



Contents list available at: <https://journal.unesa.ac.id>  
**al-Uqud: Journal of Islamic Economics**  
Journal homepage: <https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jie>



## Reducing family poverty through an Islamic women's empowerment strategy in Indonesia: An analytical network process approach

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### Article Info

#### **Paper type:**

Research paper

#### **Keywords:**

Empowerment model;  
Women empowerment;  
Family poverty; Islamic perspective.

#### **Article history:**

Received: 12 February 2022

Revised: 05 June 2022

Accepted: 25 June 2022

Available online: 27 July 2022

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### Abstract

*This study is intended to develop a strategy for the socio-economic empowerment of women from low-income families based on an Islamic perspective. The research was motivated by Indonesia's low score on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) compared to other countries, indicating the gap between men's and women's empowerment in Indonesia. The percentage of women who become the heads of poor households increases yearly. This qualitative study uses the Analytical Network Process (ANP) to test the social welfare measures for low-income families carried out by governments, Islamic philanthropic institutions, and Islamic microfinance institutions. As many as fifteen respondents involved in the ANP method were experts on the studied problems, namely regulators, practitioners, and academics. The research results indicate that the main priority issue developing women's empowerment is the development of partnership networks. In the next stage, the experts concluded that business assistance and mental-spiritual development were the main priorities for empowering women and reducing family poverty. The provision of financial access is the last priority. One implication of this study is that the empowerment program for women from low-income families must be holistic, e.g., by forming a Group Lending Model (GLM) with a modification of the majlis ta'lim (Islamic community discussion group).*

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Please cite this article in APA style as:

Nurasyiah, A., Sarwath, L. ., Mahri, A. J. W. ., Hermawan, R. ., & Karmanto, G. D. (2022). Reducing Family Poverty through an Islamic Women's Empowerment Strategy in Indonesia: An Analytical Network Process Approach: Reducing family poverty through an Islamic women's empowerment strategy in Indonesia: An analytical network process approach. *Al-Uqud: Journal of Islamic Economics*, 6(2), 206–219. <https://doi.org/10.26740/aluqud.v6n2.p206-219>

## Introduction

This research is related to poverty and gender issues that impact welfare improvement. Poverty eradication and gender equality are two of the 17 development indicators announced by all countries on the main agenda and listed in the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs (United Nations, 2019).

Gender equality in a country is reflected through the Gender Inequality Index (GII) data released by The United National Development Program (UNDP). In 2020 UNDP released GII scores and ranks of 189 countries. The data shows that Indonesia had a score of 0.480 and was ranked 107<sup>th</sup> among 189 other countries in the world. Meanwhile, the demographic data on poverty in Indonesia shows that the percentage of female household heads living in poverty from 2014 to 2020 increased from 14.20% in 2014 to 15.88% in 2020.

In Indonesia, women may have to play the role of head of households for reasons such as the death of husband, divorce, or disability of husband (Statistics Indonesia, 2018). In such a situation, women inevitably have to play dual functions, namely caring for their families and earning a living to meet the family's needs. The situation, when encountered by women from low-income families, urgently calls for empowerment of the women. This is because it entails human rights issues and relates to the potential of women as agents of family welfare improvement (Chaudhry & Nosheen, 2009).

The idea of building a socio-economic empowerment model for poor women has started with the realization that women must be part of the mainstream in carrying out development. One of the socio-economic empowerment models is Muhammad Yunus's implementation in Bangladesh. Yunus strongly believed that poor women were potential agents for reducing family poverty. He convincingly argued that the money that went into poor households through women was more beneficial for the family than if it was given to men (Yunus & Jollis, 2007).

In Indonesia, the government first implemented the idea of poor women empowerment during President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration through some development programs aimed at women from Very Low-income families (KSM). One such program is the Family Hope Program (PKH). The program provided cash assistance (grants) for education, health, and business expenses (Sukidjo & Mustofa, 2014). The program is continuing under the current President Joko Widodo in the forms of the Healthy Indonesia Card (KIS), Smart Indonesia Card (KIP), and Prosperous Family Savings Card (KSKS) which are intended as an effort to reduce family poverty.

Results of field studies and interviews with women from low-income families show that many of them have not had access to the government's empowerment program. The government-initiated empowerment program is therefore insufficient as far as effectiveness is concerned due to the government's limited capacity. Therefore, a joint effort involving the government and all related parties such as Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), private sectors, and the society in general is therefore necessary. In the joint effort, Islamic institutions has played important roles.

The Islamic institutions that have been actively involved in the empowerment program for the poor include the Zakat Management Organization (OPZ) and *Baitul Maal Wat Tamwil* (BMT). OPZ plays a strategic role in poverty alleviation efforts and sustainable economic development through zakat provision programs. Productive zakat, a type of zakat, when provided to women, can serve as an important and effective poverty reduction instrument. Productive zakat should ideally provide poor women with business capital and business assistance. In addition, BMT, an Islamic microfinance institution in Indonesia, runs a sharia microfinance program. The program is arguably much needed by the community at the grass-root level.

Despite the promising nature of the empowerment programs run by OPZ and BMT, many studies have concluded that the programs are still facing serious challenges. They have for example focused only on the provision of capital, disregarding an improvement to the poor women's lives and their families as a whole. Moreover, the absence of sustainable business assistance and mental and character development of women further reduces the effectiveness of empowerment programs that the government and various other institutions have implemented in Indonesia.

In the context of conventional development economics, women's empowerment is indicated solely by an increase in income and social status. Ideally, women's empowerment should include being critical of gender relations, self-esteem, and the power to control their personal lives, the ability to choose and organize, and their influence on social justice. Thus, women's empowerment concerns aspects of personal relationships and how women take social action (White, 2010). The indicators of women's empowerment are external, such as financial and intellectual achievement, and internal capability development, such as self-confidence and the transformation of women's awareness of the barriers to access they have to change traditional ideologies (Parveen, 2007). Thus, women's empowerment involves several strategic measures, such as education and training, credit programs, technology, information media, and forming women's groups (Parveen, 2007).

The concept of women's empowerment and family poverty reduction refers to the theory of Entitlements and Poverty developed by Amartya Sen (1999). She revealed that a set of basic needs, such as food, clothing, housing, health care, and protection of human rights, coupled with a set of ethical values would reduce poverty in women. In addition, some studies have concluded that empowerment programs have a significant effect on increasing women's empowerment (Khan & Bibi (2011); Maika & Kiswanto (2007); Paul Kato (2013); Rehman (2015)). Furthermore, women's empowerment programs have also been shown to be able to reduce family poverty (Rahman (2010); Durrani, et.al (2011); Schein, et.al (2011); Siringi (2011); Mahmood, et.al (2014); Ma'mun et.al (2010), Aslam (2014)).

Review of the literature and previous studies have shown that some studies that examine strategies for developing women's empowerment models to reduce family poverty. However, very few have studied it from an Islamic perspective. In the Islamic perspective, women's empowerment is holistic; it accommodates the need to get material gains and respects women's main tasks and roles in the family. In addition, as a belief, Islam has rules that function to indicate values for each indicator of women's empowerment. In this case, women's empowerment in an Islamic perspective is indicated by the Islamic Women Empowerment Index (IWEI), which is a modification of several previous women's empowerment indices, such as those built by M. Haque, T.M. Islam, I. Tareque (2011) and Chaudhry & Nosheen (2009). The Islamic Women Empowerment Index has four indicators, namely the Family Decision Making Index (FDMI), Economic Decision Index (EDI), Physical Movement Decision Index (PMDI) and Political Autonomy Index (PAI). So, the development of women's empowerment strategies carried out in this study refers to the achievement of each indicator of the Islamic Women Empowerment Index (IWEI). Therefore, this study aims to examine the strategy of developing a women's empowerment model to reduce family poverty from an Islamic perspective.

The paper is organized as follows. The next part presents the research method used in the study. After that, a result and discussion section are provided. The paper then closes with several conclusions.

## **Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative approach to strengthen research results and developed an

empowerment model using the Analytical Network Process (ANP) method. The research stage of the ANP model consists of a phase 1 construction model, phase 2 model quantification and phase 3 result analysis (Saaty, 2013).

In phase 1 Model Construction, Researchers collected reference materials based on literature reviews from books, journal articles and conducted in-depth interviews with a leading expert in the field of women empowerment. In the next stage, model quantification, the development of research instruments used for a women empowerment model with a qualitative approach was carried out based on the results of direct interviews with experts/experts in empowerment programs. The initial interview results were used to determine the criteria, sub-criteria and strategies used in designing the instrument. The instrument then became a guide for researchers in gathering opinions from experts about the range of influence values for each indicator in the criteria, sub-criteria and strategies that have been determined. The range of influence values chosen from each indicator in this ANP model was on a scale of 1-9. This instrument design, testing and survey was called Pair-wise (Saaty, 2013).

The respondents were fifteen experts in the field of community empowerment. These experts represented academics, practitioners of zakat institutions and Islamic Microfinance Institution, regulators/governments and scholars. The experts were asked to assess the criteria, sub-criteria of the problem and the solutions and strategies that have been set. The criteria and sub-criteria in this model consisted of Women's capacity and character (religious spirituality, skill improvement, soft skills, time management, business ability and building motivation); Women's Participation (courage to have an opinion, involvement and willingness to learn); Business development (Income, type of business, business management, financial planning); Institutional strengthening (Professionalism of NGO management, performance of mentoring, Innovation of empowerment programs and technology development) and Development of partnership networks (Number of cooperation partners, trust from partners, pattern of cooperation, and quality of relationships with partners). In addition, the experts were asked to assess the strategies that had been set, namely access to Islamic Microfinance Institutions, building women's capacity, providing motivation, mental-spiritual development, and strengthening business partnerships.

In the final stage, the results of the synthesis of ANP, Superdecision Software was used. The software was used to produce a scientific convention, and the answers of all respondents were calculated using the Geometric Mean. After that, Kendal's Coefficient of Concordance was calculated to draw a conclusion from policy recommendations. The values obtained were between 0 and 1 ( $W; 0 < W \leq 1$ ).  $W=1$  indicated perfect agreement among the respondents. On the contrary,  $W=0$  showed that there were no agreement among the respondents and that they had varying answers (Rusdiyana & Devi, 2013).

## Results and Discussion

The study used the Analytical Network Process (ANP) method. It aimed to investigate important criteria to consider in the program for empowering women from low-income families. These criteria refer to developing a model that considers women's position in Islam. The ANP method was used because it was considered to have character relevant to Islamic principles because it prioritize the deliberation process. One of the characteristics of the ANP method of decision-making is the Focus Group Discussion conducted by stakeholders. The parties involved in the empowerment institution would agree on the priority strategy needed in developing the empowerment model. The output results of the model of family poverty reduction strategies and empowering women using the ANP approach are as follows:



### *Criteria cluster prioritization*

The first criterion chosen as a priority is the development of partnership networks, with a value of 0.23, followed by institutional strengthening (0.21), business development (0.21), women's participation (0.19) and women's capacity and character (0.17) respectively. Based on the results of interviews with experts, it was determined that the problem often encountered by empowerment institutions was partnership problems. Moreover, the agreement value of the experts was 0.097 (9.7%). This value indicates that the agreement between the experts was relatively low because they considered all the criteria in the development of the model to be of almost equal importance.

In reality, empowering women from low-income families requires boardly support. The support include policy support, policy, capital access, human resources, innovative programs, etc. Research showed that zakat institutions generally have more creative and innovative mentoring and empowerment programs. However, they often suffer from financial constraints. Therefore, the financial support provided for the empowerment program should not come only from zakat fundraising. BMT, an Islamic microfinance institution has more funds since it gets funding from members and financing from Islamic banking. Unfortunately, the empowerment programs offered by BMT are only limited to providing capital.

Another basic problem pertains to government policies; how government institutions build database system to identify and locate poor people and their conditions. The database can be used by all government institutions and NGOs in programs aimed to help empower such people. This database system is strategically important to ensure that poverty programs implemented by many institutions do not overlap, so that they do not significantly reduce poverty. The results of this study generally provide the same conclusions as previous studies, which state that reducing poverty in families requires real support from various parties (Prince, Wahid, & Khan, 2022); (Aslam, 2014); (Beik, 2015); (Durrani, Usman, Malik, & Ahmad, 2011).

### *Prioritizing clusters of women's capacity and character*

Several sub-criteria indicate the criteria for the capacity and character of women. Based on the results of data processing, this spirituality value is considered to have the main priority with a value of 0.25, followed by soft skills and motivation, both have the same value of 0.17. It was then followed by skill improvement, time management, and business ability with the values of 0.15, 0.13, and 0.11 respectively. These results indicate that religious spirituality is an integral part of women's personalities who participated in the empowerment programs.

The analysis is that women with good spirituality tend to be more resilient in conducting their lives and are willing to struggle to improve the economic conditions of their families. They strongly believe in the sustenance given by Allah SWT. In addition, honesty and trustworthiness will be reflected in women with good spirituality. Both traits are fundamental when it comes to obtaining business financing.

On the other hand, experts considered business skills as the last sub-criteria in empowerment programs. The business skill is relatively easy to acquire as long as the women who are members of the empowerment have the passion for doing business. Moreover, in general, the businesses run by these mothers are informal businesses, such as trading or producing various simple products.

The agreement's value between the experts, as indicated by the rater agreement (W), is only 6%. This value is relatively weak as an agreed value. This is because each sub-criteria is considered to have relatively the same importance. However, in general, assessing the character indicated by spirituality, motivation, and soft skills is more important than the ability or capacity of women from low-income families. Character is considered more important than capacity.

The result is by previous studies, such as (Khalder, 2018); (Chaudhry & Nosheen, 2009); (Haque, Islam, Tareque, & Mostofa, 2011), which state that excess capacity will actually be contrary to women empowerment programs and the nature of women's themselves. A slightly different result was offered by Sudarsono (Sudarsono, 2021). He state that poverty alleviation through an empowerment approach to the poor women serving as head of their families would not be considered optimal if it does not improve the entrepreneurial skill of the women.

#### *Prioritizing clusters of women's participation*

Increasing women's participation is one of the elements in developing women's empowerment models. Based on the sub-criteria determined in the conceptual model and the results of data processing, the sub-criteria considered a priority is the involvement of women's efforts to raise the economic status of their families. It has a value of 0.29.

The second priority is involvement in the mentoring program, with a value of 0.28. Empirical situation show that members who actively participate in mentoring were more effective in getting many benefits from the empowerment program. The last priority is courage in expressing ideas or opinions with a value of 0.18. The sub-criteria are considered unimportant because the program is generally ready to be implemented. The result of the agreement of experts/experts on the sub-criteria for work participation was 22%. The value of this agreement was categorized as sufficient. This means that the experts on average had the same agreement on the priorities of the sub-criteria that constituted the criteria for women's participation in empowerment programs. Many studies concluded that participation is very important to build capacity from women to be central part which help their economic welfare families (Nugraha & Gunawan, 2017); (Khan & Bibi, 2011); (Mahmood, Hussain, & Matlay, 2014).

#### *Prioritizing business development clusters*

In general, every empowerment institution has the vision to contribute to developing productive businesses owned by women who are empowerment members. However, realizing this is not easy in reality because it is not only about the capital factor but also other related factors needed to develop its members' business.

Based on the data processing result, it can be seen that from the sub-criteria that have been determined, business management and productive income are the priority in developing a business, each of which has an amazing value of 0.23 and 0.22. The lowest sub-criteria is financial management. This is considered not to have a direct effect on developing the business.

The agreement value from the experts indicated by the Rater Agreement value of the prioritization of this sub-criteria was 15%. This means that the value of this agreement is of sufficient value. On average, experts considered that business management is a business priority in developing the business of empowering members. Some studies (Sudarsono, 2021) (Mamun, Wahab, & Malarvizhi, 2010); (Sukidjo & Mustofa, 2014) have concluded that entrepreneurship is an important aspect of poverty reduction. Furthermore, (Raven & Le, 2015); (Yuniati, Pratikto, & Sopiah, 2021); (Mahmood, Hussain, & Matlay, 2014) suggested that business training can improve microenterprise performance and has a number of other positive results, such as increasing motivation, success, and perceptions of entrepreneurs.

#### *Institutional strengthening cluster priority*

Institutional strengthening is part of the development of an empowerment model. In reality, the empowerment program will not run well if the internal strength of the institution does not well support it. Accordingly, the priority sub-criteria are the professionalism of the management (0.26), the performance of assistants (0.24), program innovation (0.21) and the last is the development of IT networks system (0.13).

The value indicates that the Human Resources (HR) factor is an essential part of institutional strengthening, as evidenced by the professional value of the management and the performance of the assistants, who are considered the dominant factor. Results of the study concluded the same results. When the administration and assistants run the program seriously, the results will be optimal. The use of information technology or IT applications serve only to complement the program being implemented.

The expert agreement on this aspect was relatively high (40%). This was consistent with the result of research by Gupta (Gupta, 2020), which states that government policies, networking with customers, relationship with self-help groups (SHGs) and NGOs also help them in attaining empowerment. In this regard, in this research, institutional strengthening means Islamic microfinance institutions which is consistent with several studies, such as (Islam, 2021); (Aslam, 2014); (Rahman, 2010); (Martiana, Panena, & Fuadi, 2022), Zakat institution (Beik, 2015); (Hasan, 2010); (Anis, 2016) and government institutions (Nadim & Nurlukman, 2017); (Kushardajani, 2019). These three institutions will exert a significant impact on women's empowerment and family poverty reduction if they have strong institutions and promote professionalism supported by optimal resources and synergy in providing services to poor women.

#### *Prioritization of partnership network development cluster*

The development of a partnership network is a criterion with a top priority in developing an empowerment model. Based on the sub-criteria of the partnership network development criteria, the trust of outsiders becomes the sub-criteria with the highest score of 0.30. The lowest sub-criteria is the pattern of cooperation. These results indicate that external party trust in empowerment institutions is the most important compared to other sub-criteria.

Trust from outsiders in empowerment institutions generally comes from institutions that provide financial support and assist in program implementation. The expert agreement value was 32.9% based on the rater agreement calculation. That means that the experts' agreement on prioritizing this sub-criteria was quite good.

In addition to prioritizing the criteria and sub-criteria, the prioritization calculation was also performed to develop empowerment models. Based on the strategy specified in the conceptual model, the priority chosen by most experts was business assistance with a value of 0.15. The second priority was mental-spiritual development (0.14) and strengthening business partnerships (0.12). The last priority was capital accumulation and access to Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMF). This was because access to financing was good enough and was no longer a significant problem in implementing empowerment programs. The agreement value from the experts regarding this empowerment strategy was 32%. This means that the level of agreement was quite good. So, It needs coordination from various institutions (Islamic microfinance, Islamic banking, Zakat and waqf institutions, NGO's, government institutions and others) to empower women program by caring about Islamic principles to achieve prosperity according to the objectives of the Sharia (*Maqashid Sharia*).

Result of the ANP method implementation showed that the order of priority problems in developing an empowerment model is as follows: 1) Partnership network development, 2) Institutional strengthening, 3) Business development, 4) Women's participation, and 5) Women's capacity and character development. The development of the partnership network is the first priority chosen. The underlying reason is that various parties, the government, Islamic economic and financial institutions, NGOs and other institutions have carried out many empowerment programs. Moreover, the government through several governmental institutions has implemented various empowerment programs. The Ministry of Social Affairs, for example has implemented the Program Keluarga Harapan (Family Hope Program-PKH), and Kelompok

Usaha Bersama (Common Business Group-KUBE). In addition, regional governments have also implemented such program such as Kota Tanpa Kumuh (City without slums-KOTAKU).

The problem that often arises is the problem of coordination. On the other hand, implementing of the empowerment program for the poor seems partial and unsustainable. Each empowerment institution carries out its program with several limitations, for example in this study, the empowerment program is run by the government (Badan Keswadayaan Masyarakat), zakat institutions, and Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFI). Zakat institutions generally have reliable human resources in carrying out mentoring programs for the community. Companions from zakat institutions are able to provide business and spiritual guidance to mothers from low-income families. In addition, zakat institutions generally have creative programs for empowering the poor. However, in terms of funding, zakat institutions have limitations, because they come from *Zakat, Infaq, Shodaqoh and Waqf* funds whose realization is still far from their potential.

The government's program in empowering the poor is only in the form of money transfers, the assistance program is not optimized, although it only occurs in the short term. In addition, the government empowerment programs are often not well targeted, empowerment program assistance is given to people who are less in need. In terms of funding, government programs should be more significant than other institutions because they are supported by the state budget. The empowerment programs carried out by Islamic microfinance institutions (IMFI) are only business-oriented, the implementation of integrated assistance in several IMFI cannot be implemented.

Based on these conditions, a partnership network is needed between the empowerment institutions to optimally the empowerment program. Among the things that the government must do is create a system that contains a database of the poor in Indonesia. This is felt necessary so that empowerment programs carried out by the government or other parties are right on target. This data can continue to be upgraded in accordance with the development of the poor.

The government can also invite zakat institutions as partners in empowering the poor. This can be done through the government providing funds to be distributed by zakat institutions to the poor through mentoring programs. The Islamic microfinance institution (IMFI) is a partner institution that will empower the poor later after they have met their basic needs. This IMFI will function to foster poor housewife to be able to do their own business and manage their family finances well and productively. This can be implemented because IMFI can provide greater access to financing to develop micro-enterprises run by poor housewife who originally came from low-income families. However, The IMFI's capacity to provide access to financing is also limited. So, it is necessary to build linkage with Islamic Banking or other Islamic financial institutions to support IMFI in providing better financial access for poor families.

In addition to developing partnership networks, other aspects are also a priority in developing a model for empowering women from low-income families because based, on the analysis of the ANP method, the five aspects determined as determinants that will develop an empowerment model have values that are not much different from one aspect to another. These results prove that the five aspects have almost the same level of importance.

Several aspects/criteria concluded from the development of the model for empowering the poor as a result of this study are in accordance with the empowerment model that was designed by John Friedman (Bank Indonesia, 2016). In the model, it is known that the empowerment factors that will reduce poverty are financial resources, social networks, appropriate information, surplus time, work and livelihood tools, social organization, knowledge, skills and housing.

In the next stage, based on the results of research using the ANP method, it can be seen that the prioritization of empowerment strategies for women from low-income families is as



follows: 1) business assistance, 2) mental-spiritual development, 3) strengthening business partnerships, 4) providing motivation, 5) micro-business financing, 6) creating job opportunities/opportunities, 7) building women's capacity and 8) cultivating capital and 9) providing access to financial institutions.

Based on these results, it can be seen that business assistance and mental-spiritual development are the main priorities in developing women's empowerment models to reduce community poverty. The granting of financial access is the last priority of the empowerment model development strategy. This result is slightly different from the strategy of [Yunus's \(2008\)](#) empowerment model, namely Grameen Bank which, states that providing access to finance is the main thing in empowering women. According to him, when women have access to capital, they are automatically able to do business and become an important part of alleviating family poverty.

Interviews that have been conducted with stakeholders as well as activists of empowerment programs for poor women stated that the problem of providing access to finance is currently no longer an obstacle because in Indonesia, there has been quite a lot of government assistance in the form of business capital, especially for the poor, as well as Conventional and Islamic financial institutions (Islamic banking, Islamic rural bank, Sharia Cooperatives / BMT) are competing to offer microfinance that is easily accessible by anyone. Furthermore, many Zakat and Waqf Institutions have been established in Indonesia to empower the poor through productive economic programs.

The problem found when the poor receive capital assistance from various institutions is the ability to manage the capital assistance to develop their business. Business capital assistance is often misused, even though the purpose of business capital assistance is to make the community more productive. This condition occurs as a result of the absence of business assistance. This business assistance is very important so that the poor have economic independence, which in the end is no longer dependent on assistance from the government and other institutions.

The limited of business assistance that has been carried out by empowerment institutions occurs for various reasons, internal factors from the institution itself occur due to lack of operational costs or lack of human resources who are willing to go directly to help the poor. On the other hand, business assistance is rarely carried out because the members (poor women who are empowered) do not want to be assisted in their business because they feel that they are being intervened. The forms of business assistance that need to be carried out for these housewives are recording and managing business finances, marketing techniques for the goods/services produced, product packaging, goods/services production techniques and so on. For members who have not yet started a business, this form of business assistance is also carried out to motivate women from low-income families to participate in a productive economy by producing home-made products or other small businesses around the house.

Another priority that has the same score as business assistance is mental-spiritual development. Based on the results of interviews conducted with experts/activators of empowerment programs, growing a brave, confident, strong mentality (mind set) is not easy. Some poor people feel that the poverty that afflicts their families is a life destiny that is difficult to change, so they are nurtured to do business, it becomes relatively difficult. This result is in accordance with [Parveen \(2007\)](#) who states that indicators of empowerment are not only external (financial and intellectual) but also intrinsic capability development, such as self-confidence, the transformation of women's awareness of the barriers to access they have or changing their traditional ideology. According to her, gender awareness is an initial and important step that must be carried out in every program to empower women from low-income families.

Mental development must be accompanied by spiritual cultivation because they are both inseparable. This is something that cannot be separated. Building Women's self-confidence from low-income families can be done by increasing their faith in Allah SWT. The belief that Allah will not change the fate of his people who do not want to try, the belief that the poverty that befell them can be eliminated, and the belief that abundant sustenance and blessings will be present when we want to try and pray.

The mental-spiritual training that is carried out for housewives from low-income families is even more important because they will become agents of change for their families. The mother will be an agent in carrying out the transformation of goodness by inviting her husband to optimize his efforts in trying, inviting her husband and children to optimize their deeds of worship to get God's grace and gifts to avoid poverty in this world and the hereafter. When every individual poor community is able to do this and get facilities from the government and other institutions, aggregate poverty can be reduced. Beik (2015) states that poverty is *Sunnatullah Fil Hayyah*, which can not be eliminated but can be minimized. Therefore, the purpose of providing business assistance as well as mental-spiritual assistance is that the community does not become a group of people who are materially and spiritually poor (Absolute Poverty = Quadrant IV in the CIBEST model). At the macro level, poverty can be formulated in Ibn Khaldun's theory of poverty as follows:  $P = f(W, GT, N, S, g \text{ and } j)$  where poverty (P) is a function of state welfare (W), government (G), human or community resources (N), Sharia (S), development (g) and justice (j).

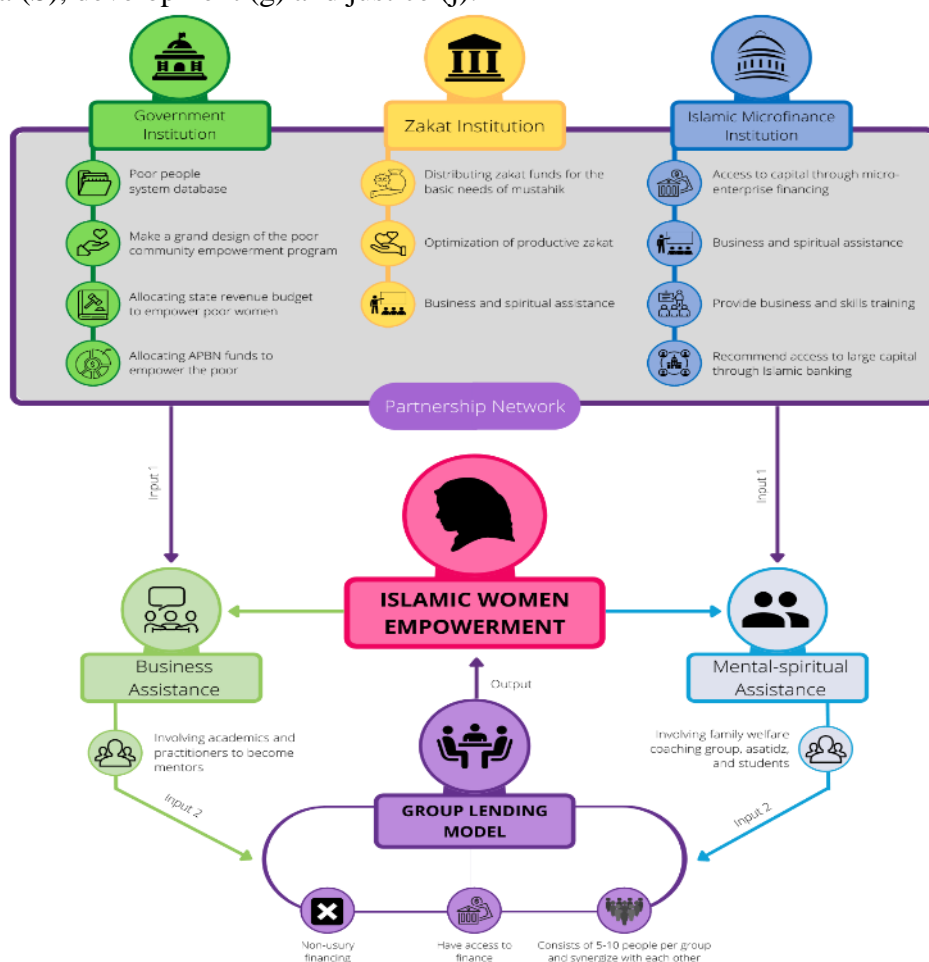


Figure 1. Output of women socio-economic empowerment model in Islamic perspective

Islamic principles in controlling poverty are based on the Islamic view of social justice and belief in Allah. Islam defines poverty as a condition of individuals who fail to fulfil one of the five basic requirements of human life: (a) religion, (b) physical/physical, (c) reason or knowledge, (d) descent, and (e) property. Therefore, programs to reduce poverty are not merely about income redistribution. An Islamic approach to poverty alleviation ideally would involve a holistic approach through the following stages: (a) increasing income with pro-poor programs, (b) achieving income equality and (c) providing equal opportunities for all social segments (Hasan, 2010).

Studies have shown that there is a relationship among empowerment programs that do not have a significant effect on women's empowerment directly but directly affect family poverty. The study's results illustrate that the empowerment programs that have been carried out so far have only been limited to providing financial access to the poor, disregarding the mentoring activities to increase women's empowerment. The lack of optimization of empowerment programs is indicated by the lack of institutions that empower the poor through business and spiritual assistance, even though this activity will be able to increase education, work participation and the role of women in the family.

A more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings is needed. Women have potentials that can be continuously developed and have equal opportunities to carry out righteous deeds for themselves, their families and the surrounding community. Such deeds should arguably not be realized solely in the form of ritual worship but also in active roles in the socio-economic aspect.

Based on the *Tawhid* Epistemology approach, every role played by women must induce knowledge ( $\theta$ ) and is continuously improved always to produce ( $\theta^*$ ) new tetha. The new tetha is new knowledge which is the result of a reference from the Qur'an, As-sunnah, ijihad of scholars and other scientists carried out through a shuratic process (consensus) to overcome development problems in society which in this study is about poverty alleviation through women's empowerment based on Islamic values. The following is the output of the women's socio-economic empowerment model from an Islamic perspective using the Analytical Network Process approach.

## Conclusion

Employing an Analytical Network Process (ANP) approach, the study found that the priority problem in the empowerment program is the development of partnership networks. Despite the many empowerment programs run by various parties such as the government, Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFI), Zakat and Waqf Institutions, NGOs and others, such programs are arguably less coordinated and less optimal due to the limited capacity of each of the parties. In addition, the experts agreed upon priority strategies are business assistance and mental spiritual development. So far, empowerment programs in productive economic activities have been limited to the sole provision of business capital. Strengthening an empowerment model with mental and spiritual development is a feature of an Islamic empowerment model aimed to help empowered women and their families avoid material and spiritual poverty. The study concludes that a master plan for empowerment programs in poverty alleviation is required. The plan should involve various relevant parties and entail close coordination among them. The goal is to make the empowerment program more effective and efficient in reducing family poverty. It also serves as an effort to strengthen the Group Lending Empowerment Model by modifying the ta'lim assembly. Finally, it is vital to provide women from low-income families with access to finance, business assistance, character development, and religious guidance that will eventually increase their understanding of the principles of Islamic teachings.

### Author's Contribution

Aas Nurasyiah, Lubna Sarwath, Ripan Hermawan, A. Jajang W. Mahri and Gina Destrianti Karmanto; conceived and design the work; analyzed and interpreted the data; drafted the work; substantively revised it, and approved the submitted version.

### Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the Department of Islamic Economics and Finance, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia for its valuable support.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

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