

## **Improving the Quality of *Pesantren* through Quality Management *Santri* at the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus**

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### **Abstract**

*Improving the quality of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is strongly influenced by the quality of students (santri). Therefore, the quality management of santri must be managed properly. The purpose of this study is to determine the quality improvement of pesantren through good quality management of santri at the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus, Gebang, Purworejo. This type of research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. Sources of data were obtained from boarding school advisers, asatidz (Islamic teachers) council, and santri through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis used in this study is an interactive analysis of Miles and Huberman. The results of this study indicate that improving the quality of pesantren is carried out through improving the quality management of santri. Improved management includes placing new students at the levels according to their abilities, improving the process by providing education in the form of learning activities from elementary to Ma'had Aly, increasing results (output) by being equipped with religious abilities and skills so that graduates can compete with graduates from other educational institutions, and increasing benefits (outcomes) by providing socialization and motivation to continue their education to a higher level. In addition, there are innovations to equip graduates so that they can provide benefits for their social life.*

**Keyword:** *Quality Improvement, Pesantren's Quality, Santri Quality Management*

### **Introduction**

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have a strategic role in society, namely to produce people with a deep understanding of religion, noble character, and the skills to deal with life's problems (Muhith, 2017:14). Islamic boarding school plays a role in realizing independence and educating the nation's life (Muhakamurrohman, 2014). This type of education is in line with national education goals and is relevant to strengthen character education (Alnashr & Suroso, 2020). Besides, pesantren can keep up with the times without losing their values and character. So, it is not surprising that many people are interested in sending their children to boarding schools.

Today, there is a change in the orientation of the community in choosing Islamic boarding schools. This change can be seen from the way people choose the right pesantren for their children, namely choosing a pesantren that not only educates religious sciences but also has a formal diploma and other general skills. Thus, the quality of *santri* is not only measured by graduates who are experts in the field of religion but also have intelligence, knowledge, and skills.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that Islamic boarding schools are a sub-system of the national education system whose existence functions to educate the nation's life and aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble characters (i.e. healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent) and become a democratic and responsible citizen.

The explanation regarding the management of pesantren is contained in Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Pesantren. In article 26, the fourth section regarding pesantren in the function of education, it is stated that the quality assurance system is developed to guarantee the quality of pesantren education. The quality assurance system functions to protect the independence and uniqueness of Islamic boarding school education, realize quality education, and promote the implementation of Islamic boarding schools. The quality assurance system is directed at improving the quality and competitiveness of pesantren resources, strengthening pesantren management, and increasing support for pesantren facilities and infrastructure.

Following up on the pesantren law, the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus Gebang, Purworejo seeks to continuously improve the quality management of *santri*. As an attempt to improve the quality of students at the Pesantren Al-Iman, formal education is held in it. As more general lessons come in, not all Islamic boarding schools still maintain their salaf nuances. This is different from the Pesantren Al-Iman which already has a policy of conducting formal education from kindergarten to university level without leaving its salaf nuances. This is inseparable from the efforts made by advisers in managing and developing the boarding school they care for.

The rapid development of the era requires all areas of life to make changes, including education. To meet the needs of the community, educational institutions including Islamic boarding schools need to carry out a quality education process to

answer the challenges of the times. In carrying out the quality of the pesantren education process, a good and structured management system is needed to achieve the goals of the educational institution.

The problem is that certain pesantren still lack a well-defined management framework, and the implementation of pesantren management has been ineffective. While quality control has a significant impact on the quality of Islamic boarding schools. The implementation of good quality management will be able to keep the pesantren's existence alive. This is following *Qawaidul Fiqhiyah* "maintaining good old values, and making new, better values".

Management in Islam views that the task is a personal mandate and responsibility that must be carried out properly. The obligation to convey is stated by Allah SWT in His word in QS An-Nisa: 58 which means: "Indeed, Allah has commanded you to convey the message to those who are entitled to receive it, and when you set a law between people, you should judge it fairly..." (Depag RI, 2011:87). From the verse, it can be seen that Allah ordered to fulfill the mandate that was handed over to the experts. This includes mandates that are obligatory for humans in the form of God's rights (such as prayer, zakat, fasting, *kafarat/fine*, vows) and others. The trust in the form of the rights of some servants with other servants is a deposit that all of them will be held accountable for later on the Day of Resurrection. At the end of the verse, there is Allah's command to establish law between humans fairly.

Some pesantrens have been able to implement good quality management so that the quality of students continues to grow. Pesantren Al-Husna Samarinda Seberang carries out quality management through monthly evaluations and improving the competence of educators (Khunaifi & Hanif: 2020). Likewise, the quality management of the Pesantren Modern Gontor is managed by the Waqf Board which is fully responsible for the implementation and development of the pesantren. Mandates are given to the Board of Directors to ensure the continuity of the education and teaching process (Fadillah: 2015).

The efforts of the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus Gebang Purworejo in improving the quality of pesantren and the quality management of santri are interesting to be investigated more deeply. To obtain valid data related to the management of Islamic boarding schools in improving their quality, this research was conducted by

observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews, especially with pesantren advisers. The collected data is then analyzed by interactive analysis (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014) and then the results of the analysis are presented in a comprehensive description.

### **Islamic Boarding School (*Pesantren*) Quality Management**

The *Pondok Pesantren* is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia as a place to teach Islamic religious sciences. This is to equip students when they are involved in carrying out Islamic da'wah in social life. The definition of *Pondok Pesantren* is a combination of the words *Pondok* and *Pesantren*. According to Dhofier (2019: 41) the word *Pondok* has the meaning of dormitories for students or residences made of bamboo or comes from Arabic, namely *funduq* which means hotel or dormitory in which there are five elements or elements of pesantren, namely cottages, mosques, santri, teaching classical Islamic books and kyai.

Likewise, in Law Number 18 of 2019 that the establishment and operation of pesantrens must meet at least five elements, namely: kiai, students (santri) who live in pesantren, huts or dormitories, mosques or prayer rooms, and the study of the yellow book or *Dirasah Islamiyah* with the pattern of muallimin education. From these elements, it can be seen that there are elements of pesantren that distinguish between pesantren and the other educational institutions and other activities such as recitations, religious seminars, and so on.

In the Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2014 that the Pondok pesantren, hereinafter referred to as pesantren, are Islamic religious education institutions organized by the community that organizes pesantren education units or in an integrated manner organize other types of education.

According to Pramono (2017:7) pesantren can be classified into two forms, namely traditional pesantren (*salaf*) and modern pesantren. Traditional pesantren (*salaf*), namely pesantren with a pattern of education that is still dynamic and not well organized. Meanwhile, modern pesantren are pesantren where education and teaching have been carefully planned, the system and teaching methods are more efficient and effective, there is a mature educational organization and administration, and the education pattern and teaching pattern refers to the interests of global education. According to Irawan (2018: 18-19), there are three

types of pesantren, namely traditional pesantren, modern pesantren, and short-term pesantren.

From the several classifications of pesantren, they are distinguished based on the needs and systems in them which make different characteristics between one cottage and another. The determination of the boarding school's type can not be separated from the role of a caregiver who becomes the highest leader in the boarding school. The management of pesantren by advisers needs to be carried out in a professional and visionary manner according to the mandate of the pesantren law. Therefore, improving the quality of pesantren must continue to be carried out by not forgetting the main goal of pesantren, namely deepening religious knowledge.

An improvement is an approach in running a business that tries to maximize the competitiveness of the organization through continuous improvement of products, services, labor, processes, and the environment (Arbangi et al., 2018: 81). The improvement referred to in this paper is a continuous effort or interaction activity carried out by an educational institution or organization to maximize existing education.

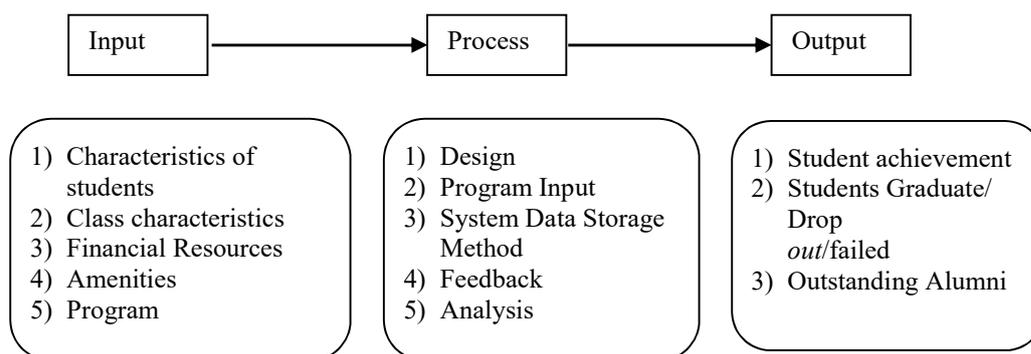
Pesantrens need good management so that the management of pesantren can run effectively and efficiently, one of which is the quality management of students. Quality management or another concept is Total Quality Management (Ramayulis and Mulyadi, 2017:166) is a management system that concerns quality as a business strategy and is oriented to customer satisfaction by involving all members of the organization. From this explanation, it can be seen that improving the quality of santri management is a management activity that includes planning, organizing, implementing and continuously monitoring the santri carried out in a pesantren to maximize the quality of education in the pesantren.

The implementation of education is a unified system in educational organizations. The organization includes input then processes in the form of learning activities, to produce graduates (output) in the form of graduates who provide benefits (outcomes) for a better life in society (Ulfatin & Triwiyanto, 2018: 5) According to Arbangi et. al (2018:109) in the world of education, the scope of quality management includes inputs, processes, and outputs that are mutually

sustainable. This is something that must be considered in every quality organization.

From this explanation, it can be seen that the scope of quality management includes input, process, and output. Educational input is an absolute thing and must exist, but it is not an automatic guarantee in improving the quality of education. When the input is good, it is necessary to support the process and output that supports it as well. These three things must be mutually sustainable.

The scope of quality management can be described as follows:



Scope of Quality Management (Arbangi et al, 2018:109)

According to Muhith (2017:108-109), there are four steps in improving quality management, namely: 1) Plan, the first step is to determine the problem to be overcome, the weaknesses to be corrected, and to develop a plan to overcome the problem. 2) Do, the second step is to carry out the plan at the trial level by paying attention to the processes. 3) Check, the third step is to observe or examine what has been implemented and find deficiencies that need to be improved. 4) Act, the fourth step is to follow up by implementing the overall quality improvement plan.

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Historical Sketch of the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus Gebang Purworejo

Pesantren Al-Iman located in Bulus village, Gebang sub-district, Purworejo district, is one of the oldest Islamic boarding schools in Purworejo which was founded in 1828 AD, namely during the war of Prince Diponegoro under the tutelage of Kiai Ahmad Ngalim. Pesantren Al-Iman is the oldest Islamic boarding school in Purworejo Regency, which was founded by a great scholar in Purworejo Regency, namely Mbah Ahmad Alim. This pesantren was established before Purworejo Regency was founded. Some say that the Bulus pesantren was founded in the 1700s, 1750s, or 1800s. This pesantren was formerly known as Al-Islamiyah.

During the Dutch colonial era, Mbah Ahmad Alim was exiled by the Dutch and arrived at Bulus which at that time was still a wilderness. The entry of Mbah Ahmad Alim into Bulus village coincided with the founding of Bulus village. At the same time as the establishment of Bulus Village, Mbah Alim founded a pesantren. The naming of Bulus village is because in this place there are many animals in the form of turtles (bulus). The genealogy of Mbah Ahmad Alim is not widely known, but it is said that he is a descendant of Sunan Gresik, East Java. He is known as a Sufi whose origins are still mysterious. Year after year, the pesantren that was established began to be visited by students. Mbah Ahmad Alim once had quite pious students and some were even famous like Mbah Kiai Sholeh Darat Semarang.

After Mbah Ahmad Alim died, the leadership was continued by Sayyid Ali who was appointed directly by Mbah Ahmad Alim to manage the pesantren as well as being given land in Bulus. Sayyid Ali is known to be quite pious and is still a descendant of Sayyid. Besides that, based on Mbah Ahmad Alim's love for a sayyid based on sincerity, Mbah Ahmad Alim sacrificed his children to get out of Bulus and did not want his descendants to stay and hold the leadership of the Bulus pesantren.

At the time of Sayyid Ali, the education system of the pesantren was not yet organized, namely only the usual Koran which was followed by a group of elders who were taught the Syattariyyah Order (*tarekat Syattariyyah*), the cultivation and deepening of monotheism, the main points of religion, and others. From Sayyid Ali, the leadership of the pesantren was then continued by Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Ali (1913-1930 AD). After returning from Mecca he took care of the pesantren and at this time applied classical education with the construction of a madrasa. The construction of madrasas began to be carried out and learning methods began to be arranged and the Alawiyyah Order (*tarekat Alawiyyah*) was also taught.

After Muhammad's death, the leadership was continued by his first son, Sayyid Dahlan (1930-1938 AD) who became the pioneer of the Pesantren Al-Islamiyah. At this time a classical education was established which was named Madrasah Al-Islamiyah. Madrasah Al-Islamiyah is an Islamic religious education in Purworejo which was the first to use the Arabic writing system on the

blackboard. The education system has begun to be regulated by the system of the formal madrasa (the material taught is still only religious material).

At that time, the Pesantren Bulus was also used as a central pengulon (marriage registrar). In 1938, the Kauman Mosque in Purworejo experienced a vacuum of a mosque imam. From this incident, the Regent of Purworejo I (Raden Cokronegoro) ordered the Bulus ulama to fill the vacuum and the end of Sayyid Dahlan's leadership period so that the Bulus pesantren experienced a vacuum for approximately 20 years. Coinciding with the Dutch Military aggression II and Bulus became the headquarters of *Hizbulloh* and *Sabilillah*.

After the Pesantren Bulus experienced a vacuum for approximately 20 years, Sayyid Agil Ba'abud re-started the pesantren and the name of the pesantren was changed to "Al-Iman" which is *tafa'ulan* (following) the name of the cottage where Sayyid Agil Ba'abud studied at Ustadz Sagaf Magelang. Sayyid Agil is known as a figure who has a vision of modern education and develops a classical-madrasa education model with a tiered curriculum between classes. Sayyid Agil developed a formal education system by establishing a 6-year Madrasah Mu'allimin/Muallimat since January 1, 1985, which was inaugurated by the Chancellor/Rector of IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. In the same year, the Mu'allimin/Mu'allimat madrasahs were changed to Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Junior High School) Al-Iman and Madrasah Aliyah (Senior High School) Al-Iman and officially received a charter of establishment in 1987. Learning in madrasahs has general lessons with the national exam system still being held at MAN (State Senior High School) Purworejo and there is also a foundation exam held by the Pesantren Al-Iman Foundation. Foundation subjects are emphasized on nahwu, shorof and Arabic. During this period, volleyball and football extracurricular activities emerged.

At the time of Sayyid Agil, the madrasa building still consisted of three classrooms for Madrasah Aliyah and three classrooms for Madrasah Tsanawiyah. The study rooms for male and female students are still limited by satire (cover). In addition to studying at the madrasa, there are Koran activities. After Ashar and Subuh, the Koran activities use the bandongan system, while after Isya' it used the sorogan system. At this time, all recitation activities were still

supervised by Sayyid Agil because there were still few students at the Al-Iman Bulus Islamic Boarding School.

After the death of Sayyid Agil, the leadership of the pesantren was continued by his son, Sayyid Hasan. The period of K.H.R.S Sayyid Hasan bin Agil Ba'abud (1978-present) was a period of development. Starting from the education system, it was carried out as before and was still separated between madrasa and diniyah education. In 2012, a full-day school began to be implemented by combining the madrasa and diniyah systems into one.

Pesantren Al-Iman has now entered its sixth generation, which is led by K.H.R.S Habib Hasan Agil Al-Ba'abud. At the time of Sayyid Hasan, Pesantren Al-Iman experienced rapid progress. It is proven by the number of students who continue to grow until now reaching the number of more than two thousand students. Besides that, there is the physical development of pesantren, as well as formal developments, namely the establishment of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (primary schools), Raudhatul Athfal (Kindergarten), and Ma'had Aly (modern pesantren). Compared the previous period, only were Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) established.

## **2. Improving the Quality Management of *Santri* at Pesantren Al-Iman**

Improving the quality management of students (*santri*) at the Pondok Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus Gebang Purworejo consists of increasing inputs, improving processes, increasing results (outputs), and increasing benefits (outcomes). In practice, the policies carried out at the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus generally refer to the government regulation of Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning pesantren. However, the policy is specifically guided by the foundation with the permission of the advisers.

To improve the quality of educational input, the action taken is by making brochures or pamphlets containing the vision, mission, goals, supporting facilities or facilities, and infrastructure as well as extracurricular activities to attract new prospective students (*santri*) who want to register. With this action, it is easier for prospective students to find information about the Pesantren Al-Iman Bulus.

Along with the development of information and communication technology, the dissemination of registration information can be done quickly and easily. The

dissemination of this information is carried out by alumni and administrators of the Pesantren Al-Iman themselves, both through print media and through websites, social media such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as through stories on WhatsApp. In addition, the existence of the Pesantren Al-Iman calendar which is distributed to alumni and the general public will be a special attraction.

In improving the educational process at the Pesantren Al-Iman through the use of interesting learning methods. This is applied so that the material presented can be accepted by students easily and not boring. In addition, the learning process also uses available learning media. Development of learning methods and media following the needs of students and the ability of pesantren to provide.

Some of the methods that are often used are the *sorogan* method, *bandongan*, lectures, discussions (*bahtsul masail*), question and answer or by combining these methods in one learning meeting, this is done so that students are more active in learning. In learning, it does not only provide subject matter, but also motivates the students. Other motivations are in the form of providing scholarships to outstanding students and involving students with outstanding achievements and talents in competitions between pesantren, such as the santri league, *nahwu-shorof* competition, *hadroh* art, and so on.

In improving quality management, the process also carries out changes and development actions in Islamic boarding schools through policies including creating students who are superior in achievement, noble in character, and have the personality of *ahlussunnah waljamaah*. To realize this policy, the boarding school has a work program, for example with the existence of santri discipline, student attendance at every activity, holding *sorogan* and *bandongan* recitations, giving punishment to students who violate the rules, and conducting evaluations.

In daily activities at Islamic boarding schools, the process of improving the quality management of students through the formation of pesantren management and the determination of each job description to the board of directors. With the existence of a job description for each management with the aim that the process of improving the quality management of students runs effectively and efficiently. To monitor the course of activities in Islamic boarding

schools, evaluation activities are carried out by the management as well as to find out the problems that arise and take what actions must be taken through routine meetings which are held once a week.

In addition to improving the quality of output, the students (*santri*) are involved in extracurricular activities at the Pesantren Al-Iman. *Santri* can choose activities according to their talents and interests, including *Musabaqoh Tilawatil Qur'an* (the art of reading the Qur'an), tambourine art, calligraphy, musical arts, sports (football, badminton, volleyball, futsal, and others). In the language aspect, there are *khitobah* (speech practice in three languages: Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese), recitation of the yellow book (classical and *bandongan*), as well as other skills such as carpentry, animal husbandry, fisheries, sewing, computers and so on.

Providing choices of diverse extra-curricular activities will be able to produce more varied competencies from students. Extra-curricular activities provide skills for students in society. Thus, the output of Islamic boarding schools is not only mastering religious knowledge but also having other useful skills. Extra-curricular activities that exist in the pesantren are still carried out under the supervision of the pesantren so that they remain following the development goals of the pesantren.

Meanwhile, to improve the quality of educational outcomes, the students received socialization and motivation to continue their education to a higher level. Socialization is provided by advisers and also external educational institutions who are willing to introduce their institution to the students. Socialization is useful for students in opening discourse and understanding in determining the choice of the next level of education.

Pesantren advisers always motivate students who will graduate to continue to develop their knowledge and skills. The motivation of the advisers strengthens the students so they don't stop learning. Meanwhile, for students who do not continue their studies, Islamic boarding schools have innovations to equip students who will not continue to higher education, namely life skill activities.

Pesantren Al-Iman implements a quality management system that is focused on improvement. This improvement is carried out especially in the

aspect of human resources in Islamic boarding schools so that they are reliable and competent. To achieve this, the Pesantren Al-Iman held education and training, seminars, and so on. This activity will add insight and exchange ideas between students with one another. It does not even rule out the possibility between santri and other parties outside the pesantren.

The improvement in the quality of outcomes at Pesantren Al-Iman can be seen from the majority of teachers or *asatidz* councils in pesantren who are alumni of Pesantren Al-Imans. This is a form of devotion to the Pesantren Al-Iman itself. In addition, because they have fully understood the ins and outs of the Pesantren Al-Iman, both from the teaching system, curriculum, and so on. With this, it is hoped that later it will be able to maintain the existence of the Pesantren Al-Iman and be able to overcome existing weaknesses so that it can make changes and improvements in a better direction.

### **Conclusion**

This study shows that improving the quality of pesantren cannot be separated from the quality management of *santri*. Good quality management of santri will improve the quality of the pesantren, both in the system of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. The improvement of the quality of the Pesantren Al-Iman is carried out through improving the quality management of students. Quality management improvement consists of improving inputs, processes, results, and benefits (outcomes). Quality management of santri at Pesantren Al-Iman rests on assets in the form of human resources (advisers, teachers, and students). Improvements in human resources aim to produce reliable and competent resources to improve the quality of pesantren Al-Iman.

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