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# Islamic Philanthropy for the Next Generation: A Systematic Review on Waqf and Youth Empowerment through Skill Building

**Wali Saputra**
**State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau**
**wali.saputra@uin-suska.ac.id**

**Abstract**

This study aims to examine the role of waqf as an instrument of Islamic philanthropy in empowering the younger generation through skill development, employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA protocol. The study analyzes 55 selected articles retrieved from various international academic databases published between 2013 and 2024. The findings reveal that waqf has undergone a significant transformation from its traditional function into more productive and digitally driven models capable of sustainably supporting youth empowerment initiatives. Three primary models of waqf implementation are identified: asset-based productive waqf, cash waqf invested in sharia-compliant financial instruments, and community-based waqf. Waqf-supported empowerment programs predominantly focus on developing digital, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills aligned with the demands of the modern labor market. The effectiveness of these programs is largely determined by the quality of nazhir governance, the integration of digital technologies, and the strength of multi-sector partnerships. However, several critical challenges persist, including limited human resource capacity, fragmented regulatory frameworks, and the absence of robust monitoring and long-term impact evaluation systems. This study further proposes the WAQF-EMPOWER conceptual framework as an integrative model to optimize the role of waqf in youth empowerment. Overall, the findings underscore the strategic potential of waqf in fostering sustainable human capital development among young generations, grounded in Islamic values.

**Keywords: Productive Waqf; Islamic Philanthropy; Youth Empowerment; Skill Development**

## Introduction

Islamic philanthropy constitutes a fundamental pillar within the socio-economic system of Muslim societies, with a long-standing history of promoting social welfare. It encompasses various instruments, including zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, which collectively function as mechanisms for wealth redistribution. In the global context, Islamic philanthropy has evolved into a system capable of reaching millions of beneficiaries worldwide. The rapid growth of the Islamic economy in recent decades has further reinforced its role as a significant instrument for social development. A deeper understanding of Islamic philanthropy is therefore essential to optimize its contributions to society, particularly for the younger generation (Mohsin, 2013).

Waqf, as one of the primary instruments of Islamic philanthropy, holds immense potential for supporting economic empowerment within the Muslim community. Historically, waqf has played a critical role in financing educational, healthcare, and social institutions across the Islamic world. The transformation of waqf management from traditional to contemporary models offers greater opportunities for optimizing waqf assets. Through modern management approaches, waqf can be administered more productively and transparently to generate sustainable benefits. Consequently, the revitalization of waqf has become a key agenda in many Muslim-majority countries aiming to enhance its socio-economic impact (Cizakca, 2011).

Muslim youth today face multifaceted challenges in the era of globalization, which demands mastery of skills and competencies aligned with modern labor market needs. High youth unemployment rates in many Muslim countries represent a serious issue requiring comprehensive and sustainable solutions. Skill development has emerged as a central strategy to address unemployment and economic vulnerability among youth. Competency-based approaches have proven effective in enhancing employability and competitiveness in the global labor market. Integrating Islamic values into youth empowerment programs further adds a moral and spiritual dimension, strengthening resilience and motivation in facing contemporary challenges (Azam et al., 2016).

Despite its vast potential, the relationship between waqf and youth empowerment remains underexplored in academic literature. Preliminary studies suggest that waqf funds can be strategically utilized to finance vocational training and skill development programs for young people. Productive waqf models oriented toward youth empowerment need to be further developed and tested across diverse socio-cultural contexts. Systematic research on this relationship can provide valuable guidance for practitioners and policymakers in designing effective programs. A systematic review is therefore an appropriate method to synthesize existing findings and identify research gaps that warrant further investigation (Kahf, 1998).

Islamic philanthropy is not merely transactional; it embodies profound social and spiritual values. Waqf practices have, for centuries, served as effective mechanisms for building and sustaining social infrastructure within Muslim societies. In the contemporary era, waqf faces new challenges, including the need to adapt to modern legal systems and professional management standards. Innovations such as cash waqf and waqf sukuk have opened new avenues for mobilizing significantly larger resources compared to conventional models. The development of an integrated Islamic philanthropy ecosystem can provide a strong foundation for various community empowerment initiatives, including those targeting youth (Hoexter, 2002).

Youth empowerment through skill development represents a long-term investment that yields multidimensional benefits for individuals, families, and society at large. Effective skill-building programs must be designed based on actual labor market demands and local potentials. A holistic approach to youth empowerment encompasses technical, social, and spiritual dimensions that complement one another. The involvement of communities and religious institutions has been shown to enhance both the effectiveness and sustainability of such programs. Waqf, as a philanthropic instrument, can serve as a stable and sustainable funding source for skill-based youth empowerment initiatives (Hassan & Shahid, 2010).

Systematic review as a research methodology offers a rigorous and transparent approach to synthesizing scientific evidence from diverse sources. It enables researchers to comprehensively identify patterns, trends, and gaps within existing literature. In the context of Islamic philanthropy, systematic reviews facilitate the integration of findings from multiple disciplines, including Islamic economics, sociology, and education. Standardized protocols such as PRISMA provide a structured framework to ensure research quality and reproducibility. Applying systematic review methods to the study of waqf and youth empowerment can provide a strong empirical foundation for policy and practice (Tranfield et al., 2003).

Youth unemployment in Muslim-majority countries has reached alarming levels, posing a serious threat to social and economic stability. Data indicate that youth unemployment rates in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are among the highest globally. One major contributing factor is the failure of educational systems to equip youth with relevant skills. Vocational training and skill development programs supported by Islamic philanthropic institutions offer a promising alternative solution. Investing in youth human capital through waqf aligns with the maqashid shariah, particularly in preserving intellect and human well-being (Salih, 1999).

Historically, educational waqf has been the backbone of the Islamic education system, producing prominent scholars and intellectuals. Renowned institutions such as Al-Azhar in Egypt and the Nizamiyah in Baghdad were established and sustained through waqf mechanisms. In the modern era, educational waqf must adapt to contemporary needs by incorporating not only religious studies but also science and technology. The development of waqf for vocational education and skill training represents a contemporary extension of traditional waqf practices. Innovative models of educational waqf can serve as strategic tools for empowering Muslim youth to face 21st-century challenges (Ariff, 1991).

Research on the impact of Islamic philanthropy-based youth empowerment programs remains limited and requires greater academic attention. Existing studies are largely descriptive and lack strong empirical evidence regarding program effectiveness. This research gap hinders policymakers in designing and allocating resources efficiently. More systematic and evidence-based research is needed to understand the mechanisms, success factors, and long-term impacts of waqf-based youth programs. This study seeks to address this gap through a comprehensive and standardized systematic review approach (Atan & Johari, 2017).

Maqashid shariah, as a normative framework in Islam, emphasizes the protection and development of five fundamental elements: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. In the context of youth empowerment, it provides a strong justification for investment in education, training, and skill development. Waqf instruments oriented toward youth empowerment directly contribute to achieving maqashid shariah, particularly in safeguarding intellect and future generations. A maqashid-based approach ensures that empowerment programs are not only technically effective but also aligned with Islamic values. Integrating maqashid principles into waqf policies offers strategic guidance for optimizing its impact on youth (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007).

Islamic social entrepreneurship presents a new paradigm for economic empowerment by integrating spiritual values with modern business practices. Waqf-supported social entrepreneurship can foster an ecosystem conducive to developing both skills and entrepreneurial mindsets among Muslim youth. Various initiatives have demonstrated promising outcomes in job creation and income generation. Youth, as agents of change, play a strategic role in driving innovation and social transformation through value-based entrepreneurship. Waqf support for business incubators and mentorship programs can accelerate the development of a sustainable Islamic entrepreneurial ecosystem (Shaikh et al., 2017).

Digital technology has created new opportunities for innovation in the management and distribution of waqf funds. Sharia-compliant fintech platforms integrating blockchain technology can enhance transparency and public trust while expanding fundraising reach. Digitalization also enables the delivery of online youth empowerment programs, extending benefits globally. Digital waqf, particularly cash waqf via online platforms, appeals to younger generations who are more technologically engaged. Technological innovation thus introduces new dimensions to youth empowerment, overcoming geographical and bureaucratic constraints (Saiti et al., 2021).

Social justice and inequality reduction are core objectives of Islamic philanthropy, distinguishing it from conventional systems. Waqf, as a perpetual wealth redistribution mechanism, offers more sustainable impact compared to temporary aid. Youth empowerment programs funded by waqf emphasize capacity building, enabling beneficiaries to achieve economic independence. Asset-based community development approaches supported by waqf have proven more effective in fostering sustainable social change. Integrating waqf into poverty reduction and youth empowerment strategies can accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Muslim countries (Shirazi, 2014).

Good governance in waqf institutions is a critical prerequisite for the effectiveness of youth empowerment programs. Issues of transparency, accountability, and professionalism remain major challenges in many waqf organizations worldwide. Governance reforms through the adoption of international standards and best practices are essential to enhance public trust. Supportive regulations and effective oversight by governments and civil society can promote responsible waqf management. Strong governance ensures that waqf resources are utilized efficiently to support impactful youth programs (Pitchay et al., 2015).

Character education and the development of Islamic values are integral components of comprehensive youth empowerment programs. Effective skill-building initiatives must not only provide technical competencies but also foster strong moral character. The integration of religious education, ethics, and practical skills reflects a holistic approach consistent with Islamic teachings. Waqf institutions managing such programs must ensure equal emphasis on spiritual, moral, and technical dimensions. Youth equipped with both skills and strong character represent valuable assets for societal and national development (Noor & Pickup, 2009).

International comparisons of waqf practices for youth empowerment reveal significant variations in approaches, mechanisms, and outcomes. Malaysia, as a pioneer in modern waqf management, has developed innovative models that can serve as references for other countries. Experiences from Indonesia, Turkey, and Bangladesh provide valuable insights into key success factors. Comparative studies can identify best practices adaptable to different local contexts. Facilitating knowledge transfer among Muslim countries is essential to strengthen waqf-based youth empowerment globally (Noordin et al., 2017).

The socio-economic impact of Islamic philanthropy-based youth empowerment programs must be systematically measured to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency. Developing appropriate indicators and metrics remains a methodological challenge. The Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach, adapted to Islamic values, offers a comprehensive evaluation framework. Empirical evidence is crucial to convince donors and policymakers of the value of investing in such programs. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems should therefore be a priority for researchers and practitioners (Ibrahim & Nor, 2014).

The role of women in Islamic philanthropy and youth empowerment programs requires greater attention in both academic research and practice. Young Muslim women face dual challenges of gender discrimination and limited access to economic and educational resources. Waqf programs specifically designed for female empowerment can yield multiplier effects for families and communities. Evidence suggests that investing in women generates higher returns than focusing solely on men. Incorporating a gender perspective is essential to ensure equity and program effectiveness (Hasan & Siraj, 2017).

Partnerships among waqf institutions, the private sector, and government can create synergies that enhance program impact and sustainability. The Public-Private-Waqf Partnership (PPWP) model offers an innovative mechanism for mobilizing resources and expertise. The private sector can contribute through training facilities, curriculum development, and employment opportunities. Governments can support through conducive regulations, tax incentives, and matching fund programs. Well-managed multi-sector partnerships can significantly accelerate youth empowerment outcomes (Budiman & Kusuma, 2019).

Innovation in waqf products and services is key to enhancing relevance and effectiveness in modern youth empowerment contexts. Productive waqf generating sustainable income can fund long-term skill development programs. Technology-based waqf products, including digital waqf and crowdfunding, can attract youth participation as both donors and beneficiaries. Micro-waqf models enable small contributions, broadening the donor base and fostering collective ownership. Diversifying waqf assets into youth-relevant sectors such as technology and creative industries can further enhance program impact (Ahmed, 2007).

The literature on Islamic philanthropy and youth empowerment highlights a significant gap between potential and actual practice. Many programs fail to achieve desired outcomes due to weak planning, implementation, and evaluation. In-depth research on success and failure factors is essential to improve future program effectiveness. Evidence-based approaches must become standard practice in designing and implementing waqf-based youth programs. A comprehensive systematic review will provide a solid knowledge base for developing more impactful initiatives (Wibowo et al., 2019).

The perspectives of Muslim youth on waqf and Islamic philanthropy are rarely explored, despite their importance for effective program design. Surveys and qualitative studies indicate limited understanding of waqf among youth. Enhancing waqf literacy is therefore a critical prerequisite for successful empowerment programs. Early education on Islamic philanthropy can cultivate positive attitudes and lifelong giving habits. Programs that actively involve youth as both beneficiaries and change agents can generate significant multiplier effects within communities (Hassan & Abdul Latiff, 2009).

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population globally, provides a particularly relevant context for studying waqf and youth empowerment. The country possesses enormous waqf potential, including millions of hectares of endowed land, which remains underutilized. Existing waqf-based youth programs in Indonesia offer promising preliminary evidence of effectiveness. The evolving regulatory framework, including Law No. 41 of 2004 on waqf, supports innovation in waqf management. Indonesia’s experience can serve as a valuable model for other Muslim countries (Sadeq, 2002).

This study responds to the urgent need for a comprehensive synthesis of knowledge on the role of waqf in youth empowerment through skill development. Employing a systematic review approach, it seeks to identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical evidence from studies conducted across different regions. The findings are expected to contribute significantly to the theoretical development of Islamic philanthropy while offering practical implications for practitioners and policymakers. Additionally, this study aims to identify future research priorities to strengthen the empirical foundation of waqf-based youth programs. Ultimately, it represents an important step toward developing a more effective and impactful Islamic philanthropy ecosystem for the next generation of Muslim youth (Sarea, 2012).

## Methods

The research method employed in this study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA framework. This approach was selected because it enables the systematic and structured identification, evaluation, and synthesis of empirical evidence related to the role of waqf in empowering the younger generation through skill development. By applying the SLR method, the study ensures a transparent and replicable analytical framework, thereby producing findings that are both objective and comprehensive. The primary focus of the study is to address three key research questions: the implementation of waqf as an instrument of Islamic philanthropy in youth empowerment programs, the types of skills developed through waqf-based initiatives, and the key success factors and challenges in integrating waqf with youth empowerment efforts.

In the data collection process, the literature search was conducted systematically across several internationally recognized academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest. Additional sources were obtained from specialized journals in Islamic economics and finance, including those published by the Indonesian Waqf Board. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords in both English and Indonesian to broaden the scope of the literature, particularly from countries with significant Muslim populations.

To ensure both quality and relevance, the study applied strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. Selected articles were peer-reviewed publications from 2013 to 2024, available in full text, and explicitly addressing waqf in the context of youth empowerment, education, or skill development. In contrast, articles that were not peer-reviewed, lacked topical relevance, were duplicates, or focused solely on jurisprudential (fiqh) discussions of waqf without empirical or applied perspectives were excluded from the analysis.

The article selection process followed the stages outlined in the PRISMA protocol: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. From an initial pool of 847 articles, duplicate removal reduced the number to 612. Following title and abstract screening, 123 articles remained for full-text review. At the final stage, 68 articles were excluded due to methodological or substantive limitations, resulting in a final sample of 55 articles deemed suitable for in-depth analysis.

Subsequently, the methodological quality of each article was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), adapted to the context of waqf research. The evaluation was based on five key dimensions: clarity of research questions, appropriateness of research design, validity of data collection, reliability of analysis, and relevance of findings. This assessment was conducted independently by two reviewers to ensure objectivity, with a high level of inter-rater agreement indicated by a Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.81.

The final stage of the study involved data extraction and synthesis. Data were collected using a standardized form capturing key information such as study characteristics, type of waqf, target groups, and types of skills developed. The analysis employed an integrative narrative synthesis approach combined with inductive thematic analysis. NVivo 14 software was utilized to facilitate systematic data coding through the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The findings were subsequently validated through a member-checking process involving experts in waqf and youth empowerment to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the results.

## Results and Discussion

### Characteristics of Included Articles

Of the 55 articles analyzed, the majority were published between 2018 and 2024 (72.7%), reflecting growing academic interest in the role of waqf in human capital development, particularly in the post-COVID-19 context. Geographically, the studies span 18 countries, with the highest representation from Indonesia (29.1%), Malaysia (21.8%), Bangladesh (10.9%), and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (12.7%). This distribution highlights the prominence of waqf practices in Muslim-majority contexts. In terms of research design, qualitative studies dominate (40%), followed by quantitative studies (29.1%), case studies (20%), and mixed-methods approaches (10.9%). This pattern suggests that research on waqf for youth empowerment remains largely exploratory, with limited robust quantitative evidence, thereby indicating significant opportunities for further empirical investigation.

### Models of Waqf Implementation for Youth Empowerment

#### Productive Waqf as an Economic Foundation

The synthesis of the literature identifies three primary models of waqf implementation in youth empowerment. The first model is asset-based productive waqf, in which waqf assets (such as land or buildings) are managed commercially, and the generated returns are allocated to vocational training programs for youth. This model is most prevalent in Indonesia, where the Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI) has developed asset management schemes that generate surplus funds for scholarships and employment training. The second model is cash waqf, which is mobilized through digital platforms and invested in sharia-compliant financial instruments. The investment returns are subsequently used to fund skill development programs, including digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and financial education for youth aged 17–35. Malaysia, through Yayasan Waqaf Malaysia (YWM), has pioneered this model, successfully reaching more than 50,000 young beneficiaries since 2016. The third model is community-based waqf, organized by local institutions such as mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and youth organizations. This model integrates spiritual values with practical empowerment initiatives, creating a supportive ecosystem for both character development and technical skill enhancement among youth.

**Types of Skills Developed**

Thematic analysis reveals six major categories of skills facilitated through waqf-based youth programs. Digital and information technology skills are the most prevalent (78.2% of articles), reflecting the adaptation of waqf institutions to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Programs such as coding, graphic design, and digital marketing are increasingly common components of contemporary waqf initiatives. Entrepreneurial skills rank second (67.3%), with waqf-based business incubation programs expanding rapidly in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh. These programs not only provide technical training but also offer seed funding and mentorship through waqf-supported networks. Traditional vocational skills, including sustainable agriculture, handicrafts, and food processing, rank third (54.5%), particularly in rural contexts. Other important skill categories include Islamic financial literacy (45.5%), leadership and soft skills (40.0%), and agriculture and food security (25.5%). This distribution indicates a growing diversification of waqf-based skill development programs, although some areas remain underrepresented.

**Success Factors in Waqf-Based Youth Empowerment Programs**

**Governance and Transparency of Nazhir**

One of the most consistent success factors identified is the quality of governance among nazhir (waqf managers). A total of 47 out of 55 articles (85.5%) emphasize that transparency in fund management, accountability in reporting, and professional management practices are fundamental to the sustainability of youth empowerment programs. Empirical evidence from Malaysia indicates that waqf institutions adopting blockchain-based reporting systems experienced a 34% increase in public trust and a 28% growth in cash waqf contributions over three years. This improvement directly enhanced the capacity of youth empowerment programs. Conversely, studies from Nigeria and Sudan highlight weak governance as a major barrier to program sustainability.

**Integration of Digital Technology**

The integration of digital platforms in waqf management and benefit distribution significantly enhances the reach and effectiveness of youth empowerment initiatives. Sharia-compliant fintech platforms—such as Ethis Waqf (Singapore), Wakaf Hasanah (Malaysia), and Berwakaf.com

(Indonesia)—have successfully engaged youth segments previously underserved by conventional waqf institutions. A longitudinal study in Bangladesh demonstrates that youth participation as waqif (donors) increased by 210% between 2019 and 2023 through digital waqf programs. This trend indicates a paradigm shift, where youth are no longer merely beneficiaries but active contributors within the waqf ecosystem.

**Strategic Multi-Sector Partnerships**

The literature consistently shows that the most successful waqf-based youth empowerment programs are those built upon strategic multi-sector partnerships involving universities, government agencies, private sector actors, and civil society organizations. Such collaborations enable access to broader resources, expertise, and networks. In Indonesia, partnerships between BWI, Islamic universities, and technology companies have resulted in waqf-based business incubators that produced over 200 youth-led startups within three years. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, university-based waqf (waqf al-jami'ah) managed collaboratively with private sector stakeholders has demonstrated more measurable and sustainable empowerment outcomes.

**Challenges and Barriers to Implementation**

**Regulatory Fragmentation and Legal Frameworks**

A total of 41 articles (74.5%) identify heterogeneity in waqf legal frameworks across countries as a significant barrier. In jurisdictions with mixed legal systems, overlapping authority between civil and sharia law often complicates the productive management of waqf assets. For instance, while Indonesia has formalized cash waqf under Law No. 41 of 2004, broader regulatory frameworks for productive waqf remain under development. At the international level, the absence of standardized reporting and accreditation systems for waqf institutions limits cross-country comparison and the transfer of best practices, thereby slowing innovation and scalability.

**Limited Capacity of Nazhir Human Resources**

Another major challenge is the limited capacity of human resources managing waqf institutions. Deficiencies are particularly evident in financial management, impact-based program planning, and digital literacy. A 2021 survey by the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) found that only 23% of nazhir in OIC member countries possess formal training in finance or nonprofit management. This gap creates a mismatch between the substantial potential of waqf assets and the managerial capacity required to optimize them. Evidence from Turkey suggests that structured and continuous training programs for nazhir can improve asset management efficiency by up to 40%, leading to greater benefits for youth beneficiaries.

### Lack of Data and Monitoring Systems

The absence of standardized monitoring and evaluation systems presents both methodological and practical challenges. Only 18 out of 55 articles (32.7%) report long-term impact data (beyond three years), making it difficult to assess the sustainability and effectiveness of waqf-based youth programs. Furthermore, the lack of integrated national waqf databases in many countries results in poor documentation of programs, limiting opportunities for replication and scaling.

### Discussion: An Integrative Conceptual Framework

The synthesis of the reviewed studies enables the development of an integrative conceptual framework termed the WAQF-EMPOWER model (Waqf-based Assets for Quality Foundation in Empowering Muslim Power through Opportunities for Work and Education in Reaching). This framework consists of five interrelated components. First, Waqf Resource Mobilization, which involves the collection of waqf assets through both traditional and digital instruments, influenced by public literacy and fundraising platforms. Second, Professional Management, emphasizing competent, transparent, and performance-based nazhir. Third, Needs-Based Program Design, ensuring alignment between skill development initiatives and labor market demands as well as youth aspirations. Fourth, Ecosystem Networks, referring to multi-sector partnerships that expand access to resources and opportunities. Fifth, Sustainable Impact Measurement, highlighting the importance of integrated monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems. These components interact dynamically to form a virtuous cycle that fosters sustainable youth empowerment while strengthening the waqf ecosystem itself.

### Conclusion

This systematic review of 55 scholarly articles yields four principal conclusions. First, waqf has evolved beyond its traditional role in supporting mosques and basic religious education. In the contemporary context, particularly through productive and digital cash waqf, it has become a dynamic and responsive instrument for youth empowerment in the digital era. Second, digital and entrepreneurial skills emerge as the most dominant domains in waqf-based youth programs, reflecting alignment with 21st-century economic demands. However, notable gaps remain in soft skills, Islamic financial literacy, and social entrepreneurship—areas that are critically important in a rapidly changing global environment.

Third, the success of waqf-based youth empowerment programs is determined not merely by the scale of waqf assets but by governance quality, managerial capacity, technological integration, and the strength of multi-sector partnerships. Weak governance consistently undermines program effectiveness, regardless of resource availability. Fourth, a paradigm shift is underway in which youth are no longer passive beneficiaries but increasingly active participants—as donors (waqif), managers (nazhir), and innovators in developing new waqf instruments. This transformation has the potential to create a more dynamic, relevant, and sustainable waqf ecosystem for future generations.

**Policy Implications**

Based on these findings, several policy implications are proposed. For regulators and governments, there is a need to harmonize waqf legal frameworks to better accommodate digital innovations while strengthening oversight and asset protection mechanisms. Tax incentives for waqf contributions supporting youth empowerment programs should also be considered. For waqf institutions and nazhir, investment in human capital development—particularly in modern management and digital competencies—is essential. The adoption of standardized social impact reporting frameworks, such as Social Return on Investment (SROI) or Impact-Weighted Accounts, can enhance transparency and public trust. For academics and researchers, there is an urgent need for longitudinal empirical studies that measure the long-term socio-economic impact of waqf programs, as well as cross-country comparative research to identify transferable best practices.

**Limitations and Future Research Agenda**

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the focus on English and Indonesian publications may result in the underrepresentation of literature from Arabic and other linguistic contexts with rich waqf traditions. Second, the heterogeneity of methodologies and indicators across the reviewed studies limits the feasibility of conducting a more rigorous quantitative meta-analysis. Future research should prioritize: (1) longitudinal quasi-experimental studies to assess causal impacts of waqf programs on youth outcomes; (2) investigations into Islamic fintech innovations for mobilizing waqf among Millennials and Generation Z; (3) comparative analyses of governance models for nazhir; and (4) exploration of waqf's role in empowering marginalized youth populations, including those with disabilities and those in conflict-affected areas.

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