

ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL: INSTITUTION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Islamic boarding school (pesantren) is the forerunner of Islamic education institutions in Indonesia. The initial attendance of the pesantren was estimated from 300-400 years ago and reached almost all levels of the Indonesian Muslim community, especially on Java. After Indonesia gained its independence, especially since the transition to the New Order and when economic growth really increased sharply, pesantren education became more structured and pesantren curricula became better. This study aims to discuss the role of Islamic boarding schools in character building. This type of research is library research, namely research whose main object is books or other sources of literature. As an educational institution, Islamic boarding school are very concerned with the field of religion (tafaqquh fi al-din) and the formation of the nation's character which is characterized by morality. The provisions of religious education are explained in Article 30 Paragraph (4) of the National Education System Law that religious education is in the form of diniyah education, pesantren, and other similar forms. The existence of pesantren is an ideal partner for government institutions to jointly improve the quality of education and the foundation of the nation's character. This can be found from a variety of phenomena that occur such as fights between schools and distributors who are widespread and drug users among young people are rarely found they are boarding children or graduates of boarding schools.

Keywords: Islamic boarding school, education, character

A. INTRODUCTION

The institutionalized Islamic boarding school in the community, especially in the countryside is one of the oldest Islamic education institutions in Indonesia. The early presence of the Boarding School was traditional to explore the Islamic religious sciences as a way of life (tafaqquh fi al-din) in society.¹ Because of its uniqueness, C. Geertz as well as Abdurrahman Wahid called it a subculture of Indonesian (especially Javanese) society. In colonial times, pesantren became the basis of the struggle of the nationalist-native.

The implementation of pesantren educational institutions in the form of a boarding school which is a separate community under the leadership of the kyai or ulama is assisted by one or several ulama, and or religious teachers who live together in the midst of the students with a mosque or mosque as the center of religious worship activities. In addition, school buildings or study rooms are the center of teaching and

¹ Mastuhu. (1994). *Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren*. Jakarta: INIS, p. 35

learning activities, and the huts are places for students to live. For 24 hours, from time to time they lived collectively between clerics, religious teachers, santri and other pesantren caregivers, as one big family.²

Gait pesantren in many ways is felt by the community. The main examples are the formation of ulama cadres and the development of Islamic scholarship, which were protest movements against the Dutch East Indies colonial government. The protest was always led by and by the students. At least it can be mentioned for example; peasant uprising in Cilegon-Banten 1888. Jihad Aceh 1873, a movement led by H. Ahmad Ripangi Kalisalak 1786-1875 and others is an indisputable fact that pesantren have a quite large role in the course of Islamic history in Indonesia.³

The issue of character education is rife, based on various events that occur, that the morale of the nation's children has declined so sharply. This is caused partly because many schools in Indonesia only become a place to transfer knowledge both knowledge in general and ethics, and have not reached the level of moral and ethical formation (character building).⁴

Character is the values of human behavior related to God Almighty, self, fellow human beings, the environment, and nationality manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on norms of religion, law, etiquette, culture, and customs.⁵ The character can also be interpreted the same as the character and character, so that the nation's character is identical with the nation's character or nation's character. A nation with character is a nation of good character and character, on the contrary a nation without character is a nation that is not or lacks character or does not have good norms and standards of behavior.⁶

Character formation must be done systematically and continuously which involves aspects of knowledge, feeling, loving and action. Formation of character can be likened to the formation of a person into a body builder (bodybuilder) that requires "training the muscles of morals" continuously in order to become sturdy and strong.

The development of aspects of character education is prioritized on the basic characters that are the basis for the behavior of each individual. The Indonesia Heritage Foundation formulates nine basic characters that are the goals of character education, including: 1). Love for Allah and the universe and its contents, 2). Responsibility, discipline and independent, 3). Honestly, 4). respect and courtesy, 5) Affection, caring,

² Hayati, F. (2011). Pesantren sebagai Alternatif Model Lembaga Pendidikan Kader Bangsa. *MIMBAR*, XXVII(2), 157–163.

³ Steenbrink, K. A. (1994). *Pesantren, Sekolah dan Madrasah, Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Modern*. Jakarta: LP3ES., p. 74

⁴ Faiqoh, & Mahfudh, S. (2015). Model Pembentukan Karakter Religius Santri Tahfidz Al-Qur'an di Pondok Pesantren Mathali'ul Huda Pusat Kajen Pati. *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan*, 13

⁵ Samani, M., & Hariyanto. (2011). *Konsep dan Model Pendidikan Karakter*. Remaja Rosda Karya, p. 63

⁶ Asmaun Sahlan. (2013). Pendidikan Karakter dalam Perspektif Islam (Kajian Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam). *El-HiKMAH*, 9(2), 139–149.

and cooperation, 6). Confident, creative, hard work and never give up, 7) Justice and leadership, 8) good, humble, and 9). Tolerance, peace and unity.⁷

Education as an effort to build character is an integral part of the orientation of Islamic education. The aim is to shape one's personality to behave honestly, well and responsibly, respecting and respecting others, fair, non-discriminatory, egalitarian, hard-working and other superior characters.

According to Megawangi in⁸ Character education is an effort to educate children to be able to make decisions wisely and practice them in their daily lives so that they can make a positive contribution to their environment.

One of the educational institutions that is alleged to have implemented character education for a long time is a boarding school (pesantren). Islamic Boarding School as one of the indigenous Indonesian National Education sub-systems, even seen by many groups as having special characteristics and advantages in applying character education for their students (santri). Such a view seems to originate from the fact that: pesantren more easily shape the character of their students because this educational institution uses a dormitory system that allows it to apply the values and world views it adopts in the daily lives of santri.⁹

The development process of the pesantren world must be seriously supported by the government as a whole human development process. Improving and developing the role of pesantren in the development process in the era of regional autonomy is a strategic step in efforts to realize national development goals, especially the education sector. Moreover, in a condition of a nation that is experiencing a moral crisis (degradation). Pesantren as an educational institution shapes and develops moral values to become a pioneer as well as an inspiration for the nation's moral generator.

Based on the explanation of the description and previous research, the author will discuss about (a) pesantren between expectations and challenges, (b) Functions and Purposes of Pesantren Education (c) the format of future pesantren.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is library research, namely research whose main object is books or other sources of literature. That is, data are sought and found through literature review from books that are relevant to the discussion.

This research is a qualitative research with a type of library research. This qualitative research uses the activity procedure and the final presentation technique descriptively.¹⁰

⁷ Purwanti. (2012). Implementasi Pengembangan Karakter Dalam Pembelajaran Di Lembaga Pendidikan Tinggi Kependidikan (LPTK). *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi Dan Humaniora*, 3(2), 120–131.

⁸ Malik, R. W., & S, R. (2013). Fungsi Pendidikan Karakter Mengatasi Kenakalaan Remaja Di Lembaga Pemasarakatan Anak Kelas II B Kecamatan Sungai Raya. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 2(12), 1–11.

⁹ Makmun, H. A. R. (2014). Pembentukan Karakter Berbasis Pendidikan Pesantren: Studi di Pondok Pesantren Tradisional dan Modern Di Kabupaten Ponorogo. *Cendekia Vol.*, 12

¹⁰ Lexy J Moleong, (2014), *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung : Remaja Rosda Karya, p. 6.

Qualitative data analysis used in this study is in the form of words rather than numbers arranged in broad themes. In analyzing the data after the writer has collected using the following methods:

- a. Inductive method, which is used when found data that have elements in common then from there drawn general conclusions.
- b. Deductive method, which is used instead the general understanding that there is already found data that can strengthen it.
- c. Descriptive Method, which is used to describe everything related to the subject matter in a systematic, factual and accurate manner about the factors of the nature and relationship of the two phenomena investigated.

From here finally taken a general conclusion that originally came from existing data about the object of the problem.

C. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Function and Purpose of Islamic Boarding Schools

The function of pesantren is not merely as an educational institution tafaqquh fi al-dien an sich, but it is a multi-complex which is the task of pesantren. Education in pesantren does not stop as a mere knowledge transfer activity. A similar sentiment was also stated by Tholkhah Hasan, the former Indonesian Minister of Religion, that pesantren should be able to revive the following functions, 1) pesantren as an educational institution that transfers religious knowledge (tafaqquh fi al-din) and Islamic values (Islamic vaues); 2) pesantren as a religious institution that carries out social control; and 3) pesantren as religious institutions that carry out social engineering or community development. All of that, according to him, can only be done if the pesantren is able to carry out the process of caring for good traditions and at the same time adapting new scientific developments better, so that it can play a role as an agent of change.¹¹

Pesantren as a social institution and religious broadcasting. We almost find that the community around the pesantren is relatively better than the people who are far from the pesantren. This is inseparable from the role of pesantren in building society through religious messages. The network of pesantren to the community is more focused on the ties of parents, santri with pesantren, or the tariqah network that exists in certain pesantren. The Tariqah network usually has a stronger relationship with the pesantren than just the relationship of the santri parents in general. As an educational institution, Islamic boarding schools organize school education (madrasas, public schools, vocational and tertiary institutions) and non-school education in the form of life skills courses, to support the lives of students after attending boarding school education, because pesantren do not print their students for be a government employee, but it is more focused on the independence of students who do not follow or become a burden on other people / institutions. Therefore, pesantren always equip their santri entrepreneurship education in accordance with the form of life skills provided by each pesantren.

¹¹ Wahidah, E. Y. (2015). Studi Implementasi Tradisionalisasi dan Modernisasi Pendidikan di Pondok Pesantren. MUADDIB, 5(2), 184–207

The process of recruiting students, also diverse. This shows that pesantren is an institution for all. According to Nizar as an educational and social institution, pesantren never distinguish social status for prospective students and guests who come.¹² According to Suryanegara,¹³ pesantren also had a very large role in responding to the expansion of Dutch colonial politics. The spirit of fighting in expelling the invaders in the homeland is more raised from the pesantren or the santri with the spirit of jihad and *hubb-u al-wathan min al-iman*, they dare to die against the invaders.

2. Islamic boarding school between Expectations and Challenges

The pesantren's strength in maintaining its mission as an institution does not mean that it does not experience obstacles. The challenges facing the pesantren first appeared, when the Indonesian nation experienced the oppression of the colonizers.¹⁴ The Gianti Agreement that occurred in 1825, the Dutch government limited the number of prospective Indonesian pilgrims and made multilateral relations with other Islamic countries, the pesantren was labeled as the basis of resistance against foreign nations (Dutch East Indies). Therefore, in response to Dutch oppression, the santri also held resistance. According to Clifford Geertz, between 1820-1880 AD, there had been a major rebellion led by the students in Indonesia, including; 1) Padri's rebellion in Sumatra was led by Imam Bonjol, 2) Diponegoro Rebellion in Java, 3) Banten Rebellion due to forced planting, carried out by the Dutch, 4) Rebellion in Aceh led by, among others, Teuku Umar and Teuku Ciktidiro.

In the Sukarno era, pesantren had to deal with communists. There are a lot of disputes at the lower level involving the santri and communists. This seems to have been deliberately planned systematically to distance Muslims from the government structure in order to perpetuate secular ideology.

Despite pressure from the government, pesantren in the two orders were able to bring forth great people who were important people in our country such as KH Wahid Hasyim, M Nastir, Buya Hamka, Mukti Ali, KH Saifuddin Zuhri etc. Starting in the 1970s and at the end of the fall of the new order in which the Indonesian economy began to collapse, the pesantren seemed to return to its supremacy due to new programs being rolled out by the government, namely the people's economy. The government seeks to partner with pesantren as partners in poverty alleviation and developing a people's economy (Integrated People's Agricultural Development Project Planning Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, 1998). He made the pesantren as a people-oriented development agent because the pesantren is considered the only institution that exists and is trusted for the distribution of populist economic funds and has very strong down roots and an attitude of mentality that can be accounted for. This offer was taken seriously and accepted by the pesantren.¹⁵ So it is not surprising at that time that many

¹² Nizar, S. (2007). *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Sejarah Pendidikan Era Rasulullah Sampai Indonesia*. Jogjakarta: Prenada Media Group, p. 89

¹³ Suryanegara, A. M. (1998). *Menemukan Sejarah Wacana Pergerakan Islam di Indonesia*. Bandung: Mizan, p. 26

¹⁴ Damopolii, M. (2011). *Pesantren Modern IMMIM: Pencetak Muslim Modern*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, p. 41

¹⁵ Kuntowijoyo. (1993). *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi*. Bandung: Mizan.

pesantren were awarded kalpatarududi from the Suharto government, because the role of pesantren in the economic development of the people is also pesantren becoming the government's economic partner.

Globalization and modernization movements are two sides of one currency which have also entered the boarding schools. This provides a quite extraordinary test for boarding schools. One side of pesantren must maintain its pesantren tradition as an "authentic" or "indigenous" Indonesian institution, but on the other hand pesantren cannot avoid globalization and modernization with all the products offered. He offers an ambivalent choice, one side brings goodness, and may also bring disaster if not ready to face it. Globalization is a real necessity that we inevitably face together. Facing this challenge pesantren are required to act wisely. If it immediately rejects globalization by preserving old construction and does not want to see something new that will harm pesantren in the future, because modern people as mentioned above are more concerned with instrumental values, lately pesantren have opened up. Previously, the pesantren was only a place to study religious knowledge through the sorogan, wetonan and bandungan systems, so now it has opened a classical system of education and even new programs with modern and formal faces such as madrassas, schools and even universities. Even though modern education has entered pesantren, it is not permissible to shift the tradition, namely pesantrenan style. On the contrary, the presence of formal education institutions in pesantren is intended to strengthen the existing tradition, namely the education model of pesantren. Adaptation is a form of necessity without losing the characteristics possessed by pesantren (al-muhâfazhah `ala al-qadîm as-shâlih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadîd al-ashlah). Pesantren education from the beginning was not intended to prepare skilled workers in the modern sectors as envisioned by schools and universities in general. But oriented to how the students can understand, live, and practice the teachings of Islam as well. Islamic boarding school education is Islamic education that seeks to bring the students into pious and pious, not to become employees or officials.

In its future development, what must always be remembered is that pesantren must remain a "home" in developing mental and spiritual defenses in accordance with the times. In addition, the knowledge taught in pesantren must have a pattern of integration (general-religion) based on Islamic scientific characteristics through the study of verses qauliyah and qauniyah, sourced from Allah SWT, to meet the needs of worldly and ukhrawi, generally applicable to all human community, realistic and integrated (integral); it means that it does not differ in its scientific dimensions, and is universal so that it can give birth to scientific concepts in all fields and all human needs. And, no less important is pesantren which is a religion-based education (Islam), must be able to maximize the aspects of the area because the region is part of Islam and cannot be separated from the Islamic sciences.

3. Future Boarding Schools Format

There is no doubt that pesantren have a real contribution in the development of education. Moreover, seen historically, pesantren have extraordinary experience in fostering and developing society. In fact, pesantren is able to increase its role independently by exploring the potential of the surrounding community. Human

development is not only the responsibility of the government or the community alone, but it is the responsibility of all components, including the pesantren world. Pesantren which have historical value in fostering and building society, the quality must continue to be encouraged and developed. The human development process carried out by pesantren cannot be separated from the human development process that is being sought by the government.

The development process of the pesantren world, which aside from being the internal responsibility of pesantren, must also be seriously supported by the government as a whole human development process. Improving and developing the role of pesantren in the development process is a strategic step in developing national development goals, especially in the education sector. Moreover, in conditions that are experiencing a moral crisis (degradation). Pesantren as an educational institution that forms and develops moral values, with the basic religion must be a pioneer as well as an inspiration for the nation's moral development. Thus, development does not become empty but is more valuable and meaningful.

Islamic boarding schools in general are independent, not dependent on the government or the existing power. Because of its independent nature, pesantren can uphold the purity of pesantren. Therefore, pesantren are not easily infiltrated by teachings that are not in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Even though the issue of terrorism was initiated by the pesantren, in fact such understanding was never taught in pesantren institutions. Education in pesantren which is part of the National Education System has 3 main elements, namely: 1) Kyai as educators as well as the owner of the cottage and the students; 2) Islamic boarding school curriculum; and 3) Means of worship and education, such as mosques, kyai houses, and huts, as well as some madrassas and vocational workshops. The activities are summarized in "Tri Dharma Islamic Boarding School", namely: 1) Faith and devotion to Allah SWT; 2) Development of useful science; and 3) Dedication to religion, society and the state.

It seems that it needs to be observed, that the meaning of pesantren in the past needs to be reviewed or it needs to be redefined and reinterpreted. The pesantren in the past were understood to be a traditional Islamic education hostel where students lived together and studied under the guidance of one (or more) teacher known as a kyai (Zarkasyi, 1998). The huts or dormitories of the students in the past were usually in the form of buildings made of bamboo, or residential buildings with plots that were walled in rooms with thatched roofs (Steenbrink, 1994). Departing from reality, it is clear that pesantren in the future are expected to improve, organize themselves in the face of competition in the education business as has been done by Muhammadiyah and others. But the changes and reforms meant are only limited to management and not the pattern, let alone change clothes from salafiyah to mu 'asyir (modern), because it will only destroy the positive values of the pesantren as is happening now, the graduates of Islamic or recitation. So, ideally pesantren in the future should be able to keep up with the demands of the times by defending the traditions and values of their morality. Study of the yellow book as a characteristic of pesantren education should be taught from Ibtidaiyah to Aliyah as KBM must be santri and compensate with additional study, extra activities such as computer courses, English, other skills and package programs

A, B and C to get their formal diplomas. Or by collaborating with other schools to follow the equation. If this happens, will be born qualified clerics, scholars and fuqoha.

There are two interesting phenomena in education in Indonesia, namely (a) the emergence of integrated schools (from elementary to secondary level); (b) organizing quality schools which are often called boarding schools. Another name for the term boarding school is boarding school. Students attend regular education from morning to afternoon at school, then continue with religious education or special values education at night. For 24 hours the students are under the guidance and supervision of the supervising teachers. Without realizing it, actually the schools tried to imitate the pattern of pesantren education, which turned out to be no less a quality of pesantren graduates than those of public schools. On the other hand, the pesantren system turns out to be superior in shaping the personality (National Education System Law No 20/2003: 2009: 101) santri. Meanwhile, brawls between students in public schools seemed to be a public spectacle. The strength of pesantren in shaping the personality of the santri as stated, is inseparable from the boarding school system that has long been applied in pesantren education. They are driven intensively to master science and technology. While in the dormitory environment they are forged to apply religious teachings, express cultural arts and other skills on holidays. Their days are days of interacting with peers and teachers. Routine of activities from morning to night to see morning again, they face the same living creatures, the same people, the same environment, the same dynamics and romance. In our educational realm, boarding school is an old educational model.¹⁶

Traditionally, we can explore the dynamics of boarding school life in pesantren, church education, and even in army wards. Boarding education has given birth to many great figures and carved the history of human life. The presence of boarding school is a necessity today. Its existence is a logical consequence of changes in the social environment and economic conditions and the perspective of community religiosity. There are three reasons why you need boarding school, namely:

- a. The social environment has changed a lot, especially in big cities. Most of the population no longer lives in a homogeneous atmosphere, the old habit of living with a large family or clan has long shifted towards a heterogeneous, pluralistic, and plural society. This has an impact on different patterns of community behavior because of the influence of different values. Therefore, some well-educated people assume that such a social environment is no longer conducive to the growth and intellectual development and morality of children.
- b. The improved economic condition of the community encourages the fulfillment of needs above basic needs such as health and education. For the newly emerging middle class due to their high level of education so getting a good position in employment has implications for their high incomes. This encourages the intention to provide the best education for children beyond the education received by their parents.

¹⁶ Azra, A. (1997). Pesantren: Kontinuitas dan Perubahan, dalam Nurchalish madjid, Bilik-Bilik Pesantren: Sebuah Potret Perjalanan, p. 85

- c. The perspective of religiosity. The latest trends in urban society are moving towards an increasingly religious direction. The indicator is increasingly popular and lively study and various religious activities. Modernity has negative implications with an imbalance between spiritual and physical needs. For this reason, people do not want the same thing to happen to their children. There is a desire to give birth to a generation that is more religious or has good living values, encouraging parents to find alternative education systems.

The three factors above, the boarding school education system seems to find its market. From a social perspective, the boarding school system isolates students from heterogeneous social environments that tend to be bad. In the school and dormitory environment a relatively homogeneous social environment is constructed namely peers and supervisors. Homogeneous in purpose namely studying as a means of pursuing ideals. From an economic point of view, boarding schools provide a complete service that demands quite high costs. Therefore students will be really well served through a variety of services and facilities. In terms of the spirit of religiosity, boarding schools promise a balanced education between physical and spiritual needs, intellectual and spiritual. It is expected that there will be strong students who are born in the world with science and technology, and are ready in faith and good deeds.

It seems that the concept of Islamic boarding school is an alternative as a model for the development of future pesantren. The government is expected to be more serious in supporting and developing the concept of education like this. Thus, pesantren become an advanced and competitive educational institution in developing knowledge and skills based on reliable spiritual values.

D. CONCLUSION

The principle of pesantren is *al muhafadzah 'ala al qadim al shalih, wa al akhdzu bi al jadid al ashlah*, which is to keep holding positive traditions, and compensate by taking positive new things. Issues related to civic values will be corrected through the principles held by the pesantren so far and of course with an effective, efficient and reshuffle it can provide alignment as humanity (*al musawah bain al nas*). Renewal in pesantren should continue to be carried out, especially in the field of management, building management must also be a serious concern so that it looks organized, the pesantren education curriculum, and various fields of expertise (language and life skills). Thus, pesantren can play an educative role in providing quality and quality human resources that are integrated in faith, knowledge, and pious deeds.

The existence of pesantren is a partner for government institutions to jointly improve the quality of existing education as a basis for the implementation of social transformation through the provision of qualified human resources and morality. Moreover, the process of social transformation in the autonomy era requires regions to be more sensitive in exploring local potentials and the needs of their communities so that existing capabilities can be optimized. Thus, the pesantren is working hard to improve all its shortcomings and add new things that are the needs of the people today. This is because the pesantren education model which bases itself on conventional or classical systems will not help much in the provision of human resources who have

integrative competence both in mastering religious knowledge, general knowledge and technological prowess.

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