



TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS AS A CHARACTER-FORMING INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools have made many positive contributions to the development of the Indonesian nation. However, Islamic boarding schools are still often identified with community movements that have not been able to show good performance and achievements. There is a stigmatic impression when referring to Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), what is depicted is that education is less advanced and very slow in accepting reform ideas. Currently, Islamic boarding school has undergone changes that break the stigma and these previous assumptions. Islamic boarding school is currently transforming. The transformation is in the form of management transformation and curriculum transformation. Management transformation in the form of transformation on aspects of organizational management, and administrative management of financial management from charismatic to rationalistic leadership styles. Curriculum transformation in the form of providing subjects that are not only Islamic religious subjects, but increased to general subjects (general insight, skills, sports, and language). In addition, if previously Islamic boarding school was synonymous with traditional learning that was local in nature, now the Islamic boarding school has developed and even implemented an education pattern at the international level.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions in general are community-based education in various forms, types, and levels, for example, Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, or similar forms.

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These educational institutions were formed, fostered, and developed by the community. Therefore, in general, it can be said that the owner of an Islamic educational institution in the form of an Islamic boarding school is the community.

Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) is a big theme with content that is full of problem topics and becomes a critical assessment. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools are considered to have a comparative advantage because they are believed to be able to deliver students (*santri*) in a more comprehensive domain, covering intellectual, moral-spiritual, and modern scientific expertise as well. But on the other hand, Islamic boarding schools as a social movement have not been able to show good performance and achievements. There is a stigmatic impression when mentioning Islamic boarding schools, what is depicted is education that is less advanced and very slow to accept renewal ideas (Yusuf, et al., 2006).

Many efforts have been made to improve the quality of Islamic boarding schools, both in terms of human resource weaknesses and curriculum weaknesses. Referring to laws and regulations, Islamic boarding schools (madrasas) are an integral part of the national education system. This is stated in article 30 of Law number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. This inauguration serves as justification that the image of Islamic boarding schools as 'second class' educational institutions can be torn down. Islamic boarding schools can organize education with a quality that is not inferior to other educational institutions. To be qualified, of course, must be accompanied by quality improvement from various aspects.

In the last few decades, many ideas have surfaced in efforts to improve the image of Islamic boarding schools while maximizing their functions and roles. In general, these ideas revolve around teaching and learning methodologies, the character of thought, as well as the traditions and culture of the Islamic boarding school. Ideas within this scope are framed in various ways, including those that convince Islamic boarding schools to carry out methodological synergies with universities. Some emphasize that Islamic boarding school reform the curriculum by incorporating several general subjects as well as applying scientific experiments to the tradition of teaching and learning in Islamic boarding schools so that the output of Islamic boarding schools can compete with general education. This idea is based on the idea that there is no dichotomy between religious knowledge and general science, all knowledge is Islamic knowledge.

Observing the reality that is currently developing in several cities, such as in Malang for example, several Islamic boarding schools have management trends that are developing in a significant direction. Several Islamic boarding schools have experienced a metamorphosis in the management of providing education in a more modern direction following developments in the world of education and demands for changes in social life globally along with the development of science and technology. These changes can be seen in the management of the resources owned and the curriculum implemented. This is different from the Islamic boarding school that has developed so far which has traditionally paid little attention to administrative management issues and the orientation of the curriculum is more toward religious learning materials, especially studies of classic books.

In this paper, the focus of the discussion will be focused on the development of the latest Islamic boarding schools which have different characteristics from traditional Islamic boarding schools. Discussions about traditional Islamic boarding schools have been widely discussed and reviewed in various writings, while the phenomenon of the emergence of modern Islamic boarding schools has not been widely discussed. The purpose of raising this topic is to complete the treasury of understanding Islamic boarding schools and their development in responding to the demands of the times.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

General Pattern of Islamic Boarding School

Islamic boarding schools are classified as the oldest educational institutions in the history of education in Indonesia. Related to its emergence, there are at least two opinions that have developed on this matter. First, Islamic boarding schools are said to have originated from tarekat studies along with the propagation of Islam in Indonesia, which has been going on since the fifteenth century. In tarekat activities, the practice of remembrance and wirid is the main menu in da'wah, which is often interspersed with conveying religious advice. It is from this kind of study that the Islamic boarding school institution establishes its existence. The second opinion states that the emergence of Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated from the acculturation of Islamic culture with the patapan (hermitage) tradition which first developed in the Buddhist-Hindu era. This assumption is based on the fact that in Islamic countries there are generally no educational institutions such as Islamic

380 | ISCE : Journal of Innovative Studies on Character and

boarding schools. Conversely, in countries that adhere to Hindu Buddhism such as India, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Thailand, you can find Islamic boarding school-style educational institutions that use the mandala system, where teachers and students live in one place during the teaching and learning process (Dahuri, 2015).

In general, based on the characteristics that have developed so far, Islamic boarding schools are divided into two, namely salaf and modern. The term salaf Islamic boarding school society contains two different meanings. First, salaf Islamic boarding schools are interpreted as traditional Islamic boarding schools that still maintain classic books and appreciate the local culture. Second, salaf Islamic boarding schools are interpreted as Islamic boarding schools which consistently follow the teachings of the ulama of the generation of companions, tabi'in, tabi'at tabi'in which tend towards the normative interpretation of texts and do not/lack appreciation for local culture, because all cultures must be following the era of the salafush-sholih, namely companions, tabi'in, tabi'at tabi'in (Ramayulis, 2012).

Unlike the salaf Islamic boarding school, modern Islamic boarding schools are Islamic boarding schools that have abandoned the salaf tradition altogether. The teaching of classical Islamic books was not held. Although in modern Islamic boarding schools Arabic is still taught, the aim of teaching Arabic is not to study classical books, but to use it for practical purposes, for example for daily communication. The Gontor Ponorogo Islamic Boarding School, for example, although it places great emphasis on knowledge of Arabic and English, has long abandoned teaching classical Islamic books. Islamic boarding schools with urban characteristics such as those that have appeared in Malang in recent years, such as Al Izzah International Islamic Boarding School, East Java, and Tazdkia International Islamic Boarding School, East Java. The students no longer prioritized reciting the yellow books.

In terms of educational activities developed, Islamic boarding schools can be classified into the following three types. First, traditional Islamic boarding schools, namely Islamic boarding schools only organize book recitation with the sorogan, bandongan, and wetonan systems. Second, semi-modern Islamic boarding schools, namely Islamic boarding schools organize mixed education between traditional book recitation systems and formal madrasas and adopt the government curriculum. Third, modern Islamic boarding schools, namely Islamic boarding schools organize a mixed pattern between the traditional book recitation system,

the madrasa system, and the public school system by adopting the curriculum government (Ministry of Religion and Ministry of Education and Culture) and supplemented with the local content curriculum.

Islamic boarding schools are a form of traditional Islamic education because they are educational institutions that uphold and preserve tradition, culture, and the order of Islamic life in the process of educating their students (Dhofier, 2011). Therefore, according to Dhofier (2011), Islamic boarding schools have different educational patterns from schools and madrasas. The general pattern of traditional Islamic education (Islamic boarding schools) is as follows: (1) there is an intimate relationship between the kiai and the santri, (2) the tradition of submission and obedience of a santri to the kiai, (3) a simple lifestyle (zuhud), (4) independence or independence, (5) the development of a climate and tradition of helping each other and an atmosphere of brotherhood, (6) strict discipline, (7) the courage to suffer to achieve goals, and (8) life with a high level of religiosity

The pattern of education in this Islamic boarding school is very distinctive and makes it different from other educational institutions. In this case, the pattern of education in Islamic boarding schools emphasizes the ethics and simple life of the students. However, some educational patterns in Islamic boarding schools have begun to be abandoned, for example, a simple lifestyle. This can be seen from the number of Islamic boarding schools which are classified as luxurious and are also followed by the luxurious life of the students. Some modern Islamic boarding schools provide luxurious facilities for their students, for example, a bedroom that only accommodates 4 students – while in traditional Islamic boarding schools, one bedroom can accommodate up to 20 students; as well as the existence of laundry facilities for students. On the other hand, this lavish lifestyle does not only exist among the santri, but also among caretakers of Islamic boarding schools or kiai. Nowadays, it is not uncommon to find Islamic boarding school administrators or kiai who have luxurious living facilities.

Educational Transformation in Islamic Boarding Schools

Education Management Transformation

Education in Islamic boarding schools, especially in traditional Islamic boarding schools, is closely related to a kiai figure. Kiai in Islamic boarding schools figures as central, authoritative, and the center of all policy and change (Bustami,

2009). The strength of the kiai figure in traditional Islamic boarding school education is related to two things. First, the kiai is considered a charismatic figure so the leadership in the Islamic boarding school is centralized to the kiai. Moreover, most Islamic boarding schools do not have specific administrative work units so leadership is centered on certain figures. Second, so far, most Islamic boarding schools are owned by individuals or families, not organizations, so Islamic boarding school owners can have authority as owners and caretakers of Islamic boarding schools. Because of that, the descendants of the Islamic boarding school owners usually also have special rights or positions in the Islamic boarding school. Society often perceives the kiai as someone who has special skills or abilities so that both the kiai, his wife, Therefore, according to Bustami (2009: 83), the Islamic boarding school tradition emphasizes the importance of lineage (heredity) which is assertive, namely the privileges possessed by a person obtained from his parents.

Even though the kiai sometimes do not have a certain formal academic degree, the community has confidence in the kiai's mastery of religious knowledge. Usually, the public will see the competency of the kiai caring for the Islamic boarding school from the number of books/books he has studied and from which scholars he has studied standard books by classical scholars must be read and have been determined by the kiai caring for the Islamic boarding school (Bustami, 2009:89). In addition, the kiai's fame is determined by spiritual strength and the ability to give blessings related to supernatural powers.

In line with the implementation of formal education, several Islamic boarding schools are experiencing development and transformation in the aspects of organizational management, administrative management of financial management. This development began with a change in the leadership style of the Islamic boarding school from charismatic to rationalistic, from paternalistic authoritarian to participative diplomatic.

Several Islamic boarding schools have formed daily governing bodies as umbrella institutions that specifically manage and handle Islamic boarding school activities, such as formal education, diniyah, recitation (ta'lim assemblies), lodging issues (student dormitories), housekeeping, and public relations. In this type of Islamic boarding school, the division of labor between units has been going well even though the kiai still have a strong influence.

Educational Curriculum Transformation

The lessons given at the Islamic boarding school are part of the curriculum which revolves around religious knowledge and all its branches, especially knowledge related to (a) Arabic (al-sharaf, al-nahwu, and 'ilm' tools); (b) Shari'a ('ilm fiqh, from those concerning matters of worship to matters of muamalah), (c) the Qur'an and its interpretations, (d) the science of hadith and mustalah al-hadith, and (e) 'ilm al-kalam and al- tauhid. Apart from these sciences, there are also lessons on mantiq (logic), tasawuf, and dates.

The subjects given in Islamic boarding schools are subjects that originate from classical books. In traditional Islamic boarding schools, general subjects are not taught or taught little. Education in traditional Islamic boarding schools is also not concerned with diplomas, but what is most important is the experience of the religious sciences that they expect from studying through these classic books.

Concerning the teaching and learning process in Islamic boarding schools, learning is carried out classically. Usually, there is an ustadz/kiai who provides learning materials and students listen. The management of santri is divided into several levels of education, starting from the level of ibtidaiyah (beginner), tsanawiyah (intermediate), and 'aliyah (advanced). The methods used are lectures, memorization, and deliberations.

Currently, education in Islamic boarding schools has changed. Not infrequently education in Islamic boarding schools has completed its subject matter with general subjects and added various kinds of education, such as skills, sports, arts, and organizational education. The addition of this material is given to provide provisions to the students after the students graduate from the Islamic boarding school. In addition, the additional subject matter is also provided with the aim that students can continue their education to a higher level. Because of these additions, many Islamic boarding schools are also equipped with formal educational institutions, for example, junior high school, high school, vocational school, and even tertiary institutions.

Another form of educational development in Islamic boarding schools is the emergence of international standard schools that integrate the education model in Islamic boarding schools with formal education. One of them is Tursina (Tazkia International Boarding School). Schools in this Islamic boarding school consist of junior high and high school levels. In addition to public schools, students also attend

education at their Islamic boarding school. However, the material studied is not only from classical books but also from sources studied in public schools. Students not only learn Islamic religious materials but also learn general materials. This educational institution also uses the international curriculum (Cambridge). The languages of instruction at this educational institution are Indonesian, Arabic, and English.

Education in Islamic Boarding Schools As A Model of Character Education

Since 2500 years ago, Socrates has said that the most basic purpose of education is to make someone good and smart (Ilyas, 2007). Not only that, in the history of Islamic education, the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who was the last prophet of Muslims, was also sent to perfect human character. Several other educational figures also called for the main purpose of education to form human beings with character and personality. Martin Luther King Jr. also agreed with this by saying that "intelligence plus character, that is the true aim of education." From this, it can be seen that character building is indeed a major issue in the development of education.

Based on the views of the figures above, it can be concluded that the main goal of education is to shape students to become better human beings in terms of attitude, morals, knowledge, and insight. All these things can be seen in the character of students. Moreover, if you examine the opinions of the figures above, the main purpose of education is essential to shape the character of students. The main goal of education is universal and agreed upon by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. This means that wherever education is carried out and with any method, the goal of education remains one: to shape the character of students.

Character is an attitude that can be seen or marked by behavior, speech, and others. The word character itself comes from the Greek word *charassein* which means 'to carve to form a pattern' (Megawagi, 2006). In Arabic, the word character is similar in meaning to noble character, namely character or habit of doing good things. Thus, character education can be interpreted as education that in its application seeks to form a pattern of behavior, habits, attitudes, and good speech that can be applied in everyday life. Furthermore, character education can be interpreted as a process of in-depth teaching of individual internal motivation that focuses on forming thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Liunardi, et al., 2008).

In character education, character formation lasts a lifetime. The earlier the formation is done, the better. This is due to increasing age, the character of a person is increasingly difficult to change. The formation of character from an early age can also be used as a determinant of one's success because one's success in life is not only determined by the brain, but also by the skills one has. This is evident from a study of successful people in various fields where they generally have 13 factors for success and 10 of them are related to character or character and only three things are related to brain abilities. The characteristics needed are characteristics such as being hardworking, never giving up, honest, trustworthy, tolerant, and able to work together (Tabloid Nakita, 2007).

Character education is a process of in-depth teaching of individual internal motivation that focuses on forming thoughts, feelings, and behavior. This means that educational institutions not only educate students to master the subject matter, but also pay attention to the formation of student character as an important thing to do for their success in life. Character education will encourage the formation of strong characters, mentally and morally strong, independent, tenacious (resilient), with adequate knowledge and skills, and able to face global competition (Zamhuri in Liunardi, et al, 2008).

In forming these characters, Islamic boarding schools have a large enough contribution. Moreover, the santri live 24 hours a period for many years in the Islamic boarding school so indirectly the formation of the personality of the santri is delegated to the Islamic boarding school. For this reason, Islamic boarding schools have a big contribution to the formation of the character of the students.

For Islamic boarding schools, there are at least five methods applied in shaping the character of students, namely (1) exemplary (uswah hasanah), (2) training and habituation (tadrib), (3) taking lessons (ibrah), and (4) advice (mauidzah).

Exemplary

Psychologically, humans need exemplary to develop their traits and potential. Therefore, to form good character, exemplary behavior is needed by giving concrete examples of good deeds to students.

In Islamic boarding schools, giving exemplary examples is very emphasized. The leadership of the Islamic boarding school, kiai or ustaz must always set a good

example for the santri, whether in ritual worship, daily life, science, or anything else.

Exercise and Habituation

Character is behavior that is obtained from continuous and continuous training. Therefore, to form good character in students, training and habituation are needed which is carried out by providing exercises on later norms and getting students used to doing so. In education at Islamic boarding schools, this method will usually be applied to religious services, such as congregational prayers, politeness to leaders and ustaz, and politeness to seniors, peers, and juniors. Exercise and habituation are carried out to form the independence of students to make and carry out decisions freely.

Training and habituation can also be seen from the habits of the students which are routine in nature and show a tendency that the students are capable and courageous in making and implementing decisions independently, for example, financial management, shopping planning, routine activity planning, and so on. This cannot be separated from the lives of those who do not live with their parents and the demands of the Islamic boarding school which wants their students to live independently. Therefore, if the santri routine is related to the independence of the santri, it is likely that the santri will have a high level of independence.

Taking Lessons (Ibrah)

The word ibrah can simply be interpreted as 'contemplating and thinking about and in a general sense, it is usually interpreted as 'taking lessons from every event. Ibrah with a psychic condition that conveys humans to know the essence of a matter that is witnessed, noticed, induced, weighed, measured, and decided rationally so that the conclusions can influence the heart to submit to it, then encourage it to behave accordingly. Ibrah can be done through exemplary stories, natural phenomena, as well as events that occurred, both in the past and present.

Advice (Mau'idzah)

The advice can be in the form of (a) a description of the goodness and truth that must be done by a person, in this case, the santri, for example regarding manners, must be in the congregation or diligent in charity; (b) motivation in doing good; and (c) warnings about sins or dangers that will arise from prohibitions for

oneself and others. In Islamic boarding schools, advice is often used by leaders or ustadz to shape the character of the students.

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