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Efforts Of Islamic Boarding School Management To Improve The Life Skills Of Students At The Raudlatul Ulum 1 Putri Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) are regarded as vital educational institutions that play an important role in the progress and development of education. Additionally, they are considered alternative solutions for various educational challenges. This educational model, which focuses on religious studies, particularly Islam, has become a model and the precursor for the current educational system in Indonesia. Implementing life skills education within these institutions produces highly competitive students. With life skills training, they become more productive and capable of competing in the job market. The research questions are: (1) What efforts do the administrators of Pondok Pesantren make to enhance students' life skills? (2) What are the outcomes of these efforts? The objectives are: (1) To identify the efforts made by Pondok Pesantren administrators to enhance the life skills of students, and (2) To determine the results of these efforts. The findings indicate that instilling educational values in Islamic boarding schools through muhadhoroh (speeches) and extracurricular activities have a positive impact. The strategies used to instill Islamic educational values through muhadhoroh and extracurricular activities have proven effective.

Keywords: Islamic boarding schools, Life skills, Religious education

Abstrak

Pondok pesantren sebagai salah satu lembaga pendidikan yang dinilai mempunyai peran penting dalam kemajuan dan pengembangan dunia pendidikan. Selain itu, pondok pesantren juga dianggap sebagai solusi alternatif bagi pemecahan berbagai bentuk pendidikan. Padahal model pendidikan yang berfokus pada dunia keagamaan khususnya Islam ini menjadi panutan dan cikal bakal model pendidikan di Indonesia saat ini. Pendidikan life skills dalam suatu lembaga pendidikan akan menghasilkan output santri yang memiliki daya kompetisi yang tinggi. Dengan bekal life skills mereka akan lebih produktif dan mampu bersaing di dunia kerja. Rumusan masalah yaitu (1) Upaya Pengurus Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Life Skill Santri (2) Bagaimana hasil dari Upaya Pengurus Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Life Skill Santri. Tujuan yaitu (1) Untuk mengetahui Upaya Pengurus Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan

Life Skill Santri (2) Untuk mengetahui hasil dari Upaya Pengurus Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Life Skill Santri. Hasil dari pembahasannya yaitu bahwa dalam penanaman nilai-nilai pendidikan di Pondok Pesantren Islam melalui muhadhoroh dan ekstrakurikur. Strategi yang telah digunakan pada penanaman nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam melalui kegiatan muhadhoroh dan ekstrakurikuler di memiliki dampak yang positif.

Kata Kunci: Pondok pesantren, *Life skills*, Pendidikan keagamaan

Introduction

The evolution of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia has shown extraordinary progress. Pondok Pesantren, which has its roots in religious education, stands as the oldest educational institution in the country. Even though they are popular, Islamic boarding schools are often underestimated when compared to formal educational institutions. On the other hand, although society recognizes the quality of Islamic boarding school graduates, they are not always fully recognized as legitimate educational institutions. However, many Islamic boarding schools show high-quality performance, producing many ulama and national leaders among their alumni.¹ Islamic boarding schools are Islamic educational institutions that aim to understand, appreciate, and practice the *Islamic teachings of Tafaqquh fi al-Din*.²

They are expected to be able to hone their intellect and apply the knowledge they have gained through Islamic boarding schools. However, Islamic boarding schools must also be responsible for the continuity of the real life of their students. Teaching

life skills is a concrete step in preparing students for life in society. Islamic boarding schools prepare students not only to become experts in religious knowledge but also to reintegrate into society as agents of social change. They become independent individuals who are not only aware of their status as Santri *an sick*, "*being*", but are also in the process of being formed and aware of being santri forever and wherever they are, "*becoming*".³

Education is an effort aimed at increasing awareness and cultivating the life skills of every individual throughout the world. Therefore, in this modern Millennial era, the education sector faces great challenges in carrying out its duties as a platform for cultivating broad-minded individuals and directing them towards a prosperous life. In this context, education equips people not only to absorb the influx of global information but also to critically process, adapt, and innovate based on the knowledge they acquire. When an educational institution provides training to hone *life skills*, this will produce students who have competitiveness. Because of *the life*

skills they learn, it is hoped that it can help them to continue to develop in the world of work. It turns out that the Islamic boarding school has taken the right steps. In this oldest educational institution, students are not only given religious material but also forged and honed every *life skill*. This shows that the learning process does not only focus on students' intelligence but also on the formation of noble personalities. This is what then becomes an advantage in Islamic Boarding schools which must always be developed and actualized by all Islamic boarding schools.

The *life skills* offered by Islamic boarding schools are quite diverse. These skills include vocational skills and academic skills. Vocational skills are skills needed in the world of work, such as technical skills, communication and *problem solving*. Meanwhile, academic skills include the skills to think critically, conduct research, and management decision-making.⁴ In essence, education itself seeks a learning process and atmosphere that can provide opportunities for students in the form of various life skills. The educational process itself is not just about acquiring knowledge but includes implementing various processes to develop skills, attitudes, and values that can be put into practice in students' lives now or in the future.

In general, the aim of sharpening *the life skills* of students is to improve the quality of thinking, eliminate bad habit patterns, increase personal potential, and help students face life problems constructively, be able to solve problems innovatively and creatively, and face the realities of life with inner and outer happiness. The principles taught by Islamic boarding schools to students are not only frugality and moderation. Courage and independence are attitudes that are always formed and taught in Islamic boarding schools. This is very important considering that social life needs these two principles. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are so many Islamic boarding schools that provide quite strict rules for the students. This is done with the hope that the students will not only rely on the help of others but also become independent, creative, and innovative individuals in solving problems.⁵

At the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school, various activities designed to hone *life skills* include practical training such as cooking, sewing, gardening, and making handicrafts. These activities aim to train students in managing time, working together in teams, and making wise decisions. Apart from that, through extracurricular activities such as art performances, sports and social activities, students are also taught to develop social

and leadership skills. All of these activities are designed to enrich the students' experience and prepare them to become individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and socially tough.

Furthermore, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school also provides various workshops and seminars that present practitioners from various fields, such as entrepreneurship, information technology, and financial management. This aims to open students' insight into various career and business opportunities that they can develop after graduating. Through this workshop, students are taught to not only be job seekers, but also job creators, by utilizing the skills and knowledge they have acquired while at the Islamic boarding school. Apart from that, this Islamic boarding school also integrates religious activities as part of developing life skills. Activities such as recitation, dhikr, and collective meditation are a means of increasing students' piety and spirituality. This is very important, because complete life skills not only involve technical and social abilities, but also deep spiritual values. With a strong foundation of faith, students are expected to be able to face various life challenges with patience, trust, and hope.⁶

With this comprehensive approach, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding

school not only forms students who are academically superior, but also have strong character, are competitive, and are ready to make a positive contribution to society. It is hoped that the success of this life skills program will give birth to a generation of students who are not only intelligent, but also have noble character, are independent, and are ready to face the world with all its dynamics. The Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school is committed to continuing to develop and improve its programs so that every student can reach their best potential and become people who are beneficial to the religion, nation, and state.⁷

Most of the students who register at the Raudlatul Ulum I Islamic boarding school come from various backgrounds, cultures, and regions. Even though they have different backgrounds, the goals and destiny of the struggle remain the same. Because of their different backgrounds, cultures and regions, the administrators of the Raudlatul Ulum I Islamic boarding school tried to unite them. Apart from providing religious materials, the administrators provide them with life skills teaching. This teaching not only has a good impact on individual students in honing their skills to face more real life, apart from that, this teaching also forms attitudes of togetherness, responsibility, working in teams and forms discipline in students. This

is very important for the survival of the students after *their studies* and increasing the potential of the students themselves.⁸

The results of observations at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School as an Islamic educational institution are that it seeks to open a global discourse about the problems that arise among students after graduating from the Islamic boarding school, such as students not knowing what to do, making it possible for other people to assume that students are incapable. solve their life problems. So the role of administrators in Islamic boarding schools is to improve life skills so as to increase the potential of their students in facing and solving challenges that may be faced in the future. There is a need to perfect the life skills of students in Islamic boarding schools by real-world demands, ensuring that these institutions do not only focus on religious education but also care about developing skills and improving the economy. Therefore, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School integrates educational patterns through various exercises and independent living practices that are embedded in the daily lives of the students, resulting in the acquisition of life skills. Activities such as muhadhoroh and extracurricular activities become a place for learning independence and various skills. The aim is to produce graduates who are

not only proficient in religious knowledge but also proficient in various practical skills.⁹

The role of Islamic boarding school administrators as guides and facilitators in developing students' life skills is crucial. However, there are still limitations in understanding the actual role of Islamic boarding school administrators in improving the life skills of students, as well as what factors influence the effectiveness of this role. Therefore, this research aims to explore and analyze the role of Islamic boarding school administrators in improving the life skills of students through a case study at Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School. Thus, the results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of more effective Islamic boarding school education strategies and programs. in forming students who are comprehensive and ready to face various aspects of life.

Method

This research includes field research, which is carried out methodically by collecting data from the real world. Data collection methods used include observation, interviews and documentation. This research uses direct data obtained through interviews and indirect data sourced from notes, archives, photos of events, and other additional information. The data analysis process involves several stages: (1) collecting data, (2) presenting it in a meaningful

way, and finally, (3) interpreting the findings to conclude. The informants or sources in this research were the administrators of the Raudlatul Ulum 1 women's boarding school, activity supervisors, and several female students. The research location was carried out at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Putri Gandanglegi Islamic Boarding School in Malang.¹⁰

Results and Discussion

Research findings regarding initiatives carried out by Islamic boarding school administrators to improve the life skills of Female students reveal that these institutions instill deep faith and devotion to Allah, prioritize noble morals, and develop students' skills, knowledge, and competencies. The aim is to produce experts in Islamic knowledge and Muslims who are skilled at contributing to the Islamic way of life in society. Efforts to improve *the life skills* of students in Islamic boarding schools involve perfecting, focusing and guiding them towards becoming a much better person. This includes the development of academic life skills, also known as intellectual skills or scientific thinking capacity, and personal life skills that are important for self-awareness, including positive thinking, gratitude, self-confidence, responsibility, and being part of community life. Social life skills include communication abilities such as showing empathy and offering help to others. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, these skills are obtained by students through extracurricular activities at Islamic boarding schools such as Raudlatul Ulum 1 which is a forum for students to explore and develop their interests and

talents. Examples of these activities include leadership education, recitation, learning Arabic and English, and making handicrafts.

Life Skills are very important to direct life towards a better life. In Islamic boarding schools, students carry out activities aimed at increasing independence, such as muhadhoroh and extracurricular activities. These activities are carried out by students under the supervision of teachers or more experienced students. The benefits of *muhadhorob* and extracurricular involvement include fostering a sense of responsibility and fostering enthusiasm among students. It has been explained that muhadhoroh activities provide benefits, especially in the field of independent living skills, and these activities are not only intended for female students but are also attended by male students. Initially, they are instructed by trained administrators. The output of muhadhoroh activities can be felt by the students themselves, including *public speaking*, storytelling, dancing, and drama activities, which were developed as a means to hone the students' speech skills and talents. Apart from that, this activity can be extended to the local community, thereby further improving the social life skills or enthusiasm of students as a group, teaching them to not only focus on personal interests but also care about the community around them.

In addition to these initiatives, Islamic boarding schools organize Ubudiyah activities related to the development of life skills which aim to foster a sense of responsibility, self-confidence and initiative. These three characteristics are very important for independence in various activities, including reciting the Koran, cleaning duties, and managing the students' rooms. These activities can increase self-confidence, instill responsibility, and encourage proactive behavior, thus making the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School an excellent environment for developing independent living skills. The development of these skills is further supported by formal and informal education which is also a key factor in improving academic life skills, thus making Islamic boarding schools in great demand.

Researchers noted that the Raudlatul Ulum I Islamic boarding school experienced an increase in the number of female students every year. *Life skills* activities at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School have the potential to shape the future of students in society. On special occasions such as Eid al- Adha, National Santri Day, Independence Day, and school anniversaries, students participate actively, showing special enthusiasm for the performing arts. This enthusiasm attracts the interest of outsiders who are not familiar

with Islamic boarding schools, thus encouraging them to consider enrolling their children in institutions such as Raudlatul Ulum 1. Developing independent living skills is a priority in every Islamic boarding school, because it is important for students to learn independence. Parents who send their children to these schools often do so with the hope that they will become independent and gain a deep understanding of religious knowledge. Islamic boarding schools aspire to continue to foster activities that build independent living skills, creating opportunities for female graduates to have significant benefits that will be useful for them in making contributions to their country and religion in the future.

Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school continues to strive to improve the quality of education and training for female students through various activities that hone *life skills*. These activities not only focus on academic and religious aspects, but also include the development of practical skills that are beneficial for the daily lives and future of the students. Every year, the increase in the number of female students in Islamic boarding schools shows that the community has confidence in the quality of the education provided. The life skills activities held at this Islamic boarding school, such as cooking, sewing, handicraft skills, as well as communication and

leadership skills, are important provisions for the students to play an active role in society. Santri participation in various events such as Eid al-Adha, National Santri Day, Independence Day, and Islamic boarding school birthdays, not only improves their skills but also builds a sense of self confidence and independence. Active involvement in these events shows how the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school is able to produce a generation that is independent, broad-minded and has good social skills.

The independence taught at Islamic boarding schools is one of the main reasons parents choose to send their children here. With holistic education, students not only gain in-depth religious knowledge, but also life skills that make them better prepared to face future challenges. This is in line with the hopes of parents who want their children to grow into individuals who are independent, responsible, and have sufficient provisions to contribute positively to society. Furthermore, graduates of the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school are expected to be able to bring positive change to their environment. With the skills and knowledge they have acquired, female students can become agents of change who help build a better society. These advantages make them no longer looked down upon, but rather as valuable assets for the nation

and religion. Thus, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school continues to be committed to improving the quality of education and training provided to its students. Through targeted and sustainable programs, this Islamic boarding school will continue to produce a generation that is independent, skilled and ready to contribute to society, the country and religion. The hope is that graduates of the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school will not only be successful in the academic and spiritual world, but also have life skills that will make them superior and useful in the future.

In 2024, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school will continue to experience significant growth in terms of the number of students and the quality of education offered. The number of female students is increasing, reflecting the high level of public trust in this Islamic boarding school. This encourages Islamic boarding schools to continue to innovate and improve existing programs, to ensure that every student gets the best education and in accordance with the needs of the times.¹¹

To strengthen the life skills development program, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school has added various new activities that are more varied and relevant to current developments. Activities such as digital marketing training,

entrepreneurial skills, and soft skills development such as time management and leadership are part of the additional curriculum given to Santri. 12 With this activity, the students are expected to be able to develop their potential more optimally and be ready to compete in the world of work. Apart from that, Islamic boarding schools also collaborate with various external institutions and organizations to provide training and workshops for students. This collaboration covers areas such as information technology, business, health and the environment. Through these collaborative programs, students get the opportunity to learn from experts and practitioners in various fields, so that their insight and skills become broader and deeper.

To commemorate major holidays such as Eid al-Adha, National Santri Day, Independence Day, and Islamic boarding school birthdays, various additional activities are also held. 2024 will be a year full of activities involving the active participation of students, such as skills competitions, handicraft product exhibitions, motivational seminars and MSME bazaars. These activities not only improve the students' skills and self-confidence but also strengthen the relationship between the Islamic boarding school and the surrounding community. One of the latest

innovations is the introduction of a student exchange program with other Islamic boarding schools in various regions. This program provides an opportunity for students to experience learning in a different environment, exchange ideas, and expand their network of friends. It is hoped that this experience can open students' insight into cultural diversity and strengthen the sense of unity among Muslims.

In the academic field, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school continues to improve the quality of teaching by adopting modern learning methods that are interactive and fun. Technology is also utilized optimally, with the introduction of online learning platforms that enable students to study anywhere and at any time. The use of this technology not only facilitates the teaching and learning process, but also prepares students to face the increasingly advanced digital era. With various efforts and innovations, the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school in 2024 is expected to be able to produce graduates who are not only academically and spiritually intelligent but also have adequate life skills. Graduates of this Islamic boarding school are expected to be able to become individuals who are independent, broad-minded, and ready to contribute positively to society, the country, and religion. They will become agents of change who bring

benefits and goodness wherever they are, making the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic boarding school a reliable place to form a generation of excellence and character.

Based on observations, the students' interest in the programs offered can be seen from the high motivation and enthusiasm of the students in implementing the programs organized by the Islamic boarding school. This is also supported by the statement of one of the female Islamic boarding school students who took part in the life skills program. Regarding this, Habibah said that as a student, taking part in life skills activities was to fulfill his obligations and at the same time to develop his future potential.

The involvement of students at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School can have a significant impact on improving their life skills. Without interest, students may not participate in activities and even ignore initiatives designed to guide their development. Efforts to develop independent living skills among students are very important. Affordable education costs also play a role in supporting life skills activities. At the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School, affordable education costs attract many people to enroll their children, because the costs are quite cheap but the quality of education remains high. This

combination makes Raudlatul Ulum 1 a favorite choice for many people.

Conclusion

From the discussion and analysis of the data above, it can be seen that the instillation of educational values in Islamic boarding schools is carried out through muhadhoroh and extracurricular activities. This educational approach was successfully implemented by the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School to improve *the life skills* of its students. The education system is comprehensive, covering key actors, hardware facilities and software. Apart from that, various programs were developed to strengthen the education system at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School, which aims to improve the life skills of students. These programs include personal skills such as performing the five daily prayers in congregation, social skills such as organizational management and serving as head of the Raudlatul Ulum 1 santri, academic skills including adab and muhadharah education, as well as vocational skills through extracurricular activities such as education. leadership education, recitation, learning Arabic and English, and making handicrafts.

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