

How Santri Learn Entrepreneurship: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to identify educational activities within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Yogyakarta that support the development of student entrepreneurship. Data were collected through observations and interviews with religious leaders (kyai) and several student students who are currently running businesses near the pesantren. The study found that Islamic boarding schools not only directly support entrepreneurial learning, but also serve as a vehicle for latent entrepreneurial learning, including the development of various entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through religious instruction and the supportive environment of the pesantren. Various pedagogical and curricular implications are explored as part of a broader analysis of how Islamic boarding schools can support the entrepreneurial tendencies of santri.

Keywords: *Independent character; Entrepreneurship; Islamic Religious-Education; Pesantren.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are one of the oldest forms of education in Indonesia. They consist of santri (students), pondok (boarding school), and kiai (Islamic religious leaders), who are central to determining the development of the pesantren (Dhofier, 2009). Within these schools, there are also santri students, meaning literate in Sanskrit, and followers of the guru wherever he goes (in Javanese) (Graaf & Pigeaud, 2011).

The pesantren's life has given pesantren a sense of independence (H. dkk., 2019; Nugroho, 2016; Rahman dkk., 2021). This is emphasized by Zarkasyi (2005). Boarding school life serves as a means of developing independence and life skills, in addition to fostering mental and behavioral development through a series of values that are upheld and developed together. This contrasts with the pattern of independence education in public schools (Prastomo dkk., 2019).

Independence is synonymous with independence, a crucial characteristic in entrepreneurship. Independence is a condition in which a person is independent of others in making decisions and choices, supported by strong self-confidence (Desmita, 2012; Santoso, 2020). Independence also means being able to meet one's own needs without relying on others (Sumani & Hariyanto, 2012).

Masrun dkk. (1986) describes the characteristics of an entrepreneur as including responsibility, autonomy, initiative, and self-control. According to Parker (2016), the characteristics of an independent entrepreneur are: responsibility; autonomy and freedom to determine one's own attitude; intelligence and problem-solving skills; high initiative; self-confidence; ability to carry out tasks; self-control; and the ability to make one's own decisions.

Independence in Islamic boarding school education has been considered by many researchers. Khamid (Khamid, 2019) observed that its implementation varies depending on the characteristics of the Islamic boarding school studied, whether it is traditional or modern. Najmuddin (2013) assessed the independence education provided by the Hasyim Asyari Islamic boarding school in Sleman as an alternative form of education that empowers the intellectual, spiritual, and professional development of students. Haryanto's research analyzed how individual students at the boarding school survive and become independent, both economically, intellectually, spiritually, and in other areas while living at the boarding school. Meria (Meria, 2016) criticized graduates of Islamic boarding schools who receive gender-based independence education as being better able to survive in any conditions and situations.

Sanusi (2012) examined the implementation of independence education in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) where the curriculum and learning were initiated by the *kyai* (Islamic cleric) and the council of *ustadz* (Islamic teachers), despite offering Packages A, B, and C. Although simple, the implementation, coupled with practical habits, can instill independent behavior in students. Misjaya et al. (Misjaya dkk., 2019) focused on the concept of economic independence education in traditional Islamic boarding schools in Sidoarjo. The findings revealed that students' religious knowledge still needed to be improved, while the focus on economic skills tended more toward job creation than on cultivating Muslim entrepreneurial character, forcing its orientation to be re-evaluated. Other research indicates that the Pangeran Diponegoro Islamic Boarding School's strategy is implemented through the *kyai* and the caretakers providing advice, developing students' leadership skills, familiarizing them with regulations, and fostering an internalized social spirit.

Pesantren Mahasiswa Garawiksa Yogyakarta (PMGY) is home to students from various universities and regional backgrounds. The education of independence is prominently emphasized by the prohibition on parental requests for remittances during their time at the Islamic boarding school. This unique Islamic boarding school stands out among the rich cultural heritage of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. To survive, the Islamic boarding school provides space for all forms of creativity, from writing for the mass media, writing books, delivering newspapers,

selling books, to teaching at various Islamic boarding schools (TPA), all of which support students in living independently. Each student's interests and talents depend on the choices that best suit their creative development.

This study aimed to explore independence learning within the framework of Islamic religious education at the PMGY Islamic boarding school. This research is beneficial in strengthening the understanding that Islamic religious education (IRE/PAI) at Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) continues to prioritize the spirit of independence for its students so that they can live in society and even become leaders.

METHODS

This qualitative case study research relies on in-depth interviews with selected informants from the caretakers and students of PMGY. Participatory observation was used to observe how the pesantren's policies, the exemplary behavior of the kyai (Islamic cleric), and the activities of the students—the author—were related to both the pesantren and independent entrepreneurship. At certain times, the author often found himself in the same position as the researched. Thus, the author gained important insights into the situation and was able to understand the individuals and groups in question. Documentation was useful in searching for archives related to PMGY's independent education, both from internal and external sources of the pesantren. The next process used descriptive analysis techniques, namely data analysis techniques that begin with the process of compiling and classifying the data that has been obtained, then interpreting and describing it in words/writing. And after that, a conclusion or conclusion is sought from the description.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The PMGY, initiated by H. Edi Mulyono as the caretaker, received legal status as a foundation to maintain its existence on February 5, 2012. The Garawiksa Islamic Boarding School was established on September 26, 2011, on Jalan Gedong Kuning, Yogyakarta. The school's roots stemmed from discussion forums held by the caretaker and young people passionate about knowledge. Discussions on religious, Islamic boarding school, cultural, and socio-political issues were held regularly. Discussions on writing were even held because the young people participating in the study group enjoyed writing.

Because these events were so intense and the young people who participated demonstrated their seriousness, Edi Mulyono took the initiative to establish a pesantren institution. Initially, the caretaker simply hoped that the young people participating in the weekly discussion forums would have a permanent place to discuss their activities. However, over time, he, as the founder, also hoped that the

Islamic boarding school would become a place for young people or students who aspired to live independently, especially through writing.

PMDG is founded on the core values of spirituality, intellectuality, and professionalism. These core values are more specific than those developed in entrepreneurial Islamic boarding schools, which aim to achieve "in the world hasanah, wa fi al-akhirah hasanah" (Misjaya et al., 2019). The Islamic boarding school does not charge fees to its students, but instead provides them with living expenses in the form of incentives based on their achievements. Therefore, the rules and learning requirements set by the boarding school administrators must be adhered to by the students.

The core values of PMDGY thus require management to be based on mutual agreement, not solely on the administrator's whim. The hope is that each student can learn to make decisions independently, as this independence is the focus and development of creativity in students. Although the institutional management of Islamic boarding schools is largely determined by mutual agreement, a management body is still established structurally to organize activities at the school.

To support this policy, the instilling of a spirit and culture of togetherness among students is strongly emphasized. Students come from various cities and provinces, including Madura, Lampung, Pati, and various other immigrants. However, upon entering the boarding school, they are treated like family. Selfishness and individualism, including ethnic pride, must be eradicated. Socioeconomic disparities are ignored, with the distinction between rich and poor ignored; what matters is the families of the students at Garawiksa Yogyakarta.

The education of independence at the boarding school begins from the moment students enter. The primary requirement for becoming a student is that they are not allowed to ask for money from their parents, either in daily life or for tuition fees. For approximately three months, students are permitted to ask for money. However, after three months, they are no longer permitted to ask for money from their parents.

Although it's not a formal policy like the regulations in Islamic boarding schools that generally don't offer non-formal education, the PMGY values have become ingrained and integrated into tradition and culture. Students who object, PMGY doesn't expel them, but socially, they can feel alienated from their environment. The foundation of the students' ethos of independence has become an integral part of the character and distinctive features of this Islamic boarding school.

Implementing this Islamic boarding school policy with a cultural approach does take time, as the students are given a chance to become accustomed to it. The caretaker, H. Edi Mulyono, has a habit of asking which students are still struggling to become independent. When a student has been unable to become independent

for approximately six months, despite their high level of perseverance in writing, he usually immediately provides them with the opportunity to start a business. Of course, writing doesn't have to be abandoned; entrepreneurship is simply a means of supporting them to become independent. Instilling habits of simple living at PMGY is an important principle in Islamic boarding schools oriented towards independent education (Khamid, 2019; Misjaya dkk., 2019; Sanusi, 2012). Sanusi (Sanusi, 2012) assessed, "Simple facilities encourage students to manage their lives by themselves without relying on others." Even for the category of student Islamic boarding schools, PMGY is also not much different from equivalent Islamic boarding schools, as an alternative for students to expand and support their role as students in the academic world so that they are able to play a role in society.

The differences in values, visions, and missions developed by each institution have varied the implementation of their learning. PMGY, with its core values, has developed a unique pattern that distinguishes it from others. The power of its advice and the practice of its practices, along with the organization of the Islamic boarding school, sourced from the students, have fostered a harmonious and dynamic life within the boarding school.

Pesantren Entrepreneurship Education

In developing the Islamic boarding school program, H. Edi Mulyono's primary concern, especially in developing the program, is the alignment of the program with the three tenets of Spirituality, Intellectuality, and Professionalism. Spirituality refers to the Islamic religion as a priority in education. This pattern is similar to independent Islamic boarding schools with traditional Salafist patterns, where the Quran and yellow books remain the main focus of learning, albeit using different methods. (Khamid, 2019; Misjaya dkk., 2019; Sanusi, 2012).

Nevertheless, PMGY's excellence in independent education, which explores intellectualism, especially in the world of writing, is given considerable emphasis. Therefore, the curriculum at the Garawiksa Student Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta encompasses several activities.

Quran recitation every Friday night. Every Friday night, a group Quran recitation session is routinely held with the students. After the recitation session, the teacher delivers scholarly advice to the students, quoting verses from the Quran and exploring them contextually. Classical Islamic Text Studies. The texts studied at the Garawiksa Student Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta include Imam al-Ghazali's *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Sayyid Ahmad al-Hasyim's *Mukhtarul Ahadith*, Sheikh Hamami Zadah's *Tafsir Yaasin*, Al-Zarmuji's *Ta'limul Muta'alim*, and Sharif Abdullah bin Alwi bin Ahmad al-Husaini's *Risalatul Mu'awanah*, as well as Athaillah Al-Sakandari's *Hujjah Ahlussunnah*, and Syarhu Hikam. English and Arabic courses are held on certain days when students are required to communicate in English or

Arabic. However, prior to this, students receive material taught every Saturday night or on Mondays. Regular discussions of philosophy and scientific works are held to develop students' critical thinking, particularly regarding contextual social issues.

In the area of writing and publication, the learning developed in the form of book writing training is related to the world of writing related to books. Entrepreneurship Training. Usually led by several of H. Edi Mulyono's friends who have extensive experience in the world of entrepreneurship. Students are expected to absorb knowledge and experience, inspiring them to pursue independent entrepreneurship. Editorial studies discuss current issues in the mass media. Finally, literary and cultural studies aim to enhance students' appreciation and creativity in literary writing.

In terms of entrepreneurial practices, PMGY is more expansive than those developed by its partner Islamic boarding schools in Sidoarjo. Misjaya et al. (Misjaya et al., 2019) assessed that the economic independence of students at Islamic boarding schools in Sidoarjo was suboptimal because they were only provided with practical training on coffee business management. The PMGY situation is different.

The practice of economic independence is realized through the Islamic Boarding School-Owned Enterprises (BUMP), which encompass several divisions, such as publishing, livestock and plantations, food stalls (*angkringan*), laundry, and other personal businesses. All of these platforms serve as platforms for developing students' potential and also as a means for them to become independent. While many students are more likely to achieve independence through writing in the mass media, this is not the only means of independence. Approaches to achieving independence also include other channels. Besides writing, BUMP offers a variety of practical avenues for cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit, including the Publishing Division, the *Angkringan* and Laundry Entrepreneurship Division, and the Livestock and Plantation Division.

The programs mentioned above serve as the foundation for building the students' entrepreneurial creativity. The knowledge gained from these programs is not limited to knowledge but is also implemented through creativity and action. Through creativity, the students utilize the knowledge gained from editorial, scientific, and literary studies as a platform for writing for the mass media, including opinion pieces, reviews, poetry, short stories, and essays. The language development program also provides the foundation and resources for students to translate books. This is a form of creativity that significantly supports and empowers students to become independent.

Implementing this through action, students learn to trust in God and surrender to Him. Studies of classical Islamic texts, which consistently teach the wisdom of religious values, must be truly practiced by students. Not all students who submit

their writing to the mass media are immediately published; it is a long process that requires patience, perseverance, and hard work. It is within this context that the students' patience and devotion to God are cultivated. Thus, free and independent individuals will be realized in PMGY, with efforts being made to actualize all their potential. First, intellectual potential relates to practical knowledge, memory, reasoning, vocabulary, and independent entrepreneurial problem-solving (Hadley dkk., 2023). Second, emotional potential. Goleman has shown that someone with a high IQ is not guaranteed to be successful. In fact, many people with mediocre IQs but high social and emotional skills are able to live successful lives and occupy key positions in the business world and government executives (Handayati dkk., 2020). Third, spiritual potential encourages free and independent individuals to live purposefully (Wardana dkk., 2020).

CONCLUSION

Independence education at PMGY is guided by its core values of spirituality, intellectuality, and professionalism, supported by the instilling of togetherness and simplicity in the pesantren's policies. The democratic approach of the guardian figure and cultural interaction, learning methods and strategies, and pesantren programs that accommodate the full potential and uniqueness of each student have instilled in them the habit of solving problems independently. PMGY has become an alternative for independence education by enriching its students' academic knowledge. Strengthening the independence-oriented kyai figure and expanding the supportive environment is crucial for maintaining the pesantren's commitment to independence-oriented Islamic Education (PAI). For this reason, further research on independence education in pesantren with non-student students is warranted to address the limitations of this study.

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