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Transforming Islamic Education through Merdeka Curriculum in Pesantren

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Abstract

The evolution of Islamic education in Indonesia marks a significant shift, with the proactive introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum fostering innovation. This curriculum grants educational institutions the power to tailor their programs to local needs, embodying a dynamic response to contemporary demands. Investigating its implementation at Pesantren Darul Qalam in Banten, this qualitative study involves interviews with Pesantren leaders, teachers, and students, complemented by observational analyses. The findings showcase Pesantren's successful integration of the Merdeka Curriculum, harmonizing it with the national curriculum and designing programs responsive to students' diverse needs. This research advocates for Pesantren institutions to adopt the Merdeka Curriculum, recognizing it as a catalyst for elevating the quality and relevance of Islamic education. Furthermore, it urges a thorough exploration of the curriculum's long-term effects within the Pesantren context and its potential applicability to other Islamic educational institutions. Emphasizing principles of freedom, autonomy in learning, multilingualism, and responsiveness to student needs, the study underscores the crucial role of educational innovation in Pesantren and beyond.

Keywords

Educational Innovation, Islamic Education, Merdeka Curriculum, Pesantren Integration

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MERDEKA CURRICULUM INNOVATION: Transformation of Islamic Education in Darul Qalam Pesantren Banten

ABSTRACT

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes over time, with one of the leading innovations being the Merdeka Curriculum which provides flexibility and independence to educational institutions to design curricula according to local needs in response to the spirit of change and the needs of the times. This research focuses on the integration of Merdeka Curriculum in Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten with the aim of understanding the adoption and integration of this curriculum, as well as its impact on the quality and relevance of Islamic education. The research method used is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach, involving interviews with pesantren leaders, teachers, and students, as well as observation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The results showed the adoption of the innovation, with the pesantren separating the pesantren into three branches, integrating the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, and developing excellent programs that are responsive to the needs of students. Suggestions from this study include the idea that other Islamic education institutions consider the adoption of Merdeka Curriculum as a way to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic education and the expansion of research to investigate its long-term impact in the context of pesantren and other Islamic education institutions, while still paying attention to the principles of freedom and autonomy in learning, multilingualism, and responsiveness to santri needs, all of which reflect the contribution of educational innovation.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Merdeka Curriculum, Pesantren Integration, Educational Innovation.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia telah mengalami perubahan signifikan seiring berjalannya waktu, dengan salah satu inovasi terkemuka yaitu Kurikulum Merdeka yang memberikan fleksibilitas dan kemandirian pada lembaga-lembaga pendidikan untuk merancang kurikulum sesuai dengan kebutuhan lokal sebagai respons terhadap semangat perubahan dan kebutuhan zaman. Penelitian ini fokus pada integrasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten dengan tujuan memahami adopsi dan integrasi kurikulum ini, serta dampaknya terhadap mutu dan relevansi pendidikan Islam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif, melibatkan wawancara dengan pemimpin pesantren, guru, dan santri, serta observasi implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adopsi inovasi tersebut, dengan pesantren memisahkan pesantren menjadi tiga cabang, mengintegrasikan kurikulum pesantren dengan kurikulum nasional, dan mengembangkan program-program unggulan yang responsif terhadap kebutuhan santri. Saran dari penelitian ini mencakup pemikiran agar lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya mempertimbangkan adopsi Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai cara untuk meningkatkan mutu dan relevansi pendidikan Islam serta perluasan penelitian untuk menginvestigasi dampak jangka panjangnya dalam konteks pesantren dan lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya, dengan tetap memperhatikan prinsip kebebasan dan otonomi dalam pembelajaran, multibahasa, dan respons terhadap kebutuhan santri, yang kesemuanya mencerminkan kontribusi inovasi pendidikan.

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Kata Kunci : Pendidikan Islam, Kurikulum Merdeka, Integrasi Pesantren, Inovasi Pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes and transformations over time. These changes are reflected in studies such as those mentioned in Amirullah & Hamami, (2020), Gumanti et al., (2023), Huda, (2020), Latief et al., (2021), Sabila et al., (2020) and Yusra, (2018) which document important shifts in the sector. In an effort to respond to the demands of the times, Islamic education institutions, especially pesantren, continue to strive to innovate and adapt to the dynamics of continuous change. Several studies, such as Baharun & Adhimiy (2019), Dewi & Wajdi, (2022), Hamdanah (2020), Hasan (2015), Kholifah (2022), Multazamy Rohmatulloh et al., (2022), Nurjanah & Amrullah (2021), Wajdi et al., (2022) and Yahya, (2021) have identified this challenge and underlined the importance of innovating in Islamic education. In the context of educational innovation, one of the most prominent and contemporary developments is curriculum development. Curriculum development, especially through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, is of paramount significance to pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. There are several compelling reasons for the critical role of curriculum development within the pesantren context (Efendi, 2022; Ekaningrum et al., 2018; Falikul Isbah, 2020; Winata et al., 2021). Firstly, it addresses modern educational needs by expanding the traditional religious focus to include a wider array of subjects, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for diverse career opportunities (Assa'idi, 2021; Muhajir, 2022; Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022; Soleman et al., 2020). Secondly, it offers flexibility and customization, allowing pesantren to develop their programs to local characteristics and student-specific needs, resulting in a more relevant and effective education (Islam, 2021; Muhammad et al., 2021; Pribadi, 2014; Sauri et al., 2018). Furthermore, it empowers students, emphasizing autonomy and the freedom to select their educational paths, encouraging self-directed learning and personal growth (Apriyanto & Hidayati, 2022; Chudzaifah et al., 2022; Hardianto et al., 2022; Khomsatun et al., 2022; Maryati et al., 2020). Moreover, it facilitates adaptation to technological advances, ensuring students are well-versed in technology (Ghozali, 2019; Muafiah et al., 2022). Additionally, it encourages diverse teaching methods, enhancing educational quality, and competitiveness, which not only benefits religious fields but also broadens opportunities in secular careers, making pesantren more appealing to a wider student base and enabling collaboration with global educational standards. Lastly, it contributes to national development by equipping students with diverse skill sets, aligning with Indonesia's progress and development objectives.

the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is an initiative that has emerged in the Indonesian education domain and aims to provide flexibility and independence to educational institutions in designing curricula according to local characteristics and needs. It encourages a more adaptive and responsive approach to rapid developments in the world of education.

The Merdeka Curriculum was launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology with Nadiem Anwar Makarim as one of its pioneers, as stated in the research of Devian et al., (2023), Dewey Triyatno et al., (2022), Manalu et al., (2022) and Setia siregar (2023). This curriculum emerged in response to the emergency situation that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed in the research of Alawi et al., (2022), Jojo & Sihotang (2022), Sumber et al., (2023) and Vidieyanti (2022).

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum has been a topic of interest in educational discussions in Indonesia, but questions arise about how these innovations can be integrated and diffused in the context of pesantren that have rich educational traditions and deep Islamic values. Previous studies, such as Jailani (2022), which analyzed the implementation of the concept of "independent learning" in Pondok Pesantren, and Zainuri et al., (2023) examined the management of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Latansa Palembang Darussalam, provided an initial overview of the challenges and similarities among pesantren in adopting the Merdeka Curriculum. Wafi & Faruk (2023) research further indicates significant similarities between the curriculum

implemented in pesantren and the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, including takhassus programs, santri autonomy, and freedom in choosing learning programs. This research does not only aim to describe the status quo or report social facts, but also to understand the impact of educational innovations such as the Merdeka Curriculum on pesantren.

The current research tries to differentiate itself from previous studies by providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the context of a unique pesantren, namely Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten. The focus on one pesantren allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges and changes that occur within the environment, as well as the level of integration of Merdeka Curriculum at all levels of pesantren educational institutions. This article also seeks to compare research results with previous research, allowing us to see similarities and differences in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in various pesantren. Thus, this research makes a more in-depth contribution to the understanding of educational transformation in pesantren and the implementation of educational innovations in the context of Darul Qalam Banten pesantren.

This research aims to fill the gaps in our understanding of how Merdeka Curriculum, as an innovation in education, is diffused and integrated in pesantren. The reason for choosing Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten as the object of research is strong, because this pesantren has a rich history and tradition of Islamic education, creating an opportunity to observe change and innovation in a culturally rich context. This pesantren has also demonstrated the ability of adaptation and innovation in order to improve the quality of Islamic education, as well as the potential to become a model in the development of adaptive and innovative Islamic education. The results of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for other pesantren in developing quality Islamic education that is responsive to today's needs.

In an effort to understand these changes, this research will apply the Theory of Educational Innovation developed by Everett M. Rogers. This theory will help us understand the factors that influence the diffusion of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren, as well as the impact of this innovation on Islamic education in Darul Qalam Banten. Through analyzing the diffusion of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into how innovative educational policies such as the Merdeka Curriculum can be adopted and implemented in educational institutions with strong religious and cultural backgrounds. Thus, this research has important relevance in the context of educational development in Indonesia and contributes to the understanding of educational innovation within the framework of Everett M. Rogers' Theory of Educational Innovation.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods through a case study approach to identify innovations in the pesantren curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten. In analyzing the pesantren curriculum innovation, this study adopted the theoretical framework of educational innovation developed by Everett M. Rogers (Rogers et al., 2019). The data explored in this research are primary data in the form of interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials related to pesantren curriculum innovation at Darul Qalam Islamic Boarding School in Banten. In addition, secondary (supporting) data in the form of books, literature, articles, and journals related to the research theme were also used.

The primary sources in this research are the research subjects, including the management of the Darul Qalam Banten Islamic boarding school who are ustadz and ustadzah (cluster program teachers), community leaders, parents of students, and students. The Principal and Vice Principal at the research location are also subjects in this study. The research subjects were chosen because they were considered the most representative in answering questions related to the focus of the research, namely pesantren curriculum innovation.

This study used data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and document studies. Observation was carried out by direct observation, recording events, occurrences, and activities at the Darul Qalam Banten boarding school to obtain data related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Interviews were conducted by direct and oral question and answer to the research subjects, with a semi-structured interview format, which follows the interview guidelines but is carried out out of order

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or conditionally. In addition, document studies were also conducted to collect various documents related to the research, such as boarding school profiles, activity profiles, activity schedules, and other relevant data in order to complement data related to pesantren curriculum innovation at Darul Qolam Banten Islamic Boarding School.

The data analysis technique uses the Interactive Model from Miles and Huberman (Matthew et al., 2014)

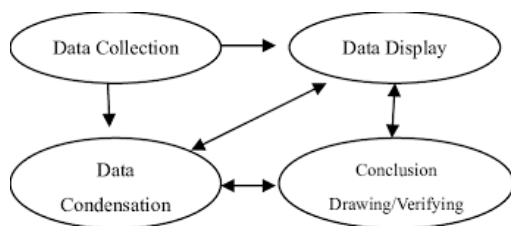


Figure 1 : Interactive Model from Miles dan Huberman(Matthew et al., 2014)

Based on Figure 1, the data analysis phase in this study involves several stages. The first stage is Data Collection, which is carried out using observation, interview, and document study techniques to collect data related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Furthermore, the Data Condensation Stage is a process in which data that has been collected from various sources is analyzed and reduced to make it more focused. The steps in this stage include grouping data by theme, deleting irrelevant data, abstracting data to create a simpler summary, creating categories or themes that reflect important elements, and organizing data according to the analytical framework. After that, in the Data Presentation stage, the data that has been reduced will be arranged in a narrative and systematic manner to understand phenomena related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Finally, in the Conclusion Drawing and Testing stage, the results of data analysis are used to draw conclusions which are answers to the research focus of pesantren curriculum innovation, and these conclusions will be tested and verified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Institutional development at Pesantren Darul Qolam reflects the pesantren's adaptation to changes and innovations in education. Based on interview, the researcher found that the leader of the pesantren, Kiyai Ahmad Syahiduddin, adopted various innovations, including changes in the structure of the institution and the pesantren curriculum. The changes include the division of the pesantren institution into three, namely Darul Qolam One, Darul Qolam Two, and Darul Qolam Three, as a leadership regeneration step and a response to the development of the internal and external environment of the pesantren. Darul Qolam Pesantren also considers pesantren as Islamic educational institutions that must remain relevant and able to compete in the midst of global competition.

The pesantren takes inspiration from Pesantren Darussalam Gontor, where the founder of the pesantren, Kiyai Rifa'i Arief, is an alumnus of the pesantren. Despite adopting the educational model of the Gontor pesantren, Pesantren Darul Qolam continues to innovate while maintaining the traditional values of the pesantren. One of the adaptation efforts is to open formal education programs such as madrasah, high school, and integrate the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum. Thus, Pesantren Darul Qolam tries to combine the pesantren tradition with the preparation of graduates who can compete at various levels of education and in various institutions, including general education. This reflects how pesantren can maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment.

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The institutional development program at Pesantren Darul Qolam, which includes improving students' knowledge and skills, can be linked to the Merdeka Curriculum innovation. In an effort to provide special treatment for santri who are considered "smarter" and give them the opportunity to explore their abilities, pesantren create excellent programs that provide added value for santri. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, these pesantren take an approach that is responsive to the needs and potential of santri by providing opportunities to develop specialized knowledge and skills. Such programs reflect the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which gives pesantren the freedom and autonomy to develop a curriculum that suits their own characteristics and needs. The use of Arabic and English as official languages of communication also reflects the pesantren's efforts to prepare santri with multilingual skills, in line with the vision of Merdeka Curriculum that emphasizes 21st century skills. Thus, this institution's development program contributes to the innovation of Merdeka Curriculum by combining pesantren traditions with modern approaches that are responsive to the development of the world of education.

Darul Qolam Tiga Islamic Boarding School under the leadership of K. Zahid Purna Wibawa has a vision to become an Islamic educational institution that prepares cadres who are believers, muttaqin, and rasikh fil ilmi. This vision reflects an effort to produce graduates who have a balanced quality of character, knowledge and skills. The accelerated education program organized by this pesantren, especially at the high school level, reflects a response to the needs and desires of the santri, as well as the desire to create quality Muslim cadres. This program allows santri to pursue knowledge and skills in a shorter time, in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes flexibility in learning. In addition, the vision and mission of the pesantren also includes mastery of science and technology, which is in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's goal of preparing students with 21st century skills. The pesantren also encourages santri to actively participate in life and society, which is in line with the social and civic values reinforced by the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus, Darul Qolam Tiga's strategic programs and goals are related to the Merdeka Curriculum innovation by combining traditional Islamic education with a modern approach that is responsive to the needs of students and the development of the world of education.

Based on the results of observations and interviews as well as documentation (2023), researchers concluded that Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has three branches that organize different education, but all of them apply the concept of integration between the pesantren curriculum and the national curriculum to ensure that students get a comprehensive education. The following is an overview of curriculum development in each branch:

1. **Darul Qolam Satu (MTs dan MA):**
 - a. Integrating the pesantren curriculum and the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum.
 - b. The academic curriculum structure includes various groups of subject areas such as language, *dirasah Islamiyah*, Arabic, English, exact, and social.
 - c. The pesantren curriculum structure involves the study of the Yellow Islamic classic Book and teaching practice.
 - d. Providing extracurricular activities such as courses, training, and organizational activities.
2. **Darul Qolam Dua (SMP and SMA):**
 - a. Has similar integration between the pesantren curriculum and the Ministry of National Education curriculum.
 - b. The academic curriculum structure includes groups of subject areas that include Arabic, English, exact, and social languages.
 - c. The pesantren curriculum structure involves the study of the Yellow Islamic classic Book, teaching practice, and extracurricular activities.
 - d. Providing Arabic and English language skills, as well as exact and social skills
3. **Darul Qolam Tiga (SMA - Program Extension):**

- a. Continuing education at the high school level with the integration of the pesantren curriculum and the national curriculum.
- b. The intracurricular curriculum structure includes materials from both curricula.
- c. Involves co-curricular and extracurricular curriculum such as speech practice, *Kitab Kuning* studies, scouting activities, *tahfidzul Qur'an*, and many other activities.

All branches of this pesantren apply the Kitab Kuning study system, teaching practices, and extracurricular activities to complete the education of students holistically. The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum allows students to obtain a balanced provision of knowledge and skills, in accordance with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which includes aspects of character, knowledge, and skills.

Discussion

Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

1. Innovations in Institutional Structure and Curriculum

Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has implemented significant innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum in response to the development of the educational environment, both internally and externally. One of the main steps is the separation of the pesantren into three branches, namely Darul Qolam One, Darul Qolam Two, and Darul Qolam Three. This reflects the adaptation needed to answer the challenges and changes of the times. By having several branches, the pesantren gives autonomy to each branch to manage and develop their own educational programs, according to their specific characteristics and needs. This approach is consistent with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives educational institutions the freedom to develop curricula that fit their own context.

In addition, in the context of curriculum innovation, pesantren create approaches that are responsive to the needs and potential of their santri. This includes opening formal education programs such as madrasah and senior high school (SMA) and integrating the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum. Thus, pesantren can combine traditional pesantren values with the preparation of graduates who can compete in various levels of education and institutions, including general education. The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages reflects the pesantren's efforts to prepare santri with multilingual skills, in accordance with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes 21st century skills.

This innovation also aims to improve the quality of education provided by pesantren. By designing a curriculum that is responsive to developments in the world of education, pesantren can ensure that their graduates are equipped with knowledge, skills, and strong character. Overall, the innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam are clear examples of how educational institutions can maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment.

Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has implemented significant innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum in response to the development of the educational environment, both internally and externally. Through the separation of the pesantren into three branches which gives autonomy to each branch to develop educational programs that fit their own characteristics, as well as with the integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, the pesantren has adopted changes that reflect the adaptation needed to answer the challenges of the times. These efforts reflect the role of pesantren leaders in interpersonal communication and explain the concept of relative advantage, which are important elements in Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation. Overall, these innovations reflect how pesantren maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment. This is in line with Yahya (2021) opinion that in the context of curriculum design, there are three types of objectives that

must be taken into account: national objectives, institutional objectives, and learning objectives. Furthermore, this curriculum redesigns learning materials by reconstructing some pesantren books, such as the books of nahwu, shorof, and fiqh. The learning process in this curriculum uses a student centered approach, which encourages active student participation, and is enriched with various learning programs, such as *takror sugbro*, *takror kubro*, and *syawir*. Finally, the evaluation methods in this curriculum include formative and summative evaluations.

2. Integration of the Pesantren Curriculum with the National Curriculum

The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, especially in Darul Qolam Dua and Tiga, reflects the pesantren's commitment to providing graduates who are ready to compete at various levels of education and institutions, in line with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum. In the context of Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation, this curriculum integration can be explained as a form of innovation in education.

Rogers' theory of educational innovation highlights the importance of adopting educational innovations in improving the quality and relevance of education. The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum reflects the adoption of educational innovations that are adapted to changes and demands in the educational environment. Here, pesantren have adopted the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives autonomy to educational institutions to design a curriculum that suits their own characteristics and needs.

This curriculum integration also reflects an important concept in Rogers' theory, namely interpersonal communication in the innovation adoption process. Pesantren leaders, such as Kiyai Ahmad Syahiduddin, play an important role in explaining the concept and benefits of this curriculum integration to stakeholders, including teachers, santri, and the pesantren community. This is in line with Rogers' theory which emphasizes that effective communication about innovations is the key to successful innovation adoption.

In addition, curriculum integration also reflects the pesantren's efforts to develop graduates who have the knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment. By integrating the pesantren curriculum components, which focus on traditional and religious values, with the national curriculum components that cover various subjects, pesantren can create graduates who have a balance of character, knowledge, and skills. This is in line with Maduningtias (2022), to improve the quality of santri education, it is necessary to revitalize the pesantren curriculum. This revitalization involves curriculum integration, which is a combination of various types of curriculum, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the pesantren curriculum. This integration mainly focuses on the harmonization of learning materials and curriculum management integrated in one management. In its implementation, this management is integrated so as to avoid any separation between pesantren and schools.

The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum at Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School reflects how educational innovation, as theorized by Everett M. Rogers, can contribute to positive changes in the education system and prepare graduates for success in various educational and professional contexts.

3. Responsive Approach to Santri Needs

The responsive approach to santri needs, which includes developing excellent programs to accommodate their needs and potential, is an important aspect of educational innovation. In the perspective of Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation, the adoption of innovations in education has a central role in improving the quality and relevance of education. The development of excellent programs in pesantren, as an innovative step, begins with the identification of existing problems or needs, and finding effective innovative solutions.

The development of excellent programs reflects the pesantren's response to the unique needs and potential of the students, allowing them to explore and develop their own special abilities. This

is in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility in learning and developing student potential. The Merdeka Curriculum provides autonomy to educational institutions to design a curriculum that is responsive to the unique needs of students and their environment.

In addition, within the framework of Rogers' theory, communication and diffusion of innovations are important elements in the adoption of innovations. Pesantren leaders and teachers play a central role in explaining the benefits and objectives of the flagship programs to santri. Effective communication regarding these innovations helps in the process of adoption and use of excellent programs by santri.

The responsive approach to santri needs that results in the development of excellent programs reflects the way pesantren apply innovations in education to improve the educational experience of santri and ensure that they have better opportunities to develop their potential and achieve success in various fields of education. This is in line with research of Romdhoni (2022) santri development program involves strategic planning innovations led by pesantren leaders and their staff. It begins with the identification of the current conditions of the students and the boarding school, which then becomes the basis for designing innovative strategies to overcome the new challenges faced by the students and provide a new paradigm for them. Through the implementation of this innovation, the goal is to increase the potential and creativity of the santri so that they can be more confident when interacting in society. Regular evaluation and assessment are used to measure the success of the development program, with the hope of forming new, more effective strategies in the future. Thus, Daarel Qolam Islamic Boarding School is committed to creating an environment that is responsive to the needs and potential of individual santri, supports growth, and helps them contribute positively in society.

4. Use of Arabic and English

In the theory of educational innovation by Everett M. Rogers, innovation is a process of change that aims to improve the quality of education. The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages at Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School is a clear example of an innovative effort. This innovation is designed to prepare santri with multilingual skills, especially in Arabic and English, which refers to the concept of diffusion of innovation in Rogers' theory.

The use of Arabic and English reflects the pesantren's adaptation to the times and the skill demands of the 21st century. This step is in line with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes the importance of 21st century skills, including the ability to communicate in various languages. The use of multilingual languages is considered an innovation that supports the goals of modern education.

In the perspective of Rogers' theory, the diffusion of innovation involves the communication and spread of innovative ideas to other individuals or groups. In pesantren, leaders and teachers play an important role in explaining the benefits and objectives of using Arabic and English to santri and facilitating the adoption of this innovation. Effective communication is a key step in promoting and supporting the adoption of innovations in educational settings. This is in line with research Rochmat et al., (2022) on the use of the Jasus (spy) system to discipline language use among santri. In addition, to improve the students' Arabic and English language skills, Daarel Qolam Islamic Boarding School implements vocabulary addition programs through activities such as Mufrodlat (Vocabulary), Muhadatsah (conversation), and Muhadhoroh (speech practice). All of these programs are designed with the aim of strengthening the students' Arabic and English language skills.

The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages in pesantren reflects how pesantren respond to the needs of the times with an innovative approach, supporting the vision of Merdeka Curriculum and the values of 21st century skills. In the context of Rogers' theory of educational innovation, this emphasizes the importance of adaptation and change in education to improve the quality and relevance of the educational process.

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CONCLUSION

The results showed that Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam Banten has successfully adopted and integrated Merdeka Curriculum into their educational environment. The Merdeka Curriculum allows these pesantren to provide flexibility and independence to educational institutions in designing the curriculum according to their local characteristics and needs. Important aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, such as the takhassus program that provides autonomy to santri, curriculum integration at all levels of pesantren educational institutions, and freedom in the selection of learning programs, have been well implemented.

The theory of educational innovation by Everett M. Rogers proved to be relevant in the context of the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren. Factors emphasized in the theory, such as effective communication, resource support, appropriate innovation characteristics, and the characteristics of the pesantren and surrounding community, play an important role in the diffusion process of this innovation. The theory provides an in-depth look at how educational innovations can be adopted and adapted in unique educational environments.

The results of this study have a positive impact on the progress of Islamic education in pesantren, especially in Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam Banten. The Merdeka Curriculum innovation has enabled this pesantren to develop according to the demands of the times, and this research provides practical guidance for other pesantren in developing responsive and quality education. In this way, this research has the potential to be a source of inspiration and guidance for other pesantren in facing future educational changes.

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Notes:

9. The title of the article should be revised to meet the scope of JPI
10. To meet JPI scope, research should be conducted at Islamic education institutions (Pesantren/ madrasah)
11. INTRODUCTION, add more international journal article to show the gap and achieve the novelty
12. METHOD, describe appropriately data collection and analysis
13. RESULTS, the findings should be described and organized well
14. DISCUSSION, elaborate and interpret each finding
15. CONCLUSION, rewrite the information to represent the content of the article
16. BIBLIOGRAPHY, provide DOI for each journal article

Each comment from the editor must be corrected by indicating the improvement results (mentioning the line and paragraph, revisions highlighted or marked in color).

MERDEKA CURRICULUM INNOVATION: Transformation of Islamic Education in Darul Qalam Pesantren Banten

ABSTRACT

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes over time, with one of the leading innovations being the Merdeka Curriculum which provides flexibility and independence to educational institutions to design curricula according to local needs in response to the spirit of change and the needs of the times. This research focuses on the integration of Merdeka Curriculum in Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten with the aim of understanding the adoption and integration of this curriculum, as well as its impact on the quality and relevance of Islamic education. The research method used is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach, involving interviews with pesantren leaders, teachers, and students, as well as observation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The results showed the adoption of the innovation, with the pesantren separating the pesantren into three branches, integrating the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, and developing excellent programs that are responsive to the needs of students. Suggestions from this study include the idea that other Islamic education institutions consider the adoption of Merdeka Curriculum as a way to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic education and the expansion of research to investigate its long-term impact in the context of pesantren and other Islamic education institutions, while still paying attention to the principles of freedom and autonomy in learning, multilingualism, and responsiveness to santri needs, all of which reflect the contribution of educational innovation.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Merdeka Curriculum, Pesantren Integration, Educational Innovation.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia telah mengalami perubahan signifikan seiring berjalannya waktu, dengan salah satu inovasi terkemuka yaitu Kurikulum Merdeka yang memberikan fleksibilitas dan kemandirian pada lembaga-lembaga pendidikan untuk merancang kurikulum sesuai dengan kebutuhan lokal sebagai respons terhadap semangat perubahan dan kebutuhan zaman. Penelitian ini fokus pada integrasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten dengan tujuan memahami adopsi dan integrasi kurikulum ini, serta dampaknya terhadap mutu dan relevansi pendidikan Islam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif, melibatkan wawancara dengan pemimpin pesantren, guru, dan santri, serta observasi implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adopsi inovasi tersebut, dengan pesantren memisahkan pesantren menjadi tiga cabang, mengintegrasikan kurikulum pesantren dengan kurikulum nasional, dan mengembangkan program-program unggulan yang responsif terhadap kebutuhan santri. Saran dari penelitian ini mencakup pemikiran agar lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya mempertimbangkan adopsi Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai cara untuk meningkatkan mutu dan relevansi pendidikan Islam serta perluasan penelitian untuk menginvestigasi dampak jangka panjangnya dalam konteks pesantren dan lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya, dengan tetap memperhatikan prinsip kebebasan dan otonomi dalam pembelajaran, multibahasa, dan respons terhadap kebutuhan santri, yang kesemuanya mencerminkan kontribusi inovasi pendidikan.

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Kata Kunci : Pendidikan Islam, Kurikulum Merdeka, Integrasi Pesantren, Inovasi Pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes and transformations over time. These changes are reflected in studies such as those mentioned in Amirullah & Hamami, (2020), Gumanti et al., (2023), Huda, (2020), Latief et al., (2021), Sabila et al., (2020) and Yusra, (2018) which document important shifts in the sector. In an effort to respond to the demands of the times, Islamic education institutions, especially pesantren, continue to strive to innovate and adapt to the dynamics of continuous change. Several studies, such as Baharun & Adhimiy (2019), Dewi & Wajdi, (2022), Hamdanah (2020), Hasan (2015), Kholifah (2022), Multazamy Rohmatulloh et al., (2022), Nurjanah & Amrullah (2021), Wajdi et al., (2022) and Yahya, (2021) have identified this challenge and underlined the importance of innovating in Islamic education. In the context of educational innovation, one of the most prominent and contemporary developments is curriculum development. Curriculum development, especially through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, is of paramount significance to pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. There are several compelling reasons for the critical role of curriculum development within the pesantren context (Efendi, 2022; Ekaningrum et al., 2018; Falikul Isbah, 2020; Winata et al., 2021). Firstly, it addresses modern educational needs by expanding the traditional religious focus to include a wider array of subjects, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for diverse career opportunities (Assa'idi, 2021; Muhajir, 2022; Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022; Soleman et al., 2020). Secondly, it offers flexibility and customization, allowing pesantren to develop their programs to local characteristics and student-specific needs, resulting in a more relevant and effective education (Islam, 2021; Muhammad et al., 2021; Pribadi, 2014; Sauri et al., 2018). Furthermore, it empowers students, emphasizing autonomy and the freedom to select their educational paths, encouraging self-directed learning and personal growth (Apriyanto & Hidayati, 2022; Chudzaifah et al., 2022; Hardianto et al., 2022; Khomsatun et al., 2022; Maryati et al., 2020). Moreover, it facilitates adaptation to technological advances, ensuring students are well-versed in technology (Ghozali, 2019; Muafiah et al., 2022). Additionally, it encourages diverse teaching methods, enhancing educational quality, and competitiveness, which not only benefits religious fields but also broadens opportunities in secular careers, making pesantren more appealing to a wider student base and enabling collaboration with global educational standards. Lastly, it contributes to national development by equipping students with diverse skill sets, aligning with Indonesia's progress and development objectives.

the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is an initiative that has emerged in the Indonesian education domain and aims to provide flexibility and independence to educational institutions in designing curricula according to local characteristics and needs. It encourages a more adaptive and responsive approach to rapid developments in the world of education.

The Merdeka Curriculum was launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology with Nadiem Anwar Makarim as one of its pioneers, as stated in the research of Devian et al., (2023), Dewey Triyatno et al., (2022), Manalu et al., (2022) and Setia siregar (2023). This curriculum emerged in response to the emergency situation that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed in the research of Alawi et al., (2022), Jojo & Sihotang (2022), Sumber et al., (2023) and Vidieyanti (2022).

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum has been a topic of interest in educational discussions in Indonesia, but questions arise about how these innovations can be integrated and diffused in the context of pesantren that have rich educational traditions and deep Islamic values. Previous studies, such as Jailani (2022), which analyzed the implementation of the concept of "independent learning" in Pondok Pesantren, and Zainuri et al., (2023) examined the management of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Latansa Palembang Darussalam, provided an initial overview of the challenges and similarities among pesantren in adopting the Merdeka Curriculum. Wafi & Faruk (2023) research further indicates significant similarities between the curriculum

implemented in pesantren and the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, including takhassus programs, santri autonomy, and freedom in choosing learning programs. This research does not only aim to describe the status quo or report social facts, but also to understand the impact of educational innovations such as the Merdeka Curriculum on pesantren.

The current research tries to differentiate itself from previous studies by providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the context of a unique pesantren, namely Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten. The focus on one pesantren allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges and changes that occur within the environment, as well as the level of integration of Merdeka Curriculum at all levels of pesantren educational institutions. This article also seeks to compare research results with previous research, allowing us to see similarities and differences in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in various pesantren. Thus, this research makes a more in-depth contribution to the understanding of educational transformation in pesantren and the implementation of educational innovations in the context of Darul Qalam Banten pesantren.

This research aims to fill the gaps in our understanding of how Merdeka Curriculum, as an innovation in education, is diffused and integrated in pesantren. The reason for choosing Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten as the object of research is strong, because this pesantren has a rich history and tradition of Islamic education, creating an opportunity to observe change and innovation in a culturally rich context. This pesantren has also demonstrated the ability of adaptation and innovation in order to improve the quality of Islamic education, as well as the potential to become a model in the development of adaptive and innovative Islamic education. The results of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for other pesantren in developing quality Islamic education that is responsive to today's needs.

In an effort to understand these changes, this research will apply the Theory of Educational Innovation developed by Everett M. Rogers. This theory will help us understand the factors that influence the diffusion of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren, as well as the impact of this innovation on Islamic education in Darul Qalam Banten. Through analyzing the diffusion of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into how innovative educational policies such as the Merdeka Curriculum can be adopted and implemented in educational institutions with strong religious and cultural backgrounds. Thus, this research has important relevance in the context of educational development in Indonesia and contributes to the understanding of educational innovation within the framework of Everett M. Rogers' Theory of Educational Innovation.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods through a case study approach to identify innovations in the pesantren curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten. In analyzing the pesantren curriculum innovation, this study adopted the theoretical framework of educational innovation developed by Everett M. Rogers (Rogers et al., 2019). The data explored in this research are primary data in the form of interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials related to pesantren curriculum innovation at Darul Qalam Islamic Boarding School in Banten. In addition, secondary (supporting) data in the form of books, literature, articles, and journals related to the research theme were also used.

The primary sources in this research are the research subjects, including the management of the Darul Qalam Banten Islamic boarding school who are ustadz and ustadzah (cluster program teachers), community leaders, parents of students, and students. The Principal and Vice Principal at the research location are also subjects in this study. The research subjects were chosen because they were considered the most representative in answering questions related to the focus of the research, namely pesantren curriculum innovation.

This study used data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and document studies. Observation was carried out by direct observation, recording events, occurrences, and activities at the Darul Qalam Banten boarding school to obtain data related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Interviews were conducted by direct and oral question and answer to the research subjects, with a semi-structured interview format, which follows the interview guidelines but is carried out out of order

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or conditionally. In addition, document studies were also conducted to collect various documents related to the research, such as boarding school profiles, activity profiles, activity schedules, and other relevant data in order to complement data related to pesantren curriculum innovation at Darul Qolam Banten Islamic Boarding School.

The data analysis technique uses the Interactive Model from Miles and Huberman (Matthew et al., 2014)

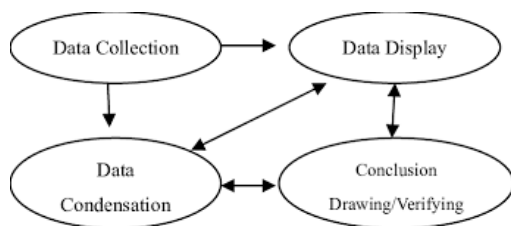


Figure 1 : Interactive Model from Miles dan Huberman(Matthew et al., 2014)

Based on Figure 1, the data analysis phase in this study involves several stages. The first stage is Data Collection, which is carried out using observation, interview, and document study techniques to collect data related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Furthermore, the Data Condensation Stage is a process in which data that has been collected from various sources is analyzed and reduced to make it more focused. The steps in this stage include grouping data by theme, deleting irrelevant data, abstracting data to create a simpler summary, creating categories or themes that reflect important elements, and organizing data according to the analytical framework. After that, in the Data Presentation stage, the data that has been reduced will be arranged in a narrative and systematic manner to understand phenomena related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Finally, in the Conclusion Drawing and Testing stage, the results of data analysis are used to draw conclusions which are answers to the research focus of pesantren curriculum innovation, and these conclusions will be tested and verified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Institutional development at Pesantren Darul Qolam reflects the pesantren's adaptation to changes and innovations in education. Based on interview, the researcher found that the leader of the pesantren, Kiyai Ahmad Syahiduddin, adopted various innovations, including changes in the structure of the institution and the pesantren curriculum. The changes include the division of the pesantren institution into three, namely Darul Qolam One, Darul Qolam Two, and Darul Qolam Three, as a leadership regeneration step and a response to the development of the internal and external environment of the pesantren. Darul Qolam Pesantren also considers pesantren as Islamic educational institutions that must remain relevant and able to compete in the midst of global competition.

The pesantren takes inspiration from Pesantren Darussalam Gontor, where the founder of the pesantren, Kiyai Rifa'i Arief, is an alumnus of the pesantren. Despite adopting the educational model of the Gontor pesantren, Pesantren Darul Qolam continues to innovate while maintaining the traditional values of the pesantren. One of the adaptation efforts is to open formal education programs such as madrasah, high school, and integrate the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum. Thus, Pesantren Darul Qolam tries to combine the pesantren tradition with the preparation of graduates who can compete at various levels of education and in various institutions, including general education. This reflects how pesantren can maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment.

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The institutional development program at Pesantren Darul Qolam, which includes improving students' knowledge and skills, can be linked to the Merdeka Curriculum innovation. In an effort to provide special treatment for santri who are considered "smarter" and give them the opportunity to explore their abilities, pesantren create excellent programs that provide added value for santri. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, these pesantren take an approach that is responsive to the needs and potential of santri by providing opportunities to develop specialized knowledge and skills. Such programs reflect the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which gives pesantren the freedom and autonomy to develop a curriculum that suits their own characteristics and needs. The use of Arabic and English as official languages of communication also reflects the pesantren's efforts to prepare santri with multilingual skills, in line with the vision of Merdeka Curriculum that emphasizes 21st century skills. Thus, this institution's development program contributes to the innovation of Merdeka Curriculum by combining pesantren traditions with modern approaches that are responsive to the development of the world of education.

Darul Qolam Tiga Islamic Boarding School under the leadership of K. Zahid Purna Wibawa has a vision to become an Islamic educational institution that prepares cadres who are believers, muttaqin, and rasikh fil ilmi. This vision reflects an effort to produce graduates who have a balanced quality of character, knowledge and skills. The accelerated education program organized by this pesantren, especially at the high school level, reflects a response to the needs and desires of the santri, as well as the desire to create quality Muslim cadres. This program allows santri to pursue knowledge and skills in a shorter time, in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes flexibility in learning. In addition, the vision and mission of the pesantren also includes mastery of science and technology, which is in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's goal of preparing students with 21st century skills. The pesantren also encourages santri to actively participate in life and society, which is in line with the social and civic values reinforced by the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus, Darul Qolam Tiga's strategic programs and goals are related to the Merdeka Curriculum innovation by combining traditional Islamic education with a modern approach that is responsive to the needs of students and the development of the world of education.

Based on the results of observations and interviews as well as documentation (2023), researchers concluded that Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has three branches that organize different education, but all of them apply the concept of integration between the pesantren curriculum and the national curriculum to ensure that students get a comprehensive education. The following is an overview of curriculum development in each branch:

4. Darul Qolam Satu (MTs dan MA):

- e. Integrating the pesantren curriculum and the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum.
- f. The academic curriculum structure includes various groups of subject areas such as language, *dirasah Islamiyah*, Arabic, English, exact, and social.
- g. The pesantren curriculum structure involves the study of the Yellow Islamic classic Book and teaching practice.
- h. Providing extracurricular activities such as courses, training, and organizational activities.

5. Darul Qolam Dua (SMP and SMA):

- e. Has similar integration between the pesantren curriculum and the Ministry of National Education curriculum.
- f. The academic curriculum structure includes groups of subject areas that include Arabic, English, exact, and social languages.
- g. The pesantren curriculum structure involves the study of the Yellow Islamic classic Book, teaching practice, and extracurricular activities.
- h. Providing Arabic and English language skills, as well as exact and social skills

6. Darul Qolam Tiga (SMA - Program Extension):

- d. Continuing education at the high school level with the integration of the pesantren curriculum and the national curriculum.
- e. The intracurricular curriculum structure includes materials from both curricula.
- f. Involves co-curricular and extracurricular curriculum such as speech practice, *Kitab Kuning* studies, scouting activities, *tahfidzul Qur'an*, and many other activities.

All branches of this pesantren apply the Kitab Kuning study system, teaching practices, and extracurricular activities to complete the education of students holistically. The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum allows students to obtain a balanced provision of knowledge and skills, in accordance with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which includes aspects of character, knowledge, and skills.

Discussion

Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

5. Innovations in Institutional Structure and Curriculum

Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has implemented significant innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum in response to the development of the educational environment, both internally and externally. One of the main steps is the separation of the pesantren into three branches, namely Darul Qolam One, Darul Qolam Two, and Darul Qolam Three. This reflects the adaptation needed to answer the challenges and changes of the times. By having several branches, the pesantren gives autonomy to each branch to manage and develop their own educational programs, according to their specific characteristics and needs. This approach is consistent with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives educational institutions the freedom to develop curricula that fit their own context.

In addition, in the context of curriculum innovation, pesantren create approaches that are responsive to the needs and potential of their santri. This includes opening formal education programs such as madrasah and senior high school (SMA) and integrating the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum. Thus, pesantren can combine traditional pesantren values with the preparation of graduates who can compete in various levels of education and institutions, including general education. The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages reflects the pesantren's efforts to prepare santri with multilingual skills, in accordance with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes 21st century skills.

This innovation also aims to improve the quality of education provided by pesantren. By designing a curriculum that is responsive to developments in the world of education, pesantren can ensure that their graduates are equipped with knowledge, skills, and strong character. Overall, the innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam are clear examples of how educational institutions can maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment.

Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has implemented significant innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum in response to the development of the educational environment, both internally and externally. Through the separation of the pesantren into three branches which gives autonomy to each branch to develop educational programs that fit their own characteristics, as well as with the integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, the pesantren has adopted changes that reflect the adaptation needed to answer the challenges of the times. These efforts reflect the role of pesantren leaders in interpersonal communication and explain the concept of relative advantage, which are important elements in Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation. Overall, these innovations reflect how pesantren maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment. This is in line with Yahya (2021) opinion that in the context of curriculum design, there are three types of objectives that

must be taken into account: national objectives, institutional objectives, and learning objectives. Furthermore, this curriculum redesigns learning materials by reconstructing some pesantren books, such as the books of nahwu, shorof, and fiqh. The learning process in this curriculum uses a student centered approach, which encourages active student participation, and is enriched with various learning programs, such as *takror sugbro*, *takror kubro*, and *syawir*. Finally, the evaluation methods in this curriculum include formative and summative evaluations.

6. Integration of the Pesantren Curriculum with the National Curriculum

The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, especially in Darul Qolam Dua and Tiga, reflects the pesantren's commitment to providing graduates who are ready to compete at various levels of education and institutions, in line with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum. In the context of Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation, this curriculum integration can be explained as a form of innovation in education.

Rogers' theory of educational innovation highlights the importance of adopting educational innovations in improving the quality and relevance of education. The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum reflects the adoption of educational innovations that are adapted to changes and demands in the educational environment. Here, pesantren have adopted the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives autonomy to educational institutions to design a curriculum that suits their own characteristics and needs.

This curriculum integration also reflects an important concept in Rogers' theory, namely interpersonal communication in the innovation adoption process. Pesantren leaders, such as Kiyai Ahmad Syahiduddin, play an important role in explaining the concept and benefits of this curriculum integration to stakeholders, including teachers, santri, and the pesantren community. This is in line with Rogers' theory which emphasizes that effective communication about innovations is the key to successful innovation adoption.

In addition, curriculum integration also reflects the pesantren's efforts to develop graduates who have the knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment. By integrating the pesantren curriculum components, which focus on traditional and religious values, with the national curriculum components that cover various subjects, pesantren can create graduates who have a balance of character, knowledge, and skills. This is in line with Maduningtias (2022), to improve the quality of santri education, it is necessary to revitalize the pesantren curriculum. This revitalization involves curriculum integration, which is a combination of various types of curriculum, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the pesantren curriculum. This integration mainly focuses on the harmonization of learning materials and curriculum management integrated in one management. In its implementation, this management is integrated so as to avoid any separation between pesantren and schools.

The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum at Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School reflects how educational innovation, as theorized by Everett M. Rogers, can contribute to positive changes in the education system and prepare graduates for success in various educational and professional contexts.

7. Responsive Approach to Santri Needs

The responsive approach to santri needs, which includes developing excellent programs to accommodate their needs and potential, is an important aspect of educational innovation. In the perspective of Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation, the adoption of innovations in education has a central role in improving the quality and relevance of education. The development of excellent programs in pesantren, as an innovative step, begins with the identification of existing problems or needs, and finding effective innovative solutions.

The development of excellent programs reflects the pesantren's response to the unique needs and potential of the students, allowing them to explore and develop their own special abilities. This

is in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility in learning and developing student potential. The Merdeka Curriculum provides autonomy to educational institutions to design a curriculum that is responsive to the unique needs of students and their environment.

In addition, within the framework of Rogers' theory, communication and diffusion of innovations are important elements in the adoption of innovations. Pesantren leaders and teachers play a central role in explaining the benefits and objectives of the flagship programs to santri. Effective communication regarding these innovations helps in the process of adoption and use of excellent programs by santri.

The responsive approach to santri needs that results in the development of excellent programs reflects the way pesantren apply innovations in education to improve the educational experience of santri and ensure that they have better opportunities to develop their potential and achieve success in various fields of education. This is in line with research of Romdhoni (2022) santri development program involves strategic planning innovations led by pesantren leaders and their staff. It begins with the identification of the current conditions of the students and the boarding school, which then becomes the basis for designing innovative strategies to overcome the new challenges faced by the students and provide a new paradigm for them. Through the implementation of this innovation, the goal is to increase the potential and creativity of the santri so that they can be more confident when interacting in society. Regular evaluation and assessment are used to measure the success of the development program, with the hope of forming new, more effective strategies in the future. Thus, Daarel Qolam Islamic Boarding School is committed to creating an environment that is responsive to the needs and potential of individual santri, supports growth, and helps them contribute positively in society.

8. Use of Arabic and English

In the theory of educational innovation by Everett M. Rogers, innovation is a process of change that aims to improve the quality of education. The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages at Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School is a clear example of an innovative effort. This innovation is designed to prepare santri with multilingual skills, especially in Arabic and English, which refers to the concept of diffusion of innovation in Rogers' theory.

The use of Arabic and English reflects the pesantren's adaptation to the times and the skill demands of the 21st century. This step is in line with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes the importance of 21st century skills, including the ability to communicate in various languages. The use of multilingual languages is considered an innovation that supports the goals of modern education.

In the perspective of Rogers' theory, the diffusion of innovation involves the communication and spread of innovative ideas to other individuals or groups. In pesantren, leaders and teachers play an important role in explaining the benefits and objectives of using Arabic and English to santri and facilitating the adoption of this innovation. Effective communication is a key step in promoting and supporting the adoption of innovations in educational settings. This is in line with research Rochmat et al., (2022) on the use of the Jasus (spy) system to discipline language use among santri. In addition, to improve the students' Arabic and English language skills, Daarel Qolam Islamic Boarding School implements vocabulary addition programs through activities such as Mufrodlat (Vocabulary), Muhadatsah (conversation), and Muhadhoroh (speech practice). All of these programs are designed with the aim of strengthening the students' Arabic and English language skills.

The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages in pesantren reflects how pesantren respond to the needs of the times with an innovative approach, supporting the vision of Merdeka Curriculum and the values of 21st century skills. In the context of Rogers' theory of educational innovation, this emphasizes the importance of adaptation and change in education to improve the quality and relevance of the educational process.

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CONCLUSION

The results showed that Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam Banten has successfully adopted and integrated Merdeka Curriculum into their educational environment. The Merdeka Curriculum allows these pesantren to provide flexibility and independence to educational institutions in designing the curriculum according to their local characteristics and needs. Important aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, such as the takhassus program that provides autonomy to santri, curriculum integration at all levels of pesantren educational institutions, and freedom in the selection of learning programs, have been well implemented.

The theory of educational innovation by Everett M. Rogers proved to be relevant in the context of the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren. Factors emphasized in the theory, such as effective communication, resource support, appropriate innovation characteristics, and the characteristics of the pesantren and surrounding community, play an important role in the diffusion process of this innovation. The theory provides an in-depth look at how educational innovations can be adopted and adapted in unique educational environments.

The results of this study have a positive impact on the progress of Islamic education in pesantren, especially in Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam Banten. The Merdeka Curriculum innovation has enabled this pesantren to develop according to the demands of the times, and this research provides practical guidance for other pesantren in developing responsive and quality education. In this way, this research has the potential to be a source of inspiration and guidance for other pesantren in facing future educational changes.

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Notes:

17. The title of the article should be revised to meet the scope of JPI
18. To meet JPI scope, research should be conducted at Islamic education institutions (Pesantren/ madrasah)
19. INTRODUCTION, add more international journal article to show the gap and achieve the novelty
20. METHOD, describe appropriately data collection and analysis
21. RESULTS, the findings should be described and organized well
22. DISCUSSION, elaborate and interpret each finding
23. CONCLUSION, rewrite the information to represent the content of the article
24. BIBLIOGRAPHY, provide DOI for each journal article

Each comment from the editor must be corrected by indicating the improvement results (mentioning the line and paragraph, revisions highlighted or marked in color).

IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA CURRICULUM : Transformation of Islamic Education in Darul Qalam Pesantren Banten

ABSTRACT

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes over time, with one of the leading innovations being the Merdeka Curriculum which provides flexibility and independence to educational institutions to design curricula according to local needs in response to the spirit of change and the needs of the times. This research focuses on the integration of Merdeka Curriculum in Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten with the aim of understanding the adoption and integration of this curriculum, as well as its impact on the quality and relevance of Islamic education. The research method used is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach, involving interviews with pesantren leaders, teachers, and students, as well as observation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The results showed the adoption of the innovation, with the pesantren separating the pesantren into three branches, integrating the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, and developing excellent programs that are responsive to the needs of students. Suggestions from this study include the idea that other Islamic education institutions consider the adoption of Merdeka Curriculum as a way to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic education and the expansion of research to investigate its long-term impact in the context of pesantren and other Islamic education institutions, while still paying attention to the principles of freedom and autonomy in learning, multilingualism, and responsiveness to santri needs, all of which reflect the contribution of educational innovation.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Merdeka Curriculum, Pesantren Integration, Educational Innovation.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia telah mengalami perubahan signifikan seiring berjalannya waktu, dengan salah satu inovasi terkemuka yaitu Kurikulum Merdeka yang memberikan fleksibilitas dan kemandirian pada lembaga-lembaga pendidikan untuk merancang kurikulum sesuai dengan kebutuhan lokal sebagai respons terhadap semangat perubahan dan kebutuhan zaman. Penelitian ini fokus pada integrasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten dengan tujuan memahami adopsi dan integrasi kurikulum ini, serta dampaknya terhadap mutu dan relevansi pendidikan Islam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif, melibatkan wawancara dengan pemimpin pesantren, guru, dan santri, serta observasi implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adopsi inovasi tersebut, dengan pesantren memisahkan pesantren menjadi tiga cabang, mengintegrasikan kurikulum pesantren dengan kurikulum nasional, dan mengembangkan program-program unggulan yang responsif terhadap kebutuhan santri. Saran dari penelitian ini mencakup pemikiran agar lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya mempertimbangkan adopsi Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai cara untuk meningkatkan mutu dan relevansi pendidikan Islam serta perluasan penelitian untuk menginvestigasi dampak jangka panjangnya dalam konteks pesantren dan lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya, dengan tetap memperhatikan prinsip kebebasan dan otonomi dalam pembelajaran, multibahasa, dan respons terhadap kebutuhan santri, yang kesemuanya mencerminkan kontribusi inovasi pendidikan.

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Kata Kunci : Pendidikan Islam, Kurikulum Merdeka, Integrasi Pesantren, Inovasi Pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant changes and transformations over time. These changes are reflected in studies such as those mentioned in Amirullah & Hamami, (2020), Gumanti et al., (2023), Huda, (2020), Latief et al., (2021), Sabila et al., (2020) and Yusra, (2018) which document important shifts in the sector. In an effort to respond to the demands of the times, Islamic education institutions, especially pesantren, continue to strive to innovate and adapt to the dynamics of continuous change. Several studies, such as Baharun & Adhimiy (2019), Dewi & Wajdi, (2022), Hamdanah (2020), Hasan (2015), Kholifah (2022), Multazamy Rohmatulloh et al., (2022), Nurjanah & Amrullah (2021), Wajdi et al., (2022) and Yahya, (2021) have identified this challenge and underlined the importance of innovating in Islamic education. In the context of educational innovation, one of the most prominent and contemporary developments is curriculum development. Curriculum development, especially through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, is of paramount significance to pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. There are several compelling reasons for the critical role of curriculum development within the pesantren context (Efendi, 2022; Ekaningrum et al., 2018; Falikul Isbah, 2020; Winata et al., 2021). Firstly, it addresses modern educational needs by expanding the traditional religious focus to include a wider array of subjects, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for diverse career opportunities (Assa'idi, 2021; Muhajir, 2022; Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022; Soleman et al., 2020). Secondly, it offers flexibility and customization, allowing pesantren to develop their programs to local characteristics and student-specific needs, resulting in a more relevant and effective education (Islam, 2021; Muhammad et al., 2021; Pribadi, 2014; Sauri et al., 2018). Furthermore, it empowers students, emphasizing autonomy and the freedom to select their educational paths, encouraging self-directed learning and personal growth (Apriyanto & Hidayati, 2022; Chudzaifah et al., 2022; Hardianto et al., 2022; Khomsatun et al., 2022; Maryati et al., 2020). Moreover, it facilitates adaptation to technological advances, ensuring students are well-versed in technology (Ghozali, 2019; Muafiah et al., 2022). Additionally, it encourages diverse teaching methods, enhancing educational quality, and competitiveness, which not only benefits religious fields but also broadens opportunities in secular careers, making pesantren more appealing to a wider student base and enabling collaboration with global educational standards. Lastly, it contributes to national development by equipping students with diverse skill sets, aligning with Indonesia's progress and development objectives.

the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is an initiative that has emerged in the Indonesian education domain and aims to provide flexibility and independence to educational institutions in designing curricula according to local characteristics and needs. It encourages a more adaptive and responsive approach to rapid developments in the world of education.

The Merdeka Curriculum was launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology with Nadiem Anwar Makarim as one of its pioneers, as stated in the research of Devian et al., (2023), Dewey Triyatno et al., (2022), Manalu et al., (2022) and Setia siregar (2023). This curriculum emerged in response to the emergency situation that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed in the research of Alawi et al., (2022), Jojo & Sihotang (2022), Sumber et al., (2023) and Vidieyanti (2022).

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum has been a topic of interest in educational discussions in Indonesia, but questions arise about how these innovations can be integrated and diffused in the context of pesantren that have rich educational traditions and deep Islamic values. Previous studies, such as Jailani (2022), which analyzed the implementation of the concept of "independent learning" in Pondok Pesantren, and Zainuri et al., (2023) examined the management of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Latansa Palembang Darussalam, provided an initial overview of the challenges and similarities among pesantren in adopting the Merdeka Curriculum. Wafi & Faruk (2023) research further indicates significant similarities between the curriculum

implemented in pesantren and the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, including takhassus programs, santri autonomy, and freedom in choosing learning programs. This research does not only aim to describe the status quo or report social facts, but also to understand the impact of educational innovations such as the Merdeka Curriculum on pesantren.

The current research tries to differentiate itself from previous studies by providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the context of a unique pesantren, namely Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten. The focus on one pesantren allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges and changes that occur within the environment, as well as the level of integration of Merdeka Curriculum at all levels of pesantren educational institutions. This article also seeks to compare research results with previous research, allowing us to see similarities and differences in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in various pesantren. Thus, this research makes a more in-depth contribution to the understanding of educational transformation in pesantren and the implementation of educational innovations in the context of Darul Qalam Banten pesantren.

This research aims to fill the gaps in our understanding of how Merdeka Curriculum, as an innovation in education, is diffused and integrated in pesantren. The reason for choosing Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten as the object of research is strong, because this pesantren has a rich history and tradition of Islamic education, creating an opportunity to observe change and innovation in a culturally rich context. This pesantren has also demonstrated the ability of adaptation and innovation in order to improve the quality of Islamic education, as well as the potential to become a model in the development of adaptive and innovative Islamic education. The results of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for other pesantren in developing quality Islamic education that is responsive to today's needs.

In an effort to understand these changes, this research will apply the Theory of Educational Innovation developed by Everett M. Rogers. This theory will help us understand the factors that influence the diffusion of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren, as well as the impact of this innovation on Islamic education in Darul Qalam Banten. Through analyzing the diffusion of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into how innovative educational policies such as the Merdeka Curriculum can be adopted and implemented in educational institutions with strong religious and cultural backgrounds. Thus, this research has important relevance in the context of educational development in Indonesia and contributes to the understanding of educational innovation within the framework of Everett M. Rogers' Theory of Educational Innovation.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods through a case study approach to identify innovations in the pesantren curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darul Qalam Banten. In analyzing the pesantren curriculum innovation, this study adopted the theoretical framework of educational innovation developed by Everett M. Rogers (Rogers et al., 2019). The data explored in this research are primary data in the form of interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials related to pesantren curriculum innovation at Darul Qalam Islamic Boarding School in Banten. In addition, secondary (supporting) data in the form of books, literature, articles, and journals related to the research theme were also used.

The primary sources in this research are the research subjects, including the management of the Darul Qalam Banten Islamic boarding school who are ustadz and ustadzah (cluster program teachers), community leaders, parents of students, and students. The Principal and Vice Principal at the research location are also subjects in this study. The research subjects were chosen because they were considered the most representative in answering questions related to the focus of the research, namely pesantren curriculum innovation.

This study used data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and document studies. Observation was carried out by direct observation, recording events, occurrences, and activities at the Darul Qalam Banten boarding school to obtain data related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Interviews were conducted by direct and oral question and answer to the research subjects, with a semi-structured interview format, which follows the interview guidelines but is carried out out of order

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or conditionally. In addition, document studies were also conducted to collect various documents related to the research, such as boarding school profiles, activity profiles, activity schedules, and other relevant data in order to complement data related to pesantren curriculum innovation at Darul Qolam Banten Islamic Boarding School.

The data analysis technique uses the Interactive Model from Miles and Huberman (Matthew et al., 2014)

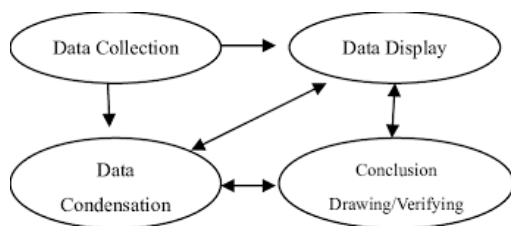


Figure 1 : Interactive Model from Miles dan Huberman(Matthew et al., 2014)

Based on Figure 1, the data analysis phase in this study involves several stages. The first stage is Data Collection, which is carried out using observation, interview, and document study techniques to collect data related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Furthermore, the Data Condensation Stage is a process in which data that has been collected from various sources is analyzed and reduced to make it more focused. The steps in this stage include grouping data by theme, deleting irrelevant data, abstracting data to create a simpler summary, creating categories or themes that reflect important elements, and organizing data according to the analytical framework. After that, in the Data Presentation stage, the data that has been reduced will be arranged in a narrative and systematic manner to understand phenomena related to pesantren curriculum innovation. Finally, in the Conclusion Drawing and Testing stage, the results of data analysis are used to draw conclusions which are answers to the research focus of pesantren curriculum innovation, and these conclusions will be tested and verified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Institutional development at Pesantren Darul Qolam reflects the pesantren's adaptation to changes and innovations in education. Based on interview, the researcher found that the leader of the pesantren, Kiyai Ahmad Syahiduddin, adopted various innovations, including changes in the structure of the institution and the pesantren curriculum. The changes include the division of the pesantren institution into three, namely Darul Qolam One, Darul Qolam Two, and Darul Qolam Three, as a leadership regeneration step and a response to the development of the internal and external environment of the pesantren. Darul Qolam Pesantren also considers pesantren as Islamic educational institutions that must remain relevant and able to compete in the midst of global competition.

The pesantren takes inspiration from Pesantren Darussalam Gontor, where the founder of the pesantren, Kiyai Rifa'i Arief, is an alumnus of the pesantren. Despite adopting the educational model of the Gontor pesantren, Pesantren Darul Qolam continues to innovate while maintaining the traditional values of the pesantren. One of the adaptation efforts is to open formal education programs such as madrasah, high school, and integrate the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum. Thus, Pesantren Darul Qolam tries to combine the pesantren tradition with the preparation of graduates who can compete at various levels of education and in various institutions, including general education. This reflects how pesantren can maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment.

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The institutional development program at Pesantren Darul Qolam, which includes improving students' knowledge and skills, can be linked to the Merdeka Curriculum innovation. In an effort to provide special treatment for santri who are considered "smarter" and give them the opportunity to explore their abilities, pesantren create excellent programs that provide added value for santri. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, these pesantren take an approach that is responsive to the needs and potential of santri by providing opportunities to develop specialized knowledge and skills. Such programs reflect the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which gives pesantren the freedom and autonomy to develop a curriculum that suits their own characteristics and needs. The use of Arabic and English as official languages of communication also reflects the pesantren's efforts to prepare santri with multilingual skills, in line with the vision of Merdeka Curriculum that emphasizes 21st century skills. Thus, this institution's development program contributes to the innovation of Merdeka Curriculum by combining pesantren traditions with modern approaches that are responsive to the development of the world of education.

Darul Qolam Tiga Islamic Boarding School under the leadership of K. Zahid Purna Wibawa has a vision to become an Islamic educational institution that prepares cadres who are believers, muttaqin, and rasikh fil ilmi. This vision reflects an effort to produce graduates who have a balanced quality of character, knowledge and skills. The accelerated education program organized by this pesantren, especially at the high school level, reflects a response to the needs and desires of the santri, as well as the desire to create quality Muslim cadres. This program allows santri to pursue knowledge and skills in a shorter time, in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes flexibility in learning. In addition, the vision and mission of the pesantren also includes mastery of science and technology, which is in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's goal of preparing students with 21st century skills. The pesantren also encourages santri to actively participate in life and society, which is in line with the social and civic values reinforced by the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus, Darul Qolam Tiga's strategic programs and goals are related to the Merdeka Curriculum innovation by combining traditional Islamic education with a modern approach that is responsive to the needs of students and the development of the world of education.

Based on the results of observations and interviews as well as documentation (2023), researchers concluded that Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has three branches that organize different education, but all of them apply the concept of integration between the pesantren curriculum and the national curriculum to ensure that students get a comprehensive education. The following is an overview of curriculum development in each branch:

7. Darul Qolam Satu (MTs dan MA):

- i. Integrating the pesantren curriculum and the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum.
- j. The academic curriculum structure includes various groups of subject areas such as language, *dirasah Islamiyah*, Arabic, English, exact, and social.
- k. The pesantren curriculum structure involves the study of the Yellow Islamic classic Book and teaching practice.
- l. Providing extracurricular activities such as courses, training, and organizational activities.

8. Darul Qolam Dua (SMP and SMA):

- i. Has similar integration between the pesantren curriculum and the Ministry of National Education curriculum.
- j. The academic curriculum structure includes groups of subject areas that include Arabic, English, exact, and social languages.
- k. The pesantren curriculum structure involves the study of the Yellow Islamic classic Book, teaching practice, and extracurricular activities.
- l. Providing Arabic and English language skills, as well as exact and social skills

9. Darul Qolam Tiga (SMA - Program Extension):

- g. Continuing education at the high school level with the integration of the pesantren curriculum and the national curriculum.
- h. The intracurricular curriculum structure includes materials from both curricula.
- i. Involves co-curricular and extracurricular curriculum such as speech practice, *Kitab Kuning* studies, scouting activities, *tahfidzul Qur'an*, and many other activities.

All branches of this pesantren apply the Kitab Kuning study system, teaching practices, and extracurricular activities to complete the education of students holistically. The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum allows students to obtain a balanced provision of knowledge and skills, in accordance with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which includes aspects of character, knowledge, and skills.

Discussion

Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

9. Innovations in Institutional Structure and Curriculum

Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has implemented significant innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum in response to the development of the educational environment, both internally and externally. One of the main steps is the separation of the pesantren into three branches, namely Darul Qolam One, Darul Qolam Two, and Darul Qolam Three. This reflects the adaptation needed to answer the challenges and changes of the times. By having several branches, the pesantren gives autonomy to each branch to manage and develop their own educational programs, according to their specific characteristics and needs. This approach is consistent with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives educational institutions the freedom to develop curricula that fit their own context.

In addition, in the context of curriculum innovation, pesantren create approaches that are responsive to the needs and potential of their santri. This includes opening formal education programs such as madrasah and senior high school (SMA) and integrating the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum. Thus, pesantren can combine traditional pesantren values with the preparation of graduates who can compete in various levels of education and institutions, including general education. The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages reflects the pesantren's efforts to prepare santri with multilingual skills, in accordance with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes 21st century skills.

This innovation also aims to improve the quality of education provided by pesantren. By designing a curriculum that is responsive to developments in the world of education, pesantren can ensure that their graduates are equipped with knowledge, skills, and strong character. Overall, the innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam are clear examples of how educational institutions can maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment.

Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School has implemented significant innovations in the institutional structure and curriculum in response to the development of the educational environment, both internally and externally. Through the separation of the pesantren into three branches which gives autonomy to each branch to develop educational programs that fit their own characteristics, as well as with the integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, the pesantren has adopted changes that reflect the adaptation needed to answer the challenges of the times. These efforts reflect the role of pesantren leaders in interpersonal communication and explain the concept of relative advantage, which are important elements in Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation. Overall, these innovations reflect how pesantren maintain traditional values while making innovations that are relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment. This is in line with Yahya (2021) opinion that in the context of curriculum design, there are three types of objectives that

must be taken into account: national objectives, institutional objectives, and learning objectives. Furthermore, this curriculum redesigns learning materials by reconstructing some pesantren books, such as the books of nahwu, shorof, and fiqh. The learning process in this curriculum uses a student centered approach, which encourages active student participation, and is enriched with various learning programs, such as *takror sugbro*, *takror kubro*, and *syawir*. Finally, the evaluation methods in this curriculum include formative and summative evaluations.

10. Integration of the Pesantren Curriculum with the National Curriculum

The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum, especially in Darul Qolam Dua and Tiga, reflects the pesantren's commitment to providing graduates who are ready to compete at various levels of education and institutions, in line with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum. In the context of Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation, this curriculum integration can be explained as a form of innovation in education.

Rogers' theory of educational innovation highlights the importance of adopting educational innovations in improving the quality and relevance of education. The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum reflects the adoption of educational innovations that are adapted to changes and demands in the educational environment. Here, pesantren have adopted the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives autonomy to educational institutions to design a curriculum that suits their own characteristics and needs.

This curriculum integration also reflects an important concept in Rogers' theory, namely interpersonal communication in the innovation adoption process. Pesantren leaders, such as Kiyai Ahmad Syahiduddin, play an important role in explaining the concept and benefits of this curriculum integration to stakeholders, including teachers, santri, and the pesantren community. This is in line with Rogers' theory which emphasizes that effective communication about innovations is the key to successful innovation adoption.

In addition, curriculum integration also reflects the pesantren's efforts to develop graduates who have the knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of modern education and changes in the national education environment. By integrating the pesantren curriculum components, which focus on traditional and religious values, with the national curriculum components that cover various subjects, pesantren can create graduates who have a balance of character, knowledge, and skills. This is in line with Maduningtias (2022), to improve the quality of santri education, it is necessary to revitalize the pesantren curriculum. This revitalization involves curriculum integration, which is a combination of various types of curriculum, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the pesantren curriculum. This integration mainly focuses on the harmonization of learning materials and curriculum management integrated in one management. In its implementation, this management is integrated so as to avoid any separation between pesantren and schools.

The integration of the pesantren curriculum with the national curriculum at Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School reflects how educational innovation, as theorized by Everett M. Rogers, can contribute to positive changes in the education system and prepare graduates for success in various educational and professional contexts.

11. Responsive Approach to Santri Needs

The responsive approach to santri needs, which includes developing excellent programs to accommodate their needs and potential, is an important aspect of educational innovation. In the perspective of Everett M. Rogers' theory of educational innovation, the adoption of innovations in education has a central role in improving the quality and relevance of education. The development of excellent programs in pesantren, as an innovative step, begins with the identification of existing problems or needs, and finding effective innovative solutions.

The development of excellent programs reflects the pesantren's response to the unique needs and potential of the students, allowing them to explore and develop their own special abilities. This

is in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility in learning and developing student potential. The Merdeka Curriculum provides autonomy to educational institutions to design a curriculum that is responsive to the unique needs of students and their environment.

In addition, within the framework of Rogers' theory, communication and diffusion of innovations are important elements in the adoption of innovations. Pesantren leaders and teachers play a central role in explaining the benefits and objectives of the flagship programs to santri. Effective communication regarding these innovations helps in the process of adoption and use of excellent programs by santri.

The responsive approach to santri needs that results in the development of excellent programs reflects the way pesantren apply innovations in education to improve the educational experience of santri and ensure that they have better opportunities to develop their potential and achieve success in various fields of education. This is in line with research of Romdhoni (2022) santri development program involves strategic planning innovations led by pesantren leaders and their staff. It begins with the identification of the current conditions of the students and the boarding school, which then becomes the basis for designing innovative strategies to overcome the new challenges faced by the students and provide a new paradigm for them. Through the implementation of this innovation, the goal is to increase the potential and creativity of the santri so that they can be more confident when interacting in society. Regular evaluation and assessment are used to measure the success of the development program, with the hope of forming new, more effective strategies in the future. Thus, Daarel Qolam Islamic Boarding School is committed to creating an environment that is responsive to the needs and potential of individual santri, supports growth, and helps them contribute positively in society.

12. Use of Arabic and English

In the theory of educational innovation by Everett M. Rogers, innovation is a process of change that aims to improve the quality of education. The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages at Darul Qolam Islamic Boarding School is a clear example of an innovative effort. This innovation is designed to prepare santri with multilingual skills, especially in Arabic and English, which refers to the concept of diffusion of innovation in Rogers' theory.

The use of Arabic and English reflects the pesantren's adaptation to the times and the skill demands of the 21st century. This step is in line with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes the importance of 21st century skills, including the ability to communicate in various languages. The use of multilingual languages is considered an innovation that supports the goals of modern education.

In the perspective of Rogers' theory, the diffusion of innovation involves the communication and spread of innovative ideas to other individuals or groups. In pesantren, leaders and teachers play an important role in explaining the benefits and objectives of using Arabic and English to santri and facilitating the adoption of this innovation. Effective communication is a key step in promoting and supporting the adoption of innovations in educational settings. This is in line with research Rochmat et al., (2022) on the use of the Jasus (spy) system to discipline language use among santri. In addition, to improve the students' Arabic and English language skills, Daarel Qolam Islamic Boarding School implements vocabulary addition programs through activities such as Mufrodlat (Vocabulary), Muhadatsah (conversation), and Muhadhoroh (speech practice). All of these programs are designed with the aim of strengthening the students' Arabic and English language skills.

The use of Arabic and English as official communication languages in pesantren reflects how pesantren respond to the needs of the times with an innovative approach, supporting the vision of Merdeka Curriculum and the values of 21st century skills. In the context of Rogers' theory of educational innovation, this emphasizes the importance of adaptation and change in education to improve the quality and relevance of the educational process.

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CONCLUSION

The results showed that Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam Banten has successfully adopted and integrated Merdeka Curriculum into their educational environment. The Merdeka Curriculum allows these pesantren to provide flexibility and independence to educational institutions in designing the curriculum according to their local characteristics and needs. Important aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, such as the takhassus program that provides autonomy to santri, curriculum integration at all levels of pesantren educational institutions, and freedom in the selection of learning programs, have been well implemented.

The theory of educational innovation by Everett M. Rogers proved to be relevant in the context of the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum in pesantren. Factors emphasized in the theory, such as effective communication, resource support, appropriate innovation characteristics, and the characteristics of the pesantren and surrounding community, play an important role in the diffusion process of this innovation. The theory provides an in-depth look at how educational innovations can be adopted and adapted in unique educational environments.

The results of this study have a positive impact on the progress of Islamic education in pesantren, especially in Pondok Pesantren Darul Qolam Banten. The Merdeka Curriculum innovation has enabled this pesantren to develop according to the demands of the times, and this research provides practical guidance for other pesantren in developing responsive and quality education. In this way, this research has the potential to be a source of inspiration and guidance for other pesantren in facing future educational changes.

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