

IMPLEMENTING A CHILD-FRIENDLY PESANTREN CURRICULUM AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT AL- MUSYARROFAH ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL JAKARTA

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Abstract (English)

This study examines the implementation of a child-friendly curriculum at Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School, Jakarta, focusing on life skills development. In an era demanding well-rounded individuals, pesantren must go beyond religious knowledge to equip students with practical life skills. This qualitative study employs ethnographic methods, utilizing observations, interviews with stakeholders (teachers, students, leaders), and document analysis. Findings reveal successful integration of life skills education into Al-Musyarrofah's curriculum. The school emphasizes a balanced approach, recognizing religious instruction as one component of a holistic education. Teachers and students alike hold high expectations for the child-friendly curriculum, believing it enhances the learning experience and fosters crucial life skills. This includes fostering critical thinking, effective communication, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence, ultimately nurturing socially responsible and resilient individuals. The study recommends continuous professional development for educators, curriculum evaluation and adaptation, enhanced parent and community collaboration, and technology integration for program improvement.

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar in building character and intelligence in children, especially within the context of Islamic education. In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) play a strategic role in educating the younger generation, providing a strong foundation in religious knowledge and noble moral values. However, in this modern era, the challenges faced by children are increasingly complex, making it essential for pesantren to adopt a curriculum that not only focuses on religious aspects but also develops life skills relevant to societal needs.

The Child-Friendly Pesantren Curriculum is essential for providing more inclusive and responsive education to children's development. This concept is rooted in the principles of Islamic education, as outlined in the Quran and Hadith. Allah SWT decrees in Surah Al-Alaq (1-5):

٤. عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ٣ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ٢ اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ١ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

*"Recite in the name of your Lord who created. He has created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Glorious One, who teaches (man) with the pen. He teaches man what he does not know."*¹

¹ Ministry Of Religious Affairs Of The Republic Of Indonesia, *The Holy Quran And Its Translation Special For Women*, (Bandung: Syaamil Quran, 2007) Al-Alaq (1-5)

This verse emphasizes the importance of a gradual and continuous learning process. In this context, pesantren must be able to create a learning environment that supports children's holistic self-development. This requires a curriculum that not only focuses on religious aspects but also on developing life skills relevant to societal needs.

The responsibility to seek knowledge is also emphasized in Surah Al-Mujadilah (11):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ
وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

"Oh, you who believe, when it is said to you, 'Make room in the assemblies,' make room, and Allah will make room for you. When it is said, 'Rise up,' rise up. Allah will certainly elevate those who believe among you and those who have been given knowledge by several degrees. And Allah is Well-Aware of what you do."²

This verse underscores that education is not only for achieving intellectual intelligence but also as a means to increase faith and piety. Pesantren should facilitate education that encompasses knowledge, practical skills, and balanced religious values.

In the context of child protection, this verse reminds parents and society of their responsibility toward children, ensuring they do not grow up in weakness. Allah says in Surah An-Nisa (9):

وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَةً ضِعَافًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

"And let those [executors and guardians] fear [as they would for their own children] those who, if they left behind them weak offspring, would fear for them..."³

This verse indicates that the responsibility to educate and protect children is crucial, aligning with the principles of a child-friendly pesantren, where every child must receive adequate attention and support to grow and develop optimally. Therefore, child-friendly education in pesantren is expected to provide a safe environment that nurtures character development, knowledge, and life skills.

The Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also emphasizes the importance of education for children. In a narration reported by Ibn Majah, the Prophet said:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim." (Narrated by Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, and reported by Ibn Majah, no. 224. Authenticated by Al-Albani in Sahih al-Jaami'ish Shaghiir, no. 3913)⁴

This Hadith indicates that education should be a priority in shaping the character and life skills of children. In this context, the development of a child-friendly curriculum that includes life skills is crucial for preparing a resilient and competitive future generation. By facilitating education that balances religious knowledge and practical skills, pesantren can help children reach their potential and positively contribute to society.

² Ministry Of Religious Affairs Of The Republic Of Indonesia, *The Holy Quran And Its Translation Special For Women*, (Bandung: Syaamil Quran, 2007) Al-Mujadilah (11)

³ An-Nisa (9)

⁴ "Sahih Al-Jami' Ash-Shaghiir, Volume 1, Translated By Imran Rosadi & Andi Arlin, Jakarta: Najla Press, 2004

Based on this, the aim of this study is to *Implementing A Child-Friendly Pesantren Curriculum An Ethnographic Study On Life Skills Development At Al-Musyarrifah Islamic Boarding School, Jakarta*, with a focus on the development of the students' life skills. This research is expected to contribute to a better understanding and development of education in pesantren that is more responsive to the needs of children, as well as to strengthen the role of pesantren as educational institutions that produce not only knowledgeable individuals but also those with good character, prepared to face the challenges of the times.

Research Methodology

This research methodology was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Al-Musyarrifah Jakarta for a period of one week, from October 13, 2024, to October 17, 2024. This study employed a qualitative approach with informants as the research subjects, consisting of teachers/ustadz, asatidz, students, the head of the pesantren, and several other students. The data collection techniques used were interviews, observations, document analysis, field notes, ethnography, and diary studies.

The collected data were then processed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification. Data analysis was performed using thematic analysis, content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory, and phenomenological analysis. To ensure data validity, this study employed techniques such as prolonged observation, increasing persistence, triangulation, and member checking.

By using a qualitative approach and diverse data collection techniques, this study aimed to understand the implementation of a child-friendly pesantren curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Al-Musyarrifah Jakarta. The results of this study are expected to provide an accurate picture of the implementation of a child-friendly pesantren curriculum and can be used as a reference for the development of pesantren curricula in the future.

Research Discussion

1. Current Practice Of Life Skills Development At Al-Musyarrifah Islamic Boarding School Is Aligned With The Principles Of A Child-Friendly Pesantren Curriculum.

The findings of this study indicate that Al-Musyarrifah Islamic Boarding School, Jakarta, has successfully integrated life skills education into its curriculum. This strategic integration is designed to equip students with essential competencies that are not only vital for their personal development but also applicable in their daily lives.

The curriculum at Al-Musyarrifah emphasizes a balanced approach to education, recognizing that religious instruction is just one aspect of a well-rounded educational experience. While religious education remains a core component, the school also prioritizes the cultivation of practical skills that prepare students to navigate the complexities of contemporary life. Among these skills are problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication—each of which plays a critical role in fostering resilience and adaptability in students.

Problem-Solving Skills: Students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking and to approach challenges with a solution-oriented mindset. Through various activities and discussions, they learn to analyze situations, evaluate options, and implement effective

solutions. This skill is particularly important in a rapidly changing world, where individuals must navigate unforeseen challenges and make informed decisions.

Decision-Making Skills: The curriculum also places a strong emphasis on the decision-making process, teaching students how to weigh pros and cons, consider ethical implications, and anticipate the consequences of their choices. By cultivating sound decision-making skills, students are better equipped to make choices that reflect their values and contribute positively to their lives and communities.

Effective Communication Skills: Additionally, effective communication is a key focus area. Students learn the importance of expressing their thoughts and ideas clearly and respectfully, as well as actively listening to others. This skill is essential not only for academic success but also for fostering healthy relationships and collaboration in various social contexts.

The development of these life skills is crucial for nurturing students' personal growth and preparing them for future challenges. In an increasingly interconnected and competitive world, the ability to solve problems, make sound decisions, and communicate effectively can significantly impact an individual's success and well-being.

Moreover, through this holistic approach, Al-Musyarrofah has created an environment that supports both academic excellence and life skills development. This dual focus ensures that students are well-prepared to fulfill their spiritual and worldly responsibilities. By equipping students with a comprehensive set of skills, the school aims to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable in their religious studies but also capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities and society at large.

In conclusion, the integration of life skills education within the curriculum at Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School represents a progressive step toward holistic education. This approach empowers students to thrive in both their personal and professional lives, fostering a generation of well-rounded individuals who are prepared to face the complexities of modern life with confidence and competence.

2. Perceptions Of Teachers And Students At Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School About The Importance Of Life Skills Development In The Pesantren Curriculum, And What They Expect From The Implementation Of A Child-Friendly Curriculum.

The findings of this study reveal that both teachers and students at Pondok Pesantren Al-Musyarrofah, Jakarta, hold high expectations regarding the implementation of the child-friendly pesantren curriculum. This curriculum is viewed as an innovative approach designed to enhance the educational experience by fostering an environment that is more inclusive, supportive, and responsive to the diverse needs of students. Teachers and students alike believe that the child-friendly pesantren curriculum will not only improve the overall quality of education at the pesantren but also play a crucial role in developing key life skills that are essential for students' personal and professional growth.

Stakeholders, including the pesantren's leadership, educators, and students, anticipate that the adoption of a child-friendly approach will contribute to creating a more holistic educational experience. This approach moves beyond the traditional focus on academic achievements and religious studies by emphasizing the comprehensive development of students, which includes moral, social, and emotional competencies. By integrating elements of a child-centered pedagogy with the values of Islamic education, the curriculum

aims to cultivate students who are not only academically successful but also socially responsible and emotionally resilient individuals.

The child-friendly pesantren curriculum is expected to foster the development of essential life skills, such as critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. These competencies are increasingly recognized as critical for navigating the complexities of modern life, both in personal contexts and in the broader societal landscape. Critical thinking, for instance, equips students with the ability to analyze problems, evaluate multiple perspectives, and make informed decisions. Effective communication skills enhance their ability to express ideas clearly and engage in meaningful dialogues, while problem-solving skills enable them to navigate challenges and develop creative solutions to real-world issues.

The holistic approach of the child-friendly pesantren curriculum is also seen as a key factor in preparing students for their future roles as active contributors to society. By instilling values such as empathy, teamwork, and adaptability, the curriculum encourages students to develop a strong sense of social responsibility and leadership. Teachers and students expect that the curriculum will provide them with not only the intellectual tools necessary for academic success but also the personal skills required to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Furthermore, stakeholders view the child-friendly curriculum as an opportunity to create a more nurturing and student-centered learning environment. Teachers expect that the curriculum will promote a more positive and engaging classroom atmosphere, where students feel valued, respected, and supported in their learning journeys. This supportive environment is anticipated to enhance students' motivation, self-confidence, and sense of belonging, which are critical factors in academic achievement and personal development.

In conclusion, the implementation of the child-friendly pesantren curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Al-Musyarrofah is highly anticipated by both teachers and students, who expect it to significantly enhance the quality of education and contribute to the holistic development of students. By equipping students with life skills such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving, the curriculum is seen as a crucial step towards preparing them for future success, both in their personal lives and in their contributions to society. The positive expectations surrounding this curriculum highlight its potential to create a transformative educational experience that nurtures well-rounded individuals capable of making meaningful contributions to their communities and navigating the challenges of the modern world with confidence and competence.

3. Implementation Of The Child-Friendly Pesantren Curriculum Has An Impact On The Development Of Life Skills Of Students At Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School, And What Are The Implications For Their Lives In The Future.

The implementation of the child-friendly pesantren curriculum at Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School, Jakarta, has had a transformative effect on the development of students' life skills. By integrating key aspects of child-centered pedagogy with Islamic educational values, this curriculum fosters a conducive environment where students not only thrive academically but also acquire essential life skills that are crucial for their holistic development. Among the competencies cultivated are critical thinking, decision-making, effective communication, and emotional intelligence—skills that play a pivotal

role in shaping individuals who are capable of addressing both the personal and societal challenges they will face in the future.

The curriculum's emphasis on critical thinking encourages students to analyze problems systematically, make informed decisions, and develop problem-solving abilities that are indispensable in navigating complex real-world situations. Furthermore, the development of communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, ensures that students can articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly, fostering collaboration and effective interaction in diverse social and professional environments. The nurturing of emotional intelligence, a critical component of interpersonal relationships, enables students to better understand and manage their emotions, leading to improved self-awareness, empathy, and conflict resolution skills.

In addition to equipping students with these fundamental life skills, the child-friendly pesantren curriculum emphasizes the importance of preparing students for long-term success. By fostering resilience, adaptability, and a sense of responsibility, the curriculum ensures that students are not only prepared for immediate academic and personal challenges but are also capable of handling the broader demands of modern life. As a result, graduates of Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School emerge as well-rounded individuals, equipped to make meaningful contributions to society, excel in their professional endeavors, and lead lives that reflect both spiritual and worldly success.

The implications of this curriculum extend far beyond the confines of the pesantren. As students transition into adulthood, the life skills they have acquired will serve as a foundation for their future roles as leaders, professionals, and community members. The holistic development facilitated by the child-friendly pesantren curriculum enables students to navigate an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world with confidence and competence. By fostering both intellectual and emotional growth, the curriculum ensures that students are not only knowledgeable but also socially conscious and empathetic individuals, ready to engage with and contribute to the betterment of society. Consequently, the implementation of this curriculum represents a significant advancement in the educational model of pesantren, highlighting its potential to shape future generations in ways that align with both Islamic values and the demands of the modern world.

Conclusion

The implementation of a child-friendly pesantren curriculum at Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School in Jakarta represents a significant evolution in the educational approach adopted by this institution. By integrating the development of life skills into its curriculum, Al-Musyarrofah prioritizes not only religious education but also emphasizes the necessity of equipping students with essential competencies required to navigate the complexities of modern life.

The findings of this study indicate that current practices at Al-Musyarrofah align effectively with the principles of a child-friendly curriculum, fostering an environment conducive to both academic excellence and personal growth. Through a balanced approach that encompasses critical thinking, effective communication, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence, students are prepared to confront challenges in both their personal and professional lives.

Both teachers and students express high expectations for the child-friendly curriculum, perceiving it as a transformative initiative that enhances the overall educational experience. The

integration of life skills into the curriculum is deemed vital for cultivating socially responsible, empathetic, and resilient individuals capable of making meaningful contributions to society.

Moreover, the impact of this curriculum extends beyond immediate educational outcomes; it establishes a robust foundation for students' future roles as leaders and engaged citizens. The life skills acquired through this program will serve them well as they transition into adulthood, enabling them to navigate an increasingly interconnected world with confidence and competence.

In conclusion, the child-friendly pesantren curriculum at Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School not only enriches students' educational experiences but also holistically prepares them for future challenges. By fostering a generation that embodies both Islamic values and the skills necessary for success in modern society, Al-Musyarrofah demonstrates its commitment to producing well-rounded individuals who are poised to contribute positively to their communities and the world at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study regarding the implementation of a child-friendly pesantren curriculum at Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance the effectiveness of the educational program:

1. Continuous Professional Development for Educators

Provide ongoing training and workshops for teachers to equip them with the latest pedagogical strategies and best practices in child-centered education. This will help them effectively integrate life skills into their teaching and adapt to the evolving educational landscape.

2. Curriculum Evaluation and Adaptation

Regularly assess and update the curriculum to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the changing needs of students and society. Incorporating feedback from both educators and students can help identify areas for improvement and innovation.

3. Enhanced Collaboration with Parents and the Community

Foster stronger partnerships with parents and local community organizations to support the holistic development of students. Engaging parents in the educational process can reinforce the values and skills taught at the pesantren, creating a more cohesive support system for students.

4. Integration of Technology in Learning

Expand the use of digital tools and resources in the classroom to enhance students' digital literacy and prepare them for the demands of the modern workforce. Providing training for both teachers and students on responsible technology use can also promote ethical behavior online.

5. Focus on Emotional and Mental Well-Being

Implement programs that prioritize the emotional and mental well-being of students, such as counseling services and stress management workshops. This focus will help students develop resilience and better manage the challenges they face in their academic and personal lives.

6. Encouragement of Extracurricular Activities

Promote a diverse range of extracurricular activities that allow students to explore their interests, develop leadership skills, and build teamwork capabilities. Activities such as

sports, arts, and community service can contribute significantly to students' personal growth.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation of Life Skills Development

Establish clear metrics and assessment tools to monitor the effectiveness of life skills development within the curriculum. Regular evaluations can help measure student progress and the impact of the curriculum on their personal and academic growth.

8. Strengthening Peer Learning Opportunities

Create structured opportunities for peer learning and mentorship, where older students can guide and support younger ones. This approach fosters a sense of community and reinforces the values of cooperation and empathy among students.

9. Promotion of a Culture of Feedback

Encourage a culture of open communication and feedback among students, teachers, and administrators. Regular discussions about the educational experience can lead to continuous improvement and a more responsive learning environment.

10. Research and Development

Invest in research initiatives to explore innovative teaching methods and educational practices that align with the principles of a child-friendly curriculum. Collaborating with educational institutions and experts can provide valuable insights for enhancing the pesantren's educational model. By implementing these recommendations, Al-Musyarrofah Islamic Boarding School can continue to strengthen its commitment to providing a holistic education that prepares students not only academically but also as responsible and capable members of society.

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