

Pesantren in Preparing the Alumni to Have the Twenty-First Century Skills

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ABSTRACT

Pesantren is an Indonesian traditional education institution based on Islamic values or often called traditional *pesantren*. It initially focuses on learning that is only limited to morality and politeness values, which make *pesantren* considered backward in the academic side and science by Indonesian society. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a term 'modern' *pesantren* which combined moral, academic and scientific values as the learning focus, such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and innovative skills that make its graduates ready to face twenty-first-century challenges. This paper tries to portray on how *pesantren*, both traditional and modern *pesantren*, prepares and navigates their students to master the twenty-first-century skills namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity to tackle future challenges. This study used qualitative approach by doing Focused Group Discussion to find the data. The researchers conducted interviews with nine students of Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Indonesia who previously spent their high school years in either traditional or modern *pesantren*. We are finding that *pesantren* although the types, traditional and modern will strive the world's dynamic. This research will provide valuable information regarding *pesantren* responding to modernity as Islamic education is supposed to consider the improvement of the learning process within preparing it is alumni to face the twenty-first-century challenges without forgetting its identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Pesantren are typical and authentic Indonesian educational institutions, which since the beginning of Islam entered Indonesia [1]. *Pesantren* as one of the authentic Indonesian institution has been recognized ever since the introduction as the spread of Islam in Indonesia [2].

Pesantren as a large educational institution that widely spread in the country, berdasarkan data dari Pangkalan Data Pondok Pesantren oleh Kementerian Agama Indonesia, di Indonesia terdapat lebih dari 27.722 pondok pesantren dengan lebih dari 4 juta santri yang tersebar di 34 propinsi di Indonesia [3]. The education system of Pondok Pesantren today has been nationally acknowledged through the Laws No. 18 2019 about Pesantren, making Pondok Pesantren one of the nationally-recognised education systems. It is therefore hoped that Pondok Pesantren can play a supporting role of ongoing developments in this twenty-first century that is dynamic, spontaneous and constant. Based on this description, it can be said that existence of *pesantren* invested the Indonesian Human Resources in the future.

In the 21st century, there has been a term that discussed and mentioned in the conversation of international community regarding the abilities that individuals of this century must have to be able to survive and face the challenges in this increasingly sophisticated century, such as the ability to communicate, collaborate, improve creativity, and think critically, which of these capabilities is now known as The Twenty-First Century Skills or can be mentioned as the 4C Skills. According to the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 4C are the abilities that students in the 21st century must have to deal with and overcome developments in this increasingly unpredictable world [4]. To fulfill and prepare oneself in order to survive and develop in the 21st century, education has an important role. Education functions to build and develop the potential that everyone has from God. Education according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary is the process of changing the attitudes and behavior of a person or group of people in an effort to mature humans through teaching and training efforts. There are many educational-based institutions in Indonesia, one of which is *pesantren*, *pesantren* is an educational institution that can be said to be an authentic educational institution of the Indonesian state, this is due to the history of *pesantren* education which cannot be separated from the history of the founding of the Indonesian state itself, which began with the entry of Islam in Indonesia. [5]. Islamic boarding schools are generally divided into two types, namely, modern boarding schools (*madrassa*) and

traditional boarding schools (*pesantren*) [6]. Since its inception, Islamic boarding schools have continued to adapt to their educational system and formation, now many *pesantren* have even provided all levels of education from elementary school to university, this is a form of reform from the *pesantren* itself to answer and prepare a generation that can adapt with the times without forgetting the essence of being a Muslim. With this change, many *pesantren* have become formal educational institutions in accordance with the national education curriculum combined with a non-formal education system based on religion as well as values that are integrated with everyday life in *pesantren*.

One form of anticipation to global development and change is to prepare community members to deal with and overcome the complexities of development, changes and challenges. In this context, the idea of educational institutions which give not only sciences but also morals and *adab* values is needed. A form of modernization response from boarding schools and preparing alumni to be able to face the challenges of the times, for such as learning general studies as mathematic or biology, actively speaking Arabic and English in their daily lives and all the activities that already arranged based on Islamic values and this all have been scheduled, which are both points have begun to erode in an era full of modern terms. This makes the *pesantren* attractive to parents who naturally want their children not only to master the sciences but also to be adept and moral.

Life at the college level is a time where everything that has been obtained at the previous education level can be seen as a result, about how students from the *pesantren* can apply the knowledge that has been obtained. With that, this research was conducted on students of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Indonesiap who have taken *pesantren* education during their secondary education. in this 21st century.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with descriptive design. Qualitative research is the type of research which the data is in the form of words and actions [7], in descriptive design the researchers describe and analyze the data with the formulation from the interview and reflect it with the real phenomenon that actually happened [8]. As stated by Sutopo (*lihat cara tulis kutipan dan kutipan*), in order to understand and analyze the realities and interactions that happened, made the researchers came out as the research instrument themselves [9]. In qualitative research the actions and the words of the interviewers is the main source of our data, and for the secondary data we used the previous research, news and eligible websites [7].

Collecting data for this study used semi-structured interviews where there are a number of questions arranged in a certain order so that one person's answers can be compared with others, but still gives room for flexibility to extract further information. [10]. In this research we conducted interviews with nine students of the Faculty of Islamic Studies of Universitas Islam Indonesia who have spent their high schools in boarding school. Seven of the students have spent their high school time for 6 years in boarding schools, which made them understand the ins and outs of boarding schools.

In the interview process, researchers conducted interview question based on the communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking (4C skills) that mentioned by the UNESCO, which we make it relates the interview questions. In the beginning we asked about the general questions such as how long they spent their time in *pesantren*, this question conducted for knowing how long they lived in *pesantren* and does it affect the skills that they have to be applied now in their university. For collaboration questions, what kind of activities they take part in *pondok pesantren* and what the benefits are obtained. Is there team work from there that can be applied in university after they graduated. For Communication questions, how education in *pondok pesantren* taught you to communicate (with all of activities they take part in). For Creativity questions, with all shortcomings and limitations because it's environment of *pondok pesantren*, indirectly you are forced to think and act creatively and make a new innovation which can lead the for independent students and for the critical thinking questions, does educations in *pondok pesantren* educate them to think more critically and how to behave when they have to solve some problems or disagree with friends or *kyai* (teacher in *pondok pesantren*) while in *pondok pesantren*. However, since we use semi-structured interview, the questions might me developed for the deep discussion and analyzing.

Triangulation of research data obtained through interviews. The data obtained were then analyzed according to the following steps: 1) Reading the transcript to find the main meaning and theme; 2) Identify and take notes on the theme; 3) Linking themes to one another; and 4) draw conclusions [11].

The results will then be discussed to answer the question of how Islamic boarding schools prepare their alumni to be able to face the challenges of the twenty-first century, which we will then present the results of the answers in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The interview was conducted on 20 January 2020 at Faculty of Islamic Studies with 9 students of the faculty as respondents, with the initials AM, MH, ND, RDA, EFN, ZSH, FT, RA, and IK. They have spent their high school years in pondok pesantren, which AM, MH, and ND 3 came from traditional pesantren and RDA, EFN, ZSH, FT, RA and IK came from modern pesantren.

When living in Islamic boarding schools, all respondents lived in dormitories consisting of many rooms, all respondents said that in one room there were 5-12 students with different regional backgrounds from themselves. So, with this it can be seen that the Islamic boarding school regulates in such a way regarding the members in each room, making each student must be able to adapt to other students even though they are in different regions, because with that they can carry out dormitory life by helping and supporting each other. AR who has spent 6 years in a modern stated boarding school,

“di pondok, saya mengalami perpindahan kamar setiap tahunnya, sebenarnya ini merepotkan, tapi sekarang saya paham, dengan itu saya bisa mengenal banyak sekali teman-teman lain, yang tidak sekelas dengan saya maupun berbeda daerah dengan saya”.

Selain itu, ND dengan latar belakang pondok tradisional memberikan pendapat yang tidak jauh berbeda,

“di pondok memang selalu diadakan pergantian kamar setiap semester, awalnya kesulitan karena harus beradaptasi dengan orang baru di tiap semesternya, namun ketika dijalani selama 3 tahun, ternyata ketika kelulusan, saya mengenal hampir seluruh santri di pondok, karena memang santri di pondok saya kemarin tidak terlalu banyak”.

From this statement, it can be seen that Islamic boarding schools often apply room changes even though with different time spans. With this room change, the Islamic boarding school familiarizes its students to experience community changes with different compositions of people at each change. It makes students not feel alien to the dynamics and differences in the nature and character of other people, making them more tolerant of change because they have been formed and used to it when they are in Islamic boarding schools.

According to the respondents, living in this room requires them to be able to discuss and work together to be able to run and maintain life in a dorm room well. When we tried to review, other things as part of moving rooms and room members themselves, heard some statements from some respondents, which in pesantren life, rooms are the smallest part of dormitory life, because in maintaining cleanliness and coordination of members in the room for the sake of the achievement of order in activities in the Islamic boarding school, making each room have a chairperson or person in charge of its own, because basically the pesantren has a santri organization who is responsible for the course of life and every activity in the pesantren, and the room is the smallest part of this santri organization. When we asked the respondents about how they became accustomed to living together in the pesantren, all of the respondents answered that the dorm room was the starting place for habits that could form these 4C skills. When we asked more about the role of dormitories and dorm life related to the formation of 4C skills, EFN replied,

“sangat benar jika dikatakan bahwa kamar dan asrama merupakan tempat dimana kami terbiasa akan banyak hal di pondok, karena di kamar kami benar-benar dituntut untuk dapat menyelesaikan masalah yang ada secara bersama, sebagai contoh, di pondok saya kemari ada penilaian mengenai kamar terbersih dan terkotor di setiap minggunya, dengan ini kami harus benar-benar dapat bekerja sama untuk dapat menjaga kebersihan kamar, dan juga terdapat penilaian mengenai kamar terdisiplin dan sebaliknya, sama halnya dengan kebersihan tadi, kami juga harus dapat bekerja sama untuk tidak dinobatkan menjadi kamar yang tidak disiplin, karena di pondok ada hukuman jika mendapat predikat kamar terkotor dan kamar yang paling tidak disiplin menjalankan aturan pondok, misalnya sering terlambat untuk ke kelas dijadikan sebagai penilaian”

In addition to EFN, it turns out that each respondent answered the same thing about the role of dorm and room life in forming habits that make them have 4C characters. With this it can be seen that, dormitory life forms the skills of cooperation, communication, creativity and responsibility to be able to live their dorm life in Islamic boarding schools.

In line with the things mentioned above, respondents are also required to be able to solve their respective problems and together, with this mindset to be able to solve problems (problem solving), where students must be able to think critically and innovatively to be able to solve their problems. , this is related to the many

limitations of time and cottage facilities, for example, students are not allowed to access the internet and electronic devices such as laptops at any time, even based on all respondents' answers, they are prohibited from bringing cellphones to the dormitory. We asked respondents how they responded to these limitations. RA stated,

“awalnya saya bingung juga bagaimana cara mengerjakan tugas yang membutuhkan alat bantu seperti laptop dan internet untuk mencari informasi, namun ternyata dengan itu saya justru harus bisa memaksa diri saya untuk dapat membagi waktu, karena klo di pondok, saya diizinkan untuk dapat menggunakan laptop setelah selesai sholat ashar hingga bell sore berbunyi saja, dengan itu saya mencoba untuk memanfaatkan waktu yang ada, karena takut waktunya kurang, maka saya biasanya mencetak informasi yang saya butuhkan dengan printout di koperasi, maka dengan itu saya dapat membawa informasi dan data yang saya butuhkan ke kamar”

In addition, RDA added,

“iya dulu di pondok pernah beberapa kali ikut lomba sains nasional, jadi untuk team yang ikut mendapat izin dari pengasuh pondok untuk menggunakan media dan alat bantu sesuai dengan waktu yang ditentukan, jadi bisa lebih lama memakainya namun harus ada izin dari pengasuh atau pengurus pondok”.

However, MH and FT added that the limitations in the cottage were indeed difficult for them in the beginning, but because this was not only felt by them, but the life of the cottage, which was already like that, did not make them feel difficult but on the contrary they trying to be able to meet their needs by adjusting to the existing circumstances and limitations.

In addition to dormitory life, Islamic boarding schools also apply curriculum-based education in accordance with national standards, making pesantren a recognized educational institution in Indonesia. Regarding learning in the classroom, all respondents convey the same thing, namely the learning method that is not much different from schools in general, only Islamic boarding schools classify Islamic boarding school learning materials as well as general, Islamic boarding school learning materials such as Arabic language materials and materials taken from the book. classics, while general subjects taught in schools such as mathematics, English and Arabic, social sciences such as geography and sociology as well as natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology have also been taught in Islamic boarding schools.

Another interesting thing that we encountered in terms of familiarizing students so that 4C skills were formed in pesantren was how each student was given the responsibility and opportunity to take part in leadership and organization.

MH stated,

“di pondok ketika kami sudah menginjak tahun terakhir, kami diberikan amanah untuk mengurus seluruh aspek kehidupan di pondok, sesuai dengan arahan dari pemimpin pondok, kalau di pondok saya kemari nada banyak bagian-bagian, saya sendiri bagian bahasa, yang pastinya mengurus hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan pengembangan dan pengaturan bahasa dan skill berbahasa, ada juga bagian yang khusus mengurus kedisiplinan asrama, ada juga kebersihan, keagamaan juga”.

Based on the answers from all respondents, they have served as a certain part and received the mandate that must be carried out from the roles that have been obtained. Not much different from student organizations in schools in general, student organizations in Islamic boarding schools manage and resolve the types of problems that exist in boarding schools related to students. It's just that life in the cottage which covers all aspects of life for 24 hours and continuously, makes the problems faced by the administrators also more complex. In this case, we see the similarities in the answers of each respondent related to the responsibility of the santri as administrators of the boarding school, namely the demand for the santri to be able to share time and discipline in carrying out their role as students to study and also the administrators as seniors who take care of all their junior activities at the boarding school. Besides that, they are also required to be able to work in teams, become problem solvers to solve existing problems, and with all the limitations they encounter in Islamic boarding schools require them to be able to think critically, innovatively and adaptively in solving problems they encounter.

The results of this study can be seen from three aspects of life in Islamic boarding schools, which according to researchers where the habits acquired become the skills possessed by each student. First, dormitory life, as explained above, that the dormitory is a place where students spend their time, makes the complexity of the problems and challenges faced by students at the boarding school causes the emergence of habits that form 4C skills. Second is classroom life which is a place for students to gain knowledge, the knowledge that has been obtained in class can be applied by students in the class itself and also in dormitory life as well as organization,

finally there is organizational life that shapes the skills of Islamic boarding school students, where the organization becomes a forum for every student. students to be able to carry out the mandate and learn to be a leader and overall that makes students have communication skills, can collaborate and work in teams, think creatively, critically, innovatively and adaptively in solving problems in Islamic boarding schools. In accordance with what was stated in the research on the formation of character and skills in Islamic boarding schools, one of which is the habituation method, we consider that by habituation to the same activities continuously in life in the three aspects of this Islamic boarding school, the alumni of the Islamic boarding school have been 3-6 years in boarding school, or at least have 4C skills [12], In addition to the habituation method, another method that is also used is the punishment method so that the students follow all the activities and rules of the boarding school to get used to the things that become the skills of the santri later, which can help the alumni of the Islamic boarding school to be able to face the challenges of the 21st century. [13].

CONCLUSION

From the overall interviews conducted and discussions of the results obtained, researchers can conclude that *pondok pesantren* have already prepared its alumny in to have and develop 21st skills by incorporating into the *pondok pesantren's* curriculum or made it into daily culture and habits, making all graduates can be better prepared to face the twenty-first century challenges in the world of future career, work or their next step educational studies. Besides that, there are things that should be used as a record for the government in order to give more attention to the growth and development of boarding schools in Indonesia because with this can be seen that boarding schools in the future will contribute a lot of human resources in the future to a more advanced and prosperous Indonesia.

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