

## **Pesantren and Creative Economic Development**

### **(Learn from The Education of Shariah Economy in Pesantren)**

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#### **Abstract**

*This article aims to reveal the role of the Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Pekalongan City in the development of creative economy through sharia economic education carried out in pesantren. This research uses a qualitative approach. Based on the purposive sampling technique, six selected Islamic boarding schools represent as the main source of primary data. In-depth-interview as the prominent method in gaining data is reinforced by the observation method. To get the validity of data, internal and external validity are performed. The former is taken through four stages, namely triangulation, emic process, member checking and prolonged time; and the latter through transferability. Methods of data analysis use descriptive-verification which is preceded by taxonomy-analysis techniques. The research discovers that there are two categories of sharia economic education in pesantren to develop creative economy. The first category is a theoretical approach by delving various fiqh books, especially with regard to fiqh muamalah. The second category is a practical approach (experience), which is realized by running a business or economic venture, both as a medium of economic education for Islamic boarding students (santri) and as a source of income for the pesantren. Theoretically, this research strengthens the theory stating that pesantren still occupies an undeniable role in the education sector, including in the shariah economy. At the same time, it also amplifies that pesantren has an adequate adjustment to the unended dynamic of human civilization.*

**Keywords:** Pesantren, creative economy, and shariah economic education

#### **A. Introduction**

It is hard to deny that since the pre-independence era under the colonialism of the West in Indonesia, historical records have recorded the significance of the role of pesantren in an effort to defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.

These roles continue to this day although in various forms, as the adaptive strength of pesantren to all forms of change in society. Pesantren (as an institution) and kiai play a very vital social role, both as an agent of social change and cultural brokers (Horikoshi, 1987; Geertz, 1981). Pesantren can serve as educational institutions, social engineering institutions, and Islamic da'wah institutions.

The Industrial Revolution 4.0, which makes everything more competitive, has the consequence that everyone must be stronger to maintain their existence and sustainability. One of the efforts that can be carried out by institutions or individuals is to develop a more creative economic sector. This is to meet not only intended the needs of the community/market, but also the needs of the economic actors themselves.

The question is, what is the role of pesantren as agents of social change in preparing students (santri) to have an adequate ability to develop the creative economy sector. It is necessary to conduct a study to find out how Islamic boarding schools play their role in building a creative economy, both for the sake of the pesantren itself to maintain its sustainability and to meet the needs of the community. Therefore, this paper seeks to explain how the process of education and learning in Islamic boarding schools in Pekalongan is the embryo of the development of the creative economy of pesantren.

## **B. Discussion**

Pesantren provides additional learning hours for students outside of the formal education they attend every day. Each pesantren has a different time allocation in providing additional education for pesantren. Of the five pesantren in the study, on average, they devoted three hours to pesantren education, which is a compulsory program that must be followed by students. Education in Islamic boarding schools containing creative economy content can be divided into two approaches, namely the theoretical approach and the practical approach.

### **1. *Theoretical Approach***

Pesantren as one of the ranks of educational institutions in Indonesia always strives to learn and develop theories originating from the treasures of Islamic

education. Therefore, learning in Islamic boarding schools that contains economic values cannot be separated from theories, basic teachings, and principles in Islamic Economics. In this section, it is explained how Islamic boarding schools carry out economic education in the realm of theory.

*a. Teaching the basics of Islamic economics as the foundation of the creative economy*

In this study, it was found that Islamic boarding schools did not have specific learning materials related to the development of the creative economy. Santri have not received certain education that is directly related to the creative economy. Islamic boarding schools have not included any content directly related to the creative economy in their educational curriculum. However, that does not mean that there are no embryos and educational basics carried out by pesantren to provide provisions for students related to the creative economy.

The educational curriculum in Islamic boarding schools related to economic content is more emphasized on the fiqh aspect, especially the muamalah fiqh. At the al-Mubarak Medono boarding school, for example, the students learned the kitab kuning (valuable ancient books written by prominent Muslim scholars) in the field of muamalah, namely the book of al-Bajuri and Ilmu al-Haal. While at the al-Faizin Tirta Islamic boarding school, the students learned various books of fiqh muamalah including Kifayatul Akhyar and Fathul Muin. Meanwhile at the Ribathul Muta'allimin Landungsari boarding school and the Syafi'i Akrom Jenggot boarding school, although no special books related to muamalah fiqh were studied, however, all pesantren in this study taught fiqh books, including Fathul Mu'in, Taqrib (Fathul Qorib Mujib), Safinatun-najah and Bidayatul Mujtahid.

Based on the previous description, it can be stated that the pesantren develops the knowledge of the students in the economic aspect by exploring the scientific treasures in the economic field from authoritative sources in the form of fiqh muamalah books. This is very urgent to do to provide a fortress for the students in the aspect of shariah compliance. This means that the students have a well-established scientific foundation in terms of shariah compliance when developing the creative economy.

Ekonomi kreatif merupakan salah satu entitas bisnis di tengah hiruk-pikuknya dunia modern. Ekonomi kreatif akan bersentuhan dengan segala jenis budaya, peradaban, teknologi dan serangkain perilaku manusia yang nyaris borderless dan terkadang permissif. Oleh karenanya memberikan dasar-dasar keilmuan di bidang fikih muamalah yang berkaitan dengan syariah compliance menjadi sangat penting bagi kehidupan para santri sebagai bekal untuk mengembangkan ekonomi kreatif.

The creative economy is one of the business entities in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the modern world. The creative economy will come into contact with all kinds of culture, civilization, technology and a series of human behaviors that are almost borderless and sometimes permissive. Therefore, providing the scientific foundations in the field of fiqh muamalah related to syariah compliance is very important for the lives of students as a provision to develop the creative economy.

***b. Performing a discussion space to stimulate the santri creativity***

Pesantren initially developed a one-way education model, namely from the kiai to the santri. Along with the dynamics of civilization, the pesantren also provides space for students to explore their creative ideas related to many aspects, including the economic side. At the al-Faizin pesantren, for example, apart from teaching muamalah books on a regular basis, several other activities were also held at the pesantren, such as reviewing the muamalah fiqh books. The kitab kuning related to muamalah fiqh are deeply dissected as an effort so that the students have a good understanding of the muamalah principles. A special program is also performed by the al-Mubarak pesantren, where mudzakaroh and bahtsul masail are regularly held at the pesantren. The two mentioned activities above are intended so that the students have the ability to increase their knowledge in the field of muamalah and sharia economics.

The discussion model or bahtsul masail has an inclusive and open-minded scheme. The students are taught to think creatively to understand and overcome the problems they face. In addition, to avoid stagnation or static in thinking, this method is able to create a creative culture among the students so that it can stimulate or improve the students to have more various creativity, including in the economic sector that can trigger the creative economy.

Educational models such as open discussion, bahtsul masaail, and the like are also very relevant to the world of Islamic boarding schools as an effort to always have adaptive power to the contemporary circumstances. This seems to be in line with Zamakhsyari Dhofier (2011), that the kiai takes a broad stance in organizing the modernization of Islamic boarding schools in the midst of changing Indonesian society (through developing a culture of discussion), without leaving the Islamic education system and still maintaining the Islamic tradition mainstream.

## **2. *Practical Approach***

### **a. *Opening a pesantren business unit***

All of the pesantren in this study have certain programs that are practically related to muamalah practices and the creative economy. With these programs, students are expected to be able to understand muamalah practices directly. As in the Syafi'i Akrom Islamic boarding school, there are several types of efforts to get students to practice fiqh muamalah and to pioneer the creative economy. This business practice is also carried out by the al-Arifiyah Medono pesantren. The boarding school also provides an opportunity for students to apply the principles of muamalah through the grocery store business, distribution of basic necessities and the like. Another Islamic boarding school that also opened a business unit was the al-Mubarak Islamic boarding school by running a gas agent business, mineral water, grocery store and the like.

The purpose of opening this pesantren business unit is to prepare the students are not only learn theory and fiqh muamalah, but also have the ability to practice them in their dailyactivities. This is an effort to foster economic creativity among the students. The pesantren leaders also stated that the pesantren business also aims to enrich the entrepreneurial spirit of the students.

### **b. *Engaging the santri in the pesantren business unit***

At Pesantren al-Faizin, some of the santri are those who already have jobs, or in other words, they live in the pesantren to study but also work outside the pesantren. While at the Syafi'i Akrom Islamic boarding school, the students are directly involved in the business of the pesantren, such as cattle, cow's milk

production, clothing convection, and so on. Pondok al-Arifiyah in Medono also involves students to pursue and be involved in the economic business of the pesantren such as distribution of basic necessities, grocery stores, and the like.

The involvement of students in the pesantren business unit is like a student who takes part in an industrial internship which will certainly be very beneficial for the students. The involvement of students in real-life dan struggling in business ventures can provide direct experience on how to creatively think in the economic sector to keep the sustainability on. Real-life in the business sector of course becomes schools and madrasah in other forms, enabling the students to enrich their experience.

### **3. *Pesantren Business Unit: A Creative Economy Embryo***

The ability of Islamic boarding schools in developing their business units will bring certain great potential advantages into reality. As Fauroni & Susilo (2007) stated that the potential in question includes:

- a. Pesantren has its own captive market, namely the santri, kyai, ustadz and the community around the pesantren;
- b. The huge internal circulation of money in the pesantren becomes its own capital if the pesantren has a cooperative which hold and run the circulation of the money
- c. Waqf is one of the important components in Islamic boarding schools. Unfortunately, it has not been well managed to be a more productive waqf. (Mubarak, 2013).

Of the five Islamic boarding schools in this study, the Syafi'i Akrom Islamic boarding school appears to be at the forefront of its business ventures. One of the cattle farms managed by the pesantren was even covered by a national TV station. Meanwhile, other pesantren business ventures are not as big as those owned by Syafi'i Akrom pesantren. The pesantren business unit basically—for several reasons—plays a very important role in the survival of the pesantren itself.

First, the pesantren business unit is one of the backbone sources of income for the pesantren to finance its operations. This shows that the pesantren has creativity in the economic sector to maintain the continuity of the pesantren. The

students are indeed required to pay infaq or donations to the pesantren. However, relying on operational funding sources to infaq and student donations is certainly not sufficient. Moreover, several Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia apply parenting styles for their students; or in other words, the pesantren actually pays for the living needs of some santri. Islamic boarding schools are responsible for the education of students who come from underprivileged groups, so pesantren avoid burdening them with pesantren cost. For this condition, the pesantren business units play an undeniable role in the pesantren sustainability.

Second, pesantren is well-known as an independent institution free from other parties interference. This independence is also included in the economic sector, and this is one of the keys to the emergence of a creative economy in pesantren. This means that to finance its operations, pesantren do not depend on other parties, even their own students. Especially in the historical line of kiai and pesantren, kiai of pesantren represents a figure who is not only strong in terms of mastery of religious scholarship but also strong in terms of economy. Therefore, it becomes something strange and "violates destiny" if the pesantren depends on outsiders for their lives (Dirdjosanjoto, 1999).

Third, in addition to the Syafi'i Akrom Islamic boarding school, the four pesantren in this study that have a business unit are trading businesses, such as grocery stores, LPG gas agents, mineral water agents, selling cow's milk and the like. Meanwhile, the Syafi'i Akrom Islamic boarding school has a cattle breeding business and cow's milk production. Basically, there is nothing wrong with the trading business, because the Prophet SAW also stated that 90% of human sustenance lies in the *tijarah*/trading business. However, it will be more highly competitive and greater economic scale if pesantren are also able to produce both goods and services. If the pesantren has a certain production unit, in addition, to creating jobs and higher profit potential, it can simultaneously function as work training center/workshop for its students.

### **C. Concluding Remarks**

The research discovers that there are two categories of sharia economic education in pesantren to develop creative economy. The first category is a

theoretical approach by delving various fiqh books, especially with regard to fiqh muamalah. The second category is a practical approach (experience), which is realized by running a business or economic venture, both as a medium of economic education for Islamic boarding students (*santri*) and as a source of income for the pesantren.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the theory stating that *pesantren* still occupies an undeniable role in the education sector, including in the shariah economy. At the same time, it also amplifies that *pesantren* has an adequate adjustment to the unended dynamic of human civilization.

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