can only be achieved when financial facilities are readily accessible and easy to learn about (Laili & Kusumaningtias, 2020).

Sharia financial inclusion is not merely defined as the availability of access to Sharia financial institutions and products, but also encompasses the public's ability to obtain, understand, and utilize these services in accordance with their needs and Sharia principles. Therefore, Islamic financial inclusion is a multidimensional concept encompassing the availability of services, accessibility, affordability, usage, and service quality, which can enhance public welfare (Hapsari et al., 2024). From an economic development perspective, enhancing Islamic financial inclusion not only contributes to expanding access to formal financial services but also plays a role in reducing economic inequality, strengthening financial system stability, boosting business productivity, and supporting poverty alleviation through mechanisms consistent with Islamic values (Puspitasari et al., 2020). Consequently, the success of Islamic financial inclusion cannot be measured solely by the increasing number of financial institutions but also by the increased utilization of services and their benefits to the community.

In this context, the expansion of Islamic financial inclusion requires the involvement of institutions with close social ties and a high level of trust within the community. Various studies indicate that social capital, institutional legitimacy, and community networks are key factors influencing the successful implementation of financial inclusion programs. Compared to formal financial institutions, Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) possess more comprehensive characteristics, as they not only fulfill educational and missionary functions but also serve as community-based economic empowerment institutions (Zaki et al., 2022) underpinned by religious values, social networks, and public trust (Fathoni & Rohim, 2019). The presence of business units, Islamic microfinance institutions, and Islamic philanthropic organizations within the pesantren environment enables the formation of an ecosystem that integrates commercial financial services and Islamic social finance. These characteristics position pesantren strategically as agents for the expansion of Islamic financial inclusion and as intermediary institutions, particularly in areas with limited access to formal financial services (Faiza et al., 2023).

The potential of the Islamic economy and finance in Indonesia offers significant opportunities for promoting inclusive economic development; however, this potential has not yet been matched by a high level of Islamic financial inclusion. The low uptake of Islamic financial services indicates that the development of this sector requires more than simply increasing the number of financial institutions; it also necessitates ease of access, affordability of services, financial literacy, and public trust in Islamic financial institutions. From a financial inclusion perspective, the success of a system is determined not only by the availability of products and services, but also by the public's ability to access and utilize them in accordance with their needs and socio-economic characteristics. These challenges are particularly evident in Papua, where the development of Islamic finance still faces constraints in terms of financial literacy, infrastructure, and access to formal services (Abidin et al., 2022). The limited number of Islamic banking branches in Jayapura City, coupled with the slowdown in the expansion of physical banking networks due to the acceleration of digitalization (Novreska & Arundina, 2024), indicates the need for a more adaptive and community-based alternative approach. In this context, Islamic boarding schools occupy a strategic position, as they not only fulfil educational and missionary functions but also possess social capital, religious legitimacy, community networks, and the capacity for economic empowerment through business units, Islamic microfinance institutions, and Islamic philanthropic organizations. These characteristics mean that Islamic boarding schools have the potential to act as agents of Islamic financial inclusion, capable of bridging the gap in access to formal services while strengthening the community's economic empowerment.

Unlike formal financial institutions, Islamic boarding schools possess social capital, which includes trust, social networks, and norms (Saihan & Umiarso, 2021), religious legitimacy as society's moral recognition of Kyai and pesantren based on their spiritual capacity and concern for the community (Mundiri et al., 2026), and a sense of belonging to the community (embeddedness in the community), as reflected in social and family relationships (Rahayu Mustaghfiroh, 2018), which enables the development of a community-based Islamic economic ecosystem. These characteristics mean that Islamic boarding schools have the capacity to function not only as educational institutions, but also as agents of economic empowerment and the expansion of Islamic financial inclusion.

Various studies indicate that the low level of Islamic financial inclusion is influenced by financial literacy, limited service networks, and low uptake of Islamic financial products (Azwar, 2017; Puspitasari et al., 2020). Another study highlights the contribution of Islamic financial institutions to MSME empowerment and community welfare improvement (Kosim et al., 2021). Meanwhile, studies on pesantren tend to view them primarily as institutions of education and socio-economic empowerment (Faiza et al., 2023; Falah & Zaki, 2017; Fathoni & Rohim, 2019; Zaki et al., 2022). However, these studies have not yet adequately explained the institutional mechanisms that enable pesantren to integrate commercial financial services and Islamic social finance to expand Sharia-compliant financial inclusion.

Based on a review of the existing literature, three research gaps were identified. First, previous studies have largely focused on levels of inclusion, financial literacy, and the role of formal financial institutions, while the role of Islamic boarding schools as agents of Islamic financial inclusion has been studied to a limited extent. Secondly, there is a lack of research explaining the mechanism for integrating commercial and Islamic social finance service within the Islamic social finance services within the Islamic boarding school ecosystem. Third, few conceptual models can explain the contribution of pesantren to expanding Islamic financial inclusion, particularly in regions with limited access to financial services, such as Papua.

In light of this gap, this study aims to analyze the Islamic financial inclusion model developed by the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school and Hidayatullah Islamic boarding school in Jayapura. The main contribution of this study lies in the development of a Sharia financial inclusion model based on the Islamic boarding ecosystem, which integrates commercial financial services and Islamic social finance as a mechanism for community empowerment and strengthening an inclusive Sharia economy.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a multisite case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the Islamic financial inclusion model developed by Islamic boarding schools in Jayapura. The multisite design was chosen because the research was conducted at two locations with different institutional characteristics, namely, the Yaa Bunayaa Islamic boarding school and Hidayatullah Islamic boarding school. This approach enabled the researcher to identify similarities, differences, and patterns in the implementation of Islamic financial inclusion at each boarding school, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the model that has developed within the local context.

Research informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique, whereby informants were chosen on the basis that they possessed the knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of Islamic financial inclusion within Islamic boarding schools. This technique was used to obtain in-depth information in line with the research objectives. The number of participants in this study was 10, comprising Islamic boarding school leaders, the manager of Baitul Maal Hidayatullah, the manager of Bank Wakaf Mikro, and members of the public who use Islamic financial services. The selection of members of the public as informants was based on their involvement as beneficiaries or users of Islamic financial services provided or facilitated by the two boarding schools.

The data collection techniques used in this study included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Triangulation techniques were used to support the data validity (Abubakar, 2021). Data validity was ensured through the triangulation technique to enhance the credibility of the research findings. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from boarding school leaders, managers of Islamic financial and philanthropic institutions, and service users. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation so that the information obtained could be mutually verified. In addition, the researchers cross-checked the data obtained during the research process to ensure consistency and compatibility of information from various sources.

The data analysis used in this study was qualitative. Qualitative Data Analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data from interviews, observation notes, and other materials so that they can be easily understood and the findings communicated to others (Sugiyono, 2019). The qualitative data analysis technique to be used is inductive analysis, consisting of three steps: data reduction, the process of selecting, focusing on, simplifying, and organizing data relevant to the research focus. Data presentation involved systematically organizing data in the form of narratives, matrices, and inter-category relationships, thereby facilitating the interpretation of research findings. Concluding drawing and verification, namely the process of identifying patterns, relationships, and meaning from analyzed data to draw valid and scientifically sound conclusions(Miles et al., 2020).

3. RESULT AND FINDINGS ANALYSIS

To create an economic cycle focused on community well-being, one way is to provide financial services to the community. The availability of Islamic financial services offered by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is highly appropriate, as the communities surrounding these schools are low-income and lack access to formal financial institutions such as banks (Laili & Kusumaningtias, 2020).

Establishment of Micro Waqf Bank (Sharia Microfinance Institution)

The results of this study indicate that the Honai Sejahtera Papua Micro Waqf Bank (BWM) serves as the primary instrument for Islamic financial inclusion in Islamic financial inclusion in Islamic boarding schools by providing unsecured financing and business empowerment programs for communities that lack access to formal financial institutions.

Based on an interview with Ahmad Basudin (the Caretaker of the Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School), he said that:

> *The BWM has been around since 2019, a collaboration with the Financial Services Authority (OJK) and the Indonesian Banking Association (BSI). In fact, we at the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) and BWM have made significant efforts to implement the SDGs. Previously, we went directly into the field to identify people who might need financial services such as loans. However, over the last two or three years, many people have been seeking sharia-compliant financial services such as BWM. Indirectly, BMW has facilitated easy financial access, which has been effectively utilized. Since its inception, BWM has aimed to provide access to financial services for lower-middle-class people who lack access to banks or other financial services.*"

This statement was reinforced by Azril Ramadhan, Supervisor at Waqf Micro Bank (BWM) Honai Sejahtera Papua, who explained that:

> *"Financing is provided under a qardhul hasan agreement without collateral andi s accompained by a business mentoring program as part of a community empowerment initiative"*

From the beneficiaries perspectives, one customer, Yani, Stated the *"existence of Micro Waqf Bank facilities access to interest-free business capital and provides a sense of security because loan repayments are based on the amount* *received. Another informant also noted that, in addition to receiving financing, they receive business mentoring that helps ensure the sustainability of their small businesses."*

Triangulation of information from pesantren leaders, Micro Waqf Bank Supervisors, and the community indicates that Islamic financial inclusion is realized not only through the provision of access to financing but also through empowerment and mentoring mechanisms that strengthen the community's economic capacity. This finding indicates that the program's success is not solely determined by the presence of financial institutions but also by the integration of financing, education, and community-based mentoring functions.

According to the theory of Islamic financial inclusion, the success of an institution is not only measured by the availability of financial products but also by its ability to provide access, increase utilization, and create benefits for the community. The findings of this study indicate that the Micro Waqf Bank has fulfilled these three dimensions by providing easily accessible Islamic financing, business mentoring,and strengthening the community's economic capacityy.

This finding is relevant to previous research, which shows that Islamic microfinance institutions strengthen social responsibility and contribute to Islamic financial inclusion in low-income communities (Ozdemir et al., 2023). This role is further strengthened by the presence of Islamic Microfinance Institutions (LKMS), which not only act as agents of Islamic financial inclusion but also contribute to poverty reduction through financing and mentoring programs(Abdullah et al., 2021). Furthermore, the presence of a waqf-based Micro Waqf Bank can achieve social and economic goals, namely community welfare (Yusgiatoro et al., 2024). In addition, the Micro Waqf Bank presents a new approach to sustainable community empowerment based on women's communities (Harianto & Listyani, 2025).

Other research findings indicate that Sharia Microfinance Institutions significantly enhance the community's acces to Sharia-compliant financial services through Mudharabah and Murabahah financing (Rismanto, 2025). There are differences in the financing patterns of Sharia Microfinance Institutions in Papua and Madura. In Papua, Qardhul Hasan financing is still provided to give the community an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the institution's products, whereas in Madura, financing is used for capital for existing businesses and consumer spending.

Thus, this study not only reinforces findings regarding the role of Micro Waqf Banks in enhancing Islamic financial inclusion but also offers a new perspective: that the effectiveness of financial inclusion in the context of Islamic boarding schools is built through the integration of Islamic financing, community empowerment, and the social capital of boarding school institutions. These findings expand our understanding of an Islamic financial inclusion model based on the pesantren ecosystem, a topic that has not been extensively discussed in previous research.

Figure 1. The researchers conducted an interview with the BWM supervisor at the Honai Sejahtera Papua Micro Waqf Bank Office.

Establishing the Yaa Bunayaa Mart Cooperative as an Agent for Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI)

The research findings indicate that the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school not only plays a role in providing Sharia-compliant financing but also expands Sharia financial inclusion through the establishment of the Yaa Bunayya Mart Cooperative, which functions as an agent for Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI). The availability of these services enables the community to access various financial transaction services, such as transfers, cash withdrawals, bill payments, and other financial transactions, without having to visit a bank branch. These findings indicate that Islamic boarding schools act as intermediary institutions that bring Sharia financial services closer to the community amid the limited formal service infrastructure in Jayapura City.

This finding is supported by a statement from the director of the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school, who explained that:

"In 2023, we, as part of the Islamic boarding school, applied to the Ministry of Religious Affairs for funding to open a Sharia business incubator. After successfully raising IDR 140,000,000, we launched Yaa Bunaya Mart to directly

address the high demand for accessible Sharia financial services in Jayapura. Opening the store increased local access to these services, as reflected by strong community engagement with our BSI Agent for paying bills, transferring and withdrawing funds, and other transactions."

The existence of Yaa Bunayya Mart not only helps meet people's daily needs but also provides access to Islamic financial services without having to go to the office. The following is an interview with Amin (a community member):

I thought that Yaa Bunayaa Mart only sold groceries. The employee told me that I could transfer money, withdraw cash, and pay bills for electricity, water, Wi-Fi, and other things. I was happy because I did not have to go to the office to make a cash transfer.

Annisa (a member of the community) shared the same sentiment, noting the impact of sharia financial inclusion on Yaa Bunayya Mart. The following is the interview.

"*I used to have trouble transferring money or withdrawing cash; I had to go to the bank. After learning about cash transfers at Yaa Bunayya Mart, I often transfer and withdraw money. It's closer to home.*"

These findings suggest that the inclusion model developed by the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school not only expands geographic access to Islamic financial services but also reduces transaction barriers that have long been a challenge for the community. By leveraging boarding schools as hubs for the community's daily needs. This demonstrates that the success of Islamic financial inclusion is not solely determined by the presence of bank branches but also by the ability to provide easily accessible services through local institutions that have earned the community's trust.

From the perspective of financial inclusion theory, these findings suggest that the dimensions of accessibility and usage can be strengthened through collaboration between formal financial institutions and community-based organizations. The presence of financial service agents in pesantren for financial inclusion does not necessarily require expanding branch networks; rather, it can be achieved through institutional partnership models that leverage social capital and community ties as instruments for service delivery.

This finding is relevant to research on Islamic educational institutions (pesantren) that adopt collaborative models with stakeholders, integrate digital literacy, and practice value-based leadership, demonstrating their ability to promote inclusive Islamic finance(Desky et al., 2025). The establishment of micro cooperatives with Islamic banking is accepted by Indonesians because its flexibility supports economic welfare(Santoso & Ahmad, 2016). Branchless banking services (agents) are a form of the company's responsibility towards product, social and community sustainability (Zahid et al., 2021). Thus, Bank Syariah Indonesia's implementation of Islamic financial inclusion, which provides branchless services at the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school, demonstrates that Islamic banking has a moral responsibility and supports the company’s sustainability as it expands its services to the community.

Other research findings indicate that BSI Smart Agents play a role in improving access to Islamic banking services for rural communities through easier transactions, expanded service coverage, and financial literacy education (Salsabila, 2024). The presence of these agents also provides economic benefits for both the community and the agents themselves through easier access to financial services and additional income opportunities.

These findings are consistent with this study, which shows that the BSI Agent at the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding School in Papua contributes to improving access to Islamic financial services for students and the community surrounding the Islamic boarding school. However, unlike previous studies that focused on the general public, this study found that BSI Agents also function as an Islamic financial inclusion instrument based within the boarding school, supporting the transactional needs of students, their guardians, and the surrounding community, thereby strengthening the role of the boarding school as a center for Islamic economic and financial empowerment.

However, this study offers a more specific perspective by demonstrating that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are not merely venues for program implementation but function as institutional hubs that integrate community economic activities with Sharia branchless banking services. Thus, the main contribution of this study lies in strengthening the concept of pesantren-based Islamic educational institutions transforming into mediators that connect communities with formal financial services in a more accessible and sustainable manner.

Collaboration with Bank Muamalat Presents the Muamalat Cash Mobile

The research findings indicate that the collaboration between the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school and Bank Muamalat through mobile cash services is an effective strategy for expanding Islamic financial inclusion. The availability of these services not only improves public access to Islamic banking services but also reinforces the role of boarding schools as institutional intermediaries that bridge formal financial services with the needs of the community. This finding is supported by a statement from Ahmad Basudin, the director of the Yaa Buanyya Islamic boarding school, who explained that:

> "*The existence of the mobile Muamalat car service has helped many people because they have not had access to Islamic finance, especially since most of the customers here are women who sell and do not understand the Islamic financial cycle, plus what we all know is that in Jayapura city, especially in Heram District, the provision of Islamic financial access is practically non-existent.*" *This Muamalat bank car is at the boarding school every Thursday from 09.00 to 14.00 WIT.* "*Many parents of students also feel helped by the mobile Muamalat service, so while picking up their children, they can also withdraw money, save, or do other things.*"

This statement is supported by the results of an interview with Caca (Mumalat Mobile Cash Teller). The following is an explanation.

> "*We started operating at the Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School a long time ago. However, we stopped operating for a while because of relocation. In 2023, we resumed operations at the Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School to serve customers in the Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School environment.*" *We provide several services to customers, including account opening, withdrawals, cash deposits, savings, and market-appropriate products such as children's education savings, Hajj savings for parents, Prima savings with prizes, and deposits. In general, Muamalat Bank itself provides many products and services, but we focus on the needs of the Islamic boarding school environment, such as children's savings.*"

The impact of the Mumalat cash mobile service has also been felt by the communities. In an interview with Suharti (a member of the public), the following was explained:

> "*My child happens to go to school here, and the school has a savings program for its students. I am also a Mumalat Bank customer who has benefited from this cash van. Previously, if I wanted to save, I had to go to Ruko Dok II, which was far away. Now that the cash van service is available, it's much more affordable for me to save for myself and my child.*"

Bunga (the Manager of the Honai Sejahtera Papua Micro Waqf Bank) expressed the same sentiment. Here is her explanation:

> "*With this mobile cash service, I can easily access Islamic financial services. The service I always use is saving. Because the Islamic boarding school has partnered with Bank Muamalat, it's been a huge help.*"

An interpretation of these findings suggests that collaboration between Islamic boarding Schools and Islamic banking institutions can reduce both geographical and operational barriers to accessing formal financial services. In Jayapura, which has limited Islamic banking service networks, the presence of mobile cash units provides a service distribution mechanism that is closer to the user's access to and utilization of Islamic financial services. Thus, Islamic boarding schools serve as service delivery locations and function as institutional intermediaries that bridge the gap between community needs and formal financial services.

From the perspective of financial inclusion theory, expanding access is determined not only by the number of service outlets but also by the financial system's ability to provide services that are easily accessible, tailored to the needs of the community, and sustainable. The findings of this study show that a collaborative approach between community-based organizations and formal financial institutions can strengthen the dimensions of accessibility and usage as key components of Islamic financial inclusion in Indonesia.

These findings are relevant to previous research, which found that one barrier to financial inclusion is banks' inability to develop branch-based banking models. In developing countries, policies that can be implemented include expanding banking services through banking agents to reach a wider population (Shaikh et al., 2023). The availability of branchless Islamic banking services, such as cash cards, can increase consumer satisfaction and ensure that Islamic financial inclusion is experienced by all members of society (Ashraf et al., 2025). In addition, the existence of branchless Islamic banking services can expand customer reach to areas not yet served by Islamic banks (Al Arif & Cahyani, 2021). Thus, innovation in branchless services, including mobile cash machines and banking agents, is a relevant strategy for strengthening Islamic financial inclusivity.

However, this study offers a more specific contribution by demonstrating that the effectiveness of these services is enhanced when they are embedded within the pesantren ecosystem, which is characterized by social legitimacy, close-knit communities, and a high level of public trust. Thus, the Islamic financial inclusion model identified in this study relies not only on innovations in banking services but also on institutional synergy between pesantren and Islamic banks to expand financial access for the community.

Figure 3. Bank Muamalat Cash Mobile Service

The Presence of Baitul Maal Hidayatullah

The research findings indicate that Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) serves as an Islamic social finance instrument that expands Sharia financial inclusion through the collection and distribution of zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf (ZISWAF) funds to the community. BMH not only strengthens the social functions of Islamic boarding schools but also provides access to social financing that supports the economic empowerment of the surrounding community. This finding is supported by a statement from Sahriadi, the Head of BMH Jayapura, who explained that:

> "*BMH itself can be considered an Islamic philanthropic institution that has existed for 15 years. Its primary task is to collect zakat (alms), infaq (donations), and sedekah (charity) and administer waqf (endowments). The proceeds are usually distributed to eligible recipients or Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). BMH was founded to find alternative funding for Islamic boarding school operations.*"

The impact of Baitul Maal Hidayatullah on the community, as conveyed by Sudirman (Mustahik). The following is an explanation.

> "*Thank God, the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School not only provides us with religious education but also provides us with economic benefits. In addition to the families who work at the Islamic Boarding School, the Baitul Maal Hidayatullah provides us with zakat (alms) to use as capital for our business, which helps us continue our endeavors.*"

Ika (Mustahik) felt the same way about the benefits of the Islamic boarding school and Baitul Maal Hidayatullah. Here is her explanation:

> "*I always participate in activities organized by the Islamic boarding school. It is great for us as a community, as it increases our religious knowledge. I also receive assistance from the BMH (Body of Muslim Community) for my business. I feel the immense benefit of the Islamic boarding school and BMH.*"

These findings suggest that Islamic financial inclusion in the context of Islamic boarding schools is realized not only through the provision of formal banking and financing services but also through the optimization of Islamic social finance instruments. The presence of BMH demonstrates that access to ZISWAF funds can serve as a mechanism for economic empowerment that reaches community groups lacking access to formal financial institutions or commercial financing.

From the perspective of Islamic social finance, ZISWAF and qardhul hasan serve not only as instruments for the redistribution of wealth but also as mechanisms for improving well-being and expanding financial inclusion for vulnerable groups. Therefore, the success of Islamic financial inclusion is not measured solely by access to banking products but also by the public's ability to access productive and sustainable social finance instruments.

This finding is certainly relevant to previous research, which emphasized that Islamic social finance for wealth redistribution, such as zakat, infaq, shadaqah, waqf, and qardhul hasan, plays a role in increasing Islamic financial inclusion(Zulkhibri, 2016). In line with this research, Islamic social finance instruments can be used to improve social justice and financial inclusion of poor Muslim communities in Nigeria (Zauro et al., 2020).

In this study, Islamic boarding schools played a significant role in supporting Islamic financial inclusion in Jayapura City, despite the limited number of Islamic financial institutions. Optimizing the Islamic financial services provided by Islamic boarding schools underscores their role as centers of economic empowerment in realizing social justice. This role aligns with the indicators of Islamic financial inclusion, namely accessibility, availability, utilization of financial products, and the suitability of financial services to community needs, as well as the impacts that occur after the community receives financial services (Holle et al., 2023) . Thus, the contribution of this study not only demonstrates that BMH plays a role in the distribution of ZISWAF funds but also offers the perspective that Islamic social finance is an integral part of the pesantren-based Islamic financial inclusion model. These findings expand the concept of Islamic financial inclusion from an approach oriented toward formal financial services to an ecosystem-based approach that integrates microfinance, transaction services, Islamic banking, and Islamic philanthropy instruments into a single community empowerment model.

Figure 4. The researchers conducted interviews with the leaders of the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School and Baitul Maal Hidayatullah Jayapura.

Based on the analysis of all research findings, it is evident that the roles of the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school and the Hidayatullah Islamic boarding school are not limited to those of religious educational institution;s rathe,r they have evolved into strategic actors in building a Shariah financial inclusion ecosystem at the community level. Empirical findings indicate that these Islamic boarding schools perform an intermediary function through various integrated instruments, including the provision of Islamic microfinance through the Micro Waqf Bank, financial transaction services via Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) Agent, Bank Muamalat mobile cash units, and the optimization of Islamic social finance through Baitul Maal Hidayatullah.

The integration of these services creates a mechanism that broadens public access to the uptake of financial products and services in line with community empowerment. Consequently, this study proposes a conceptual model of Islamic financial inclusion centered on Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren), positioning pesantren as an institutional hub for integration between Islamic financial institutions, Islamic social finance instruments, and the community as the beneficiary.

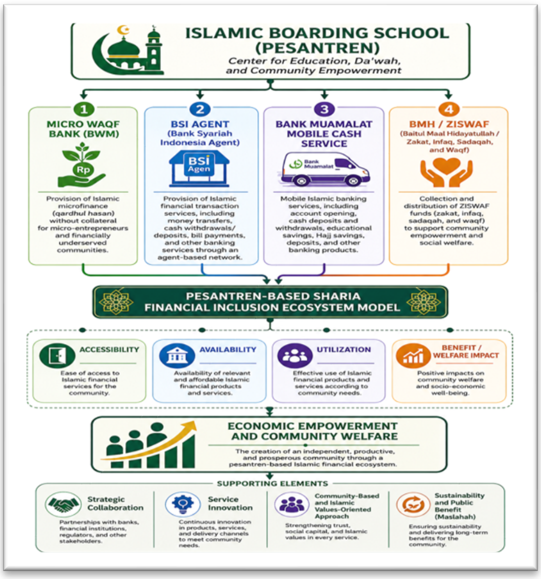

Figure 5. The Conceptual Model of Islamic Financial Inclusion in Islamic Boarding School

Unlike previous studies, which generally examined the role of each institution separately, the model developed in this study shows that pesantren function as an institutional hub that integrates sharia financing services, transaction services, and Islamic social finance within a single financial inclusion ecosystem geared towards community empowerment and welfare.

4. DISCUSSION

Ease of Access (Accessibility) to Sharia Financial Services

Accessibility theory states that accessibility is the ease of accessing services and utilizing financial products from Islamic financial institutions (IFIs). The ability of communities around Islamic boarding schools to access Islamic financial services and Islamic philanthropic institutions affects the ease with which they obtain them.

The pivotal role of Yaa Bunayya and Hidayatullah Islamic boarding schools in enhancing community access to Islamic financial services is evident in the research results. Through various innovations, these boarding schools create opportunities for all community members, especially those lacking access to formal financial institutions, such as banks. These innovations promote community access to Islamic financial services. Supporting institutions, including Bank Waqf Mikro Honai Sejahtera Papua, Yaa Bunayya Mart (an agent of Bank Syariah Indonesia), Bank Muamalat's mobile cash service, and Baitul

Maal Hidayatullah, help the community easily access Islamic financial services. Thus, Islamic boarding schools serve as religious educational centers and intermediaries connecting the community with the Islamic financial system.

The theoretical framework of Islamic financial inclusion identifies three key indicators. The first indicator is the affordability of access(Holle et al., 2023). The findings of this study align with previous research, showing that Islamic boarding school business units, such as Baitul Maal Wa Tamwil in Purworejo, aim to provide the community with access to Islamic financial services, specifically Islamic microfinancing. This program has a direct impact on poverty alleviation across various aspects, including financing applications, disbursements, utilization, and repayment (Prasetyo et al., 2018). The presence of Islamic financial institutions in Islamic boarding schools, such as Micro Waqf Banks, BMTs, and banking institution agents that provide micro-financing, can promote Islamic financial inclusion through these schools. This further reaffirms the role of Islamic boarding schools not only as religious educational institutions but also as community empowerment institutions (Falikul Isbah, 2020).

The findings of this study also reinforce the perspective of accessibility theory, which identifies the proximity of services, ease of procedures, and affordability as key factors in increasing community participation in financial services. In this context, Islamic boarding schools function as financial access points capable of reducing the geographical, administrative, and social barriers that have hitherto limited the community's access to formal financial services. These results align with the findings of Abdullah et al. (2021), who confirmed that the integration of Islamic financial institutions with the pesantren ecosystem can expand the reach of services to previously underserved communities. Furthermore, these findings reinforce the argument of Falikul Isbah (2020) that the transformation of pesantren from religious educational institutions into centers for community empowerment can generate broader socio-economic impacts, including improved public access to inclusive and sustainable Islamic financial services.

Availability of Islamic Financial Products

Sharia financial inclusion is defined as the availability of Sharia financial products and their use as a means of fulfilling the community's need for access to Sharia financial institutions (Hidayah et al., 2023). The availability of Islamic financial products offers an alternative source of financing for communities. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) play a strategic role in this process by collaborating with Islamic financial institutions to extend their services as agents and increase financial inclusivity. Additionally, these schools function as Islamic philanthropic institutions, enhancing their socio-religious influence on the community. Modern Islamic boarding schools, such as Hidayatullah Holtekamp in Jayapura, have innovated by creating philanthropic organizations such as the Aimil Zakat Institute.

These findings align with previous research, indicating that waqf funds used to finance programs for low-income Muslim communities boost the economy and increase financial inclusion(Zauro et al., 2020). This is how the Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School Micro Waqf Bank manages Waqf funds. Waqf funds are integrated into Islamic microfinance and are accessible to low-income communities. Furthermore, Islamic social financial services, such as zakat, are collaborative efforts between institutions and are accessible to the community, aiming to empower communities to become self-sufficient (Asni, 2025). The collaboration between the Hidayatullah Islamic boarding school and Baitul Maal Hidayatullah demonstrates a sustainable model for providing communities with access to Islamic social finance that empowers them to become independent.

The findings of this study reinforce the availability theory, which identifies the availability of financial products and services as a key factor in driving Islamic financial inclusion. The presence of Bank Wakaf Mikro, BSI Agents, and Baitul Maal Hidayatullah demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools are capable of providing a range of Islamic financial services, both commercial and social, tailored to the needs of the community. These findings align with those of Zauro et al. (2020) and Asni (2025), who confirmed that the integration of Islamic financing and Islamic social finance contributes to improved financial access and community empowerment. However, unlike previous studies, which generally focused on a single type of Islamic financial institution or instrument, this study found the integration of various Islamic financial services within the pesantren ecosystem, ranging from microfinance and banking services to Islamic philanthropy, which collectively expands the availability of financial products for students and the communities surrounding the pesantren.

Utilizing Sharia Financial Products to Improve Welfare

Islamic boarding schools need to increase collaboration with various financial institution stakeholders to expand financial inclusion, especially in Sharia finance. This has been done by the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school, which has collaborated with Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) and Bank Muamalat Jayapura Branch to meet the community's need for Sharia financial services. In addition to collaborating with various stakeholders, the Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school has been entrusted by the Financial Services Authority (OJK) to develop productive waqf through a management called the Micro Waqf Bank (BWM). As a forum for empowering the community around the boarding school, it emphasizes sharia contracts as a distinguishing strength, setting it apart from other microfinance institutions. Conversely, the Hidayatullah Holtekamp Islamic boarding school strengthens its existence by providing Islamic social funds in collaboration with Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) Jayapura to collect and distribute zakat, infaq, and alms to communities in need. Both boarding schools play different roles in society. The Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School plays an empowering role, while the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School plays a social role.

The concept of utilizing Islamic financial products is based on their perceived benefits for achieving societal well-being. This concept aligns with previous research on the use of Islamic social financial instruments, such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, to help save micro and small businesses from bankruptcy (Ascarya, 2021). Apart from zakat, waqf is an Islamic financial instrument that continues to be developed to achieve sustainability and community welfare (Maulina et al., 2016). The use of Islamic banking financial products indicates the community's satisfaction with them, which, in turn, helps expand inclusion within the community (Ashraf et al., 2025) The collaboration between Yaa Bunayya and Hidayatullah Islamic boarding schools, which utilize Islamic social finance funds and work with Islamic banks to expand Islamic financial inclusion, aligns with the indicators of Islamic financial inclusion, namely the use of Islamic financial products aimed at improving welfare.

Furthermore, this study found that the Islamic financial inclusion model developed by pesantren not only focuses on providing commercial financial services but also integrates Islamic social finance instruments within a single community empowerment ecosystem. The Waqf Micro Bank, Islamic banking agency services, and mobile cash units expand community access to formal financial services, while Baitul Maal Hidayatullah strengthens the redistributive dimension through the utilization of zakat, infak, sadaqah, and wakaf funds. The integration of these two instruments demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools have implemented a holistic approach to Islamic financial inclusion, which not only improves financial access but also strengthens the economic capacity of the community through empowerment and social protection. This finding enriches the literature on Islamic financial inclusion, which has hitherto tended to separate the commercial financial sector from the Islamic social finance sector. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, these two sectors complement each other to achieve sustainable community welfare.

Unique Characteristics of the Pesantren-Based Sahria Financial Inclusion Model in Papua

Unlike regions with relatively adequate Islamic financial infrastructure, the development of Islamic financial inclusion in Papua faces geographical challenges, limited formal service networks, and low public access to Islamic financial institutions. These conditions indicate that expanding financial inclusion cannot rely solely on the addition of service branches or the expansion of formal financial institutions but requires an institutional approach capable of reaching communities more directly. In this context, Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) hold a strategic position, not only as religious educational institutions but also as community-based institutions possessing social legitimacy, local networks, and the capacity to connect communities with various Islamic financial services.

In contrast to previous research findings, which generally portray pesantren as managing a single type of service, such as BMT, Micro Waqf Bank, or Zakat collection agencies separately, this study demonstrates that pesantren in Papua have developed an integrative model of Islamic financial inclusion. This model combines microfinance, banking, and mobile banking services and Islamic social finance instruments within a single, mutually supportive institutional ecosystem. Through this model, Islamic boarding schools are transformed into institutional hubs that expand access, increase service utilization, and strengthen the sustainable economic empowerment of the community.

In the context of Papua, the integration of commercial financial services and Islamic social finance facilitated by Islamic boarding schools demonstrates that strengthening Sharia financial inclusion does not depend solely on the expansion of the banking network but also on the optimization of local institutions that possess social legitimacy and close ties with the community. This finding broadens the conceptualization of Islamic financial inclusion from a service provider-oriented approach to an ecosystem-based approach (ecosystem-based financial inclusion), in which Islamic boarding schools function as institutional hubs that integrate various Islamic financial instruments to support the sustainable empowerment and welfare of the community.

The main contribution of this research lies in the development of a model for Islamic financial inclusion based on Islamic boarding schools, which have emerged in Papua, a region with limited access to formal Islamic financial infrastructure. The resulting model demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools can be transformed into institutional hubs that integrate Islamic microfinance, banking transaction services, mobile banking services, and Islamic social finance instruments within a single ecosystem focused on community empowerment. These findings expand the literature on Islamic financial inclusion by offering an ecosystem-based approach that emphasizes not only service accessibility but also institutional collaboration, the utilization of social capital, and the sustainability of economic empowerment in regions with distinctive geographical and social characteristics.

5. CONLUSION

This study aims to analyze the Islamic financial inclusion models implemented by Islamic boarding schools and their contribution to improving public access to Islamic financial services. The results show that Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school and Hidayatullah Islamic boarding school have developed different yet complementary Islamic financial inclusion models. Yaa Bunayya Islamic boarding school focuses on providing access to Islamic finansial services through the Bank Wakaf Mikro, Islamic banking agents, and mobile cash services, whilst Hidayatullah Islamic boarding school strengthens inclusion through the optimisation of Islamic social finance instruments in the form of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah. Both models have proven to contribute to improving the accessibility, availability, and utilization of Islamic financial services for communities that previously had limited access to formal financial institutions.

Theoretically, this study expands the literature on Islamic financial inclusion by demonstrating that Islamic boarding schools can serve as centers for financial intermediation and community empowerment through the integration of commercial and Islamic social finance services. In practical terms, these findings have implications for the government, regulators, Islamic financial institutions, and boarding school administrators to strengthen collaboration in developing community-based models of Islamic financial inclusion, particularly in areas with limited access to financial services. The limitation of this study lies in its focus, which covers only Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine the role of other religious institutions, such as mosques or Islamic philanthropic organizations, in expanding Islamic financial inclusion and improving community welfare.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS:

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding this study and the publication of this article.

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