



The Influence of Religious Social Interactions on the Economy of the Bengkarek Community in West Kalimantan

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Abstract

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Religious social interaction in society is one of the important aspects that can influence various dimensions of life, including the economy. This study aims to analyze the influence of religious social interaction on the local economy in Bengkarek Village, West Kalimantan. In a society with a Muslim majority, religious social interaction plays a significant role in shaping social and economic life patterns. This research uses a qualitative methodology with a religious sociology approach, with data collection conducted through direct observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was performed through data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study show that religious social interaction between Islam and Catholicism in Bengkarek, West Kalimantan, has formed a relationship pattern based on mutual respect, enriching the local community's life. In the context of the economy, this interfaith harmony opens opportunities for cooperation in various sectors, such as trade, education, and joint ventures. This harmony accelerates local economic development by fostering trust, supporting social solidarity, and expanding economic networks between individuals or groups. However, the influence of religion also faces challenges, such as potential minor conflicts that could disrupt stability, although positive interactions tend to dominate.

INTRODUCTION

Religious social interaction in society is one of the important aspects that can affect various life dimensions, including the economy.¹ In regions with religious and cultural diversity, like Bengkulu, social interactions within the context of religion can play an essential role in shaping economic patterns in society. Bengkulu, a region with a heterogeneous community background, features various religious activities that often form the social norms that influence the economic behavior of individuals and groups.

The role of religion in the economic life of society can be seen through various channels, such as religious institutions managing zakat, waqf, and charity, which contribute to the distribution of economic resources.² Moreover, religious values often shape work ethics, consumption habits, and economic priorities of individuals or groups. On the other hand, religious social interactions can also create social networks that support economic activities,³ both in the form of community solidarity and through collaboration between individuals in various sectors. Religious social interaction is an important aspect of social and cultural identity in society, and it also affects various life dimensions, including the economy.⁴

Religion not only serves as a guide in spiritual aspects, but it also has the potential to influence patterns of consumption, production, distribution, and even investment practices within society's economy. The economy of a community is often influenced by both external and internal factors that interact with each other, and one significant yet often overlooked aspect is the impact of religious values and social-religious interactions. Religion does not only function as a belief system, but it also shapes individuals' ways of thinking, lifestyles, and economic behaviors within a community.⁵ Therefore, it is important to explore in-depth how social-religious interactions can affect the economic condition of society, both in individual and collective contexts. Social-religious interaction becomes an effort to improve harmonious social relations, which in turn impacts the community's economy.

Social-religious interaction is often manifested in the form of religious and cultural activities that involve the community, such as consultations, mutual cooperation, celebrations of major religious holidays, collective cultural-based worship, and various forms of social solidarity based on religion. In many

¹ A. Suryadi, 'Religious Social Interaction in Community Economic Development in West Kalimantan,' *Journal of Religious Studies* 16, no. 1 (2021): 70-85.

² Devi Agustini, M. Iqbal, and Syamsiar Zahrani, 'CONTRIBUTION OF ZAKAT, INFAQ AND SEDEKAH (ZIS) OF ASN TO THE JUSTICE OF THE LUMPATAN MUSI BANYUASIN COMMUNITY,' *El-Mubarak: Islamic Studies Journal* 1, no. 2 (2024): 44-53.

³ Marpuah Marpuah, 'Tolerance and Social Interaction between Religions in Cigugur, Kuningan,' *Harmoni* 18, no. 2 (2019): 51-72, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.309>.

⁴ Aprilinda, 'Religion in Sociological Perspective: A Study of Social Interaction and Religious Values,' *Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Studies* 8, no. 6 (2024): 7-14.

⁵ Agustina Rusmini, "Peran Sosial Agama Perspektif Pemikiran Max Weber dan Relevansinya dengan Kemajuan Masyarakat," *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia* 6, no. 2 (2023): 189-96, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v6i2.57930>.

societies, religion serves as a foundation for moral and ethical regulation, which then shapes norms that influence economic behaviors, such as attitudes toward hard work, resource management, and wealth distribution.⁶ For example, the teachings of Islam, which emphasize social justice and economic balance through zakat (almsgiving), charity, and waqf (endowment), have a direct impact on income distribution within society. Zakat and waqf, for instance, function to help those in need, reduce social inequality, and strengthen solidarity among individuals within the community, even across different faiths.

Additionally, religion often forms the basis for the establishment of social networks that reinforce economic relations within a community.⁷ These networks, often based on religious groups, can influence economic transactions, market formation, and the distribution of goods and services.⁸ In some places, religious groups operate economic institutions designed to provide financial services based on religious values, such as microfinance institutions that offer low-interest loans, or Islamic banking systems that avoid interest-based practices and emphasize profit-sharing principles. This is a form of social interaction where religion plays a role that impacts the economy of a pluralistic society, particularly in Bengkarek Village.

However, the impact of social-religious interactions on the economy is not always positive. In some cases, there is potential conflict between religious values and conventional economic practices, especially in the context of a global market that prioritizes financial gain alone.⁹ For instance, there is criticism of economic practices that are considered contrary to religious teachings, such as the exploitation of natural resources that harms the environment or the injustice in wealth distribution. On the other hand, religion can also act as a barrier to certain economic innovations, especially if those innovations are seen as conflicting with the spiritual values and ethics of the religion.

On the other hand, with the development of the digital economy and the global economy, social-religious interactions are increasingly adapting to the changing times. Technology and information make it easier for religious followers to access economic knowledge based on religious values and increase

⁶ Dahrun Sajadi, 'Religion, Ethics and Economic System,' *El-Arbah: Journal of Economics, Business and Islamic Banking* 3, no. 02 (2019): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.34005/elarbah.v3i02.1049>.

⁷ Nensy Triristina, Moch. Mubarak Muharam, and Yunita Rizki Pujiyanti, 'COMMUNICATION OF RELIGION AS SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUMDES WISATA BLUE SOURCE VILLAGE WONOMERTO,' *Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences* 06, no. 01 (2022): 89-108.

⁸ Ambok Pangiuk, 'Traditional Market Adaptation Strategies in Facing the Economic Threat of the Asean Economic Community in Indonesia,' *Kontekstualita* 33, no. 01 (2019): 90-125, <https://doi.org/10.30631/kontekstualita.v33i1.125>.

⁹ Moh Nasrul, Arief Setiawan, and Dewi Indrayani Hamin, 'Comparison of Socialism, Capitalism, and Sharia Economic Systems: A Critical Analysis of Principles, Implementation, and Social Impact,' *JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS* 7, no. 2 (2024): 1011-24.

participation in the global economy.¹⁰ The role of religion in the development of economic sectors such as religious tourism, halal products, and sharia-based financial institutions has become more evident as rapidly growing sectors that contribute significantly to the global economy. Particularly within the community Bengkarek Village's Awareness of Technology and its Impact on Social Interactions and Economy Bengkarek Village is aware of technology, allowing its community members to interact without religious barriers, which has fostered an open environment, particularly in matters of the economy.

According to the researcher's observation on December 20, 2024, the community of Bengkarek Village is considered pluralistic, as several religions are practiced by its residents. In addition, the village is diverse in terms of ethnicity, culture, and language, as it is home to both Dayak and Madurese people, each with their own distinct cultures and languages. Interestingly, despite this diversity, significant conflicts have not arisen. This can be observed in the social interactions of the local people, which have positively impacted the economic conditions within the community. However, it cannot be denied that the region's economy is greatly influenced by its religious and cultural diversity, as the area is home to two major religions, Islam and Catholicism, each with its own distinct teachings. A prominent issue is the prejudice surrounding business ventures, especially among the Catholic community, where Muslims may avoid purchasing products due to concerns about halal or haram status, as some members of the community remain strongly attached to religious concepts (P/20/12/2024).

Despite the common understanding that religion and economy are closely linked, further research is needed to explore the specific impact of religious social interactions on the economic conditions of Bengkarek's community. Therefore, a more in-depth study is necessary to understand how religious social interactions contribute to changes or improvements in the local economy. This research aims to investigate the impact of religious social interactions on the economy of Bengkarek, focusing on the relationship between religious activities and their effects on consumption patterns, production, and economic distribution in the daily lives of the community.

Several studies have already explored the relationship between religious social interactions and the economy. One such study, conducted by Suhandi in 2018, examines Religion and Social Interaction: A Portrait of Religious Harmony in Wiyono, Pesawaran Regency. This study shows that the interactions taking place are mutually beneficial and are supported by religious leaders as part of efforts to strengthen mutual respect, which leads to harmony among the community.¹¹

The research mentioned above touches on several themes that are also relevant to this study, such as: a) social interactions within communities based

¹⁰ Andika Andika, 'Religion and Technological Development in the Modern Era,' *Abrahamic Religions: Journal of the Study of Religions* 2, no. 2 (2022): 129, <https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v2i2.12556>.

¹¹ Suhandi, 'RELIGION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION: A Portrait of Religious Harmony in Wiyono, Pesawaran Regency,' *Al-Adyan* 13, no. 2 (2018): 171-92.

on mutual respect, which can foster tolerance between religious groups, b) open relationships that enable cooperation to build harmonious relationships, and c) the role of religious leaders in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. However, this previous research does not address the impact of religious social interactions on the economy, which is the focus of the present study. Thus, this research will examine the theme: "The Influence of Religious Social Interactions on the Economy of Bengkarek Village, West Kalimantan."

METHOD

This study belongs to the qualitative cluster with a sociological approach. Qualitative research is an approach that focuses on an in-depth understanding of certain phenomena, experiences, or situations through the collection of descriptive and narrative data.¹² In this approach, the researcher does not solely rely on numbers or statistics but instead analyzes data collected through observations, interviews, documents, and other qualitative methods. Various other forms of interaction are used to explore the meaning, perspectives, and perceptions of research subjects. Meanwhile, the sociological approach is a method or perspective used to study social phenomena, emphasizing the relationships between individuals, groups, or structures within society.¹³ This approach focuses on how norms, values, culture, and social interactions shape human behavior and influence social change. In sociology, this approach is used to analyze social issues by examining underlying factors such as social status, power, economics, and politics.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources.¹⁴ The data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is a process of systematically observing objects, phenomena, or specific events to gain deeper information.¹⁵ In observation, the researcher typically notes and analyzes what is seen, heard, or experienced without altering the observed object. Observations can be conducted either directly (through firsthand observation) or indirectly (using tools such as cameras or sensors), and they are often employed in various fields such as research, education, psychology, or even in daily life.

An interview, on the other hand, is a communication process between two or more parties, where one party (the interviewer) asks questions, and the other party (the informant) provides answers.¹⁶ Interviews can serve various purposes, such as gathering information, exploring opinions, or collecting data on a specific topic. Interviews are typically conducted in various contexts, such as the

¹² Hardani, *Book of Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods* (Yogyakarta: group science library, 2020).

¹³ Gunawan Adnan, *Sociology of Religion, Understanding Theories and Approaches. Cet 1*, (Banda Aceh,: Ar-raniry Aceh press, 2020).

¹⁴ Z. Abdussamad, *Qualitative Research Methods*. (CV. Syakir Media Press., 2021).

¹⁵ Sudaryono, *Research Methodology: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mix Method Ed.2* (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 2019).

¹⁶ Muh Fitrah and Luthfiyah, *Research Methods: Qualitative Research, Classroom Action, and Case Studies, First Edition*. (Sukabumi,: Jejak, 2017).

workplace, research, journalism, or education. There are several types of interviews, including structured interviews (with pre-prepared questions), semi-structured interviews (with flexible questions), and unstructured interviews (more casual and open-ended).

Documentation is the process of storing, recording, or gathering information in written, visual, or other media forms, aimed at capturing, organizing, and presenting specific data or knowledge.¹⁷ Documentation is often used to facilitate information management, references, and future understanding. In the context of organizations or projects, documentation may include reports, procedures, instructions, notes, or other records that support smooth operations and communication.

Data analysis is carried out through data condensation, which is the process of simplifying or summarizing large or complex information into a more concise form, while still maintaining the essence and core of the data.¹⁸ In data condensation, irrelevant or redundant information is eliminated, while the most relevant or meaningful information is retained. Data display is the process of presenting information or data in a format that is easy to understand and view by the reader.¹⁹ Finally, conclusions are drawn as a summary of the discussion or information presented earlier.²⁰

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Religious social interactions in the community of Bengkarek, West Kalimantan, have had a very significant impact on the village's economic development. Based on the religious values taught in daily life, such as honesty, hard work, and social solidarity, the community is able to form economic patterns based on cooperation and mutual assistance. In this context, religion not only serves as a spiritual guide but also as a foundation for building strong social and economic relationships. The forms of social interaction that impact the economy of the Bengkarek village community include:

1. Islamic and Catholic Religious Social Interaction in Bengkarek

Social interaction between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek can be observed in various aspects, such as cooperation in social, cultural, and educational activities, as well as in the economic sector. Generally, despite differences in beliefs, both groups are heavily involved in mutually beneficial social activities. The religious social interaction between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek reflects the harmony and social dynamics between these two groups. Even though there are differences in beliefs and worship practices, interfaith relations in Bengkarek are fostered through various

¹⁷ Mukhtar, *Guidance for Thesis, Thesis, and Scientific Articles; A Guide Based on Qualitative Field and Library Research*, (Ciputat: Gaung Persada Press, 2019).

¹⁸ J. Miles. M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, *Analisis Data Kualitatif; Buku Sumber tentang Metode-metode (Edisi Ketiga)*. (SAGE Publications, Ins., 2014).

¹⁹ A Muri Yusuf, *Qualitative, Quantitative and Combined Research Methods, First Edition*, Jakarta, (Jakarta: kencana., 2019).

²⁰ S. Aminah Roikan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods in Political Science, First Edition*, (East Jakarta,: Kencana, 2019).

social and cultural activities involving both communities. This was emphasized by Yohanes, a Dayak Catholic community member, who stated:

“We’ve lived side by side here for a long time, and there has never been a conflict, although small issues do arise but they are resolved together. We cooperate here without considering each other’s religious beliefs, in fact, we usually work together in community tasks, especially in mutual assistance, such as when we build buildings, and we always respect each other’s religious holidays” (W/15/12/2024/13:00 WIB).

Good relations between the Bengkarek village community have had a positive impact on collective economic development (P/15/12/2024). Both groups are often involved in collaboration across various fields, such as education, social issues, and humanitarian activities. Additionally, religious events organized together, such as the commemoration of religious holidays, further strengthen interactions between the communities. Some forms of interaction in the Bengkarek village community include:

a. Social and Cultural Cooperation

Cooperation between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek is often seen in social activities, such as mutual assistance, religious holiday celebrations, and other social activities. For example, Muslims and Catholics often collaborate in building public facilities, such as schools, places of worship, or other infrastructures. Social and cultural cooperation between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek can be seen as a form of harmonious interaction in a multicultural society. In this context, cooperation between these two religious groups is not limited to social activities, but also encompasses cultural aspects that support and enrich each other.²¹ This religious social interaction can be observed in various dimensions, including religious, educational, and socio-economic development activities.

In Bengkarek, this cooperation is reflected in various joint activities, such as cultural events, religious holiday celebrations, and the strengthening of tolerance values. One concrete example is the mutual assistance activities involving both Muslims and Catholics to build public facilities or places of worship together. Although each group has differences in beliefs, the people of Bengkarek tend to prioritize shared interests and respect these differences as part of the region's social and cultural wealth. This is in line with the statement made by Hasan, a Madurese Muslim:

“We in Bengkarek always maintain harmony among religious communities. Even though we have different beliefs, we remain

²¹ Muzakkir Walad et al., ‘Approaches to Religious Pluralism in Education in Indonesia: Challenges and Implementation Strategies,’ *Scientific Journal of Education Citra Bakti* 11, no. 3 (2024): 871–86, <https://doi.org/10.38048/jipcb.v11i3.3749>.

united in our joint activities. For example, during religious holiday celebrations, whether Muslim or Catholic, we celebrate together and offer support. We also often engage in mutual assistance to build public facilities or places of worship together” (W/15/12/2024/08:00 WIB).

The cooperation within the Bengkarek community shows unity and harmony, regardless of differences in beliefs (P/13/12/2024). This social and cultural cooperation is driven by a shared awareness to create peace, avoid conflicts, and build an inclusive community. Religious education that teaches tolerance, as well as interfaith activities such as seminars or dialogues between religious communities, also serve as means to strengthen relations among religious groups in Bengkarek.

b. Education

The education sector in Bengkarek also demonstrates the positive impact of interfaith social interactions. Schools in this region often become places where children from different religious backgrounds learn together, fostering attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect. This value-based education, rooted in religious principles, contributes to the development of character that appreciates diversity, which in turn supports harmonious economic relations.²² Education related to interfaith social interactions between Islam and Catholicism in Bengkarek reflects the social dynamics that have developed between these two different religious groups. In general, education in Bengkarek serves as a means to improve interfaith understanding, reduce the potential for conflict, and strengthen social harmony. This is similar to the statement of Hanif, a teacher at the school in Bengkarek Village, who said:

“Overall, education in Bengkarek functions not only to enhance academic knowledge but also as a means to strengthen interfaith relationships. Our village, which is predominantly Muslim but also has a significant Catholic population, has long coexisted peacefully” (W/19/12/2024/10:00 WIB).

Education in Bengkarek Village has become one of the community's tools for fostering cooperation among its diverse people (P/12/12/2024). In this context, schools and educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping attitudes of tolerance and mutual understanding between religious groups. Over time, education has also become a platform for promoting teachings of peace and interfaith tolerance.

Teachers and educators in this region are expected to be facilitators who can guide students to appreciate differences and collaborate in

²² Kasya Ardina Kamal, 'Implementation of Students' Tolerance Attitudes in Primary Schools,' *Gentala Journal of Primary Education* 8, no. 1 (2023): 52–63, <https://doi.org/10.22437/gentala.v8i1.21938>.

creating social harmony. Healthy social interactions between Muslims and Catholics can be fostered through various educational activities, such as joint discussions, religious events involving both parties, and social projects that encourage interfaith cooperation. An educational approach based on inclusivity and respect for religious differences is vital to achieving harmony in a pluralistic society.

c. Economy

Social interactions between religious groups are evident in trade activities and joint ventures. For example, Muslims and Catholics often engage in trade networks that support each other, both on a small scale, such as traditional markets, and on a larger scale, such as joint ventures in agriculture. In Bengkarek, a region inhabited by communities with both Muslim and Catholic backgrounds, the social interaction between these two religious groups significantly impacts the local economic dynamics. A social life full of tolerance and interfaith cooperation plays a major role in influencing the economic sector in this area.

Historically, Bengkarek provides concrete examples of how cooperation between Muslims and Catholics is reflected in various aspects of life, including the economy. For instance, in trade activities, people from both religions often collaborate in local commerce, market management, or even the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This is in line with the statement made by Eva, a Dayak Catholic community member:

“Here, the relationship between Muslims and Catholics has been very harmonious. We respect each other and work together in many things, especially in economic activities. For instance, in trade, we often work side by side in the local market, whether selling goods or helping each other manage businesses” (W/19/12/2024/14:00 WIB).

The economy derived from the community's cooperation in managing economic activities has enabled the people of Bengkarek Village to strengthen their harmonious relationships (P/14/12/2024). At the macro level, these social interactions encourage the creation of a plural consumption pattern. Understanding and appreciation of religious differences facilitate the development of a more inclusive market, where products and services meeting the needs of various communities can thrive. Furthermore, this diversity enriches human resources, fosters collaboration in education and employment, and ultimately contributes to economic growth.

2. Impact on the Community's Economy

Good social interaction among different religious groups in Bengkarek has a positive impact on the community's economy. One significant factor is the agriculture sector, which is the mainstay of the village. The community relies on agricultural products such as coconuts, rubber, and other

commodities to meet their economic needs. However, fluctuations in prices and natural disasters often disrupt farmers' income. In addition, the presence of large companies in the palm oil plantation sector has both positive and negative effects. On one hand, these companies create job opportunities, but on the other hand, they can reduce the size of agricultural land for the locals and damage the natural ecosystem, which is a source of livelihood for the community. Some of the main impacts that can be observed include:

a. Increased Economic Cooperation

Cooperation between Muslims and Catholics in various economic sectors, such as agriculture, creates new business opportunities. With trust and collaboration between these two groups, a broader economic network can be formed, improving market access and creating job opportunities.²³ Increased economic cooperation in Bengkarek Village, West Kalimantan, significantly impacts the local economy. Economic cooperation can take the form of collaboration between the villagers and external parties, such as the government, the private sector, or other village communities.

In the context of Bengkarek Village, strengthening economic cooperation through broader market access allows the community to increase production and improve the quality of their products, which in turn can raise income levels and improve living standards. A real example is the increased collaboration in agriculture, where local farmers gain access to more modern agricultural technologies and larger markets through partnerships with bigger companies or organizations. Additionally, cooperation with the local government opens up opportunities to receive social aid and infrastructure development support.

b. Interfaith Tolerance and Understanding

The interfaith tolerance created through social interaction allows the community to work together without being hindered by religious differences.²⁴ For example, in the trade sector, traders from different religious backgrounds can collaborate by emphasizing mutual respect and appreciating diversity. This positively affects the stability of the local economy. This aligns with the statement from Mujib, a community member in Bengkarek, who said:

²³ Putri Puja Lestari, Siti Maftukhatur Rohmah, and Aditya Ramadhani, 'Regional and Multilateral Cooperation as an Effort to Improve Indonesia's Economic Competitiveness,' *Indonesian Journal of Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2024): 40-53.

²⁴ Muhammad Turhan Setyorini Wahyu, 'COMMUNITY SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN MAINTAINING TOLERANCE BETWEEN RELIGIOUS UMATES (DESA GUMENG KECAMATAN JENAWI DISTRICT KARANGANYAR) Wahyu Setyorini 13040254044 (Prodi S-1 PPKn, FISH UNESA) Riniayuk90@gmail.Com Muhammad Turhan Yani,' *Civic Moral Studies* 08, no. 1995 (2020): 1078-93.

"In our village, cooperation among traders from various religions has been running very well. We respect one another and always strive to maintain tolerance. The principle of respecting and appreciating diversity is paramount in our relations, especially in the trade sector. We do not differentiate based on religion. What matters more is integrity, the quality of goods, and good service" (W/26/12/2024/14:00 WIB).

Interfaith tolerance and understanding play a crucial role in strengthening social harmony and promoting economic development in a region, particularly in Bengkarek Village (P/11/12/2024). In Bengkarek, West Kalimantan, which has diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, harmonious interfaith relationships can create a stable social climate, which in turn has a positive impact on the local economy.

Well-established religious tolerance allows the community to work together without being hindered by differences in beliefs. This fosters a conducive environment for investment and local economic activities.²⁵ For instance, diversity in religious practices often leads to joint celebrations that involve many people, including sectors of the economy related to tourism and micro-businesses. Mutual understanding between religions also enables the formation of cooperative patterns between individuals and groups with different backgrounds, enriching the ways of thinking and innovating. This can accelerate the development of local economic sectors as the community becomes more open to new opportunities that can improve collective welfare.

c. Infrastructure Development

The harmonious social interaction between Muslims and Catholics also impacts the regional infrastructure development. Cooperation between these two groups facilitates the procurement of public facilities that support the economy, such as markets, trade centers, and educational facilities. Infrastructure development has a significant impact on the economy of society, particularly in rural areas like Bengkarek Village in West Kalimantan. Good infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and other basic facilities, can drive economic growth by improving accessibility and reducing transportation costs.²⁶ This opens up opportunities for rural communities to develop local potentials, such as the agricultural and trade sectors.

²⁵ Idi Warsah, 'The Relevance of Social Relations to Religious Motivation in Maintaining Islamic Identity in a Multi-religious Society (Phenomenological Study in Suro Bali Village Kepahiang Bengkulu),' *Contextualita* 34, no. 02 (2018): 149-77, <https://doi.org/10.30631/kontekstualita.v34i02.42>.

²⁶ Azuwandri Azuwandri, Retno Agustina Ekaputri, and Sunoto Sunoto, 'The Effect of Infrastructure Development on Economic Growth in Bengkulu Province,' *EKOMBIS REVIEW: Scientific Journal of Economics and Business* 7, no. 2 (2019): 33-40, <https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v7i2.834>.

With easier access to markets, agricultural products or local goods from Bengkarek Village can be marketed more widely, increasing the income of local farmers and traders. Furthermore, infrastructure development also attracts investment and creates new job opportunities, both during the construction process and in the operation of the infrastructure. The social interaction between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek, West Kalimantan, illustrates an interesting example of how religious diversity can enrich the social, cultural, and economic aspects of a region.

The interaction between these two religious groups not only demonstrates tolerance but also brings tangible impacts on the advancement of the local economy in a sustainable way. The economy of Bengkarek's community shows a synergy between the two religious groups, utilizing their differences as strengths. Social cooperation, such as in micro-businesses, trade, and infrastructure development, creates jobs, reduces poverty, and enhances overall welfare. Religious diversity in Bengkarek is not a barrier; instead, it is a social capital that enriches work networks, expands markets, and strengthens the sense of togetherness among the community.

The importance of a shared understanding of the need for interfaith tolerance in the economic framework is also clearly evident. The maintained peace between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek creates a conducive atmosphere for social and economic investment. This facilitates a more inclusive development process, where various groups can contribute without being hindered by differences in beliefs. Religious social interactions between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek, if managed wisely, have the potential to strengthen the local economy, create social stability, and build a more inclusive, just, and prosperous society. Through the development of this cooperation, Bengkarek could become an example for other regions on how religious diversity can be harnessed as a strength in sustainable economic development.

CONCLUSIONS

Religious social interactions between Muslims and Catholics in Bengkarek, West Kalimantan, have formed a relationship pattern that respects each other and enriches the local community's life. In the economic context, interfaith harmony opens up opportunities for cooperation in various sectors, such as trade, education, and joint ventures. This harmony accelerates local economic development by fostering mutual trust, supporting social solidarity, and expanding economic networks between individuals or groups. However, religious influences are not without challenges, such as the potential for small conflicts that could disrupt stability, although positive interactions dominate. Overall, interfaith collaboration has become an essential factor in driving the economic growth of Bengkarek's community by improving access to resources and strengthening inclusive socio-economic networks.

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