The Urgency of Education Crisis Management Based on Islamic Boarding Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract---This study examines the urgency of Islamic boarding school education crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic. This type of research is library research with qualitative methods. Data were collected from library sources with a sociological approach. The theory used is crisis management. The findings of this study are: first, Islamic boarding school-based education is vulnerable to external disturbances, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, Islamic boarding school-based education in Indonesia has diverse resilience in overcoming the pandemic, therefore some are carried away by the government's political policies, while others are trying to survive. Third, the pros and cons of Islamic boarding school policies revolve around technical strategies to respond to the pandemic situation as well as in responding to government policies. Fourth, the urgency of crisis management for Islamic boarding school-based education. This research contributes efforts to improve the management of boarding school-based education in Indonesia in
Introduction

Islamic boarding schools as models of religious education are affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is suspected to have caused the weakness of teaching and learning activities in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, the management of the institutional administration and the Islamic boarding school’s economy was also shaken. Consequently, teaching and learning activities must be carried out using online learning methods. And this was done in order to follow the government’s directives on preventing the wider spread of the pandemic. It is the same in the economy. Boarding schools must survive and remain stable and even have to take advantage of existing opportunities to overcome real challenges (Kahfi & Kasanova, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic is also considered a hard life factor for Islamic education because it is able to remodel the order of Islamic education that has been going on comfortably so far. In fact, the predictions of observers say that the future of Islamic education, schools, and Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is threatened with lost education feared to give rise to a lost generation. This is because the Work From Home (WFH) policy, social and physical distancing, and the process of Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM) using an online system (Sarnoto, 2021), makes learning that was originally done outside the network (offline) turn into a network (online). Changes in the learning model had to be carried out due to a Joint Decree (SKB) of the Four Ministers regarding the implementation of learning at the beginning of the 2020/2021 school year, and the Decree of the Director General of Education Number 2791 of 2020 regarding emergency curriculum guidelines for Islamic schools, to support learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ministry’s decision above indicates that the reorientation and role of Islamic education are starting to accelerate its learning format (Prasetia, 2020).

Another problem is the response to the pandemic in Islamic boarding schools is quite diverse. This is because the religious paradigms of Islamic boarding schools are also diverse, some are conservative and some are non-conservative/progressive (Sarnoto & Hayatina, 2021). Conservative-based Islamic boarding schools are more reserved and tend to fight the existence of COVID-19 by not fully following the health protocols recommended by the government. While others, who are more progressive, prefer to be open to all policies taken by the government as an effort to prevent and overcome COVID-19. Although the responses of Islamic boarding schools to COVID-19 tend to vary, in general, Islamic boarding schools are responsive and willing to accept the application of social-physical distancing and issuing religious fatwas containing theological explanations about the necessity to follow health protocols. They also provide

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procedures for carrying out religious rituals in emergencies during the pandemic (Hannan et al., 2020).

The polarization of Islamic boarding schools in the midst of this pandemic ideally does not occur, because Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that support moral for the community. The rejection of Islamic boarding schools towards government programs and different attitudes from the government must be seen as internal considerations for Islamic boarding schools to maintain their existence. However, when dealing directly with power and the government, of course, there are more political reasons why Islamic boarding schools have different responses, and what concrete benefits for the resilience of Islamic boarding schools education will they get from their different and similar attitudes to the government (Sarnoto, 2014; Susanto et al., 2016; Kidd, 1978). The issue of the resilience of the Islamic boarding schools-based education pattern in the midst of a pandemic, from a crisis management perspective.

Method

This type of research is library research (Zed, 2004). Researchers collect data from various previous publications, both in the form of books, research results, journals, articles on websites, etc. The research approach used is the sociology of education approach (Ballantine & Spade, 2011), which looks at the behavior of Islamic boarding school-based education managers in Indonesia in dealing with the pandemic. The theory used is crisis management theory in education (Dodds & Swiniarski, 1994), in-depth information, it is obtained about the management of Islamic boarding schools in facing the crisis due to COVID-19.

The management of the crisis in the world of education is closely related to the government’s political policies (Boin et al., 2016). Thus, the management of Islamic boarding schools-based education in this study is important to see in relation to the policies issued by the government, especially related to efforts to overcome the pandemic in Indonesia. In addition, crisis management in the world of education cannot be separated from social conflict, especially when it relates to various political, economic, and social interests (Jessop & Knio, 2018). Differences or polarization within the Islamic boarding schools community will be analyzed in this study, especially in their response to government policies. Finally, this theory of crisis management talks about the technical strategies that an institution or leader must take (Crandall et al., 2013).

Findings and Discussion

There are several important findings in this study, namely the Pros and Cons of Technical Strategies Responding to Change and the Urgency of Islamic Boarding School Education Crisis Management, especially when hit by certain crises.

Pros and cons of technical strategy responding to change

The diversity in the resilience of the pattern of education in Islamic boarding schools is exacerbated by the discourse around Islamic boarding schools which only gives rise to pros and cons related to technical strategies for responding to
change. Islamic boarding schools have become a completely powerless subculture when it comes to the health aspect (Hanafi et al., 2021; Indriasari et al., 2020). Discourses related to Islamic boarding schools, education, and the pandemic only concern how Islamic boarding schools should implement health protocols optimally, look for religious arguments that support the government’s political policies in order to break the chain of coronavirus transmission, as well as the pros and cons of receiving vaccinations with certain types of vaccines. They are all technical and very insubstantial.

At the same time, the world is in chaos or war. The General Chairperson of the Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) Executive Board, KH. Said Aqil Siroj, said that there were several big wars that NU residents had to win. The war referred to here is not physical but a war to influence each other in order to seize, control, and change people’s way of thinking. One of them is biological warfare. This new war began when there was a COVID-19 pandemic. Countries that are able to produce vaccines today will come out victorious in this biological war. Meanwhile, countries that cannot afford and can only import will lose. Even though the COVID-19 virus has now appeared many more virulent variants. One of them is the Delta variant from India, which is considered to be more contagious than the original COVID-19 virus (NU Online, 2021).

In a situation where the world is holding a biological war, it is not only Islamic boarding schools that are unable to move to fight from within, but the state and the Indonesian government itself are also losing. Said Aqil Sirad said that the fragility of the national health system, one of which was due to the high import of medical equipment. According to Kiyai Said, currently, around 94 percent of medical devices in circulation are imported products. The dominance of imported products marks the fragility of the national health system. Said Aqil then suggested that the government would improve the national health system, by increasing the ratio and reliability of domestic health facilities, such as hospitals and health centers (CNN Indonesia, 2021).

The fragile national health system is a macro context for the Islamic Boarding Schools health system which is also fragile as a micro context. When there is a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization of Islamic boarding school activities, including education in it, must also accept defeat in a global war. Islamic boarding schools are forced to talk and debate about technical issues and strategies that are not substantial. Because Islamic Boarding Schools c think about creating their own health products, which are useful for the health services of students, religious teachers, and kyai, so teaching and learning activities are not disrupted by this kind of health crisis (Patriadi et al., 2015; Ismail et al., 2013; Coombs, 2001).

When Islamic boarding schools are no longer moving and cannot do much to maintain their independence, Islamic boarding schools inevitably become passive objects for every government policy program. For example, when Vice President Ma’ruf Amin reviewed the process of implementing face-to-face learning at Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School, Jakarta, the government acted very superior and asked for the vaccination process for Islamic boarding school
administrators, teachers, and employees to be accelerated (Rosana, 2021). Meanwhile, the Islamic Boarding School can only agree with, support, and cooperate with the government with one common hope, which is to be able to return to holding face-to-face education as before the pandemic. The rest, Islamic boarding schools can only refuse trivial things, such as certain types of vaccines, but accept other types of vaccines. This means that the management of Islamic boarding schools and all their policies only focuses on technical matters and strategies for responding to change, without actually being able to offer new alternatives, due to their inherent weaknesses, which are far weaker than the state’s position.

In this weak and lacking situation, both in terms of health infrastructure and policies, Islamic boarding schools are not independent, even in terms of narratives and solutions. The Federation of Indonesian Teachers’ Unions (FSGI) is an external institution outside Islamic boarding schools, but after seeing the big gaps in the weaknesses of Islamic boarding schools, FSGI dared to build a narrative about what is good for pesantren to cover the gaps. Likewise, when it sees the gaps in the weaknesses of Islamic Boarding Schools, the government dares to build legislation whose clauses threaten Islamic Boarding Schools with sanctions. The weakness of Islamic boarding schools becomes capital for external institutions to regulate, suggest, and frame them in a definitive narrative, which Islamic Boarding Schools themselves can only do passively and accept. There is no strong resilience system in the body of the pesantren, especially regarding the education it provides, so that the Islamic Boarding Schools can be independent (Mursidi et al., 2021; Elihami, 2021; Widana et al., 2020). The only ability of Islamic Boarding Schools is religious fatwas whose orientation is predictable, namely supporting the direction of government policies and installing bodies that are fully dependent on the government.

On the other hand, when Islamic boarding schools try to build their defense system, at least by trying to optimize their religious philosophy, as KH. Asep Saifuddin Chalim did with his institution, Ponpes Amanatul Ummah Caretaker, then he became a minority actor and was not popular. Likewise, when the Islamic boarding school struggles to contribute to the health of the santri and the community around the pesantren, such as the Modern Islamic Boarding School Darussalam Gontor, then he becomes a minority actor, unpopular, even the only Islamic boarding school that can do much (Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2016; Lefebure, 2019). Theological opposition such as Pondok Amanatul Ummah or through real contributions such as the Modern Islamic Boarding School Darussalam Gontor, then such phenomena are very few and their quantity is very small.

The urgency of Islamic boarding school education crisis management

COVID-19 has spread all over the world. There is a new terminology called “crisis team”, which has worked hard to overcome all the challenges. Tara Trachsler and Wouter Jong say that this crisis team tends to rely on its procedures and responsibilities, but that most still underestimate the importance of the mindset of each person on the team. Hence, crisis management should be considered as the work of an elite who can also adopt new insights in the field (Trachsler &
Islamic boarding schools face a crisis, the way to build resilience must be taken through what is called crisis management, namely a conceptual framework and practice that puts the crisis paradigm forward as the context (Sarnoto, 2014). A study on crisis management in the context of education in Indonesia was once conducted by Dasrun Hidayat, et al., taking a sample of this university. According to Dasrun, et al., the resilience of the education pattern cannot be separated from the problem of crisis management, because the world of education in Indonesia is facing this pandemic period. According to Dasrun Hidayat, et al., the government has established Study from Home (SfH) as an emergency learning program during the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of SfH is done through online learning, using various applications; such as chat and video conferencing. Dasrun Hidayat, et al., found that there are two weaknesses of online learning, namely technical and communication weaknesses.

Technical weaknesses are influenced by geographical factors, internet networks, and internet costs. While the weaknesses of communication include slow adaptation, learning media that have not been maximized, an interactive atmosphere that has not been built, and the absence of an atmosphere of empathy. This situation causes lecturers to be unable to manage to learn effectively. Online learning during SfH must be able to build collaborative classes to be able to grow students' motivation and interest in learning. Collaborative classes are realized when lecturers and students try to improve communication competence while the weaknesses of communication include slow adaptation, learning media that have not been maximized, an interactive atmosphere that has not been built, and the absence of an atmosphere of empathy. This situation causes lecturers to be unable to manage to learn effectively. Online learning during SfH must be able to build collaborative classes to be able to grow students' motivation and interest in learning. Collaborative classes are realized when lecturers and students try to improve communication competence (Hidayat & Wibawa, 2020).

But in reality, crisis management that uses online learning as a solution also faces many obstacles. In addition to internet network infrastructure constraints, some obstacles are leadership in an organization. Based on cases in the form of higher education institutions in Australia, England, and the United States, some findings say that crisis management actions must be taken by touching various sectors, prioritizing the most crucial issues, then identifying and grouping them thematically, to formulate problems. solving it. This kind of crisis management requires the presence of a caring leadership model, as a positive tool that allows a
leader to be more sensitive in recognizing and responding to structural weaknesses in an educational institution (McNamara, 2021). In this context, Islamic boarding schools must be led by a visionary kiyai, not only following government programs in dealing with the spread of COVID-19 but must take creative steps from within, as was done by Pondok Gontor.

There are at least 13 suggested strategies to overcome management challenges in the crisis era. By taking a sample of universities majoring in medicine, Karimian, et al., formulated thirteen strategies, including virtualization, technology support, empowerment, participation, sharing, helping, integration, compression, overcoming neglect, flexibility and diversity, severance pay, protection; and monitoring. A personal approach through the incorporation of technology is also considered a very important solution. Simply put, providing technology-based education and a more flexible platform (because it must be adapted to the audience) is the most important solution in crisis management in the world of education. As a result, the scope of crisis management is expanding not only at the individual and academic levels (Karimian et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Islamic boarding schools have deep weaknesses in terms of using this technology, including online learning as reported by Dasrun Hidayat, et al.

However, crisis management cannot be separated from the installation of information technology in Islamic boarding schools. This is because the closure of educational institutions is considered effective in preventing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Therefore, an effective knowledge transfer scheme or scenario and teaching and learning process in the context of this pandemic era must be through maximizing information technology (IT) tools and knowledge management (KM) approaches. Several factors that support this, include distance learning and online IT tools, knowledge explorations, types of educational knowledge (tacit-explicit knowledge), and internal-external knowledge in education. In addition, several concepts and theories are combined, namely the SECI theory and the ambidexterity view, namely the exploration and exploitation of knowledge (Saide & Sheng, 2021). In the context of Islamic boarding school education, which experiences problems in the use of information technology, crisis management demands the creativity of institutional leaders, kyai, foundation heads, school principals, to explore their respective knowledge. There is no single formula, considering the conditions of Islamic Boarding Schools and their capacities are different from one another.

The lack of similarity in the capacities and capabilities of this Islamic Boarding School is not an impossible problem to solve. Because Islamic Boarding School can take the least action, namely following government policies. In many countries, the current coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has prompted governments to implement public health measures aimed at preventing its spread (Suhifatullah et al., 2021; Liriwati et al., 2020). Although there is always a gap between idealism and practice. One of them is maximizing “multilingual” skills and indigenous cultural assets of the local community, in order to eliminate misunderstandings about the pandemic and negative stigmatization. It should be underlined that all of this is in order to realize the importance of an integrated approach to dealing with the pandemic. This approach will be able to capture the needs of the community and frame them in a shared paradigm, which can
strengthen the world of education and public health regarding COVID-19. This paradigm is open to receiving input from various stakeholders, including knowledge and customary holders, for the sake of collective welfare (Mbah et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic Boarding School education in Indonesia, there must be a common language among Islamic Boarding School education managers to mobilize collective action with the government, in order to tackle the spread of the pandemic. This is part of the crisis management action. This action must be of strategic value, especially for the sake of managing the crisis (Spais & Paul, 2021).

Collective action between Islamic Boarding School and the government is a tangible manifestation of anti-crisis management activities, both organizationally, socio-psychologically, and technically. This collective anti-crisis action between Islamic Boarding School and the government is only for one common goal, namely facilitating anti-crisis management in the world of education. Efforts to realize this common goal in turn provide basic information that is very relevant in making decisions and actions that are nuanced in politics, administration, and academic practice, (Nenko et al., 2021). Aligned Islamic boarding schools, one vision, and one mission, with the state, make the management of pesantren education not politically at odds with government policies, obeying laws and regulations such as PPKM and others, and academic practices in the form of implementing learning can run smoothly. Without collective and synergistic action between the government and the management of Islamic boarding schools, efforts to overcome the crisis will experience many obstacles.

In many countries, crisis management practices in education in the face of this pandemic are also being pursued through social media platforms, which can help reduce the health consequences of COVID-19 and manage the global health crisis. Because, unavoidably, this pandemic has created a global mental health crisis and has given a lot of incorrect information. So correct information is urgently needed to dispel uncertainty, fear, and mental stress, and to unite the global community in a joint and collective effort to fight the disease COVID-19 around the world. Social media always provides positive and negative data. COVID-19 is generating an infodemic worldwide. This infodemic erodes public trust and hinders virus control. Even, (Abbas et al., 2021). In other words, in the context of crisis management in the world of Islamic Boarding Schools-based education in Indonesia, the government and Islamic boarding schools must be synergistic in utilizing social media, fighting hoaxes around the pandemic, and restoring the crisis of public trust. All of this is part of the necessity in realizing crisis management in the pandemic era.

**Conclusion**

Based on the description above, the resilience of the Islamic Boarding School education pattern in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic is sought through crisis management. However, the crisis management of the Islamic Boarding School education world during this pandemic tends to be passive-affirmative. Islamic boarding schools are powerless to take steps that grow from their internal awareness because they are constrained by many obstacles in the form of infrastructure and human resource capacity so that they become passive objects.
that surely affirm all government policies. To survive in the midst of a pandemic crisis, the management of Islamic boarding schools is more about supporting all government policies, such as the strict implementation of health protocols, even being able and without protesting to receive sanctions from the government if they are considered to have violated the prokes rules. By acting passively and affirming the government’s political policies, the implementation of Islamic Boarding Schools education is much more sustainable. The implementation of teaching and learning activities can be carried out within the corridor frame that has been determined by the government (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Gruber et al., 2015).

If anyone acts actively, it becomes part of the minority and is unpopular. There are few cases where Islamic Boarding schools try to diverge from government policy, but this phenomenon is an exception. Even if there are pros and cons within Islamic boarding schools, which both imagine the continuity of education during the pandemic, it is carried out at the technical strategy level, not at the substantial level which offers alternatives and novelty. This is because the pesantren itself has not been able to get out of its internal constraints, such as the lack of infrastructure, facilities, and human resource capacity to contribute more for the students and the surrounding community, especially in tackling the pandemic.

References


