Islamic Boarding School Based on Women's Empowerment and Equality

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Abstract

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are often considered an important aspect of religious education. One aspect of the discussion that is rarely discussed in Islamic boarding schools is women's empowerment and gender equality because this is often considered an idea derived from western ideology and education. However, to solve the country's economic and development problems, ideas and discussions around gender equality and women's empowerment are now increasingly coming to the fore and becoming a public concern. One of the institutions that became the focus of this research was the involvement of Islamic boarding schools in teaching these ideas to their students. Thus, the main guestion in this study is how gender and women's empowerment are implemented in Islamic boarding schools. This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological studies to explore and identify existing field results by carrying out field observations and interviews with various speakers including educators and students as the primary method of data collection. Observations and interview questions are based on research formulations that focus on the practice and involvement of institutions and each Islamic boarding school actor in gender equality and women's empowerment. The results illustrate the role of an educational institution that optimizes education based on gender equality and women's empowerment in its curriculum. In addition, each individual also has an active role in efforts to empower women to change the negative stigma brought by conservative Islamic understanding of women. Education in Islamic boarding schools also actively tackles radicalism among its students. This study discusses how Islamic boarding schools in Tasikmalaya are reforming their curriculum and environment to assimilate with gender education and women's empowerment.

Keywords

Islamic boarding school; Gender; Women's empowerment

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INTRODUCTION

Empowerment can broadly be interpreted as an effort to improve or change a condition for the better. The method used can be in the form of increasing knowledge, training skills, and bringing out self-potential so that it can then be developed to be used properly in a person or group of people. Women's empowerment is closely related to gender equality, which is how to equalize the opportunity for everyone to move forward regardless of male or female differences. This is not to contribute to women moving progressively to become or feel more like men, but rather an attempt to make it aware that women can be more independent and less dependent on men.

In the perspective of women in three domains, it can be concluded that women should be synonymous with three things so as not only to be part of the second class or as a second class that only serves in one realm, namely domestic or for short which parents often say with dapur, sumur, kasur (kitchen-bathroom-bedroom). Yet far from it women must take two other equally important domains. Namely, the public realm and also the social community. The public domain is related to the role of "outside" of his family, or more simply saying the public realm is related to profession, status, and position. This means that it has become certain that women taking part in the public sphere is not a setback from civilization, it is precisely an advance. Although in the journey there will be many challenges both from the internal public domain itself and from the outside such as the "old-fashioned" thinking that requires women to only play a role domestically. Meanwhile, in the social realm of society, how do women contribute to the continuity of the dynamics of society so that society can have an understanding that it is not taboo if women walk and move forward more than just the issue of "dapur, sumur, kasur (kitchen-bathroom-bedroom)", but can also provide benefits for the surroundings with the status they carry. Although it does not mean letting go of the status that is also equally important in the family in the future, namely as a smart mother to educate her children.

This empowerment process can be based on the educational path both formal and informal. R.A.Kartini once said that education is a means that allows women to stand the same height as men, even far from it, women can become central figures in the progress of civilization with the status that is mostly carried by her, namely as a mother. Because there is a saying that says "An intelligent mother will produce an intelligent child." Education not only teaches science but also in it includes how to build attitudes and behaviors as well as a strong mentality as well as skills and also the development of interests and talents is another aspect that must be realized in education.

Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) Riyadlul ulum Wadda'wah, which is located in Condong Village, Setianegara Village, Cibereum District, Tasikmalaya City, is one of the formal educational institutions that combines the national curriculum, salafiyah, and pondok gontor. This Islamic Boarding School is better known as Pesantren Condong. As one of the oldest Islamic boarding schools in Tasikmalaya City, this pesantren has a uniqueness in its curriculum, namely the national curriculum which is contained in general lessons at the junior high and high school levels. Which includes Riyadlud Ulum Integrated Men's Junior High School, Riyadlul Ulum Integrated Girls' Junior High School, and Riyadlul Ulum Integrated High School. The Pondok curriculum, which is commonly called Salafiyah or the teaching of the yellow book, is also the Gontor curriculum which emphasizes the use of English and Arabic in everyday life.

Women's Empowerment is the focus of this paper which from the interesting side of the curriculum contained in the *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) *Condong* with all the activities contained in the continuity of education in the *pesantren*, is something that should be seen and studied from the side of the extent of women's empowerment contained in the *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) *Riyadlul ulum Wadda'wah* in the title Similar positions between Men and

Women in the Pedagogic Context of *Pesant-ren* (Islamic Boarding School).

METHODS

This research uses a phenomenological approach that allows the research team to see and find pure symptoms that occur in the pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) environment, especially with the results of behavior, words, or actions that arise from a person's interpretation and understanding of their world. Data is collected through observation methods or direct observation in the Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) environment on various matters that are considered important and related, interviews with parties with certain criteria to obtain appropriate data, and literature studies in the form of finding reading sources, journals, books as references to strengthen and ensure that the data is accurate. Furthermore, this qualitative data processing is carried out by describing the data that can be sequenced, clear, and overlapping with each other through the process of examination, screening, verification, and making conclusions as a result of research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Women's empowerment is a central topic in the discussion of women in three domains. This is in response to not a few women being placed in a very excessive marginal realm. This can be caused by several factors, namely first as a result of cultural constructions which means that women are mapped or patterned as people who have a domestic centralized domain of work which means the area of dapur, sumur, kasur (kitchenbathroom-bedroom); secondly as a result of the empowerment of women themselves which in reality goes unevenly. So women are often positioned for their lives only in the domestic world because women are considered to be able to hinder if they enter the public world. The real concept of gender often experiences a shift in meaning, so there are often misunderstandings that lead to the emergence of the view that women want to

compete with men (Andy, 2018).

Empowerment is always related to education because the backwardness of women is predominantly caused by the low level of education of women themselves. Women's empowerment is one of the efforts to provide abilities to women so that they can gain access and control over several aspects such as economic, social, cultural, and other aspects. This is done to increase selfconfidence so that women can play a role and actively participate in their lives (Tamba et al., 2020). The perspective of some societies suggests that gender construction puts women in an "as they should" position even though in reality it is a marginalization of women. just as women's education is restricted, and also women's work is fraught with restrictions on women's own "obligations." The real obligation is limited to the "habits and habituations" addressed to women as "domestic servants". The inequality that occurs in women has given rise to various forms of injustice felt by women, such as marginalization, violence, double burden, and several other circumstances (Jauhari and Towaf, 2019).

To fuse differences between women and men in the educational process, Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) presents a typical education for women and men. Not all education systems are applied the same for both, some educational programs are devoted based on the assessment of the rights and obligations, and needs of both. This needs assessment covers various aspects of women's and men's lives, namely personal needs as independent individuals, maximizing the role and function of both in the family and social environment, as well as responsibility as a servant to Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala (Malihah and Nurbayani, 2015; Nuroniyah, 2019). All of this is presented in a continuous, sustainable, and integrated education system between Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) as an instillation of religious values with a school education system as is generally available in the *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) environment.

An in-depth study of women and men as distinctive individuals is answered with a

learning system that is peculiar to both. A deep understanding of individual women and men is expected to be able to make both understand each other that some values are indeed textually different in religious studies for both but, contextual analysis in social life and obligations to their God are the same (Muafifah, 2013). In simple terms, the basis of education is to give a deep understanding of oneself which will then make it easier to understand others.

This peculiarity in the education system for women and men aims to form good character and morals as guided by Islam (Mannan, 2017). Both women and men have roles and can be potential assets for nationbuilding, therefore women and men must have equal opportunities to develop their abilities (Prasetiyawan and Rohimat, 2019). The specificity of the education system is not limited to distinguishing education because there is a subordination between the two but rather to maximize roles and functions based on the concept of gender relations and proportionality, that there are roles that need to be divided to be balanced for women and men. There are efforts to deepen through the study of flexible religious values to provide more provisions for women and men in a reformative manner as the demands of the times are increasingly developing without leaving the basis of religious values themselves.

There are many cases of radicalism that have occurred in Indonesia recently. The latest is an action carried out by one of the women, namely 25-year-old Zakiah Aini at the Police Headquarters. As a result, the perpetrator was successfully shot dead by the police after a previous exchange of fire. This incident gives the idea that the threat of terror from radicalism is not something that can be taken lightly. There are often people who misinterpret the meaning of verses in the Quran that make them feel right about radical behaviors and attitudes. Religion has always been used as a cover for people who act radically when in reality no religion teaches its people to act radically. Every religion teaches the values of peace both in the world and in the hereafter so that every human being can live in harmony and peace (Amin and Akmal, 2021).

Some of the factors causing the emergence of radicalism in the religious aspect are the existence of a wrong understanding of religion, social injustice, poverty, and a sense of dissatisfaction with the ongoing politics so that they want to change the religious teachings they adhere to, social inequality (Mukhlis and Makhya, 2020). Especially seeing from the perpetrator is a woman who is a continuation of the barrage of terror perpetrators of the female sex. A lecturer at the Faculty of Law, Universitas Brawijaya who is also a researcher at LP3ES Milda Istiqomah, explained that in recent years there has been an increasing trend of terror acts involving women. It was recorded that within 10 years (2010-2020), there were 39 women involved in acts of terrorism. Although the number is still below that of men, it has become the basis for the need for caution and vigilance and the need for efforts to be able to overcome this.

Pondok Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) Riyadlul Ulum Wadda'wah or often referred to as Pondok Pesantren Condong is one of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia located in the Tasikmalaya area. This Condong Islamic boarding school interprets the meaning of gender equality, from the results of the field, showing the freedom and autonomy given to women in holding and having an identity outside the pesantren. This freedom is a form of women's freedom in terms of intellectual and sensitivity to the law outside the Islamic boarding school, by freeing women to study and hold schools outside the Islamic boarding school and also studying science as well as law and involving themselves in efforts to learn science and law. With this, women in the pesantren can play an active role in efforts to instill and understand efforts to identify fanaticism, political narratives, and other religious narratives against one opinion without acknowledging the opinions of others. The narrative that women should be protected by curbing and restricting women within their social environment can also limit their awareness of social responsibility due to their teaching which can lead to a lack of social sensitivity. These limitations can result in a lack of sensitivity to legal and intellectual consciousness which results in the inclusion and exclusion of social responsibility consciousness. So that limited the space for women to move in social life, will grow or raise a new problem because women cannot behave or respond to social conditions in society.

In contrast to the application in Pesantren Condong which makes women active, independent, and proficient in various aspects, starting from the activities packaged in the OSPC (Organization of Santri Pesantren Condong) which structurally has the same position as the students. So that both men and women have the same position because the OSPC in the pesantren tends to be separate but when there is a big event the two OSPC between santri (male students who study in Islamic boarding schools) and santriwati (female students who study in Islamic boarding schools) become integrated. Thus, women have the same role as men in organizing, holding an event, leading activities, and so on. Women and men have the same opportunity to lead organizations within *pesantren*, female *OSPC* is led by women and male OSPC is led by men. In addition, men and women working together with the celebration of qurban, social service, and economic empowerment provide space to convey their ideas and opinions in packaging a program and provide opportunities in improving the economy that has an impact on the lives of the surrounding community. The combination of the education system by combining the formal curriculum and the typical curriculum of *pesantren* also has a role in realizing independent women, because it can involve students to be active in the educational environment (Hasanah et al., 2020). The separation of the management of the female and male structures is also carried out in the teaching system, santriwati (female students) who already have experience will become educators at the Islamic boarding school. So, if the santriwati (female students) have finished carrying out their knowledge at the Islamic boarding school, they can still improve their abilities and have the opportunity to become educators at the Islamic boarding school.

In addition, the existence of extracurriculars in *Pesantren Condong* has always been generalized, there is no extracurricular term such as martial arts only given to men. All santri (male students) and santriwati (female students) freely choose extracurriculars that are tailored to their interests and talents. So that *santriwati* (female students) in *pesantren* tend to be able to hone their abilities, this is very useful for them when they have finished carrying out knowledge at the pesantren, women can actualize their abilities with maximal. This application will have a good impact on the understanding of santriwati (female students) in the Islamic boarding school, that any activity or activities can be carried out by women or men.

The focus instilled in Pesantren Condong itself is based on the long term for the future, the students are packaged into independent people by not relying on anyone. From waking up to going to bed self-management in exploring itself is given. For santriwati (female students) who are skilled in teaching, which has been seen from school, they will automatically be given the trust to teach at Pesantren Condong, besides that structurally as the fields of student affairs, administration, and Information Technology curriculum are all the responsibility of santriwati, not to mention that economically the santriwati (female students) have also been developed to be good at developing business, one of which is the wallapa canteen where the santriwanti are taught to develop catering for events outside the pesantren with its preparations. This wallapa canteen is one of the efforts of Islamic boarding schools to increase the activeness of women to have a business, how they manage food, maintain quality, manage income and expenses, and other things that can be learned by the students. *Pesantren Condong* also has a bakery business that started from the participation of santriwati (female students) in the competition and became the winner held throughout West Java, so that the Islamic boarding school could develop its bakery business. The existence of a bakery owned by a learning Islamic boarding school has a very good impact on the students because taking care of the bakery starting from buying ingredients to finally becoming a product that has selling power can increase the ability and knowledge of women in the business world.

So it can be concluded that the role of women in *pesantren* tends to be independent, there is no noticeable difference in the differences between men and women both in terms of subjects, book studies, structural to space in interests and talents. This is an added value for *Pesantren Condong* which removes the view that women are subordinated. The cultivation of women like this can certainly strengthen the principle of life so that they become female figures who are not easily carried away in extreme environments where Islamic boarding schools are sometimes categorized as anti-government education.

Boundaries about gender, how judgments of gender, and "supposed" measures are firmly held by media portrayals. As an industry, the media conveys the role of producers in conveying cultural messages. The dominant framework of ideology is formed in such a way, to the point of influencing a person's way of thinking and acting. "Mass communication" became one of the sacred processes in the distribution of modern culture. The media can define the limits of acceptance and rejection of culture. The media plays its role as a producer in the cultural products that develop in society, not least with how to interpret religious values and how to apply them in everyday life. The media forms a pattern of "what is the better done" to "what should be done", through news, and special channels related to these cultural products, to penetrate the boundaries of exclusivity about generally accepted values and norms. The media has full authority and power to convey true Islamic values and resist the bias of the media itself which often corners Islam such as how the media portrays Islam which is full of double standards for women and the stereotype of Islam as "out of date religion".

The media is a forum that accommo-

dates all things cultural products, including religion. How to represent the value of religion in today's society, how obedience to its God, and how religious obligations should be carried out, not a few of these are all described by the media. Until the media is in a pattern that justifies a phenomenon as the media explains that women's motivation to carry out suicide bombings is more of an emotional (feminine) dimension than a (masculine) ideology "owned" by men (Howard and Prividera, 2004).

This is certainly not in harmony with the "power" that women have. The depiction given to the audience is limited to decision-making and actions that are based only on the emotionality of weak women rather than on the pattern of struggle that women want to convey (regardless of the fallacies in it). It's as if the media confirmed that what exists in society then and now, including the media both past and present is "men's property", until the decisions taken by the two remain on a superficial depiction of how emotional women and ideologically full men are.

Gender equality applied in *Pesantren* Condong is in line with Cooley's concept of the looking glass self where pesantren have clear causes and rules in forming a self-identity that is adjusted to the goals and expectations of *Pesantren Condong* it self, one of which is to be able to understand itself from its potential (Cooley and Smith, 2014; Syarif, 2017). The head of the Pesantren revealed that there is nothing different between men and women, the difference is only the physical form, there is a statement that the woman has weaknesses in worship and anger only but this needs to be emphasized that women have weaknesses in their worship because women have menstruation and women have weaknesses in their anger because women's emotions that are not controlled make it difficult for women to control themselves. However, when reviewed through the Cooley concept, this pesantren applies the concept of a mirror to interpret the reactions of others to women, in particular, the concept that has been formed that women are the second role but in the Pesantren

Condong women have the same space as men (Anita et al., 2020).

Pesantren is an educational institution that aims to form its students by the principles and dogmas of Islamic teachings both in intellectual aspects and character (Mumtahanah, 2015; Syafe'i, 2017). About Islamic boarding school education to women at the Riyadlul ulum Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School, it has been observed that both culturally and in the pesantren curriculum, the placement of women in education and their role in society are treated equally with men. The presentation of education in Islamic boarding schools also discusses gender equality for women by allowing women to have autonomy and individual freedom with their identities outside the pesantren, which is a form of educational reform in Islamic boarding schools to accommodate the rights, obligations, and needs of santri and santriwati (male students and female students) to adjust to the times without leaving the basis of Islamic values.

Gender awareness education in the Islamic boarding school environment is a new real thing in Indonesia (Warliah, 2017). As religious education has shifted in a more progressive direction, what carries over here is a series of questions about how to implement gender equality both inside and outside the school curriculum and how it can be practiced by learners. For example, Pesantren Riyadlul ulum Wadda'wah is one of the pioneers of other Islamic boarding schools with its gender-friendly education, as an effort to deceive women by providing equal opportunities with men and forming an environment and culture to support gender equality. In practical terms, this form of effort aims to avoid students falling into radical and extreme thoughts, but there are also efforts to empower both gender parties to learn to be independent and resilient to the outside world. Because Islamic boarding schools are often seen as normative and conservative in teaching gender equality and women's empowerment, the Riyadlul ulum Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School is seen as a new beginning in the development of Islamic education in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools.

CONCLUSION

The basis of Islamic education at the Riyadlul ulum Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School is also active in dealing with the problem of radicalism among its santri and santriwati (male students and female students). Active measures in anti-radicalism education as well as identifying political and religious narratives are also present in their curriculum, this is one way to prevent their learners from joining extremist or militant radical groups that can harm them. Pesantren education also actively encourages its students to be able to have autonomy mi & independence to eliminate stigma and gender bias narratives that women in Islam are obedient, obedient, and passive figures in taking action.

Thus, the development of gender equality and women's empowerment in Islamic boarding schools is not only limited to their curriculum but also involves areas outside the school curriculum. This includes extracurricular activities that are equalized between men and women, in the absence of restrictions or prohibitions on women, and also being given the same facilities, and infrastructure. Apart from that, there are also microeconomic businesses also allowed in Islamic boarding schools to provide opportunities to empower their businesses, this includes the establishment of canteens in pesantren and also includes bakery businesses which are one of the proofs of the results of *pesantren* empowerment that can produce a relatively stable business. Overall, the opportunities provided in Islamic boarding schools, especially for women, have been proven progressive and do not show any form of discrimination or restrictions against women.

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