

## The Issue of Honorarium for Temporary Teachers from the Perspective of the Ijarah Contract and Islamic Economic Justice: A Literature Review

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### **Keywords:**

*Ujrah, Honorary Teachers, Ijarah Contract; Distributive Justice, Islamic Economics.*

### ***Abstract***

*The remuneration of honorary teachers remains a challenge in Indonesia, where wages are often far below workloads, responsibilities, and contributions. While previous studies have addressed this issue from policy and welfare perspectives, little attention has been given to analysis through ijarah and distributive justice. This study examines honorary teachers' ujrah from the perspectives of the ijarah contract and justice, focusing on the distortion of taradbi, the gap between the social and economic value of teaching, and ujrah as structural injustice in education. Using a qualitative literature review, data were collected from relevant journal articles through purposive sampling and analyzed through content analysis. The findings show that taradbi is often distorted by economic pressure and weak bargaining power, making consent superficial. The study also identifies a mismatch between social esteem for teachers and their low compensation. In addition, low remuneration reflects structural injustice marked by unequal resource distribution and weak labor protection. These findings suggest the need for remuneration reform grounded in Islamic principles of justice, human dignity, and welfare. The study contributes to Islamic economic literature by providing a conceptual framework for evaluating honorary teachers' remuneration through ijarah and distributive justice.*

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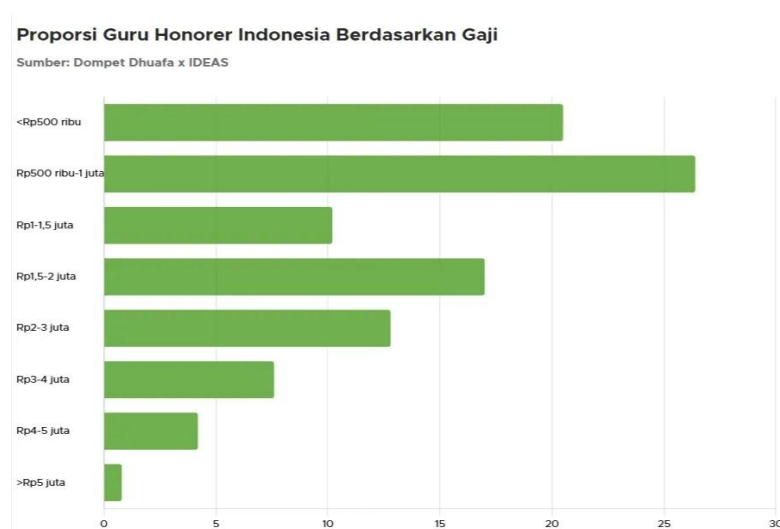
## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the cornerstone of human resource development and a nation's progress, with teachers playing a central role in this process. Teachers not only function as educators but also as agents of social change who play a role in shaping the awareness, character, and morality of students. This is emphasized in various studies that teachers hold a strategic position as agents of change in determining the success of education and the formation of students' social values (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, 2024). Furthermore, teachers are also viewed as the main pillars in building the intellectual and moral quality of future generations (Ningsih & Laura, 2024). Therefore, the role of teachers should ideally not only be symbolically valued through social recognition but must also be balanced with appropriate economic compensation.

The phenomenon of the welfare of contract teachers in Indonesia remains a serious concern in both educational and economic studies, including from an Islamic economic perspective. In practice, contract teachers play a strategic role in ensuring the continuity of the educational process, particularly in areas still lacking educators with civil servant (ASN) status. However, this significant contribution is not matched by adequate levels of welfare. Various empirical findings indicate that contract teachers' salaries remain low and inconsistent, and in many cases fall far below the minimum wage standard. A study indicates that contract teachers in Indonesia still receive salaries ranging from Rp300,000 to Rp1,000,000 per month, which is clearly

insufficient to meet the cost of a decent living (Hutasuhut et al., 2025). This situation highlights a disparity between the workload and the economic compensation received.

In several regions across Indonesia, honorary teachers' salaries remain far below the Regional Minimum Wage (UMR) standard, amounting to only around Rp300,000 to Rp1,000,000 per month. A recent survey conducted by Dompet Dhuafa and the Institute for Demographic and Poverty Studies (IDEAS) revealed that 74.3% of honorary teachers still receive salaries below Rp2 million per month. Even more shocking, 20.5% of contract teachers receive wages below Rp500,000 per month. Based on various studies, contract teachers' salaries in Indonesia remain at a low and uneven level. The majority of contract teachers receive wages below the standard for a decent standard of living (Hutasuhut et al., 2025). The distribution of income levels can be seen in the following graph:



*74.3% of respondents who are contract teachers stated that their monthly salary is still below Rp2 million | Source: Good Stats*

Based on the data presented in the graph, it is evident that the salary levels of contract teachers in Indonesia still vary significantly across educational levels. At the elementary school (SD) level, contract teachers generally receive salaries ranging from Rp300,000 to Rp1,500,000 per month, with amounts that in some cases may be lower, particularly in remote areas with limited funding sources. Meanwhile, at the Junior High School (SMP) level, there is a slight increase in salary amounts, ranging from Rp500,000 to Rp2,000,000 per month (Rafli et al., 2024). This variation is generally influenced by school policies and budget availability, whether sourced from the Regional Budget (APBD) or internal funds of educational institutions.

At the Senior High School and Vocational High School (SMA/SMK) levels, honorary teachers' salaries are relatively higher compared to the previous level, ranging from Rp800,000 to Rp2,500,000 per month. This difference is often influenced by the school's status whether public or private as well as the financial capacity of the institution in question. As for religious-based educational institutions such as madrasahs (MI, MTs, and MA), the salaries of contract teachers generally range from Rp300,000 to Rp1,500,000 per month. The primary funding sources for madrasahs usually come from the School Operational Assistance (BOS) fund or foundations, with

some regions providing additional incentives as a form of support for educators' welfare. Generally, these salary figures indicate that there is no uniform standard in the remuneration system for contract teachers in Indonesia (Bagaskara et al., 2025). This situation suggests disparities in the distribution of compensation that are influenced not only by educational level but also by structural factors such as institutional policies, funding sources, and geographic location.

Inequality in the welfare of contract teachers can also be analyzed through John Rawls's perspective on distributive justice. In his theory of "justice as fairness," Rawls asserts that the distribution of rights, opportunities, and economic resources must be conducted fairly, particularly for the least advantaged groups the "difference principle" (Rawls, 1971). However, the reality faced by contract teachers indicates that the distribution of welfare within the education system has not been carried out proportionally. Contract teachers, who make significant contributions to the educational process, still receive low wages and minimal labor protections. This situation indicates the existence of structural inequality that contradicts the principle of distributive justice, as the group most in need of economic protection has not yet attained adequate welfare (Irdan & Andani, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, this issue can be analyzed through the concept of the *ijarah* contract in Islamic economics. *Ijarah* is a contract for the provision of services accompanied by compensation (*ujrah*) that must adhere to the principles of justice, clarity, and mutual consent (*taradhi*) between both parties. Ideally, the working relationship in *ijarah* is not only based on a formal agreement but also on the appropriateness of the compensation provided in accordance with the benefits generated (Putri et al., 2023). However, in the reality of contract teachers, there are often situations where teachers receive low wages due to limited job options and urgent economic needs. This raises critical questions regarding whether the principle of *taradhi* is truly fulfilled or, conversely, distorted in practice. Thus, the issue of honorarium for contract teachers is not merely economic but also touches upon ethical and justice dimensions within Islam.

A number of recent studies have examined the issue of contract teachers' welfare from various perspectives. A study titled "Analyzing Contract Teachers' Welfare Policies Regarding the Improvement of Educational Quality" asserts that the welfare of contract teachers is significantly influenced by institutional policies, particularly regarding the payroll system, employment contracts, and the protection of educators (Windasari et al., 2024). This study indicates that low wages not only affect teachers' economic conditions but also have implications for the quality of learning produced. Meanwhile, another study titled "Compensation Systems in Ensuring the Well being of Contract Teachers" found that the compensation system for contract teachers tends to be unstable and highly dependent on the financial capacity of the school or foundation, thereby creating income uncertainty for teachers (Agustina Pitriyani, Yustinus Sanda, Scolastika Nene Remi, Yesepa, 2021).

Furthermore, a recent study titled "The Crisis of Honorary Teachers' Welfare: Low Wages and Difficulty in Meeting Basic Needs" indicates (Sutisna et al., 2026) that these findings reveal serious structural issues within the honorary teacher remuneration system in Indonesia. Furthermore, research from the Ministry of Education through the study "The Problems of Honorary Teachers Management in Primary Education" confirms that the issues facing honorary teachers are not limited to wages but also encompass labor management aspects, including recruitment, employment status, and career development (Sabon, 2023). This indicates that the issue of honorary teachers' welfare is multidimensional and cannot be separated from the broader context of education policy.

On the other hand, research on the relationship between teachers' welfare and performance indicates that the level of compensation, including wages, has a significant impact on the performance and work motivation of contract teachers (Kurniawan et al., 2021). In other words, low wages not only affect teachers' economic lives but also have the potential to lower the overall quality of education. However, although these various studies have provided a fairly comprehensive picture of the conditions of contract teachers, most still focus on policy and general welfare aspects, without deeply linking them to the perspective of Islamic economics, particularly the concepts of the ijarah contract and distributive justice (Muthmainnah & Fauziah, 2025).

Based on a review of these studies, there are several research gaps that need to be addressed. *First*, studies on contract teachers are still dominated by policy and educational management approaches, while analyses based on Islamic economics particularly regarding the concept of *ujrah* in the ijarah contract remain relatively limited. Yet this perspective is crucial for assessing whether current wage practices align with Islamic principles of justice. *Second*, existing research has not explicitly examined how the principle of *taradhi* in the ijarah contract can be distorted under conditions of unequal bargaining power between contract teachers and educational institutions. In practice, the consent that emerges is often not the result of an equal position but rather a consequence of economic coercion.

*Third*, there is a gap in studies linking the social value of the teaching profession with the economic value of the wages received. Normatively, the teaching profession holds a high standing in society, often referred to as a pillar of national development. However, this social recognition does not align with the economic compensation provided, creating a disconnect between symbolic and material value. Fourth, most studies have not viewed the issue of honorary teachers' wages as part of structural injustice within the education system. Yet, upon deeper analysis, the low wages of honorary teachers are not merely an individual problem but also reflect the system's failure to distribute resources fairly.

Based on the aforementioned gaps, this study aims to address several key questions. First, how is the principle of *Taradhi* distorted in the determination of honorary teachers' wages? Second, how does the disconnect between the social value of the teaching profession and the economic value of wages manifest? Third, how do honorary teachers' wages reflect structural injustice within the education system? The objective of this study is to critically analyze the remuneration practices for honorary teachers using the ijarah contract framework and the principles of justice ( ) in Islamic economics. This study also aims to uncover distortions in the principle of *taradhi*, identify the disconnect between the social and economic values of the teaching profession, and explain how the conditions of honorary teachers' remuneration reflect structural injustice. Thus, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic economic studies, particularly regarding ijarah, as well as a practical contribution to the formulation of fairer policies for honorary teachers.

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach that combines fiqh muamalah analysis with structural studies within the education system. Unlike previous studies, which tended to be normative or partial, this study explicitly addresses three main issues: the distortion of the principle of *taradhi* in determining the remuneration of honorary teachers, the disconnect between the social value of the teaching profession and the economic value of remuneration, and the remuneration of honorary teachers as a reflection of structural injustice. With this approach, it is hoped that the study will provide a more comprehensive and critical

understanding of the existing problems, while also opening up space for discussion regarding wage system reform from an Islamic economic perspective.

## METHODS

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian studi literatur (*literature review*) untuk menganalisis fenomena *ujrah* guru honorer dalam perspektif akad *ijarah* dan keadilan ekonomi Islam. Pendekatan ini dipilih karena sesuai untuk mengkaji distorsi prinsip *taradhi*, diskoneksi antara nilai sosial dan nilai ekonomi profesi guru, serta ketidakadilan struktural dalam sistem pendidikan. (Darwanti et al., 2024) The *ijarah* contract perspective is used to analyze the alignment of remuneration practices with the principles of justice, fair wages, and mutual consent (*taradhi*), while the distributive justice perspective is used to examine the distribution of welfare, labor protection, and the economic rights of honorary teachers within the education system. Through a literature review, this study not only describes the phenomenon but also interprets and synthesizes various relevant research findings.

The subjects of this research are scientific documents, not individuals, consisting of journal articles and academic publications related to the welfare of honorary teachers, the concept of *ujrah* in Islamic economics, and the *ijarah* contract. Data sources were selected using a *purposive* approach based on the following criteria: (1) articles must come from credible and relevant scientific journals; (2) they must have a direct connection to the research topic; and (3) they must have been published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure the data's recency. Based on these criteria, this study utilized 40 scientific articles discussing the welfare of contract teachers, educational systems and policies, the *ijarah* contract, and distributive justice in Islamic economics.

Data collection was conducted through a literature search of online journal databases such as Google Scholar, Sinta, and DOAJ using the keywords “contract teachers,” “*ujrah*,” “*ijarah* contract,” “distributive justice,” and “teacher welfare.” The primary research instrument was the researcher themselves (*human instrument*), who played a role in selecting, classifying, and interpreting the data. The analysis technique employed *content analysis* with a descriptive analytical approach through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and critical conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, this study utilized source triangulation by comparing various studies relevant to the theme (Nurfajriani et al., 2024).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Distortion of the *Taradhi* Principle in Determining the *Ujrah* of Temporary Teachers

In the concept of *fiqh muamalah*, *taradhi* implies the existence of sincere consent from both parties without any element of coercion, pressure, or manipulation of circumstances. However, an analysis of various recent studies indicates that the consent given by contract teachers tends to be pseudo-consent that is, an agreement that appears formally valid but does not stem from genuine freedom. This condition arises due to limited job options, economic pressure, and power imbalances between individuals and institutions (Aziz, 2022).

The results of this literature-based study indicate that the issue of honorarium for contract teachers extends beyond merely low wages; it touches on a more fundamental aspect, namely the moral validity of the employment agreement within the ijarah contract. As outlined in the introduction, there is a disparity between the strategic role of teachers as agents of change and the welfare conditions they receive. However, recent literature reveals that this problem is not merely an economic issue but also concerns a distortion of the principle of *taradhi*, which is one of the main foundations of the ijarah contract.

Several empirical studies support this finding. The study (Hutasuhut et al., 2025) indicates that most contract teachers continue to accept low-wage jobs because they lack viable alternative employment options. This suggests that the decision to accept low wages is not the result of free, rational choice but rather a consequence of structural coercion. This finding is reinforced by (Sutisna et al., 2026) which states that the pressure of basic living needs is the dominant factor forcing contract teachers to remain in suboptimal working conditions.

The phenomenon of contract teachers accepting low wages is not because they voluntarily deem it acceptable, but due to limited job options and the economic pressures they face. This can be understood as a form of *pseudo-consent*, a condition where individuals appear to give consent but are actually in a situation that restricts their freedom. Contract teachers, especially in areas with limited job opportunities, often lack other viable employment alternatives (Faridah & Khasan, 2026). In such situations, the decision to accept a job with low wages is not the result of free, rational preference but rather a response to structural coercion. This indicates that the willingness underlying the ijarah contract is not fully fulfilled in substance.

Furthermore, many contract teachers are in economically vulnerable situations, forcing them to accept jobs with compensation that does not match the workload assigned. The need to meet daily living expenses becomes the primary driving force that compels them to remain in suboptimal working conditions. In such situations, the willingness that emerges is more pragmatic than normative that is, based on urgent needs rather than an assessment of the fairness of compensation. The study reveals (Nugraha et al., 2022) that the economic vulnerability experienced by contract teachers places them in a position of extremely weak bargaining power during wage negotiations. In many cases, contract teachers have no room to refuse or negotiate the amount of their compensation for fear of losing their jobs. This situation indicates that the employment agreement is not made under equal conditions, meaning the principle of *taradhi* is not substantively fulfilled.

From the perspective of classical fiqh, this condition clearly contradicts the view of *Ibn Qudamah*, who asserts that consent in a contract must be free from any element of coercion (*ikrah*). Consent arising from economic pressure cannot be categorized as valid *consent* under Islamic law. Contemporary literature also reinforces this view (Rusli, 2025) explains that in Islam, well being is not measured solely by financial aspects but also encompasses spiritual and social dimensions. The fulfillment of material needs, such as an adequate income, is part of the *maqashid al-sharia* (a concept in Islamic law referring to the objectives or purposes of the sharia), which serves to protect wealth (*hifdzul maal*). Therefore, in modern Islamic economics, the validity of a contract is not determined solely by the presence of *ijab* and *qabul*, but also by the quality of the underlying consent. Thus, if that willingness is influenced by coercion, the contract becomes ethically problematic.

Furthermore, (Lubis et al., 2023) in their study on employment contracts in Islamic economics emphasize that modern employment relationships often contain structural imbalances

that are not explicitly visible but affect an individual's freedom to make decisions. In the context of honorary teachers, this inequality is reflected in the dominance of educational institutions in determining wage policies without adequate protective mechanisms for non-civil servant workers. This power imbalance is further exacerbated by a non-standardized wage system. The study (Windasari et al., 2024) shows that the amount of honorarium for contract teachers is highly dependent on the financial capacity of the school or foundation, so there is no guarantee of fairness in its determination. Meanwhile, the study (Sutisna et al., 2026) found that contract teachers generally lack bargaining power in determining their employment contracts, so they tend to accept existing conditions without negotiation. This further underscores that the resulting employment relationship is asymmetrical.

Within the framework of modern justice theory, this phenomenon can be analyzed using John Rawls' perspective, particularly the concept of "*justice as fairness*." Rawls emphasizes that justice can only be achieved if every individual has equal opportunities and genuine freedom in making choices. However, in the case of contract teachers, available job options are extremely limited, so the decisions made do not fully reflect freedom. When individuals lack equal opportunities and are in a state of constraint, the decisions they make do not fully reflect freedom. In the context of contract teachers, limited access to alternative employment and weak bargaining power indicate that the conditions necessary to realize justice have not been met (Furkon et al., 2025) refers to this condition as a "*pseudo-choice*," that is, a situation where individuals appear to have choices but are actually trapped within structural constraints.

The phenomenon described above indicates the normalization of injustice within the education system, where contract teachers view their work as a form of service and thus tend to accept low wages without protest. This narrative of service indirectly serves to legitimize the economic injustice that occurs. Consequently, the meaning of consent in the employment contract has shifted from what should be a normative and voluntary act to a mere administrative formality. Although the contract is procedurally considered valid, substantively it often disregards the principle of justice. From the perspective of *ijarah*, the justice of the *ujrah* is determined not only by agreement but also by the fairness and proportionality of the compensation relative to the benefits of the work. Therefore, when wages fall below the standard of fairness, the agreement in question is morally questionable.

This situation highlights a gap between the normative values of Islamic economics and empirical practices on the ground. The principles of justice, balance, and genuine willingness in *ijarah* contracts are distorted due to economic pressures and structural inequalities. This injustice is not merely individual in nature but is part of a broader system, particularly within educational policies that have not prioritized honorary teachers. Uneven resource distribution and imbalanced power dynamics place honorary teachers in a vulnerable position, often forcing them to accept unfair working conditions (Arsy & Sugiarto, 2026).

Based on the overall literature findings, it can be concluded that the distortion of the principle of *taradhi* in the determination of honorary teachers' wages occurs through three main mechanisms. First, the presence of economic coercion that eliminates individual freedom in decision making. Second, power imbalances between institutions and teachers that weaken workers' bargaining power. Third, the social normalization of unfair conditions that makes such practices seem acceptable. From an Islamic economics perspective, the concept of a *fair wage* must consider the worker's need for a decent standard of living. Thus, a salary that fails to meet the worker's basic needs can be categorized as a form of injustice. This further strengthens the

argument that the agreement between contract teachers and educational institutions does not fully meet the principles of justice in Islam.

The novelty of this discussion lies in the effort to shift the focus of analysis from merely the issue of low wages toward a critique of the moral legitimacy of the employment agreement. With this approach, the research not only describes empirical conditions but also examines whether such practices align with the principles of justice in Islamic economics. This is significant because many previous studies have tended to accept employment agreements as valid without questioning the underlying quality of consent. Thus, the findings of this study affirm that the issue of honorary teachers' wages is not merely an economic problem but also concerns ethical dimensions, justice, and the validity of contracts from the perspective of *fiqh muamalah*. The consent that occurs cannot be considered ideal *taradhi* because it is influenced by various forms of structural pressure. Therefore, reform efforts are needed in the wage system and education policy so that the principle of justice in the *ijarah* contract can be realized substantively, not merely as a formality.

### **The Disconnect Between the Social Value of the Teaching Profession and Economic Value from the Perspective of Ujrah**

Based on current realities, the teaching profession is highly valued socially but does not align with the economic conditions they receive. On one hand, teachers are placed in a very high social position. They are viewed as figures playing a crucial role in shaping the nation's future, building the character of the younger generation, and serving as role models in social life. It is not uncommon to hear the expression that teachers are "unsung heroes," a label that illustrates the magnitude of their contributions to society. However, on the other hand, when discussing economic compensation particularly for contract teachers the actual conditions are in stark contrast to this social recognition (Faridah & Khasan, 2026).

Various research findings reviewed in the literature review (Nur Intan Zahrotul Muhtar et al., 2025) indicate a disparity between the social and economic value of the teaching profession. Contract teachers, who effectively perform the same educational functions as permanent teachers, often receive very low wages, and in many cases, these wages are insufficient to meet basic daily living needs. This situation indicates that the recognition given to the teaching profession is more symbolic than material. In other words, society and the system tend to grant high moral recognition, but this is not accompanied by commensurate economic compensation.

This phenomenon reveals what can be termed a disconnect between social and economic value. The social value of the teaching profession is reflected in society's high expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities. Teachers are expected not only to teach but also to guide, educate, and even shape the character of their students. These demands naturally require significant competence, dedication, and responsibility. However, the economic value received does not reflect the magnitude of this contribution. In many cases, contract teachers must instead face income uncertainty, limited facilities, and minimal job protection. From an Islamic economic perspective, this situation is problematic. Yusuf al-Qaradawi's thought emphasizes that Islam does not condone the exploitation of labor, even if cloaked in moral or religious justifications (Adam, 2020). Paying an inadequate wage under the pretext of "service" remains unjustifiable. *Ujrah*, or wages, must be provided fairly and sufficiently to meet the worker's basic needs.

Upon deeper analysis, this situation is not merely an economic issue but also concerns the aspect of justice. From the perspective of classical justice, as articulated by Aristotelian thought,

distributive justice emphasizes that every individual should receive a reward proportional to their contribution. In other words, the greater a person's contribution to society, the greater the reward they should receive. In the context of honorary teachers, this principle appears unfulfilled. They make significant contributions to the education system but do not receive commensurate economic compensation.

Furthermore, this disconnect is reinforced by the social constructs that have developed in society regarding the meaning of the teaching profession (Nurafifah et al., 2025). Teachers are often associated with values of self-sacrifice, sincerity, and selfless dedication. These values are fundamentally positive and form part of a noble professional ethic. However, in practice, these values are often interpreted excessively, thereby becoming a tool to legitimize unfair conditions. For instance, when teachers complain about low salaries, the response is not infrequently an exhortation to remain "selfless" or to remember that the teaching profession is a source of spiritual reward. Narratives like this indirectly obscure the actual structural issues at play and can even make injustice appear as something normal.

The *ijarah* contract applies not only to the leasing of goods but also to the provision of services or *ujrah* (Istiqomah, 2025). From the perspective of *ujrah* in Islamic economics (Putri et al., 2023), this situation clearly raises serious issues. *Ujrah* is not merely compensation for services rendered, but a right of the worker that must be granted fairly and appropriately. The principle of justice in Islam demands that every job be valued according to the benefits it provides, and ensures that workers can meet their basic living needs. Thus, the payment of inadequate wages, even if cloaked in a narrative of devotion, remains normatively unjustifiable.

Furthermore, in Islamic economics, fairness in the provision of wages is not merely a matter of agreement between the two parties, but also concerns the appropriateness and reasonableness of the compensation itself. This means that even if contract teachers formally agree to the amount of wages offered, this does not automatically make the practice fair. Especially if such an agreement occurs under conditions of unequal bargaining power or economic coercion (Hijriah & Adiba, 2019). In such situations, the value of substantive justice becomes more important than a mere formal agreement.

This disconnect between social and economic values is also inseparable from policy factors and the structure of the education system. Numerous studies indicate that the low wages of contract teachers are often linked to budget constraints or suboptimal policies regarding the management of teaching staff (Burhan et al., 2025). However, upon closer critical analysis, this issue is not solely caused by resource constraints but also by how the system prioritizes the allocation of those resources. In many cases, the welfare of contract teachers has not been a top priority in education policy, leaving them in a disadvantaged position.

Furthermore, the absence of clear standards regarding the amount of compensation for contract teachers exacerbates this situation. A remuneration system heavily dependent on the financial capacity of individual educational institutions leads to significant disparities across regions and institutions. Consequently, there is no guarantee that contract teachers will receive a living wage, even though they bear the same workload (Putri et al., 2023). This further reinforces the imbalance between the social and economic value of the teaching profession.

The impact of this disconnect is felt not only by individual teachers but also by the education system as a whole. When teachers do not receive proper recognition both economically and in a more substantive social sense their motivation and performance are likely to decline. Many contract teachers are forced to seek additional work to meet their basic needs, causing the time

and energy that should be focused on the learning process to be divided. In the long term, this situation can impact the quality of education produced (Yulianti et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this disconnect also has the potential to cause dissatisfaction and instability within the education system (Rahmiati, 2017). Teachers who feel they are not adequately valued tend to experience a decline in work motivation, and in some cases may even choose to leave the profession. If this situation persists, it will be difficult to create a high-quality and sustainable education system. In a broader context, this phenomenon indicates that the issue of honorary teachers' compensation cannot be separated from social, cultural, and structural contexts. The high social value placed on the teaching profession should serve as the foundation for providing appropriate recognition, not as a justification for neglecting their well-being. In other words, moral recognition and material compensation should be balanced.

The novelty of this discussion lies in the effort to critique perspectives that have long been considered normal in society. Until now, discourse regarding the teaching profession has tended to be dominated by narratives of morality and dedication, while aspects of economic justice have received insufficient attention. By raising the concept of the disconnect between social and economic values, this study attempts to demonstrate that there is an imbalance that needs to be addressed.

Thus, it can be concluded that the disconnect between the social value of the teaching profession and its economic value, viewed through the lens of *ujrah*, is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. This condition not only reflects disparities in the wage system but also indicates issues in how society and the system perceive the teaching profession itself. Therefore, comprehensive efforts are needed to address this issue, whether through policy improvements, shifts in perspective, or the strengthening of principles of justice within the education system. Teachers are not only deserving of symbolic respect but also entitled to fair and appropriate economic compensation commensurate with the contributions they make.

### **Honorary Teachers' Compensation as a Reflection of Structural Injustice in the Education System**

Justice in Islam encompasses granting the rightful due to every party without harming others (Assyifa & Sukti, 2025). The phenomenon of the low wages received by contract teachers in Indonesia cannot be understood merely as a technical payroll issue. When examined through the various research findings reviewed in this literature study, this issue actually points to a more fundamental problem: structural injustice within the education system. In other words, the conditions faced by contract teachers are not merely the result of misguided policies or budget constraints, but rather a reflection of how the system operates—indirectly producing and reproducing inequality.

From a distributive justice perspective, John Rawls, through his theory of "*justice as fairness*," explains that justice must be realized through the fair distribution of rights, opportunities, and economic resources to all members of society (Rawls, 1971). Rawls emphasizes that social and economic inequalities are only justifiable if they benefit the least advantaged groups (*the difference principle*). However, in the context of contract teachers in Indonesia, the prevailing conditions actually reveal inequities in the distribution of welfare. Contract teachers, as a group in a vulnerable position within the education system, still receive low wages despite making significant contributions to the educational process. This situation indicates that the education system has not

fully reflected the principle of distributive justice, as the distribution of welfare and labor protections has not prioritized the group most in need of economic protection (Pratama, 2024).

According to John Rawls' theory of distributive justice, contract teachers should receive a fair and proportional distribution of rights, welfare, and educational resources commensurate with their contributions to the educational process. Contract teachers perform the same duties as civil servant teachers, such as teaching, guiding, and evaluating students, so they should rightfully receive economic compensation, benefits, and adequate labor protections without excessive disparities. However, in reality, the distribution of welfare within the education system remains unequal, as contract teachers often receive low wages and minimal social security coverage (Mulyana, 2018). This situation indicates that the principle of distributive justice has not been fully realized, as vulnerable groups have not yet received proportional protection and welfare within the education system.

In study (Nur Intan Zahrotul Muhtar et al., 2025), it was found that contract teachers play a highly significant role in ensuring the continuity of the educational process, particularly in areas still facing a shortage of educators. They perform the same duties as permanent teachers, ranging from teaching, developing instructional materials, conducting assessments, to guiding students in various academic and non-academic activities. However, this substantial contribution is not matched by adequate economic compensation. In fact, in some cases, the wages received are far below the minimum living standard. This situation indicates an imbalance between work contributions and the compensation provided.

When viewed from the perspective of structural injustice (Bagaskara et al., 2025), it is argued that this phenomenon does not occur by chance. Structural injustice refers to conditions where existing social, economic, and policy systems indirectly create and perpetuate inequality. In the context of education, policy structures that fail to provide protection and certainty for contract teachers are a primary factor contributing to low wages. A flexible recruitment system, lacking clear wage standards, creates opportunities for unfair wage practices.

Furthermore, the position of contract teachers within the educational institutional structure tends to be weak. They lack clear civil service status, do not receive adequate welfare guarantees, and are often excluded from the formal labor protection system. Consequently, they lack sufficient bargaining power to determine the amount of wages they receive (Nurdiansyah et al., 2026). In such situations, the resulting employment relationship becomes unbalanced, with the institution holding greater control than the workers.

This disparity is further exacerbated by the absence of national standards governing the wage rates for contract teachers. In practice, wage levels depend heavily on the financial capacity of individual schools or foundations. This leads to significant variations in the income levels of contract teachers, even for jobs with similar workloads and responsibilities. This situation indicates that the existing wage system has not been able to ensure distributive justice for all educators.

From an Islamic economic perspective, this situation contradicts the principle of justice in the *ijarah* contract. In the concept of *ijarah*, the employment relationship is based on an exchange of benefits between the employer and the employee, which must be accompanied by the provision of a fair, clear, and reasonable wage. Justice in this context does not merely mean an agreement between both parties but also encompasses the adequacy of the compensation provided in accordance with the benefits generated (Lutfi, 2023). Thus, when a contract teacher performs the same duties as a permanent teacher yet receives significantly lower pay, it can be said that the principle of justice in *ijarah* is not fulfilled.

Furthermore, the concept of *taradhi* or consent in the contract also needs to be critically examined in this context. Formally, contract teachers may be considered to have agreed to the amount of *ujrah* provided. However, when viewed in light of the underlying circumstances, such consent often occurs under duress due to limited job opportunities and economic pressures (Samudra, 2023). In other words, the willingness expressed is not entirely free but influenced by external factors that limit individual choice. This indicates that the principle of *taradhi* is distorted in practice.

Within the framework of *maqashid al-sharia*, this situation also reflects a failure to realize the fundamental objectives of *sharia*, particularly regarding the protection of property (*hifz al-mal*) and the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*). Inadequate wages have the potential to hinder the fulfillment of contract teachers' basic needs, which may ultimately affect their overall quality of life. In Islam, the state bears the responsibility to ensure the well-being of its citizens, including through the provision of a fair and sustainable employment system (Adesty, 2025). Therefore, the low remuneration of honorary teachers is not merely an individual issue but also an indicator of systemic failure in fulfilling this responsibility.

Furthermore, this structural injustice is also linked to the distribution of resources within the education system. Although the national education budget is relatively large, its distribution does not always prioritize the well-being of educators, particularly honorary teachers. In many cases, budget allocations are more focused on infrastructure development or administrative aspects, while improving teachers' welfare has not been a top priority. This indicates an imbalance in policy prioritization (Qalbi & Sunarya, 2023).

The impact of this structural injustice is not only felt by contract teachers individually but also affects the overall quality of the education system. Teachers who do not receive adequate compensation tend to experience a decline in work motivation, as they must cope with economic pressures in their daily lives. Many contract teachers are forced to seek additional work outside their profession to meet their basic needs (Yulianti et al., 2023). Consequently, the time and energy that should be dedicated to improving the quality of learning are divided.

In the long term, this situation can lead to a decline in the quality of education (Idris et al., 2025). When teachers cannot work optimally due to the burden of economic problems, the learning process that takes place will also not be maximized. This will certainly affect the quality of educational outcomes, namely the students produced. Thus, the injustice experienced by contract teachers will ultimately impact society at large.

In addition, structural inequality creates a cycle that is difficult to break. Contract teachers facing economic instability often face limitations in developing their professional competencies, such as participating in training or pursuing further education. This can hinder the overall improvement of the quality of the teaching workforce (Khairunnisaannisaa et al., 2025). On the other hand, a system that fails to provide adequate recognition can also reduce young people's interest in choosing the teaching profession, particularly in non-civil servant (non-ASN) positions.

In this context, it is important to recognize that the issue of honorarium for contract teachers cannot be resolved solely through partial approaches, such as merely increasing the nominal salary. More fundamental changes are needed in the structure of educational policies and systems (Siburian, 2024). One step that can be taken is to establish national standards regarding the amount of compensation for honorary teachers, ensuring a minimum guarantee that must be met by every educational institution. Additionally, a stronger protection system is needed for non-civil servant educators, including in terms of social security and job security.

From an Islamic economic perspective, reform of this system must also be based on the principles of justice, balance, and the public interest. The state plays a strategic role in ensuring that labor relations within the education system operate in accordance with these principles. This encompasses not only remuneration but also the overall management of the workforce. Therefore, the low wages of honorary teachers not only reflect economic inequality but constitute a form of structural injustice that contradicts the principle of justice in Islamic economics

Thus, it can be concluded that the low wages of honorary teachers are a reflection of structural injustice within the education system. This condition indicates disparities in resource distribution, weak labor protections, and the suboptimal application of the principle of justice in the *ijarah* contract. Therefore, improvement efforts must be carried out comprehensively, not only at the individual or institutional level but also at the policy and systemic structural levels. By comprehensively reforming the system, it is hoped that the principle of regarding justice in the provision of remuneration can be realized in practice, enabling contract teachers to fulfill their roles with greater well-being and optimal performance.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the practice of providing *ujrah* to honorary teachers still shows inconsistencies with the principles of the *ijarah* contract in Islamic economics, particularly regarding justice, wage adequacy, and the principle of *taradhi*. The low wages received by contract teachers reflect distributive injustice within the education system, as the distribution of welfare, labor protection, and economic rights has not been provided proportionally to their contributions to the educational process. This situation not only impacts the economic well-being of contract teachers but also has the potential to affect work motivation and the overall quality of education. This study demonstrates that research on honorary teachers cannot be understood solely from the perspectives of educational policy and welfare but must also be analyzed through the lens of Islamic economics, particularly the *ijarah* contract and distributive justice. Thus, this study contributes to expanding scholarly research on the relationship between the remuneration system for educators and the principles of justice in Islamic economics.

This study has limitations because it employs a literature review approach, meaning the data used relies on previous research findings and does not directly involve field data. Additionally, the study's focus remains limited to a conceptual analysis of honorary teachers' remuneration within the Islamic economic perspective. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a *field research* approach through interviews or observations to obtain a more in-depth empirical picture of the welfare conditions of honorary teachers. Subsequent research can also develop studies on the implementation of honorary teacher remuneration policies based on the principles of distributive justice and the *ijarah* contract within Indonesia's education system.

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