

THE ROLE OF SHARIA COOPERATIVES IN IMPROVING MEMBERS' WELFARE (A Case Study of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 Sharia Cooperative in improving the welfare of its members in Sri Kuncoro Village, Central Bengkulu. The growing demand for accessible and affordable capital, particularly among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), motivates this research to explore BMT's contribution within the context of a Sharia-based people's economy. This qualitative study employs a socio-legal approach, gathering primary data through interviews with BMT administrators and members, alongside secondary data from relevant literature and documents. The aim of this study is to elucidate the role of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in enhancing member welfare and to identify the factors that support or hinder this process.

The research findings highlight the significant role of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in enhancing the economic welfare of its members. Easy access to financing and profit-sharing systems has proven effective in increasing income, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises. Despite challenges such as limited public awareness of BMT and funding constraints, BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 has successfully built trust and member satisfaction. Overall, this study concludes that BMT KUBE

Sejahtera 008 plays a vital role in improving the economic welfare of members in Sri Kuncoro Village, Central Bengkulu, and contributes positively to the village's economy.

INTRODUCTION

The context of inclusive economic development, active community participation plays a crucial role. This participation encompasses various aspects of both formal and informal economic activities. Cooperatives, grounded in Islamic values such as *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), serve as a strategic platform to promote community-based economic initiatives (Rahmah, 2019). In Islam, *ta'awun* signifies mutual understanding and protection among the involved parties, aiming to achieve shared prosperity. The core of cooperatives lies in embodying the values of *ta'awun* to realize *maslahah*—that is, the benefits and blessings experienced by all community members.

Cooperatives, as economic entities, have a noble objective, namely achieving *falah*, which refers to the human capacity to meet life's needs in a sustainable and equitable manner (Rahmah, 2019). This goal is highly relevant to Indonesia's economic conditions, where a large portion of the population still struggles to meet basic needs. Therefore, cooperatives are expected to become an alternative solution to overcome poverty and economic inequality. In the global context, the Islamic cooperative economic model has been increasingly recognized as a fairer and more sustainable alternative, particularly in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, where *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) has gained growing importance. From an Islamic perspective, *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) is not merely a philanthropic obligation but an integral part of ethical and responsible business operations. Islamic cooperatives, with their inclusive principles and orientation toward social welfare, inherently hold greater social responsibility compared to conventional financial institutions. This responsibility includes contributions to community development, environmental preservation, and fair business practices (Dusuki, 2008).

Islamic cooperatives serve as one of the key instruments in the development of the people's economy, particularly at the micro and medium levels. As Sharia-based financial institutions, Islamic cooperatives are not merely profit-oriented but also emphasize the values of justice, solidarity, and mutual assistance (*ta'awun*). This is in line with Islamic teachings that stress the principles of *ukhuwah islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) and *maslahah* (public benefit) in every aspect of economic life (Rahmah, 2019). The presence of Islamic cooperatives in Indonesia is expected to provide solutions to the limited access to capital faced by small communities that are often marginalized by the conventional financial system. Law Number 25 of 1992 on Cooperatives also reaffirms that cooperatives are a people's economic movement based on kinship (Jannah et al., 2022).

Conceptually, cooperatives are regarded as a platform for economic collaboration founded on the values of solidarity and mutual cooperation. Mohammad Hatta, known as the Father of Indonesian Cooperatives, emphasized that a cooperative is a joint business entity aimed at improving the economic well-being of its members through the principle of kinship. From an Islamic perspective, the principle of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) serves as a fundamental basis for the activities of Islamic cooperatives. The ultimate goal is the

attainment of *falah*, namely a state of well-being that encompasses material, spiritual, and

social dimensions (Triana Sofiani, 2014).

Islamic cooperatives serve a dual function, acting both as economic institutions and as social institutions. As economic institutions, they provide services such as savings and loans, business financing, and profit-sharing based savings with Sharia contracts such as *mudharabah*, *musyarakah*, *murabahah*, and *qardhul hasan*. As social institutions, they also distribute charitable funds, manage zakat, infaq, and sadaqah, as well as empower members to become more self-reliant (Neng Frida, 2023). This model is in line with the concept of *Baitul Maal wat Tamwil* (BMT), which integrates social functions (*baitul maal*) and business functions (*baitul tamwil*) within a single institution.

Despite its great potential, Islamic cooperatives in Indonesia continue to face various challenges. Common obstacles include limited capital, low financial literacy among members, weak institutional management, and high rates of financing arrears that hinder capital turnover (Putra, 2022). In addition, a portion of society still prefers conventional financial institutions, even though their practices are not aligned with Sharia principles, due to a lack of understanding of the mechanisms of Islamic cooperatives (Hutagalung & Batubara, 2021).

From an academic perspective, studies on Islamic cooperatives still reveal the existence of a research gap. Most previous studies have focused more on aspects of institutional structure, financial performance, or cooperative governance. Meanwhile, research that directly measures the contribution of cooperatives to improving members' welfare, particularly in rural areas, remains limited (Rodríguez & Velastequí, 2019). In addition, quantitative research has been more dominantly employed, whereas qualitative approaches with in-depth case studies on the actual conditions of members are still rarely conducted.

In this context, the existence of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in Sri Kuncoro Village, Pondok Kelapa District, Central Bengkulu Regency is important to examine. Established in 2005, this cooperative has transformed into a Sharia-based microfinance institution that actively serves rural communities. Its products include business financing with *murabahah* and *mudharabah* contracts, educational savings, Eid al-Fitr savings, and a *Qardhul Hasan* program for emergency needs. These products have proven to assist members, particularly micro and small business actors, in accessing capital more easily and fairly.

Nevertheless, preliminary data indicate that challenges remain, particularly in the form of loan repayment arrears from some members due to unstable income. On the other hand, the presence of Sharia-based savings and financing products continues to make a tangible contribution to improving members' income and welfare. This demonstrates that Islamic cooperatives, despite facing obstacles, are still able to play a significant role as a driving force of a just and people-centered economy.

Based on these conditions, this study seeks to analyze more deeply the role of the Islamic cooperative BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in improving the welfare of its members. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis. Through this approach, it is expected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of Islamic cooperatives to members'

welfare, the supporting and inhibiting factors they encounter, as well as the practical implications for the development of Islamic cooperative institutions in rural areas.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on the role of Islamic cooperatives from the perspective of Islamic economics, particularly regarding their contribution to improving members' welfare. Empirically, this study provides concrete evidence of how Islamic cooperatives in rural areas contribute to community economic development. Practically, this research can serve as a reference for cooperative managers, local governments, and relevant stakeholders in formulating strategies for community economic empowerment through the strengthening of Islamic cooperative institutions. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a Sharia-based people's economy that is inclusive, just, and sustainable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cooperative

A cooperative is a business entity consisting of individuals or legal cooperative entities, founded on the principles of kinship and economic democracy. Law No. 25 of 1992 affirms that cooperatives are both a people's economic movement and a business entity based on kinship. Unlike conventional business entities, cooperative members have a dual role as both owners and users of cooperative services. Mohammad Hatta, known as the Father of Indonesian Cooperatives, stated that cooperatives are the backbone of the national economy because they are capable of realizing justice, equity, and members' welfare (II, 1992).

The study conducted by Mulyono (2021) emphasizes that cooperatives play a strategic role in human resource development, particularly in the digital era. In his research, he explained that cooperatives function not only as economic institutions providing financial services to their members but also as platforms for empowerment and competency development. Through the adoption of digital applications, cooperatives are able to expand service reach, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen transparency in financial management. This indicates that cooperatives possess the flexibility to adapt to technological changes and can deliver tangible benefits in enhancing the quality of human resources. Thus, cooperatives can be seen not only as a means of promoting economic equity but also as institutions that foster social welfare and strengthen the competitiveness of their members in facing global challenges.

Sharia Cooperative

A sharia cooperative is one form of microfinance institution based on Islamic principles and aimed at improving the welfare of its members through sharia-based business activities. Sharia cooperatives differ from conventional cooperatives, as they do not apply interest in their operations but instead use profit-sharing principles and sharia contracts such as *mudharabah*, *musyarakah*, *murabahah*, and *qardhul hasan* (Rahmah, 2019). The fundamental principles of sharia cooperatives are in line with Islamic teachings, namely upholding the values of justice, solidarity (*ukhuwah islamiyah*), and mutual assistance (*ta'awun*) in economic activities (Triana Sofiani, 2014).

According to Jannah, M., Rasti, A., Ramadaeni, N., & Yulanda (2022), sharia cooperatives represent an important instrument in people's economy, as they are able to provide more inclusive financial services for small community groups that are often marginalized from access to formal financial institutions. The most developed institutional

form of sharia cooperatives in Indonesia is the *Baitul Maal wat Tamwil* (BMT), which integrates a social function (*baitul maal*) as the manager of charitable funds with a business function (*baitul tamwil*) as a provider of business financing (Neng Frida, 2023).

Sharia cooperatives represent an extension of the cooperative model that operates on the principles of Islamic law. This institution emerges as a solution for society, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), to access financing without the interest-based system (*riba*) prohibited in Islam. The activities of sharia cooperatives include mobilizing savings and deposits, distributing financing through Islamic contracts such as *mudharabah*, *musyarakah*, *murabahah*, *ijarah*, and *qardhul hasan*, as well as engaging in social programs through the management of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah funds. The role of sharia cooperatives is not limited to providing capital, but also encompasses education, justice, and community welfare. They seek to uphold fairness in transactions, provide education to avoid *riba*-based practices, and contribute to improving community income and the national economy. Thus, sharia cooperatives perform a dual function: as an economic institution supporting business development, and as a social institution strengthening solidarity among the Muslim community. (Ii, 1992)

A cooperative is essentially a business entity founded on the spirit of togetherness and the principle of kinship. Law Number 25 of 1992 concerning Cooperatives explains that a cooperative is a business entity whose members consist of individuals or cooperative legal entities, carrying out its activities based on cooperative principles while also serving as a people's economic movement rooted in kinship values. This places cooperatives in a unique position, as members are not only service users but also the owners of the cooperative. Mohammad Hatta even referred to cooperatives as the backbone of Indonesia's economy, due to their ability to foster solidarity, promote equity, and improve the standard of living of society. Therefore, cooperatives are not merely oriented toward financial profit but rather toward enhancing the overall welfare of their members, both economically and socially. (Jannah, M., Rasti, A., Ramadani, N., & Yulanda, 2022)

Thus, Islamic cooperatives hold a dual role. On one hand, they function as economic institutions that provide savings, lending, and business financing services; on the other hand, they also serve as social institutions that distribute charitable funds and empower communities through Sharia-based activities.

The Theory of Welfare in the Perspective of Islamic Economics

The concept of welfare in Islamic economics is not limited to material aspects but also encompasses spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. Welfare (*falah*) is defined as a condition in which human beings are able to meet their basic needs decently, live with dignity, and at the same time uphold religious and social values (Rahmah, 2019).

In the context of Islamic cooperatives, member welfare can be observed from the increase in income, the availability of business capital, and the fulfillment of basic family needs (Jannah et al., 2022). In addition, the existence of Islamic cooperatives is also expected to strengthen social solidarity through a fair profit-sharing system that does not disadvantage members. Triana Sofiani (2014) emphasized that the indicators of cooperative members' welfare are not only measured by financial gains but also by member participation, satisfaction with services, and overall improvement in quality of life.

In the perspective of Islamic economics, welfare is not merely measured by material economic growth but also encompasses spiritual, moral, social, and distributive justice aspects. Eza Okhy Awalia Br Nasution et al. (2023) explain that the concept of economic

growth in Islam has long received attention from classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and Ibn Taymiyyah, who emphasized that economic development aims to prosper the earth while preserving human dignity. Welfare in Islam is viewed as the fulfillment of material needs balanced with spiritual needs, thus not only oriented toward worldly life but also toward preparing for the hereafter. The principle of distributive justice is central in Islamic economics, since growth without equity will only generate social inequality. Therefore, welfare in Islam requires a fair distribution of wealth through instruments such as zakat, infaq, and sadaqah, so that wealth does not circulate only among the rich. This concept affirms that true welfare is the attainment of both physical and spiritual happiness, in this world and the hereafter, through balanced, realistic, just, and environmentally responsible growth.

The Role of Islamic Cooperatives in Improving Members' Welfare

The role of Islamic cooperatives in enhancing members' welfare can be analyzed through several aspects. First, Islamic cooperatives function as providers of accessible and affordable capital, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This has been evidenced by various studies stating that Islamic cooperatives are able to encourage the development of small businesses by providing sharia-based financing that is considered fairer compared to conventional institutions (Putra, 2022).

Second, Islamic cooperatives play a role in increasing members' income. Research by Sari et al. (2017) shows that active participation of members in Islamic cooperatives has a positive impact on household income, although there are still obstacles such as limited capital and low financial literacy. Third, Islamic cooperatives strengthen social bonds among their members. According to Hutagalung & Batubara (2021), Islamic cooperatives not only provide economic benefits but also foster a sense of togetherness and social solidarity through mechanisms of mutual assistance.

Cooperatives play a strategic role in improving members' welfare through various means, such as providing access to affordable capital, enhancing skills through training and mentoring, and creating business opportunities through collaboration and business networks (Rahmah, 2019). In the Islamic context, cooperatives also strive to conduct business activities that are halal and in line with Islamic principles, such as avoiding usury (*riba*) and implementing a fair profit-sharing system (Hutagalung & Batubara, 2021). Islamic cooperatives also contribute to increasing financial inclusion for communities that have not been reached by conventional financial institutions. In the context of empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Handayani et al. (2023) emphasize that Islamic cooperatives have a strategic role as an alternative source of financing that is more inclusive, especially for MSMEs that often face obstacles in accessing conventional banking services due to complex requirements or lack of credit history. By offering financing schemes that comply with Islamic principles, such as *mudharabah* and *murabahah*, Islamic cooperatives not only provide access to capital but also support sustainable business development in accordance with Islamic business ethics. According to Siregar (2015), Islamic cooperatives have functions and roles in building according to Siregar (2015), Islamic cooperatives have functions and roles in developing and enhancing the potential and capabilities of their members, strengthening the quality of human resources to become more trustworthy (*amanah*) and professional, as well as realizing a national economy based on kinship and economic democracy.

Previous Relevant Studies

A number of studies have examined the relationship between Islamic cooperatives and the improvement of members' welfare. Putra (2022) found that Islamic cooperatives play a significant role in providing financing for MSMEs; however, their success still largely depends on institutional management and the level of member participation. Sari et al. (2017) showed that Islamic cooperatives are able to increase members' income, but they often face obstacles such as installment arrears that affect capital turnover.

Hutagalung & Batubara (2021) concluded that Islamic cooperatives are more preferred than conventional cooperatives because they do not apply an interest-based system, although challenges still remain in terms of financial literacy. Rodríguez & Velastequí (2019), in an international study, emphasized that the success of cooperatives in improving community welfare is largely determined by the quality of governance, member participation, and the institution's ability to adapt to community needs.

Another study by Jannah et al. (2022) highlighted that Islamic cooperatives in rural areas face more complex challenges compared to those in urban areas, such as limited infrastructure and low levels of financial literacy among the community. This provides an important reason to examine the role of Islamic cooperatives in villages, such as BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008, in improving the welfare of their members.

Previous studies provide a strong foundation for understanding the role of cooperatives and BMTs in improving community welfare. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of Islamic cooperatives in enhancing member welfare is also influenced by various factors, one of which is the quality of services provided. Sagala & Silalahi (2022), in their study of the Sharia Financial Services Cooperative (KJKS) Baitut Tamwil Muhammadiyah (BTM), found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on member satisfaction. The study emphasized that good, responsive services that meet members' needs can increase their trust and loyalty toward the cooperative. Indirectly, this can contribute to improving member welfare, as satisfied members tend to be more active in utilizing the services and products offered by the cooperative. In line with these findings, Rizki et al. (2022), in their case study of the Ta'awun Sharia Cooperative in Klaten Regency, found that the cooperative plays an important role in empowering the community's economy through the provision of business capital. The study also highlighted that the Ta'awun Sharia Cooperative faces challenges such as the lack of public understanding regarding the sharia system and competition with conventional banks. Nevertheless, the cooperative continues to strive to make a positive contribution to the welfare of its members.

Thus, this study seeks to fill the existing research gap by analyzing in greater depth how BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 provides quality services and implements sharia principles in its operations, and how these two factors jointly influence the welfare of its members. This research will also take into account other factors that may affect the effectiveness of BMT in improving member welfare, such as member participation in BMT programs and the socio-economic conditions of the local community.

Relationship Between Variables and Conceptual Framework

Based on previous theories and studies, the relationship between Islamic cooperatives and members' welfare can be explained. Islamic cooperatives, through Sharia-based financing services, are expected to increase members' income, provide business capital, and strengthen social solidarity (Rahmah, 2019). Empirical research shows a positive relationship

between the role of Islamic cooperatives and members' welfare (Putra, 2022).

Thus, the conceptual framework of this research is that the more optimal the role of Islamic cooperatives, the greater their contribution to improving members' welfare. This study will examine such a role through a case study at BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in Sri Kuncoro Village.

Conceptual Framework

This study illustrates the relationship between the variables examined. The independent variables in this research are members' participation in BMT programs and the implementation of sharia principles. The dependent variable is members' welfare. Members' participation in BMT programs is measured through the level of activeness in activities organized by the BMT, such as training, mentoring, and member meetings. The implementation of sharia principles is measured by the extent to which the BMT carries out its business activities in accordance with sharia principles, such as avoiding *riba* and applying a fair profit-sharing system. Members' welfare is measured using indicators such as income, access to capital, skills, and quality of life. This research will analyze how members' participation and the implementation of sharia principles influence the welfare of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 members in Sri Kuncoro Village.

Operational Definitions

The operational definitions in this study are as follows:

1. Sharia Cooperative: A business entity consisting of individuals or cooperative legal entities that carries out its business activities based on sharia principles, such as avoiding *riba*, *gharar*, and *maysir*, while upholding the principles of justice, transparency, and *ta'awun*.
2. BMT (Baitul Maal wat Tamwil): A sharia microfinance institution that combines social functions (*baitul maal*) and business functions (*baitul tamwil*), and seeks to improve community welfare through savings, financing, and investment activities based on a fair profit-sharing system.
3. Members' Welfare: A condition in which the economic, social, and spiritual needs of cooperative members are fulfilled, measured through indicators such as income, access to capital, skills, quality of life, participation in social activities, and understanding as well as practice of religious values.

RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research

This study employs a quantitative approach with the survey method. The quantitative approach was chosen because it is aligned with the research objective, namely to test the hypothesis regarding the effect of members' participation in BMT programs and the implementation of sharia principles on members' welfare. Quantitative research enables statistical data processing so that the results obtained can be generalized to the population. The survey method was used because the researcher intended to obtain primary data directly from a relatively large number of respondents through a structured questionnaire instrument.

Research Approach

The research approach used is an associative approach. This approach was chosen

because the study aims to determine the relationship and influence between variables, namely member participation in BMT programs and the implementation of sharia principles as independent variables, and member welfare as the dependent variable. Through the associative approach, the researcher can measure the extent to which the independent variables contribute to changes in the dependent variable. Theoretically, associative research provides an overview of the causal relationship between variables, making it relevant to test the conceptual model developed in this study.

Research Location

The research was conducted at BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008, located in Sri Kuncoro Village, Central Bengkulu Regency. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that this BMT is one of the active sharia microfinance institutions that empowers the rural economy. BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 has a significant number of members, with diverse operational activities, including micro-business financing, member savings, and social fund distribution. Furthermore, the research location was chosen in accordance with the study's focus, namely analyzing the role of sharia cooperatives in improving member welfare at the village level.

Data Sources

This study used three types of data sources:

1. **Primary Data:** Data obtained directly from research respondents through structured questionnaires. Primary data included information on the level of member participation in BMT programs, the extent to which sharia principles are implemented, and the perceived welfare of members.
2. **Secondary Data:** Data obtained from official BMT documents, such as institutional profiles, membership numbers, financial reports, and activity reports. This data was used to complement and strengthen findings from the primary data.
3. **Tertiary Data:** Data obtained from academic literature sources, including books, articles, scholarly journals, and credible online sources relevant to the research topic. Tertiary data served as a theoretical foundation and academic reference to reinforce the study's arguments.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was conducted using several methods:

1. **Questionnaire:** Used as the primary instrument to obtain primary data from BMT members. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions using a Likert scale, allowing respondents to provide answers according to their level of agreement with the statements presented.
2. **Semi-structured Interviews:** Conducted with BMT management to gain in-depth information regarding internal policies, the implementation of sharia principles, and member empowerment programs. Semi-structured interviews were chosen so the researcher could maintain a question framework while remaining flexible to follow the dynamics of the informants' responses.
3. **Document Study:** Involves reviewing official BMT documents, such as financial reports, annual reports, organizational profiles, and meeting minutes. These documents serve as supplementary data to validate primary data.

4. **Documentation:** Includes physical evidence such as activity photos, program brochures, or other written materials that can strengthen the credibility of the research findings.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all members of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008. Based on BMT data as of August 2025, there are 200 active members. From this population, the researcher determined the sample using a simple random sampling method, ensuring that each member has an equal chance of being selected as a respondent for the study.

The sample size was determined using a practical rule of thumb, taking 15% of the total population. For example, if the total number of members is 200, the research sample is set at 30 people. The formula used is:

$$\text{Sample Size} = \text{Population} \times 15\%$$

In this case:

$$\text{Sample Size} = 200 \times 0.15 = 30 \text{ members}$$

If the population that the researcher will take consists of 200 people, and uses the simple random sampling method as well as wants to take 15% of the population as the sample, then the number of samples that the researcher needs to select can be calculated using the following formula:

$$n = (N \times \text{persentase}) / 100$$

$$n = (200 \times 15\%) / 100 = 30$$

$$n = (10 \times 15\%) / 100 = 2$$

Thus, if the researcher intends to take 15% of a population of 200, the number of samples to be studied is 32 people. Thus, the selected sample size is considered representative of the population, given that the characteristics of BMST members are relatively homogeneous in terms of social and economic background.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted through several stages:

1. **Editing:** Editing was carried out to check the completeness and accuracy of the data obtained from questionnaires and other sources. This process was done carefully to ensure the quality of the data.
2. **Classification:** This involved grouping the data into variable categories, such as the level of member participation, the degree of sharia principle implementation, and the level of member welfare.
3. **Verification:** Ensuring the validity of the data by comparing questionnaire responses with information from documents and interviews.
4. **Data Analysis:** A process of organizing and arranging the data into categorical patterns and basic descriptions.
5. **Concluding:** Drawing conclusions from the identified problems, representing the final stage of the research process and providing answers based on the previously presented data.

Analytical Conclusion

The research method used is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of Islamic cooperatives in improving members' welfare. The quantitative approach with multiple linear regression techniques allows the researcher not only to identify relationships between variables but also to measure the magnitude of the influence of each independent variable on members' welfare. With this research design, the results obtained can serve as an empirical basis for the development of theories as well as policies related to economic empowerment based on Islamic cooperatives.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008

History of Establishment of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008

BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 is a Microfinance Institution operating based on Sharia principles. This institution was established through a collaborative initiative between a group of Community Business Groups (KUBE) and local community leaders, with the primary aim of serving the community and developing their businesses through savings and financing activities based on a profit-sharing system.

Administratively, BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 Sri Kuncoro is located in the Pondok Kelapa Subdistrict, which was formerly part of North Bengkulu Regency. The institution was officially established on February 1, 2005. In May 2008, its name and status were changed to Koperasi BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 Sri Kuncoro, Central Bengkulu Regency. This change was accompanied by the ratification of its legal entity status through Notarial Deed Number: 009/BH/DK-UKM/V/2007 on May 15, 2007.

The development of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 can be traced through the Annual Members' Meeting (RAT) held routinely. The first RAT was held in 2006, when BMT still had not obtained legal entity status. After becoming a legally recognized cooperative, the RAT for the first fiscal year was held in 2008 and continued each year until the 17th RAT in 2024. The establishment of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in Sri Kuncoro Village began from a farmer group that actively conducted savings and loan activities among its members. The increasing need for fast and easy access to capital, especially for urgent needs such as weddings, medical expenses, and education, encouraged the farmer group to develop itself and meet these needs more structurally.

Over time, the farmer group realized the need for a more formal management system and a wider reach. They then initiated the establishment of the BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 cooperative. The farmer group continued its activities independently, while the cooperative operated as a new entity built to meet the larger capital needs of the community. This initiative was driven by the spirit of mutual cooperation and the strong trust that had been established within the farmer group.

With the increasing number of members and the growing volume of transactions, the BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 cooperative continued to develop and improve the quality of its services. Its commitment to meeting the community's capital needs, along with responsible and effective management, ultimately enabled the cooperative to keep expanding and innovating in its products and services.

One of the keys to the success of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 is its ability to adapt to technological developments. The use of digital systems and training for members in

managing finances in a modern way has become a key strategy to improve efficiency and expand service reach. The culmination of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008's long journey is its achievement in obtaining official legal entity status. This serves as tangible proof of the dedication and hard work of all parties involved. Today, BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 has become a vital pillar in the economy of Desa Sri Kuncoro, making a significant contribution to the welfare of its members and the local community.

Vision and Mission

Vision

BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 has become an independent, healthy, strong, and trusted financial institution in empowering the community's economy based on sharia principles.

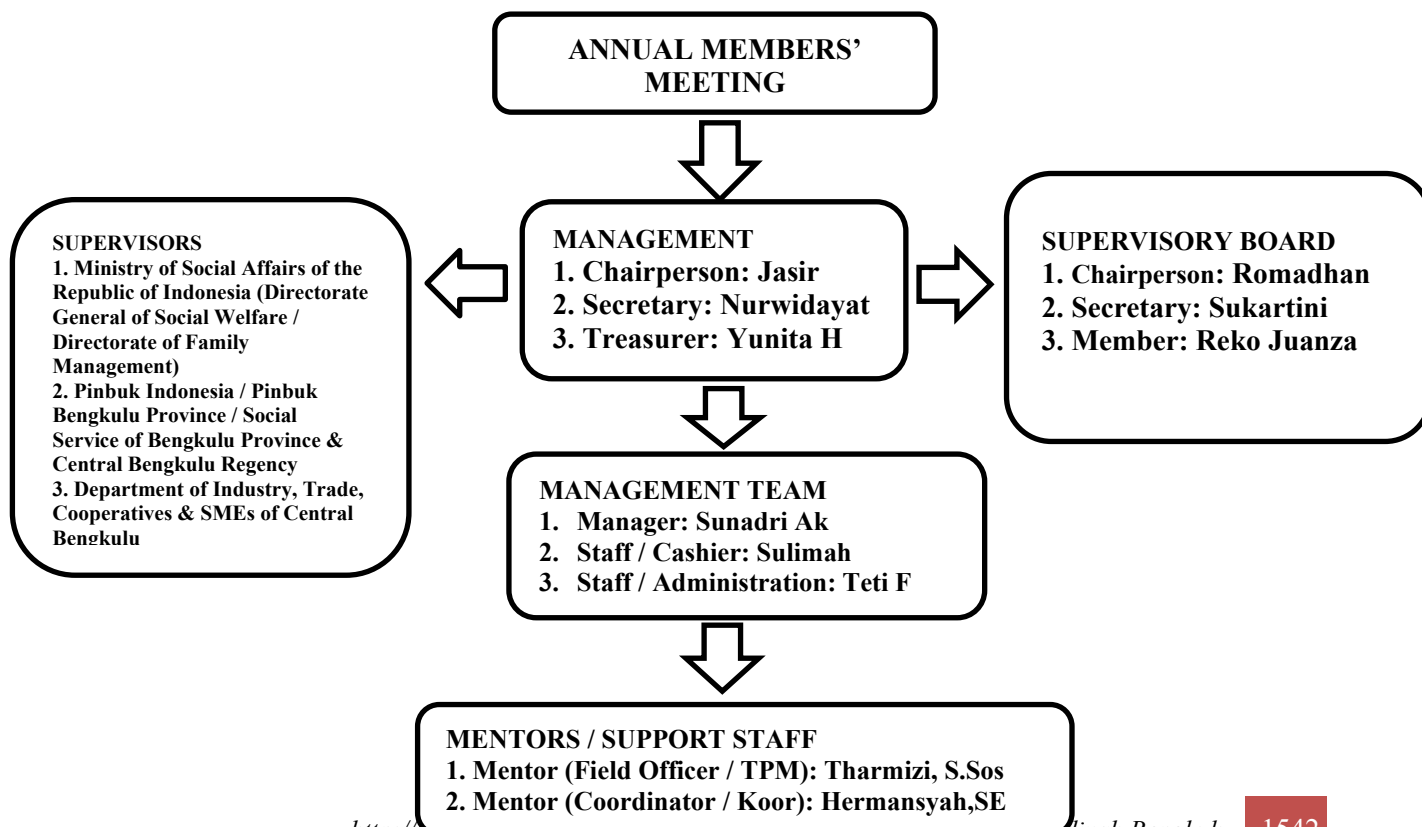
Mision

This BMT aims to develop micro and small entrepreneurs to be resilient and professional, provide innovative sharia-based financial products and services tailored to the community's needs, and enhance human resource quality so they can deliver professional and trustworthy services.

Organizational Structure of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 Cooperative

The organizational structure of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 consists of the management, supervisory board, and operational units. The management is responsible for the overall administration of BMT, the supervisory board oversees the operational activities of BMT, and the operational section comprises several units, such as the savings unit, financing unit, and business unit.

Organizational Structure of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 Cooperative



Profile of Sharia Cooperative BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008

BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 is located in Sri Kuncoro Village, Pondok Kelapa Subdistrict, Central Bengkulu Regency. This cooperative operates in the sharia-based savings and loan sector using a profit-sharing principle. According to documentation data, the number of cooperative members at the time of the study was 85 people, consisting of rural community members, the majority of whom work as farmers and small traders.

Table 1. Member Profile of Sharia Cooperative BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008

Member Characteristics	Number	Percentage (%)
Farmer	40	47,1
Small Trader	25	29,4
Civil Servant	10	11,8
Others	10	11,8

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 2. Gender of Respondents

No	Gender	Respondents	%
1	Male	8	25
2	Female	24	75
Amount		32	100

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 3. Respondents' Age

No	Age of Respondents	Respondents	%
1	26 to 35 years	12	37,5
2	36 to 45 years	14	43,75
3	46 to 60 years	6	18.75
Amount		32	100

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 4. Respondents' Occupation

No	Respondents Occupation	Respondents	%
1	Farmer	11	34,38
2	Entrepreneur / Self-employed	7	21,88
3	Civil Servant	5	15,63
4	Laborer / Worker	9	28,14
Amount		32	100

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 5. Respondents' Income Before Becoming BMT Members.

No	Respondents' Income	Respondents	%
1	≤ Rp. 1.000.000	7	21,88
2	≤Rp. 1.500.000	14	43,75
3	≥Rp. 2.000.000	11	34.38
Amount		32	100

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 6. Respondents' Income After Becoming BMT Members.

No	Respondents' Income	Respondents	%
1	≤ Rp. 1.000.000	4	12,5
2	≤ Rp. 1.500.000	14	43,75
3	≤ Rp. 2.000.000	12	37,5
4	≥ Rp.2.500.000	2	6,25
Amount		32	100

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Members' Access to Financing

One of the main roles of BM\$T KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008 is to provide access to Sharia-based financing. Based on interview results, the majority of members access financing in the form of murabahah and mudharabah.

Table 7. Types of Financing Received by Members

Type of Financing	Number of recipients	Percentage (%)
Murabahah	50	58,8
Mudharabah	20	23,5
Musyarakah	10	11,8
Qardhul Hasan	5	5,9

Source: Interviews and documentation, 2025

Impact of Financing on Welfare

The research results indicate that the majority of members experienced an improvement in welfare after joining the cooperative. Welfare indicators include increased income, easier access to capital, and a sense of spiritual comfort since financing is provided without interest.

Table 8. Impact of Financing on Members' Welfare

Welfare indicators	Before joining	After joining	Change
Average monthly income	IDR 1.800.000	IDR 2.500.000	+38,9%
Access to business income	Limited	Easier	Improved
Spiritual well-being	Low	High	Positive

Source: Members' interview data, 2025

Challenges Faced by the Cooperative

Although beneficial, BM\$T KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008 also faces challenges in carrying out its operations. Some of the challenges identified include limited capital, low financial literacy among members, and payment arrears from some members.

Table 9. Challenges Faced by the Sharia Cooperative

Challenges	Description
Limited capital	Capital is still limited to serve all members
Low financial literacy	Some members do not yet understand the principles of Sharia contracts
Payment arrears	Some members have outstanding installments
Limited human resources of management	Still limited in institutional management capacity

Source: Interviews with management, 2025

Supporting Factors

Besides the challenges, there are supporting factors that help the cooperative remain resilient, namely community trust, support from the village government, and adherence to Sharia principles, which are considered fairer.

Table 10. Supporting Factors of the Cooperative

Supporting Factors	Impact
Members' Trust	Increases loyalty
Village Support	Provides social legitimacy
Sharia Principles	Makes members feel more secure / at ease

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the Sharia cooperative BM\$T KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008 plays an important role in improving members' welfare through access to Sharia-based financing. These results are consistent with Putra (2022) and Sari et al. (2017), who found that Sharia cooperatives increase members' income, although challenges in management and payment discipline still exist.

Furthermore, this study supports the findings of Hutagalung & Batubara (2021), which emphasized that Sharia cooperatives are more widely accepted in rural communities due to their adherence to Sharia principles, even though financial literacy remains limited. The research by Rodríguez & Velastequí (2019) is also relevant, highlighting that the success of cooperatives is strongly determined by member participation and institutional governance.

Thus, this study strengthens the theory that Sharia cooperatives function not only as economic institutions but also as social institutions that provide spiritual, moral, and social solidarity benefits. However, their effectiveness is still influenced by internal factors (management and capital) as well as external factors (community and government support).

The research findings indicate that BMST KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008 plays an important role in improving the welfare of its members. This is evident from the increase in members' income after joining the BMST. In addition, BMST provides easier access to capital, helps meet daily needs, and alleviates the financial burden of marriage, education, and healthcare. BMST also offers entrepreneurship training that benefits members in developing their businesses. The factors supporting the success of BMST KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008 include a strategic location, qualified human resources, and the availability of savings products and business units.

The inhibiting factors include the community's limited understanding of BMST and restricted funding.

Table 11. Indicators of the Role of the Sharia Cooperative

Indicator	Description (Interview Results)	Respondents
Income	Most respondents stated that their income increased after joining BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008, both from their own business and from additional capital received.	Data from respondents
Access to Capital	Respondents experienced ease in obtaining loans, with amounts according to their needs, and utilized the loans effectively to develop their businesses.	Data from respondents
Quality of Social Relations	Majority of respondents are satisfied with BMT services, feel treated politely, experience fast processes, and have good communication with management.	Data from respondents
Quality of Life	Respondents experienced improved access to education for their children and easier access to health services due to additional income and assistance from BMT.	Data from respondents
Business Ethics	Respondents stated that BMT operates honestly, fairly, and according to Sharia principles; there is	Data from respondents

	no fraud or usury, and all transactions are transparent.	
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BM T KUBE Sejahtera 008 not only provides access to financing but also serves as a social pillar in the community. It helps increase the income and economic independence of its members, as well as contributes positively to local economic development. The success of BM T KUBE Sejahtera 008 aligns with previous research indicating that Sharia-based microfinance institutions can play an effective role in improving community welfare.

Based on the five welfare indicators, the results show that:

1. Income

Based on interviews with 15 respondents, 13 people (86.7%) reported that their income increased after joining BMST KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008, while 2 people (13.3%) stated that their income remained relatively stable. Before becoming members, their average monthly income ranged from IDR 1,500,000 to IDR 2,000,000. After receiving financing, their average monthly income increased to IDR 2,500,000–IDR 3,000,000. This increase occurred due to the additional capital that was used to develop businesses such as grocery shops, food businesses, agriculture, and services. This indicates that BMST KUBE\$ Sejahtera 008 plays a significant role in improving the income of its members.

2. Access to Capital

All respondents (100%) acknowledged that the loan application procedure at BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 is relatively easy and not burdensome. The approved loan amounts varied between IDR 2,000,000 and IDR 10,000,000, adjusted according to the needs and repayment capacity of the members. A total of 12 respondents (80%) stated that the loans were optimally used to increase business capital, while 3 respondents (20%) utilized them for urgent needs such as healthcare and children's education. The success rate of utilizing these funds is considered good, as most members were able to repay their loans on time.

3. Quality of Social Relations

Survey results indicate that 14 respondents (93.3%) feel satisfied with the services provided by the management and administrators of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008. The services highlighted include friendliness, transparency of information, and ease of business consultation. Monthly regular meetings and member development agendas also serve as a platform to strengthen social bonds among members, fostering a sense of togetherness and mutual assistance.

4. Quality of life

A total of 11 respondents (73.3%) stated that their quality of life improved, particularly in terms of access to education and healthcare, after joining BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008. The additional income enabled members to finance their children's education up to senior high school and even higher education, purchase school supplies, and meet family nutritional needs. In addition, 10 respondents (66.7%) reported easier access to healthcare services, both for routine check-ups and treatment during illness.

5. Bussines ethics

All respondents (100%) stated that BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 operates based on Sharia principles, upholding honesty and fairness. The profit-sharing mechanism, loan requirements, and members' rights and obligations are explained transparently. There are no elements of interest (riba) in transactions, and contracts (akad) are conducted according to mutual agreement. The application of this business ethics enhances members' trust and strengthens their loyalty to the cooperative.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the study on the role of BMT KUBE Sejahtera in improving the welfare of its members in Desa Sri Kuncoro, Central Bengkulu Regency, the research findings can be presented as explained in the previous chapters. Based on the presentation of the results, the researcher can draw the following conclusions:

The data analysis shows that BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 has successfully improved the economic welfare of its members. This is indicated by the significant increase in income after they joined the cooperative. The rise in income reflects the positive impact of the programs and services provided by the cooperative in enhancing the members' standard of living.

BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 is also considered effective in providing easy and affordable access to financial services for its members. This ease of access, combined with the high level of trust members have in the cooperative, is reflected in the large number of members who successfully obtain loans. This demonstrates the cooperative's success in building trust and meeting the financial needs of its members.

This study aims to analyze the role of the Sharia Cooperative BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in improving the welfare of its members in Sri Kuncoro Village, Pondok Kelapa District, Central Bengkulu Regency. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the Sharia cooperative plays a significant role in providing access to Sharia-based financing, increasing members' income, and offering spiritual reassurance to its members.

The role of the cooperative in improving member welfare is reflected in the following:

1. An increase in the average income of members after obtaining financing;
2. Easier access to business capital through Sharia-compliant contracts, which are more equitable compared to conventional systems; and
3. The development of social solidarity among members through the principles of togetherness and mutual assistance.

However, the cooperative also faces challenges, including limited capital, low financial literacy among members, and outstanding loan repayments. The results of this study reinforce previous theories and findings that Sharia cooperatives function not only as economic institutions but also as social institutions that promote both material and spiritual welfare.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the author provides several recommendations as follows:

1. For cooperative management: It is necessary to enhance the management capacity and financial literacy of members through regular training to ensure the sustainability of the cooperative.
2. For local government: Support should be provided in the form of policies or additional funding facilities so that rural Sharia cooperatives are better empowered to serve the needs of their members.
3. For the community/cooperative members: Members are expected to be more disciplined in fulfilling their financing payment obligations and more actively participate in cooperative activities to strengthen the sense of togetherness.

Implications and Limitations of the Study

This study has theoretical implications in enriching the understanding of the role of Sharia cooperatives from an Islamic economic perspective, particularly in improving the welfare of members at the rural level. The practical implications of this research are that Sharia cooperatives can serve as a strategic tool for empowering the rural economy based on Sharia principles.

However, this study has limitations because it was conducted on a single case study, namely BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008, so the results cannot yet be generalized to all sharia cooperatives in Indonesia. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more sharia cooperatives across various regions using a comparative approach or quantitative methods to achieve broader and more generalizable findings.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends several strategic steps to enhance the role of BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 in improving the welfare of members in Desa Sri Kuncoro, Kabupaten Bengkulu Tengah:

- a) BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 should collaborate with other organizations to increase public understanding of the cooperative and sharia principles.
- b) BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 should seek new sources of funds through collaboration with other financial institutions or corporate CSR programs. Additionally, BMT KUBE Sejahtera 008 should strengthen its risk management system to minimize potential losses and ensure the sustainability of the cooperative.

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