

Islamic Business Ethics in Student Start-Up Development

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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Background: The Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship (SCP) initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology aims to strengthen student entrepreneurship through innovation, market analysis, and ethical business practices. This study examines how Islamic business ethics contribute to strengthening marketing, operational, financial, and business planning aspects within the SCP framework.

Method: This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a literature review method. Data were collected from books, scientific articles, national journals, and official SCP program documents, and analyzed through descriptive qualitative techniques with triangulation to ensure validity.

Results: The findings indicate that SCP encourages evidence-based entrepreneurial decision-making through systematic market research, product innovation, and digital-based business development. From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, entrepreneurial practices must align with the principles of *fiqh al-mu'amalah*, emphasizing honesty, fairness, transparency, and accountability. Marketing activities should reflect ethical conduct consistent with Islamic legal and moral principles. Operational decisions integrate rational analysis with *maqasid al-shariah* through *tahqiq al-manath*. Financial practices prohibit *gharar* (uncertainty), unjust enrichment, and deceptive transactions, while business planning emphasizes accountability and transparency as reflected in the Qur'anic concept of *al-tijarah*.

Conclusion: The integration of Islamic business ethics within the SCP framework demonstrates that student entrepreneurship can simultaneously pursue economic viability, ethical responsibility, and social benefit. By aligning entrepreneurial activities with Sharia-based ethical values, the program contributes to developing innovative start-ups and morally grounded, socially responsible entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

The formulation of business concepts for student start-ups in Indonesia is closely related to the Student Creativity Program (SCP) in Entrepreneurship initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This program emphasizes the importance of market-based entrepreneurship,

where business ideas are developed based on the results of systematic market research, particularly through the identification of potential market opportunities and emerging consumer demands. In addition to market analysis, students are required to present clear descriptions of the technical specifications of the proposed business commodities, including production processes, product characteristics, and the distinctive competitive advantages that differentiate SCP products from similar products already available in the marketplace. Furthermore, the program requires the identification of the target market characteristics, including demographic and geographic distribution, consumer preferences, and purchasing potential, in order to ensure that the proposed business ideas are feasible and responsive to real market conditions.

From an analytical perspective, this requirement reflects the program's intention to encourage evidence-based entrepreneurial decision-making among students (Bastian, 2018). By integrating market research and product differentiation strategies, the SCP in Entrepreneurship not only promotes innovation but also strengthens the commercial viability and sustainability of student-led start-ups (Poggesi et al., 2020). Such an approach aligns with contemporary entrepreneurship frameworks that emphasize the importance of customer-oriented innovation and strategic market positioning in developing competitive business models (Lodha, 2022).

Moreover, the SCP in Entrepreneurship plays a strategic role in supporting the achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in higher education, particularly those related to student achievements, innovation capacity, and entrepreneurial competencies (Köylü, 2023). The program integrates both online and offline learning environments, reflecting the transformation of entrepreneurial ecosystems in the digital era (Kimbu, 2019). Through the adoption of digital platforms and technology-based marketing strategies, students are encouraged to develop start-up initiatives that are not only innovative but also capable of adapting to the rapidly evolving digital economy (Rusydiana & Izza, 2022).

In addition to technological and entrepreneurial competencies, the SCP program also highlights the importance of ethical considerations in business practices, particularly in financial management and stakeholder relations (Yusuf, 2021). Ethical start-ups are widely recognized as having a greater likelihood of achieving long-term sustainability, as they foster trust, accountability, and transparency in their operations. From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, these ethical principles correspond to fundamental values such as justice (*'adl*), honesty (*sidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and responsibility (*mas'uliyah*) in economic transactions. (Fauzi et al., 2023).

Stakeholders including customers, employees, investors, and the broader community are increasingly attentive to ethical issues in business activities. Consequently, integrating Islamic ethical values within entrepreneurial practices can strengthen (RM Ongare, AP Ikoha, 2021). the moral foundation of start-up development while simultaneously enhancing public trust and social legitimacy (Díaz, 2021). This alignment between entrepreneurship programs and ethical principles demonstrates that the SCP in Entrepreneurship not only functions as a platform for developing student innovation but also as a mechanism for fostering responsible and value-based entrepreneurship in Indonesia (<https://simbelmawa.kemdikbud.go.id>, 2026).

In the development of knowledge, Islam establishes connections across theological, political, economic, and legal dimensions (Sultana, 2022). Within the context of business digitalization, ethical concepts must align with both universal values and tentative values. Ethics plays a vital role in knowledge management because organizations that adhere to ethical principles tend to maintain long-term sustainability (Ahmetaj, 2023). Stakeholders such as customers, employees, and the broader community pay close attention to ethical considerations in business practices (Bharathi, 2019).

However, further examination is necessary regarding how the SCP in Entrepreneurship program describes the general environmental conditions, including potential resources and market opportunities, as well as the economic analysis of the proposed business plan, while remaining aligned with universal and tentative values (Smith-Hunter, 2024). This should be formulated to demonstrate business feasibility, particularly through financial analysis such as projected cash flow for at least two years, in order to illustrate the economic sustainability of the business activities (<https://simbelmawa.kemdikbud.go.id>, 2026).

Within the framework of mu'amalah, individuals inevitably possess diverse interests, which may lead to disputes, especially in business-related matters (A. de Bruin, 2007). Islamic law anticipates such issues through regulatory frameworks such as fiqh mawaris, Islamic economic principles (iqtisadiyyah), and other jurisprudential guidelines, all of which are rooted in Sharia principles. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were widely disseminated through Muslim traders (Braches, 2017). The Qur'an warns against the misuse of wealth but does not prohibit the lawful pursuit of wealth, as stated: "Allah has permitted trade and prohibited usury." Islam places trade in a strategic position in the pursuit of future prosperity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated: "Engage in trade, for indeed nine out of ten sources of livelihood are found in commerce." (Borquist, 2019).

Usul al-Fiqh, as a method of deriving Islamic legal rulings, serves as an important tool for addressing religious and economic issues within Muslim communities (Rando-cueto et al., 2022). It provides legal foundations and arguments for Islamic economic policies, products, systems, and mechanisms, including sales estimation and financial practices within the framework of Sharia (Shukla, A., Kushwah, P., Jain, E., & Sharma, 2021). Usul al-Fiqh also introduces the concept of Maqasid al-Sharia, which offers philosophical and rational perspectives on contractual agreements in entrepreneurial products (Prabha et al., 2025).

In implementing start-up business development methods, the PKM-K program outlines the technical procedures for producing business commodities, packaging them, and marketing them, along with the stages required to achieve program objectives (Abebe, A., & Kegne, 2020). Each stage describes the activities undertaken as well as the tools and materials used, while ensuring compliance with halal and haram considerations (<https://simbelmawa.kemdikbud.go.id>, 2026).

Islamic jurisprudence in fiqh muamalat establishes that the fundamental rule in commercial transactions is permissibility, except for activities explicitly prohibited by Allah SWT ((Yoesdiarti, 2023). The Qur'an outlines several prohibitions in business practices, including: unjustly taking the rights of others, engaging in usury, conducting transactions involving gharar (uncertainty) or maysir (gambling), participating in gambling activities, conducting prohibited businesses, and committing any form of fraud or (Lerner, 2010).

For example, Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) systems operate through direct distribution without relying on single distributors or wholesalers, as products are distributed directly to independent distributors who function as retailers or direct sellers to consumers (Bock, 2004). Historical records show that during the era of Al-Ghazali, economic development had already reached a significant level. Business centers emerged as meeting points for traders from various regions. Several cities became major trade hubs connecting commodities from different countries, including Isfahan, which was well known as a commercial center. (Kimbu, 2016). Financial institutions also developed mechanisms similar to modern banking, such as currency exchange, deposit services, checks (sakk) as payment instruments, and money transfers (Pande, 2021).

In the SCP in Entrepreneurship program, four categories of expenditures are identified. These include equipment costs, particularly for tools required to produce (Kurtege, 2020) commodities, as well as consumable materials, which are adjusted according to the operational needs of the program activities (<https://simbelmawa.kemdikbud.go.id>, 2026).

In Sharia-based business, all activities must comply with Islamic law. These regulations ensure that entrepreneurs obtain lawful income approved by Allah SWT while promoting equitable welfare distribution (Heras-pedrosa et al., 2024). Therefore, Islamic business ethics plays a crucial role in Sharia-based entrepreneurship. Such ethics establish principles and norms that guide business actors in conducting transactions, behavior, and relationships to achieve sustainable and responsible business objectives (S Garg, 2017). This transformation in values is expected to facilitate the transition from manual application systems toward Sharia-compliant product mechanisms, emphasizing the integration of Islamic moral dimensions (Bullough, 2015).

Within SCP in Entrepreneurship, activity schedules are arranged according to program stages and are limited to three to four months (Humbert, 2015). These schedules are typically presented in bar chart formats, providing measurable planning frameworks to support innovative activities and the achievement of noble purposes in entrepreneurship (<https://simbelmawa.kemdikbud.go.id>, 2026).

Trade is one of the oldest forms of muamalah, initially conducted through barter systems to fulfill human needs. Over time, business development has become increasingly sophisticated through innovative methods and advanced facilities (Basaff, 2018). Islamic economic concepts are therefore dynamic rather than static, allowing them to respond to the challenges and problems of different eras (Agustiawan, 1979). Fiqh serves as a comprehensive legal framework governing human behavior in daily life by interpreting the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These interpretations are systematically compiled in classical jurisprudential works known as fiqh literature (D. Bruin, 2006)

In Islamic intellectual tradition, ethics is understood through concepts such as akhlaq, al-adab, and al-falasifah al-adabiyyah. The term most closely associated with ethics in the Qur'an is khuluq. The Qur'an also uses several related terms to describe goodness, including khayr (goodness), birr (righteousness), qist (equity), 'adl (justice), haqq (truth), ma'ruf (recognized goodness), and taqwa (piety). Praiseworthy actions are referred to as salihat, while wrongful deeds are termed sayyi'at. (R Deka, 2020)

Islam teaches that resources on earth are created to serve human needs; however, consumption must generate maslahah (benefit) and avoid mudharat (harm). Therefore, Islamic consumption principles include halal and tayyib standards, moderation, cleanliness, generosity, and morality. In the Qur'an (Franck, 2012) business-related terms include al-tijarah (trade), al-bai' (sale), tadayantum (credit transactions), and isytara (purchase). Among these, al-tijarah is most frequently used, referring to the management of wealth for profit-seeking activities (Lingappa & Rodrigues, 2023)

The implementation of SCP in Entrepreneurship by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is expected to promote values such as khayr, birr, qist, 'adl, haqq, ma'ruf, and taqwa in determining the products to be developed (S Untari, 2020). These values guide participants toward achieving noble purposes while adhering to the principles of halal, moderation, cleanliness, generosity, and morality in business practices. Such noble objectives encourage The participants to maintain spiritual awareness while engaging actively in social and economic interactions. Islamic jurisprudence represents a product of intellectual reasoning derived from universal Sharia values, which may evolve over time while avoiding prohibited practices such as gharar (uncertainty) (Brush, 2017)

In relation to this research, the primary issue to be examined is how do universal and tentative Islamic business ethics contribute to strengthening the marketing, operational, financial, and business planning aspects within the SCP in Entrepreneurship of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology?

METHOD

Types and Research Approaches

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive analytical approach to examine the conceptual relationship between the Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) and the principles of Islamic business ethics. The research is conducted as a review study, focusing on the analysis of SCP In Entrepreneurship program guidelines, entrepreneurial frameworks, and relevant scholarly discussions from the perspective of Islamic ethical values.

The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study aims to interpret and understand conceptual relationships between entrepreneurial practices, ethical values, and Islamic economic principles rather than to measure them quantitatively. Through this approach, the research seeks to provide an in-depth description of how SCP In Entrepreneurship potentially integrate ethical dimensions such as fairness, transparency, accountability, and compliance with halal principles in supporting student-based start-up development in Indonesia.

Time and Place of Research

This research is conducted through library-based research, which does not involve a specific physical research location. Instead, the study relies on various academic and institutional sources accessed through digital databases, national journal repositories, and official SCP In Entrepreneurship documentation published by Kemdikbudristek.

The research process was carried out during the data collection and analysis period, which involved systematically reviewing and examining relevant literature, official program guidelines, and scholarly publications discussing Islamic business ethics, entrepreneurship, and student innovation programs. This approach enables the researcher to explore the conceptual integration of ethical principles within the SCP In Entrepreneurship program framework.

Research Informants / Data Sources

In qualitative research based on literature review, the primary data sources consist of secondary data derived from credible academic references. These sources include books, peer-reviewed journal articles, scientific publications, and official documents related to SCP In Entrepreneurship program guidelines and Islamic economic principles. Such materials provide the theoretical and empirical foundation necessary to analyze the relationship between entrepreneurial program implementation and Islamic ethical values.

The selection of these sources is based on their relevance to the research topic, particularly those discussing Islamic business ethics, entrepreneurship development, and student innovation programs in higher education. By synthesizing insights from various scholarly perspectives, the research aims to generate a comprehensive understanding of how ethical principles may strengthen marketing, operational, financial, and business planning aspects within the PKM-K program.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentation and literature study techniques, involving systematic identification, selection, and analysis of relevant academic materials and official program documents. This process enables the researcher to examine existing theories, conceptual frameworks, and empirical findings related to Islamic business ethics and entrepreneurship development.

Data Analysis and Validation

The collected data are analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, where the information obtained from various sources is interpreted and synthesized to produce meaningful conclusions. The findings are presented in the form of descriptive explanations that provide a comprehensive overview of the research object, namely the SCP In Entrepreneurship program and its potential alignment with Islamic ethical values.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study applies a triangulation technique. Triangulation refers to the process of verifying and comparing data obtained from multiple sources, perspectives, and references. In this research, triangulation is conducted by cross-examining information derived from academic literature, national journals, and official PKM-K program documents, thereby strengthening the reliability and trustworthiness of the research conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Business Ethics in the Marketing Aspect

The Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship is implemented both within and outside the university environment over an effective period of three to four months, typically equivalent to one academic semester. Within the framework of higher education policy in Indonesia, PKM-K activities carry sufficient academic weight to be converted into course credits in accordance with the applicable curriculum. Consequently, the program is aligned with the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy and contributes to achieving the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) established for higher education institutions.

In practice, The Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship requires student teams to conduct systematic analyses of market needs and opportunities prior to developing entrepreneurial products or services. Based on this analysis, students are expected to design creative business commodities that address identified market demands. These commodities may take the form of goods or services derived from the creativity and expertise of student teams. Importantly, the primary actors in The Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship entrepreneurial activities are the students themselves, rather than external communities or institutional partners. Furthermore, The Student Creativity Program in

Entrepreneurship initiatives are not solely oriented toward profit generation; instead, the program emphasizes product creativity, technological innovation, and the quality of business implementation (<https://simbelmawa.kemdikbud.go.id>, 2026).

From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, marketing activities must be understood within the framework of *fiqh al-mu'amalah*, particularly through the concept of *'amaliyah*, which concerns observable human actions in social and economic interactions. In this context, *fiqh* primarily regulates practical human conduct in economic transactions, while matters related to faith and belief belong to the domain of theology rather than jurisprudence. Consequently, marketing practices within entrepreneurial activities should reflect ethical conduct that is consistent with Islamic legal and moral principles.

The understanding of Sharia-based economic rules is derived from authoritative sources, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah, supported by detailed legal reasoning (*dalil tafshili*). These sources guide scholars (*mujtahid*) in deriving legal judgments that shape ethical commercial practices. Through this process of reasoning and interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence provides normative guidance for entrepreneurial decision-making, including market analysis, product development, and pricing strategies. Thus, the commercialization of products developed through PKM-K is expected to embody a noble purpose, ensuring that marketing practices not only pursue economic benefits but also reflect ethical responsibility and social welfare (Hizbullah & Haidir, 2021; Thayib & Ain Ajuna, 2022).

Islamic Business Ethics in the Operational Aspect

Within the PKM-K program, the operational dimension of entrepreneurship requires a clear description of available resources, potential market opportunities, and the overall feasibility of the proposed business model. This includes the preparation of economic and financial analyses, such as projected cash flow for at least two years, which demonstrates the sustainability and viability of the business initiative.

In Islamic jurisprudential discourse, operational decision-making in business can be analyzed through the concept of *tahqiq al-manath*, which refers to the process of verifying and contextualizing legal principles in real-world situations. This analytical process involves two major dimensions. First is *fahm nushus al-shari'ah*, the understanding of the textual sources of Islamic law, which gives rise to linguistic and methodological principles known as *al-qawa'id al-usuliyyah al-lughawiyah*. Second is *fahm maqasid al-shari'ah*, the comprehension of the objectives of Islamic law, which produces normative principles related to legislation and social welfare.

From this perspective, *usul al-fiqh* functions as the intellectual framework that shapes the formulation of Islamic legal rulings, including those related to economic activities. The process of deriving legal guidance from scriptural sources and the objectives of Sharia requires critical reasoning and analytical interpretation. Consequently, entrepreneurial operations within The Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship can be viewed as a dynamic process that integrates human creativity, rational analysis, and ethical considerations derived from Islamic legal thought. This integration supports responsible business practices that are both economically viable and ethically accountable (Miharja, 2007; Wawo & Amiruddin, 2020; Romli, 2019).

Islamic Business Ethics in the Financial Aspect

In the development of start-up businesses within the PKM-K program, students are required to describe the methods and techniques used to produce, package, and market business commodities, including the stages of implementation necessary to achieve the objectives of the program. At each stage, it is essential to identify the activities performed as well as the tools and materials used. From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, these financial and operational activities must also consider the distinction between *halal* and *haram* practices.

Islamic jurisprudence emphasizes the prohibition of transactions involving *gharar* (uncertainty or deception). For example, selling goods whose quantity or existence cannot be clearly determined at the time of the transaction is considered invalid in Sharia. This principle is illustrated in a hadith narrated by Ahmad from Ibn Mas'ud (RA), in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prohibited purchasing fish that are still in the water because such transactions involve elements of deception.

Another fundamental principle is the prohibition of unlawful appropriation of wealth, as stated in the Qur'an: "O you who believe, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, but only through lawful trade conducted by mutual consent among you" (Qur'an, An-Nisa: 29). Islamic jurisprudence also discusses specific forms of commercial transactions, such as *mudtarr* transactions, in which a seller is forced to sell goods below market value due to financial hardship. While such transactions are not strictly prohibited, they are considered discouraged (*makruh*). Islamic teachings encourage the provision of *qiradh* or benevolent loans to assist individuals facing financial distress. Furthermore, practices such as *talji'ah* (fictitious transactions) where a sale is conducted merely as a façade without genuine intent—are considered invalid because the contractual intention of the parties does not reflect a genuine commercial exchange (Harahap, 2011; Rianti, 2021; Safwan, 2019).

Islamic Business Ethics in the Business Planning Aspect

In the implementation of PKM-K activities, the financial structure generally consists of four categories of expenditure, including equipment procurement for product production and the acquisition of consumable materials necessary for operational activities. The overall implementation period is limited to three to four months, during which students must develop and execute their entrepreneurial projects.

The activity schedule is typically presented in the form of a structured activity plan, designed to ensure measurable progress toward the achievement of program objectives. Such planning reflects the importance of systematic estimation, innovation, and the pursuit of noble purposes in entrepreneurial initiatives.

From an Islamic perspective, the concept of business is commonly associated with the term *al-tijarah*, which refers to trade or commercial exchange. Classical Islamic scholars, such as Ar-Raghib al-Asfahani, interpret *tijarah* as the management of wealth for the purpose of generating profit. Similarly, Ibn Farabi describes a *tajir* (merchant) as an individual who possesses expertise and strategic understanding of the objectives and direction of business activities.

The term *tijarah* appears eight times in the Qur'an, across several chapters including Al-Baqarah, An-Nisa, At-Taubah, An-Nur, Fathir, Ash-Shaf, and Al-Jumu'ah. In these contexts, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of fair transactions, financial accountability, and transparency in economic activities. For instance, Qur'an 2:282 highlights the necessity of documenting financial transactions and providing witnesses, which forms the ethical foundation for modern accounting practices and financial accountability within business planning.

Therefore, the integration of Islamic ethical values in PKM-K business planning encourages students to develop entrepreneurial initiatives that are not only economically viable but also ethically responsible, transparent, and socially beneficial (Ariyadi, 2018; Efilianti, 2018; Syaifullah, 2014; Taufiq, 2016; Try & Rukiah, 2019; Nurhayati, 2018; Muhayatsyah, 2020; Arifiani, 2020; Koni, 2017; Jafa & Muzaki, 2023; Nurhali, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis presented, the Student Creativity Program in Entrepreneurship serves as an important platform for developing student entrepreneurial competencies while simultaneously supporting the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy and the achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in higher education institutions in Indonesia. The program encourages students to design innovative business initiatives grounded in systematic market analysis, product creativity, and technological innovation, thereby promoting the development of sustainable student-led start-up activities.

From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, entrepreneurial practices within the PKM-K framework can be understood through the principles of *fiqh al-mu'amalah*, which regulate ethical human conduct in economic interactions. In the marketing aspect, Islamic ethical values emphasize honesty, fairness, and responsibility in identifying market opportunities and delivering products that provide real benefits to society. Marketing strategies developed by students are therefore expected to reflect not only commercial objectives but also broader ethical and social considerations.

In the operational dimension, the PKM-K program requires a systematic assessment of resources, market potential, and business feasibility. Through the analytical framework of *tahqiq al-manath* and the methodological foundations of *usul al-fiqh*, entrepreneurial decision-making can integrate rational analysis with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*). This integration supports business operations that are both economically sustainable and ethically accountable.

With regard to the financial aspect, Islamic jurisprudence establishes clear guidelines to ensure that economic transactions are conducted in accordance with Sharia principles. These include the prohibition of *gharar* (uncertainty), unjust enrichment, and deceptive practices, as well as the encouragement of fairness, mutual consent, and social responsibility in financial dealings. Such principles aim to protect all parties involved in business transactions and to promote ethical financial management within entrepreneurial activities.

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