Life skills education management of Muslimah Islamic Boarding School in Sleman Yogyakarta during COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract---Pondok Pesantren’ or Islamic boarding schools are one form of the development of the education system in Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools have been available for a long time and become an indigenous culture in Indonesia. The Covid-19 pandemic has presented new challenges for Islamic boarding schools to adjust to increasingly difficult environmental changes. Islamic Boarding School do not only provide students with religious studies but also transform into modern organizations by teaching modern life skills education. This study focuses on the management of life skills education in Islamic boarding schools for girls in Sleman Yogyakarta, which is one of the Islamic boarding schools based on life skills education. The study used the qualitative method. The sample was determined using the purposive sampling technique. This study used primary data obtained from observation and interviews. Data were analyzed in three stages, namely 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, and 3) conclusion. It used triangulation techniques for checking the data validity. The results of the study showed that the planning of an organization required written records to fulfill the objectives in which the written records can be a reference in carrying out management functions. The planning was in accordance with the strategic foundation of the organization. Learning activities were not tied to certain schedules like schools or official educational institutions. The learning method used demonstration followed by direct practice in accordance with the expertise by paying attention to health protocols.

Keywords---planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, life skill education, pandemic COVID-19.
Introduction

_Pondok pesantren_ or Islamic boarding schools are a form of the natural development process of the national education system (Muhlas & Rahayu, 2019; Wahidah, 2022). As part of a national educational institution, Islamic boarding schools have emerged for decades or even hundreds of years and are allegedly _indigenous_ or authentic institutions in Indonesia (Madjid, 1997; Zakaria, 2010; Maulida, 2017; Isbah, 2020). Life in the cottage becomes very vulnerable to the transmission of Covid-19 cases considering the large number of students in one location. If one person suffers from Covid-19, the transmission will be very fast (Hendayana, 2021). Thousands of islamic boarding school students in Jogja were identified as being exposed to covid-19 quickly. Jabali (2000) mentions that Islamic boarding schools are one of the symbols of Indonesia’s educational culture. Besides, some Islamic boarding schools do not use the traditional system anymore (Wahidah, 2015), whereas, in the traditional system, everything dealing with Islamic boarding schools is handled by one person (Kiyai). Now, it has developed into a relatively modern organizational management in the distribution of authority and policies. _Kyiai_ does not only play role in the Islamic boarding school but also leads the phenomena in society (Wahidah, 2022). Many Islamic boarding schools already have a clear legal entity status (Komara, 2016; Anggara & Faradisi, 2020). This means that the management of Islamic boarding schools has started to consider the managerial patterns covering Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling enabling them to synergize and collaborate with various parties (Sahid et al., 2021).

The covid-19 pandemic is a special challenge for the management of learning activities in Islamic boarding schools (Habibi et al., 2021; Dalimunthe et al., 2021). The role of Islamic boarding schools in facing changes in the surrounding environment will be difficult. To carry out a good educational program to produce graduates who are independent and able to compete, Islamic boarding schools are expected to adjust the educational systems and programs. Abidin (2017) states that in the globalization era and the development of science and technology (IPTEK), Islamic boarding schools are required to further improve their quality in the fields of religion, intellectuals, and life skills so that the existence of Islamic boarding schools remains solid. Putra (2017) explains that Islamic boarding schools have two forms of empowerment programs, namely spiritual and life skills, with three stages of implementation the provision of materials, training, and implementation. Life skills education is education that provides students with basic skills and training carried out in accordance with applicable standards including the values of social life so that the students are capable, independent, and skilled in maintaining their future life and development (Marwiyah, 2012).

The implementation of life skills education in an educational institution will produce output for students that have high competitiveness (Suharmoko, 2018). Equipped with life skills, students will be more productive and able to compete in the world of work (Beck et al., 2012; Pierce et al, 2019). Islamic boarding school for girls is one of the Islamic boarding schools that has a life skill education and becomes a choice for parents to educate their children to be pious, useful, and dignified (Umami & Amrulloh, 2017). Women have different career opportunities and roles that require them to be practical and efficient in their daily lives.
Islamic boarding schools aim to guide students to have religious knowledge and Islamic da’wah ability as well as life skills to be able to compete in the business and industrial world (DUDI) so that they can adapt to the development of current trends. Based on the results of previous studies and phenomena in the Islamic boarding schools for girls in Sleman Yogyakarta, this study aims to analyze the management of life skills education in Islamic boarding schools in Sleman Yogyakarta. This study needs to be done due to the urgency of managing life skills education management which has not been considered well by Islamic boarding schools in Yogyakarta. This study is interesting as it can provide a life skills education model that can be implemented by every Islamic boarding school.

**Literature Review**

**Management**

Griffin (2016) defines management as a science that is needed by a manager in managing the company to achieve the predetermined goals. Many experts have defined the meaning and functions of management from the very simple to the most complex. One of the most well-known management functions is the P-O-A-C (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) model. Planning is an activity that determines the goals that will achieve, and ways in using facilities to achieve the goals. Organizing is the management and arrangement of all available resources in the organization, both human resources and material resources. Actuating is an activity to move and control all organizational resources in an effort to achieve goals. Control or supervision is something that needs to be done so that organizational members can work well together and achieve the predetermined target and goals (Terry, 2010).

**Life Skills Education**

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, particularly Chapter VI Article 26 (3) emphasizes the Pathways, Levels, and Types of Education in the fifth section of Non-formal Education: (3) Non-formal education comprises life-skills education, early childhood education, youth education, women empowerment education, literacy education, vocational training and internship, equivalency program, and other kinds of education aimed at developing learners’ ability. This means that life skills education is education that provides personal skills, social skills, intellectual skills, and vocational skills to work or run an independent business. In Al-Qur’an surah Annisa verse 9 states, "And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice." meaning that weak offspring can refer to physical, mental, social, economic, scientific, spiritual weakness and others that cause them to be unable to carry out their functions both as caliphs and as His creatures who must worship Allah. Allah advised the older generation not to let the next generation who will continue the struggle be the helpless generation, who cannot carry out their functions and responsibilities. This indicates that education is a must for everyone. Efforts to regenerate successors lie on the shoulders of the old generations, parents, and the community to teach life skills.
education to equip the young generation in carrying out responsibilities in the future (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2020).

The definition of life skills is broader than vocational skills or work skills. Unemployed people like housewives or retirees continue to practice life skills. Fadjar (2003) defines life skills as skills to work in addition to skills for the academic field. Life skills, namely the ability to deal with life’s problems, then proactively and creatively seek and find solutions to overcome them. Bently (2000) states that it is necessary to apply the principle of broad-based education which is not only oriented to the academic or vocational field, but also learning how to learn, learning how to unlearn, not only learning theory, and practicing them to solve daily life problems. Education integrates the four pillars of education as proposed by UNESCO, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. Anwar (2004) proposes the characteristics of life skills education as follows:

1. A process of identifying learning needs.
2. A process of awareness to learn together.
3. A harmony of learning activities to develop themselves, learn, work, be independent, and work together.
4. A process of mastering personal, social, vocational, academic, managerial, and entrepreneurial skills.
5. A process of providing experience in doing the job correctly and producing quality products.
6. A process of mutual learning interaction from experts
7. A competent assessment process.
8. A process of technical assistance to work or establish a joint business.

According to the Board-Based Education Team, life skills are grouped into 5 categories of know yourself skills, think rationally skills, social skills, academic skills, and vocational skills. Skills that are often taught to develop and form life skills are vocational skills. The Board-Based Education Team further explains that vocational skills are related to certain fields of work in the community (Sukmara, 2007). Marwiyah (2012) defines life skill education as the minimum basis of efforts to maintain human life and carry out human nature in carrying out its orientation as humans towards three relationships 1) Human relations with the Creator, namely Allah (Hablum Minallah), 2) Relationships with fellow human beings (Hablum Minannas), and 3) Relationships with the surrounding nature which consists of various elements of life, such as plants, animals and natural forces (Hablum Minal Alam). Therefore, life skill education is a must for everyone (Hidayatulloah, 2018).

**Method**

This qualitative study used a descriptive qualitative analysis which aims to reveal facts, phenomena, and circumstances at the time of the study (Creswell et al., 2006). This study used a phenomenological approach, which is a qualitative study rooted in philosophers and psychology and focuses on the experience of human life (sociology). Phenomenology is a research strategy in which researchers identify the nature of human experience about a particular phenomenon. The
A phenomenological approach is a research method whose procedures require researchers to examine some subjects by engaging directly for a long time to develop patterns and relationships of meaning that exist in the field (Samsu, 2017).

The object of the study was one of the Islamic boarding schools in Sleman Yogyakarta. Data collection was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. Determination of informants in this study used the purposive sampling technique based on some criteria of 1) the person who knows the early history of the founding of the Islamic boarding school, 2) the person who participates in managing the management of life skills education in the boarding school, and 3) the person who has various information regarding data needed in this study. Based on these criteria, the resource persons in this study were 3 people consisting of 2 founders and 1 educator of the Islamic boarding school. The study used primary data obtained from observations and interviews (Usman & Akbar, 2006). The observation used the participatory observation technique in which the researcher was involved with the daily activities of the person being observed or used as a source of research data. In the observations, the researcher participates in doing what the participants do (Samsu, 2017). The interview used a structured interview technique where the instrument has been prepared before (Esterberg, 2002). Structured interview instruments referred to question items that represent the activities of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising the management of life skill education in Islamic boarding schools (Azizah, 2015).

Data were analyzed in three stages 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, and 3) conclusion. Obtained data were reduced for further analysis in accordance with the research objectives, namely all data obtained were simplified and transformed into short and meaningful conclusions (Moleong, 2021). The validity of the data was tested using triangulation techniques by checking data from various sources in various ways and at various times (Wiliam, 1986). Data were also checked by reconfirming the data obtained from the interviewees.

**Result and Discussion**

Data were collected by interviews using structured questions referring to Azizah (2015):

Table 1. Question Indicator

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question indicator</th>
<th>Question item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Basic concept of life skills</td>
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<td>Objectives</td>
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<td>Human resources needed</td>
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<td>Human resources involvement</td>
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<td>Development activity plan</td>
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<td>Islamic boarding school curriculum</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Division of work</td>
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<td>Division of duties and authority</td>
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Based on the results of interviews, respondent 1 stated that all school administrators are involved in planning life skills education, starting from designing the curriculum through joint meetings and asking for approval from the board and managers of Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools planned to design a more practical curriculum. The objective of life skills education is to equip students to be independent with noble values to form *akhlaqul karimah* so that they will not be awkward when playing their role in society. There were several forms of life skills education, namely agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and handicrafts. The division of duties and authority of the boarding school administrators was flexible by adapting to the existing work and not bound by time or duration of work. The Islamic boarding school teachers could learn more from their experience in the field or direct practices. Not all teachers have a background that matches the life skill taught, but they have practiced it directly for a long time so that they have become experts in that field.

Respondent 2 stated that the purpose of establishing Islamic boarding schools is to provide learning facilities for students in college who still want to learn in an Islamic boarding school. Life skills education is expected to reduce unemployment so students are equipped with skills in various fields like agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and handicrafts. All parties related to Islamic boarding schools are considered educators, even the community around can also be considered educators because learning is not only from theory but also from one's life experience. Therefore, the curriculum in life skills education is to provide direct examples to the students and how to deal with real problems in the surrounding environment. All Islamic boarding school teachers learn according to experiences in the field from direct practice. Everyone learns and evaluates continuously to be better.

Respondent 3 stated that life skills education is education that provides skills and examples to students in boarding school, and invites students to practice directly in the field. The goal is to provide independence to the students so that when they play their roles in society, they can be independent without depending on others. The parties involved in the planning of this life skills education are the managers of the boarding schools. Teachers only provide inputs that can be implemented. The teacher already has the skills and then transfers knowledge through direct practical activities. The division of work was based on the competence of educators who have the ability in that field. The implementation of education was daily but not always formally, so there are no fixed working hours. Control in life skills education was more about direct assistance and participating in the field by direct practice and providing examples.

The planning process of an organization requires written records to meet the predetermined goals (Ţîţu & Pop, 2021; Leiner & Haux, 1996; Fal, 2021). The
records are important as a reference in implementing education in Islamic boarding schools. However, they often forget this and do not record and document important things that have been done. As a result, internal and external parties of Islamic boarding schools do not get the data needed to develop the program. Moreover, the change of leadership is always marked by the delay in the development of the next Islamic boarding school. Therefore, written records are needed to support the needs and development of Islamic boarding schools so they can implement more professional managerial practices. Life skills education planning for Islamic boarding schools is in a good category with systematic curriculum preparation. The planning carried out at Islamic boarding schools is simple because there are no detailed activities that will be carried out routinely. There is no detailed schedule for each planned activity because the activities carried out are not formal which means that they are not tied to fixed timing like schools in general. The activities are there aim to train the independence of the students. The results of this study support the findings of Borchers & Enke (2021) that if good planning is made in accordance with the strategic foundation of the organization, Islamic boarding schools design curricula and activities that support students to be involved in life skills education schemes, either through the structured and unstructured curriculum.

Organizations always try to develop their human resources (Rigby & Ryan, 2018; Collings et al., 2018; Borchers & Enke, 2021). The organization of Islamic boarding schools is quite good and well-arranged. Good coordination of activities and distribution of work is a measure of organizational success (Borchers & Enke, 2021). The organization is based on the structure that has been designed. The educators work in accordance with their respective fields of expertise to make the activities run well. This is in line with Rohma et al., (2020) that a good organization shows the existence of an order and a balance of duties, authority, and responsibility. The system of division of tasks and authority is not yet formal which means that it is not tied to schedules like other schools or official educational institutions in general, but activities there are built to become a habit for students to be independent and compete with the industrial world (Beck et al., 2012; Pierce et al, 2019).

The implementation of life skills education has a different learning system from educational institutions in general (Amirudin & Muzaki, 2019). In other educational institutions, the learning methods emphasize more on lecturing, assignments, and the material focusing on the theory and concepts. Meanwhile, Islamic boarding schools use the demonstration learning method because it allows students to explore complex lessons in a way that traditional teaching methods cannot (Hamilton et al., 2021). The demonstration is followed by direct practice in accordance with the expertise education provided. Life skills education applied by Islamic boarding schools emphasizes more on practice. Students are required to play an active role in each ongoing educational process. The implementation of demonstration learning methods can be seen in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and handicraft indicating that the implementation of life skills education is in accordance with existing planning and organization. The demonstration method shows its effectiveness during the Covid-19 pandemic because with this method, students can immediately solve the cases
given but can still maintain health protocols such as maintaining distance, wearing masks and maintaining cleanliness.

Control in the management of Islamic boarding schools’ life skills education programs is carried out directly by the coordinators of each field to ensure that all activities can be carried out in accordance with the designed plan (Kurpayanidi, 2019). Thus, all activities can be evaluated and if there is an error in the implementation, it can be corrected so that the objectives can be achieved properly according to the plan. The technique used to evaluate the implementation of life skills education activities is by providing direct examples of cases and participating in the implementation of life skills education activities from the start till the end of the case. Thus, the monitoring process can be seen in detail if there are deviations.

Conclusion

Life skills education at Islamic boarding schools for girls in Sleman Yogyakarta has run well. However, some aspects need to be improved. This can be seen from the absence of the minutes of each activity carried out. Overall, the planning is in accordance with the strategic foundation of the Islamic boarding school. Islamic boarding schools have a good organizational structure and divisions that are in accordance with the curriculum. Duties and authorities have not been well documented. The process of implementing the activities has been running as expected by giving assignments to students to get directly involved in life skill activities. The method used in the learning process is case demonstration so that students will be required to solve cases in the surrounding environment with the guidance of the teacher. Control is carried out by each coordinator of each life skills education division by giving assignments, observing, giving examples, and participating in direct practice so that the control carried out is an evaluation of each action done by students in solving the given case.

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