

## IMPLEMENTATION OF PESANTREN CURRICULUM UPDATES AS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE LIFE SKILLS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL KNOWLEDGE

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### ABSTRACT

Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that has an important role in the development of Indonesian society. Pesantren has been part of the culture and tradition of Indonesian society for centuries. This study aims to examine the implementation of pesantren curriculum renewal as an effort to improve the life skills and entrepreneurial knowledge of pesantren graduates. This research uses qualitative research methods. The data collection technique in this research is a literature study obtained from Google Scholar. The data that has been collected is analyzed through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the direction of updating the pesantren curriculum had a positive impact on improving the life skills and entrepreneurial interests of pesantren graduates. This can be seen from the increasing ability of pesantren graduates in terms of the ability to think critically and solve problems, the ability to communicate and collaborate, the ability to adapt to change, and entrepreneurial interest. The renewal of pesantren has implications including improving the quality of education in pesantren, increasing the competitiveness of pesantren, and increasing the role of pesantren in society. However, pesantren renewal must be done carefully so as not to eliminate the basic values of pesantren.

**Keywords:** *pesantren, renewal, direction, implication*

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### INTRODUCTION

Pesantren Islamic boarding schools are one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that teach religious subjects and general science side by side for mutual benefit. Thus, Islamic boarding schools play a key role in introducing and spreading Islamic principles among the Indonesian Muslim community. Islamic boarding schools play an important role in promoting Islamic values and cultural heritage in Indonesia. Pesantren, with its significant financial resources, has the potential to become a major force in the political and cultural spheres of the Indonesian Muslim community, provided these resources are managed wisely. In addition, Islamic boarding schools maintain close relationships with the communities they serve, rely heavily on community support, and have a responsibility to overcome various intellectual, spiritual, social, cultural, political, and other challenges faced by the community (Ismayani et al., 2023).

Pesantren are often described as conventional educational institutions. The word "conventional" is used because Pesantren have existed for centuries and are an essential element in the life of Muslim communities in Indonesia (Noor, 2018). In general, Pesantren are often identified as educational institutions that have a "traditional" character. This "traditional" predicate is attached to Pesantren for two main reasons. First, Pesantren have been around for centuries and have become an integral part of the life of Indonesian Islamic society. Nurcholish Madjid even considers Pesantren to be a genuine product of Indonesian culture, which is fundamentally different from formal educational institutions such as elementary,

middle, and high schools which are a colonial legacy. Second, many Pesantren are managed and maintained by Islamic groups with traditional roots, often based in rural areas. This group still adheres closely to local traditions and culture. Therefore, it is often seen that Islamic figures who come from traditional groups are more likely to adapt, absorb elements of local culture, and practice assimilation and inculturation with local culture, without considering it as heresy as other groups might do modernist (Imroatus Sholihah, 2020).

Pesantren, Islamic educational institutions that have strong traditional roots, are currently experiencing significant development. The past of Pesantren which only focused on religious learning and classical curriculum has changed. Nowadays, Pesantren is no longer traditional. Pesantren has moved forward by making updates in various aspects. Previous research by (Defnaldi et al., 2023) found that each period was unique and significantly influenced the development of Islamic education in Indonesia in terms of systems, management, and methodology, down to how Islamic education was envisioned.

Other research by (Amirudin & Rohimah, 2020a) shows that Pesantren are no longer concentrated in rural areas, but have spread sporadically in various big cities and have become a destination for education in urban communities. In terms of function, Pesantren is not limited to being religious educational institutions, but quite a few of them are also social and community empowerment institutions as well as centers for community economic development. Apart from being an educational institution, Pesantren also functions as a scientific institution, training institution, community empowerment institution, religious guidance institution, and also cultural node. Madrasah Sayang Ibu is one of the Islamic boarding school development models that dynamically seeks to develop learning materials and methodologies that not only have a "soaring" orientation but at the same time are "down to earth" as a response to the inevitable progress of the times.

Similar research by (Ismayani et al., 2023) found that the Islamic doctrines learned and spread by Pesantren were ultimately firmly embedded in Indonesian Islamic culture. Without Pesantren, it is impossible to promote respect for Islamic cultural traditions. It is hoped that Pesantren can develop into the center of Islamic culture and civilization in Indonesia. In this case, First, Kiai is the main element of Pesantren, teaching religious principles so that they can emphasize their unique strategies for implementing Islamic teachings; second is the santri, which is very important in Pesantren because it shows how far Islamic education has come and how well it is taught; the third is the mosque, which functions as a place for prayer and religious teaching. This requires a special space, the complexity of which varies according to the pesantren's mission. fourth is the Madrasah, which is the place where the teaching and learning process takes place; Lastly the fifth is a place to live, which is called a dormitory or cottage and these five things are all necessary.

The novelty of this research is to examine Islamic boarding school reform in terms of curriculum, namely in terms of Life Skills and entrepreneurial knowledge. Increasing the life skills and entrepreneurial interest of Islamic boarding school graduates will have a positive impact on society. This will improve the quality of Indonesia's human resources so that it can encourage economic growth and social welfare. This research aims to examine the direction and implications of Islamic boarding school reform.

## **METHOD**

This study used qualitative research methods. According to (Rofiah, 2022) qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and so on holistically and using descriptions in the form of words and language, at a time. special natural contexts by utilizing various natural methods. The data collection technique in this research is studying literature obtained from Google Scholar with a publication period of 2018-2023. The collected data was analyzed through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Education is a process of transformation in a person's attitudes and behavior, which aims to guide, teach, and instill basic values and outlook on life in the younger generation. This aims to ensure that they grow into individuals who are aware and responsible for the tasks of human life, by their human nature, essence, and characteristics. In addition, through education, a person's personality develops naturally, reflecting traits such as honesty, truthfulness, discipline, responsibility, and moral and social values. Education also has a key role in preparing individuals to live a quality life, love their homeland, have a strong physique, noble character, the ability to think regularly, emotional sensitivity, skills in work, a tendency to help others, and good communication skills. verbally and in writing (A. Fauzi, 2018; F. Fauzi et al., 2023)

Education must aim at moral foundations and the virtues of temperament, traits that students must possess and become accustomed to from infancy to adulthood or adolescence. There is no doubt about the virtues of morals, temperament, and character (S. Rahayuningsih et al., 2023). One of the educational institutions in Indonesia is Pesantren. The history of Pesantren has played an important role in the nation-building process; Unlike educational institutions that emerged later, Pesantren has produced many cadres of ulama who then play an active role in the spread of Islam and the transfer of knowledge. As institutions that shape Islamic culture, Pesantren play an important role. Its existence is very embedded in society. Pesantren, as agents of enlightenment, are also agents of cultural transformation in their respective environments (P. Rahayuningsih et al., 2023).

Pesantren not only covers certain periods in Islamic history such as the Salaf period, which refers to the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and their succeeding generations. Although the term "Salaf" is used within Islamic boarding school circles, such as "Salafi Islamic boarding school," its understanding and use in the Islamic boarding school context is very different from its meaning in Islam in general (Ridwan et al., 2023). According to Nurcholish Madjid's view, in a historical context, Pesantren not only represents Islamic aspects but also reflects the authenticity of Indonesian culture, namely its "indigenous" nature. For Madjid, institutions similar to Pesantren have existed since the Dutch East Indies colonial period (Tambunan & Karimah, 2022). Therefore, Islam in Indonesia adopted or "Islamized" educational institutions that already existed. However, this does not reduce the important role of Islam in developing education in Indonesia.

Currently, many people still think that Pesantren are educational institutions that have lagged behind the times and are isolated from the outside world. Some even underestimate the

various systems implemented in Pesantren. Although this assumption is not completely wrong, it is important to understand that Pesantren does not only have one approach, but rather a variety of approaches that must be taken into account. For example, several Pesantren specifically prioritizes memorizing the Koran, which is often known as "tahfidz Pesantren" (Tambunan & Karimah, 2022). Some focus on learning the yellow book, which is usually referred to as "Salafi Pesantren" (Amirudin & Rohimah, 2020b). Yellow book material studies several branches of knowledge, including Nahwu, Sharaf, Usul Fiqh, Fiqh, Tauhid, Akhlak/Sufism, Hadi, Tafsir, and Tarikh, at various levels, and the methods used in general are the Wetonan (Bandongan) method, lectures, question and answer, and memorization (Sumatri & Alwizar, 2021). On the other hand, there is a type of Islamic boarding school that not only teaches religious knowledge but also general sciences, known as "modern Islamic boarding school" (Fitri & Ondeng, 2022).

Pesantren wants to produce graduates who can contribute to the global scope. Therefore, Pesantren needs to reform by updating the curriculum and learning techniques, they strive so that their graduates can compete globally, both in academic and social aspects. Updates also aim to respond to the challenges of ever-changing times. By including general sciences and technology in their education, Pesantren seeks to prepare students to face the modern, increasingly connected world. Pesantren has implemented various types of reforms, both internal and external, to respond to the changing demands of the times, one of which is curriculum renewal, namely as an effort to improve life skills and entrepreneurial knowledge.

Pesantren are Islamic educational institutions that have an important role in producing a generation that has good knowledge and morals. However, in its development, Pesantren is also required to be able to produce graduates who have life skills and an interest in entrepreneurship. Life skills are the basic abilities needed to live independently and adapt to change. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial knowledge is a person's understanding of entrepreneurs with various positive, creative, and innovative characteristics in developing business opportunities into business opportunities that benefit themselves and the community or consumers. One effort to improve the life skills and entrepreneurial knowledge of Islamic boarding school graduates is by updating the Islamic boarding school curriculum.

Islamic boarding school curriculum updates are carried out by adding subjects that are relevant to the business world, such as business management, Islamic economics, or entrepreneurship. Apart from that, Pesantren can also adopt teaching methods that develop critical thinking skills, communication skills, collaboration, and adaptation to change. Entrepreneurship material can also be integrated into other subjects, such as fiqh, muamalah, or Arabic.

In addition to curriculum content, the application of entrepreneurship education can include extracurricular activities that enable students to apply business and entrepreneurship concepts practically. This could be a business simulation, skills training, or even involvement in an entrepreneurial project in the local community. In addition, the development of Islamic boarding school-based entrepreneurship programs can provide opportunities for students to start and run their businesses. This program can provide guidance and assistance to students in running their businesses. These steps are an effort by Pesantren to enrich their curriculum with relevant and up-to-date materials, which are expected to provide Islamic boarding school

graduates with broader skills and knowledge and prepare them for success in various aspects of life, including the world of entrepreneurship.

Pesantren has updated its curriculum to accommodate the latest developments in science, technology, and social challenges. This includes expanding the subjects taught in Pesantren, including general sciences such as mathematics, science, and foreign languages, in addition to religious studies (Faizin, 2020). This update reflects the pesantren's efforts to remain relevant and provide quality education while maintaining traditional Islamic values. Thus, Pesantren plays an important role in bridging tradition and contemporary developments in Islamic education. The reforms implemented by Pesantren have various impacts, both on the Islamic boarding school itself and on the students who receive education there. Here are some of the impacts of the update:

1. Increasing Student Understanding

Updates in curriculum and learning methods help students to understand modern issues, science, and technology better. Pesantren have the opportunity to integrate religious teachings with general science.

2. The Relevance of Pesantren in Modern Society

By updating the curriculum and accommodating modern aspects of education, Pesantren has become more relevant in modern society. This can increase parents' interest in sending their children to Pesantren.

3. Balanced Character Development

Pesantren that implement reforms still maintain traditional values of education. This enables students to develop a balanced character, which includes morals, ethics, leadership, and competence in various aspects of life.

4. Preparation for the Challenges of the Modern World

Updates help students meet the challenges of a modern, increasingly connected world. They not only have a strong understanding of religion but also knowledge that allows them to participate in an increasingly global economic, social, and political life.

The reforms carried out by Pesantren have had a significant positive impact. Students can combine traditional values with contemporary relevance, preparing students to become qualified and skilled individuals, and maintaining the relevance of Pesantren in modern society (Munir et al., 2022).

Islamic boarding school reform has significant implications in several aspects. First, there is an increase in the quality of education in Pesantren. Through the integration of a more modern curriculum and updated learning methods, Pesantren can provide more relevant and quality education to students. This contributes to increasing students' understanding of subject matter, including understanding religion, as well as general knowledge (Adipratama et al., 2018). Second, the renewal of Pesantren can also increase the competitiveness of Pesantren in the world of education. By following modern educational trends, Pesantren can be more attractive to parents who want to provide the best education to their children. This can increase the number of students enrolling in Pesantren, which in turn increases Pesantren's income (Maulidiyah et al., 2021). Lastly, the renewal of Pesantren can strengthen the role of Pesantren in society. By opening themselves up to the community and actively participating in social and educational activities in their surroundings, Pesantren can become a more important center of

activity in society. Pesantren can provide spiritual guidance and education to local communities, run humanitarian programs, and contribute to wider community development.

Pesantren faces various challenges and opportunities in the future. To deal with this, Pesantren can undertake several potential exploration directions, including exploring the use of technology in education. This includes distance learning, the use of online e-platforms, and technology-based learning applications. By utilizing technology, Pesantren can reach more students and modernize teaching methods. Pesantren can design a holistic curriculum, including religious education, science, and practical skills. This will prepare students to be more successful in complex modern life. Pesantren can also establish partnerships with other formal and non-formal educational institutions. This includes collaboration with public schools, universities, and professional training institutions. These kinds of partnerships can increase students' access to different types of education.

## **CONCLUSION**

Renewing the Islamic boarding school curriculum has had a positive impact on improving the life skills and entrepreneurial interests of its graduates. This can be seen from the increase in the abilities of Islamic boarding school graduates in various aspects, namely by showing an increase in critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communication and collaboration skills, adaptability to change, and a greater interest in entrepreneurship. Reforms in Pesantren also have significant consequences. This includes improving the quality of education provided in Pesantren, increasing the competitiveness of Pesantren in the field of education, and increasing the role of Pesantren in society as a whole. Therefore, Islamic boarding school renewal must be carried out carefully and sustainably so that it can face the challenges of the times without losing the essence and sustainability of Islamic boarding school values.

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