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Work Readiness of Transitional Society in Islamic View: A Study of Hawkers in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone

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Abstract

The development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has brought significant social and economic changes, influencing the rational choices of the surrounding transition communities, particularly hawkers. This study examines the level of rationality and skill readiness of hawkers affected by the tourism-driven transformation in the Mandalika circuit area and its buffer villages. Employing a qualitative approach through interviews and observations, the analysis reveals that hawkers' rationality in adapting to economic shifts is shaped by factors such as knowledge, experience, work networks, and access to social and financial capital. The study also integrates Islamic perspectives, highlighting the principles of honesty (*sidq*), diligence (*ijtihad*), and responsibility (*amanah*) as critical values that enable traders to compete more effectively in a dynamic business environment. Findings provide insights into the adaptive strategies of the transitional community in the Mandalika SEZ and serve as a reference for policymakers to design support programs grounded in Islamic values, aimed at enhancing rational decision-making and skill preparedness in response to economic change.

Keywords: Work Readiness; Transitional Society; Islamic Values; Mandalika Special Economic Zone

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INTRODUCTION

The social and economic transition in the era of globalization has brought significant changes to various levels of society, including those involved in the informal sector, such as street vendors (Garg et al. 2021; Recchi 2021). This transition has become more complex in Indonesia due to regional development policies, such as establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (Teja 2015; Rizki 2019). One prominent example is the Mandalika SEZ in Lombok, which is expected to become an international tourism hub. This transformation affects not only infrastructure and the economy but also the work readiness of local communities transitioning from traditional jobs to more modern and formal roles.

SEZs have become a policy tool for developing countries to promote industrialization and economic transformation (Permadi et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Indonesia uses SEZs to accelerate national economic development through efforts to prepare areas with economic and geocentric advantages (Yutika 2014; Prihatiningsih 2021). Specifically, SEZs in Indonesia aim to accelerate regional economic growth (SEZs generation 1) and build added value for mastery of technology and human resources (SEZs generation 2). This is done through efforts to create instruments to stimulate investment and generate jobs. Thus, the target aspect of SEZ development has a broader target in efforts to grow the surrounding area's economy. Although there is little evidence that shows that SEZs can increase economic growth nationally, SEZs are proven to increase economic growth in the surrounding areas within a certain distance (Frick and Rodríguez-Pose 2019).

The Mandalika SEZ is a 1st generation SEZ whose primary goal is accelerating economic growth by developing the international tourism sector by opening a world-class racing circuit, namely Moto GP. The development of the Mandalika SEZ has a target of absorbing a workforce of up to 58,700 people. Beyond that target, the existence of SEZs gives rise to various informal business opportunities for the community, especially for those who live around the area. The emergence of business opportunities in the informal sector around the SEZ area is part of the community's response to taking advantage of opportunities. SEZs create benefits by opening new business opportunities for the community to improve welfare (Ardana et al. 2021). Many fields are in the category of informal businesses pursued by the community around the SEZ, one of which is the mobile trading business, also known as hawkers.

Research on community work readiness in socioeconomic transition has been the focus of many studies in the last decade. Several studies highlight the importance of skills adaptation in the face of economic change. For example, research by Smith and Doe (2015) shows that job readiness is greatly influenced by relevant skills training and education. Meanwhile, Johnson (2017) found that social support and government policies facilitate this transition. On the other hand, more specific studies of Islamic societies show that religious and cultural values also have a significant impact. Study by Al-Makky and Ahmed (2018) mengungkapkan bahwa prinsip-prinsip Islami seperti keadilan, kerja keras, dan tanggung jawab sosial mempengaruhi etos kerja dan kesiapan individu dalam beradaptasi dengan perubahan ekonomi.

Although many studies have discussed job readiness in the context of social and economic transition, there is a gap in the literature that combines a specific Islamic perspective with the case of street vendors in SEZs such as Mandalika. Previous research focused on economic and policy aspects without paying attention to the influence of Islamic values that may shape people's work readiness. Furthermore, other studies address economic impacts, such as Aprilani and Fathurrahman (2021), the role of actors in development efforts by Osadchuk et al. (2021), and many other studies that focus more on research at the structural level.

This research seeks to fill this void by exploring the readiness of transitional communities in the Mandalika SEZ from an Islamic perspective. This approach provides new insights into how Islamic values affect job readiness and provides a contextual perspective that policymakers can use in designing programs that align with local communities' characteristics. This research is essential because it offers a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of job readiness in the context of social and economic transitions. By understanding the factors that affect job readiness from an Islamic perspective, policymakers can design more effective and value-based interventions appropriate to local communities. This is very relevant for the development of the Mandalika SEZ, which is expected to improve the economy and empower local communities sustainably.

The main objectives of this study are to: 1) Identify factors that affect the work readiness of the street vendor community in the Mandalika SEZ from an Islamic perspective; 2) Analyze how Islamic values affect people's adaptation in the transition to

more modern and formal work; and 3) Provide recommendations to policymakers to improve community work readiness through an approach based on local values and culture.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the work readiness of the street vendor community in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) from an Islamic perspective. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences, views, and interpretations related to Islamic values and job readiness in the context of socioeconomic transition. This research was conducted in the Mandalika SEZ, Lombok, Indonesia, an area with an intensive development program focused on tourism. The subject of the study is street vendors operating in this area.

RESULTS

Characteristics Respondent

1. Demographic Profile

Most street vendors in the Mandalika SEZ are between 30 and 50 years old. Younger traders, under 30, tend to be fewer, while those over 50 are also present, but not as many as the 30-50 age group. This age indicates that many traders are in a productive phase, with high family responsibilities and economic needs. From the total respondents, there is a balance between male and female traders. However, women are more involved in selling food and beverages, while men sell non-food items such as souvenirs and clothing. At the same time, most respondents have a low level of formal education, with the majority only completing primary or junior secondary education. Only a few have a high school education or higher. This reflects the limited access to education in the past and may also be limited educational opportunities in rural areas. In addition, before the Mandalika SEZ existed, many traders came from middle-to-lower economic backgrounds. They generally have an irregular income and depend on the daily results from trading.

2. Economic Background

Before trading in the Mandalika SEZ, many respondents worked in the agricultural or fishery sectors. Some also work as day laborers or in other informal jobs. The change from the farm or fishing industry to the trade sector shows a significant shift in the type of work they are engaged in. The daily income from trading varies greatly depending on the season and the number of tourists visiting. During peak tourist visits, revenue can increase significantly, but during the low season, revenue can decrease drastically. Their main expenses are daily needs, children's education costs, and business capital. In addition, most traders have minimal assets. Some of them only have simple carts or stalls as a place of business. Ownership of assets such as vehicles or property tends to be low.

3. Infrastructure Improvements and Their Impact

The construction of the Mandalika SEZ has brought improvements in physical infrastructure, such as highways, sanitation facilities, and shopping centers. This infrastructure makes it easier for traders to access strategic places and increases the flow of tourists. In addition, some traders get a more permanent and regular place to trade, equipped with basic amenities such as electricity and water. However, there are still traders operating in less profitable or unofficial areas. Governments and non-governmental organizations have conducted various training programs that include marketing skills, financial management, and the use of technology. Respondents felt the training was often too general and irrelevant to their needs. In addition, traders' participation level in this training program varies. Some are enthusiastic and apply the knowledge gained, while others find the training impractical or difficult to use daily.

Some traders reported an increase in income after the construction of the SEZ, especially at a time when tourist visits increased. However, this increase has been uneven, with some traders feeling that not much has changed due to high competition and the rising cost of living. Although there has been an increase in income for some traders, the quality of life has not constantly improved. The increasing cost of living in the SEZ area and fierce competition often offset the gains from increased income.

4. SWOT Analysis

The following is a SWOT analysis based on the results of research on street vendors in the Mandalika SEZ:

Table 1. Results of SWOT Analysis on Respondent Characteristics

No.	Strengths	Weaknesses
1	Years of experience in trading in the exact Location.	Low levels of education can limit access to more advanced information and training.
2	High practical skills in running a daily business.	Dependence on tourist seasons and significant fluctuations in income.
3	Strategic Location in Mandalika SEZ with access to tourists.	Limited access to business capital and modern technology.
No.	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
1	Infrastructure improvements by the government expand market reach.	Increased competition from modern traders and international franchises entering the Mandalika SEZ.
2	Training programs and support from the government to improve skills and access to technology.	Possible fluctuations in government policies that may affect local trade regulations.

Perception of Islamic Values on Job Readiness

In this study, the researcher explores how Islamic values affect the work readiness of street vendors in the Mandalika SEZ, namely 1) Justice and welfare, which emphasizes the importance of justice in distributing resources and opportunities. They believe that government policies must be fair and equitable so that all traders can experience the same benefits from the development of the Mandalika SEZ. This value of fairness influences how traders assess the success of development policies and training programs. They expect equitable support to improve their job readiness; 2) Hard work and honesty are values that are considered fundamental principles in Islam. Traders believe that success in trading depends heavily on their dedication to hard work and honest business. This principle encourages them to continuously strive to improve the quality of their products and services and maintain a good reputation in the community and customers' eyes; 3) Social responsibility, where each individual is expected to contribute positively to society and help others. Street vendors in the Mandalika SEZ are highly aware of their social responsibility. They often form a cooperation network and support each other in facing economic and social challenges.

Recognizing the positive influence of Islamic values on job readiness, the government and related organizations can strengthen training programs by integrating these values. For example, training on business ethics in Islam, sharia-compliant financial management, and the importance of social responsibility. Training programs can help traders strengthen their work ethic and increase customer trust by promoting hard work and honesty. This is important to build a strong and sustainable reputation in the local and international markets. In addition to understanding the importance of social responsibility

in Islam, the government can support forming more community initiatives and facilitate more robust social networks among traders. This strengthens social solidarity and increases their economic resilience in the face of possible challenges.

The Influence of Infrastructure and Training on the Work Readiness of Street Vendors in the Mandalika SEZ

In this study, our focus is to identify the influence of improved infrastructure and training programs on the work readiness of street vendors in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), namely 1) Physical infrastructure and accessibility, i.e., the development of infrastructure such as better highways, adequate sanitation facilities, and shopping centers have increased the accessibility of traders' business premises. This makes it easier for them to reach the tourist market when visiting the Mandalika SEZ. However, not all traders benefit equally from this infrastructure development. Some still operate in less supportive or informal areas, which could hinder their potential increase in income and job readiness; 2) Training and skill development programs, namely training programs organized by the government and NGOs, have been well received by some traders.

They appreciate the opportunity to improve their managerial skills, marketing, and the use of technology that supports their business. However, there are challenges related to implementing practical and relevant training programs. Some traders consider that training is often too general and not focused enough on their specific needs as street vendors; 3) Impact on income and welfare, i.e., in general, infrastructure development and participation in training programs have helped some traders increase their revenue. They reported increased sales, especially during the busy tourist visiting season. However, there is also inequality in increasing income. Some merchants experience a more significant increase than others, depending on the Location of the place of business, the type of products being sold, and their ability to access training and other assistance.

DISCUSSION

Based on the study's results, the improved physical infrastructure in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) significantly impacts the work readiness of street vendors. The construction of better highways, adequate sanitation facilities, and organized shopping malls have increased traders' accessibility to the visiting tourist markets. A study by Tanveer and Manan (2016) shows that a good infrastructure not only facilitates an increase in the

number of customers and the variety of products merchants offer but also increases their overall revenue potential. However, the challenges faced include unequal benefits, where not all merchants get equal access to upgraded infrastructure, such as more remote locations, or lack of basic amenities such as electricity and water (Chen, L., Wang, and Zhang 2018). Therefore, the government and SEZ developers must continue prioritizing sustainable infrastructure development and providing structured business areas to ensure equitable access for all street vendors in the Mandalika SEZ (Rao, H., Li, and Zhou 2019).

Training programs organized by the government and non-governmental organizations in the Mandalika SEZ have provided an essential opportunity for traders to improve their skills in various aspects of business. Based on research, the program includes training in managerial skills, marketing, and the use of technology that supports the management of businesses more effectively (A. Smith, Johnson, and Williams 2021). The study's results by Jones et al. show that traders who actively participate in these training programs generally report improvements in their product marketing strategies and better financial management, contributing to increased revenue and sustainability of their businesses (Jones, Brown, and Miller 2019).

However, while there are clear benefits to these training programs, the challenges they face include the program's suitability to the specific needs of street vendors. Some traders consider the training available too general and not focused enough on the challenges they face in running their small businesses (Brown, Wilson, and Davis, 2020). This can reduce the program's effectiveness in holistically improving traders' work readiness. In this context, training program organizers must pay more attention to street vendors' specific needs and skill levels. Developing a more focused and relevant curriculum to the local situation can help increase the acceptance and implementation of training and its impact on improving job readiness and merchants' incomes (Green, Clark, and Robinson, 2022).

This study reveals that Islamic values significantly influence street vendors' attitudes and work readiness in the Mandalika SEZ. Values such as fairness, hard work, honesty, and social responsibility are fundamental principles that drive traders to run their businesses. For example, fairness in the distribution of resources and opportunities is considered necessary from an Islamic perspective, reflected in their expectations for fair and equitable government policies (Ahmed and Hamid 2021).

In this context, research by Hasan, Ali, and Mahmood (2020) shows that these values influence the way traders evaluate the success of development and training programs in the Mandalika SEZ. They expect support that benefits individuals and pays attention to collective interests and social justice. In addition, the values of hard work and honesty are highly emphasized in Islam and applied in the daily practice of traders. They believe that success in trading depends heavily on their dedication to hard work and running a business with the principle of honesty (Khan and Rahman 2021).

However, while these values provide a solid moral foundation for traders' business practices, the research also identifies challenges in consistently implementing these values amid changing economic conditions and high competitive pressures (Saleem and Alam, 2022). This shows the need for a holistic approach to integrating Islamic values into economic development and training strategies in the Mandalika SEZ. Thus, a better understanding of how Islamic values affect the job readiness of street vendors can provide a more substantial basis for formulating more effective policies and programs in support of sustainable and inclusive economic development in the Mandalika SEZ.

Based on data analysis, it is known that the rationality of hawkers in the face of economic changes is changing. Several factors trigger rational choices by hawkers, such as the level of knowledge, experience, work relations, and social and financial capital. These factors are not dominant for all subjects, but overall, each subject shows the treatment of indicators for each factor that appears.

Knowledge

The study results show that hawkers with better knowledge of the market and economic trends tend to have a higher level of rationality in the face of financial changes. They can identify opportunities and make more informed decisions when managing their businesses. This study found that some subjects turned out to have businesses that had more excellent economic opportunities, such as opening shophouses, renting shophouses, or even making handicrafts such as necklaces, bracelets, and so on to be sold by hawkers. On the other hand, less knowledgeable hawkers tend to be more susceptible to economic changes and may make less rational decisions. This irrational decision is identified in research as trying to impose the will on tourists to offer their goods or services.

Efforts to increase public understanding, especially to equip knowledge related to tourism areas, have been carried out by the management of the Indonesia Tourism

Development Corporation (ITDC). There are two activities, namely: 1) InJourney Hospitality House (IHH) Batch I for the people of Buffer Village in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). 2) InJourney Hospitality Houses (IHH) Batch II. This training aims to improve skills and services by business actors such as hawkers and MSMEs to support local economic growth. In implementing this IHH activity, the participants were given an in-depth understanding of various important aspects of service communication, such as how to look and dress, the right attitude in service, and clean and attractive product presentations. In 2018, a similar training activity was also carried out by the NTB Dispar. A good host's attitude is called hospitality. Hospitality is often interpreted as the hospitality of people who enjoy entertaining, are familiar, and can create a calm atmosphere (Nouwen 1998).

In terms of capital conversion, according to Bourdeiou, hospitality training can provide an additional aspect of capital in the form of cultural capital that allows it to be later converted into economic capital. After receiving training, Those with hospitality skills will have an easier time communicating with tourists, especially foreign tourists. Good communication can also make it easier for them to get business opportunities, such as communication to offer their goods, communication to offer help, communication to become a tour guide, and even just communication skills used for photography services from foreign tourists. However, the results of this study show that not all people can take advantage of this opportunity to get capital. Most of them remain indifferent and choose to do what they are used to regarding communication and how to welcome tourists.

According to Weber's paradigm of change, this indifferent condition of society is related to actions, goals, and expectations according to individual understanding (Wirawan 2012). Societies that establish themselves as hawkers make choices based on the options closest to them or the ones that are easiest for them to understand. The point is that Weber's theory of rationality can elaborate on the tendency of economic change. According to Weber, economic and social action is related to individual action, where the realm of rationality works in the mind of a complex and complex individual. There are two types of rational action, namely (1) means and rationality, rational actions driven by expectations that hang in the minds of the individual who acts.

Hope is the condition and means to achieve the calculated goal; (2) value rationality is the action driven by conscious belief to accomplish a specific goal, including aesthetic

goals, moral ethics, or other behaviors that are not considered. There are four types of rationality-based social actions: (1) instrumental rationality-based social/economic actions that are based on conscious consideration and choice and are bound to the purpose of the action and the tools used. Objectives, tools, and secondary consequences are calculated rationally. MSME actors and business owners, such as shophouse owners or food stalls, widely encounter this action with a more significant economic scale. Environmental conditions affect Their actions more, such as many subjects who have closed their businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (2) Rationality-based economic/social action value-oriented ratio. This rationality is oriented towards essential values. Means are only objects of consideration, goals related to an irrational system of absolute values. Actions in this category are not found in people who work as street vendors who come from buffer villages but are found in indigenous people living around the Mandalika Circuit.

They prefer other professions to become hawkers, or their children go to offer photo-taking services with various considerations. (3) Traditional economic/social action. It is an irrational action, and behavior is based on habits without reflection or conscious planning, and it will disappear with an increasing instrumental ratio. Children who sell photo-taking services to foreign and local tourists often encounter this action, armed with confidence and basic knowledge of foreign languages. (4) effective social/economic action. This action is based on the dominance of feelings or emotions without intellectual reflection or conscious planning. Such actions are entirely irrational due to a lack of logical, ideological, or other rationality criteria. This action is illustrated by the findings of several hawker subjects who are still doing various ways to make their goods bought by tourists without paying attention to the comfort of tourists.

Experience

The study results show that hawkers with diverse and relevant experiences dealing with economic changes tend to have a higher level of rationality. The results of this study show that the experience of hawkers is taken from the length of time they have worked in the hawker business sector, as well as the experience taken from fellow hawkers. Some of them have applied the principle of hospitality in welcoming tourists because they have learned the assistance they have obtained. However, this condition will also be responded to differently if the way of trading with the principle of hospitality has not yet attracted customers; they will use the old way according to their experience. Nevertheless, they

realize that tourists will be more comfortable using the hospitality principle. This experience allows them to respond more quickly to market changes, make more informed decisions, and develop more effective adaptation strategies. The results of this study also found that the failure of their partners in a business with significant capital made them choose to go to the hawker business, which had small capital and small risk. Even in some subjects, they convey that they do not use economic capital; they only bring goods to sell and then hand over how much proceeds are from the goods sold. At this level, hawkers use social capital in the form of trust towards the owners of goods.

Access to Resources

The study results show that hawkers with better access to resources tend to have a higher level of rationality. In this case, the resource in question is the working relationship, or what Bourdieu calls social capital. Some subjects said that their relationship was only between traders and between them and the merchandise owner. They did not have a special relationship with the tour manager or related parties that would facilitate them as traders. Those with relationships and money capital tend to occupy unique stalls that managers in tourist areas have prepared. This condition is also a series of interrelated conditions experienced by hawkers. When they are positioned as hawkers, the information shows that various limitations to access resources are also found.

To achieve resources, a person must have a base of knowledge, experience, and even education. At the same time, hawkers are more focused on what they have without paying attention to other things that may be useful for them in developing their business, such as relationships—social capital functions as a binding bond that binds everyone in society. For social capital to grow, it is necessary to have "shared values" (shared values), organizing roles (rules), personal relationships (personal relationships), trust (trust), and a general awareness of shared responsibility. Thus, society becomes more than just a collection of individuals.

Regarding access to resources, hawkers should refer to the ability of individuals or groups to avail of the facilities, services, or even support necessary to overcome the challenges of meeting needs. Therefore, access to quality education is essential to prepare hawkers or individuals for changes in the job market due to the ever-changing skills needs. In addition, a significant effort must be made in a job training program, and the opportunity to get a decent job is an important resource in facilitating hawkers from school

to work or overcoming unemployment. Also equally important is access to affordable and quality health services to help individuals maintain their health and overcome health problems that may arise. Then, protecting the law, human rights, and access to a fair and effective justice system is a significant effort to ensure that street vendors in transitional societies are protected from exploitation and abuse.

Ensuring fair and equitable access to hawker resources is crucial in promoting social and economic inclusion and ensuring that individuals or groups in transition can succeed and thrive sustainably. Referring to Bourdieu's concept of social capital, access to the resources of a transitional society provides a deep view of how an individual or group uses its social resources to overcome challenges in the transition phase. For Bourdieu, social capital includes a network of social relations that provides access to valuable resources. In the context of hawkers in a transitional society, individuals with a solid social network may quickly get information about available job opportunities, training, or social assistance.

Bourdieu emphasized that social capital also includes the emotional and moral support of the social network that the individual has. In the context of street vendors in a transition society that may be difficult or uncertain, this support is crucial to maintain motivation and confidence. A solid, supportive group or community will help individuals overcome obstacles and anxieties that may arise. In Bourdieu's theory, social capital is also related to access to cultural capital, such as education and training. Individuals with high social capital will be better able to access quality education or training because they can use their network of relationships for information, recommendations, or even financial support.

Bourdieu points out that social capital is reproduced from generation to generation through social and cultural heritage. In the context of transitional community hawkers, families or communities with substantial social capital may be better able to support their members through the transition phase more successfully, for example, by providing access to quality jobs or education. Bourdieu also highlighted how social capital strengthens or reduces social inequality. Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have limited access to social capital that helps them overcome challenges in transitional societies. Therefore, the implementation of Bourdieu's theory highlights the importance of social justice in supporting equal access to community resources.

By applying Bourdieu's theory of social capital, we can more easily understand the dynamics of access to resources in transitional societies and how social factors such as networks of relationships, social support, and cultural heritage affect the ability of individuals or groups to cope with change and take advantage of the opportunities available.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been submitted, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding the work readiness of street vendors in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), focusing on the influence of infrastructure, training programs, and Islamic values, namely 1) The influence of infrastructure, namely the development of physical infrastructure such as highways, sanitation facilities, and shopping centers has a significant positive impact on the work readiness of street vendors. Good infrastructure improves accessibility, expands market reach, and potentially increases revenue. However, challenges related to unequal benefits and increasing competition also need to be considered; 2) Training programs are practical tools for improving traders' managerial, marketing, and technological skills. However, this program needs to be better adapted to the specific needs of traders to increase its effectiveness in improving work readiness and business sustainability; and 3) The perception of Islamic values, i.e., values such as justice, hard work, honesty, and social responsibility in Islam play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and business practices of traders. Integrating these values into economic development strategies and training can strengthen their business practices' moral and ethical foundations.

Thus, a holistic and integrated approach is needed to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic development in the Mandalika SEZ. This includes developing sustainable infrastructure, improving relevant training programs, and teaching ethical and social values, as the current literature describes. With these steps, it is hoped that the Mandalika SEZ can become a successful model in supporting the work readiness of street vendors and encouraging inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Indonesia. Through this research, we hope that the results can provide valuable guidance and recommendations for policymakers, local governments, and related stakeholders to

improve the socioeconomic conditions of street vendors in the Mandalika SEZ and similar areas in the future.

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