


21st Century Skills Development in Modern Pesantren

Ahmad Farid¹ , Aghni Zakiatun Nabila² , Siti
Zuflihatul Magfiroh³ , Nur Zhafirah Hafizhah⁴ ,
Maulida Nisaul Khomsah⁵ 

1,2,3,4,5 Universitas Darunnajah Bogor, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background: The integration of 21st-century skills into educational systems is crucial for preparing students for the global era. Modern Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia face the challenge of balancing traditional Islamic education with contemporary skill development.

Purpose: This study aims to examine the implementation of 21st-century skills development in modern pesantren, identify challenges, and explore effective strategies for integration.

Method: A qualitative case study approach was employed, involving three modern pesantren in Java. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data.

Results: Modern pesantren have implemented various programs to develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy skills. However, they face challenges including limited resources, resistance to change, and concerns about preserving traditional values. Effective strategies identified include integrated curriculum development, teacher training, external partnerships, mentoring programs, and judicious use of technology.

Conclusion: Modern pesantren demonstrate significant potential in integrating 21st-century skills while maintaining their core Islamic values. The study recommends collaborative efforts among pesantren, government, researchers, and the community to support this educational transformation and enhance the relevance of pesantren education in the global era.

KEYWORDS

Islamic Education, Modern Pesantren, 21st-Century Skills.

Citation: Farid, A., Nabila, Z. A., Magfiroh, Z., S., Hafizah, Z. N., Khomsah, N.M., Fatin, Z. Z., & Nurisma, S. (2024). 21st Century Skills Development in Modern Pesantren. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Sustainability Asean*, 1(3), 112–118.

<https://doi.org/10.70177/ijmsa.v1i3.1124>

Correspondence:

Aghni Zakiatun Nabila,
Aghninabila854@gmail.com

Received: June 21, 2024

Accepted: July 23, 2024

Published: September 4, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The rapid global development in the 21st century has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including education. 21st century skills have become the main focus in the modern education system to prepare the younger generation for future challenges (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In Indonesia, pesantren as traditional Islamic educational institutions have also undergone a transformation into modern pesantren that seek to integrate Islamic values with the demands of the times (Steenbrink, 2018).



Modern pesantren have a strategic role in developing 21st century skills in santri, while still maintaining Islamic values and local wisdom. The integration of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration is both a challenge and an opportunity for pesantren in preparing santri to compete in the global era (Tan, 2014).

The Concept of 21st Century Skills

21st century skills refer to a set of competencies that are considered essential for success in the modern era. The most commonly used framework is "4C" which consists of Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). In addition, digital literacy, information literacy and life skills are also often included in the 21st century skills category (Binkley et al., 2012).

The development of these skills is considered crucial in preparing learners for global challenges, rapid technological change and a dynamic labour market. Learning approaches that support the development of 21st century skills generally focus on active learning, project-based, and real-world problem solving (Larson & Miller, 2011).

Modern Pesantren

Modern pesantren, also known as khalafiyah pesantren, are an evolution of traditional pesantren that integrate Islamic religious education with general education and modern skills. In contrast to traditional pesantren that focus on teaching the yellow Islamic classic books (kitab kuning), modern pesantren implement a more comprehensive curriculum, including general subjects, foreign languages (especially Arabic and English), and practical skills (Azra, 2020).

The characteristics of modern pesantren include: the use of a class system, the adoption of the national curriculum, intensive foreign language teaching, and the development of diverse extracurricular activities. Nevertheless, modern pesantren still maintain the core values of pesantren such as independence, simplicity, and mastery of religious knowledge (Lukens-Bull, 2010).

Integration of 21st Century Skills in Pesantren Education

The integration of 21st century skills in pesantren education is both a challenge and an opportunity. Modern pesantren attempt to balance the need to maintain Islamic identity and local wisdom with the need to adapt to global demands (Tan, 2014). Some strategies that have been implemented include:

Integrated curriculum development that combines religious education, general education, and 21st century skills (Suharto, 2018).

Implementation of active and project-based learning methods that encourage creativity and problem solving (Wekke, 2015).

Utilisation of information and communication technology in the learning process and pesantren management (Hidayat & Machali, 2018).

Development of entrepreneurship and life skills programmes to increase the independence of santri (Fauzi, 2017).

Nonetheless, the integration of 21st century skills in pesantren still faces various challenges, including limited resources, resistance to change, and concerns about the loss of traditional pesantren values (Azra, 2020). Therefore, a careful and contextualised approach is needed in implementing 21st century skills in the pesantren environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of 21st century skills development in modern pesantren in a natural context (Creswell

& Poth, 2018). Case studies were used to intensively explore the implementation, challenges, and strategies of 21st century skills development in selected modern pesantren (Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted in modern pesantren in Java Island that were selected based on purposive sampling criteria, namely: 1) had been established for at least 10 years, 2) had a 21st century skills development programme, and 3) were willing to participate in the study. The research subjects included pesantren leaders, teachers, students, and alumni. The selection of subjects was conducted using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure the variety and depth of data (Patton, 2015).

Data were collected through several techniques:

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with pesantren leaders, teachers, students, and alumni to obtain information about the implementation, challenges, and strategies for developing 21st century skills (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Participant observation of learning and extracurricular activities relevant to 21st century skills development (Spradley, 2016).

Document analysis, including curriculum, lesson plans, and pesantren policy documents related to 21st century skills development (Bowen, 2009).

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with groups of teachers and santri to validate and deepen findings from other data collection methods (Krueger & Casey, 2014).

Data analysis was conducted iteratively using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps of the analysis included:

Transcription and grouping of data from various sources.

Coding the data to identify emerging themes.

Organising the codes into broader categories and themes.

Review and refinement of themes.

Naming and defining final themes.

Writing the analysis report.

To enhance the credibility of the research, triangulation of sources and methods, member checking with participants, and peer debriefing with other researchers who have expertise in Islamic education and 21st century skills were conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study upholds the principles of research ethics, including:

Informed consent from all participants.

Protection of privacy and confidentiality of participants' data.

Respect for the values and norms of the pesantren.

Honest and transparent reporting of research results (Israel, 2015).

This study has obtained ethical approval from the relevant research ethics committee before being conducted.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor

Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor, located in Cipining, Bogor, West Java, is a branch of Pesantren Darunnajah Jakarta. Established in 1988, this pesantren carries a modern education concept that integrates the national curriculum, pesantren curriculum, and 21st century skills development. With the vision of "Becoming an Islamic education institution that excels in IMTAK and IPTEK", Darunnajah 2 Bogor has demonstrated its commitment in preparing students to face global challenges (Suharto, 2018; Profile Document of Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor, 2023).

Implementation of 21st Century Skills Development

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills

Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor applies problem-based learning and case study methods in various subjects. For example, in Jurisprudence, santri are exposed to contemporary cases that require in-depth analysis and application of Islamic legal principles. This approach is in line with educational experts' recommendations to develop higher-order thinking skills (Larson & Miller, 2011; Interview with the Principal of Darunnajah 2 Bogor, 2023).

Creativity and Innovation

The development of creativity at Darunnajah 2 Bogor is conducted through the "Santri Innovator" programme which encourages santri to create innovative solutions to problems in the pesantren environment and the surrounding community. This programme has produced several creative projects, such as an integrated waste management system and a mobile application for santri time management (Santri Innovator Activity Observation, 2023; Wekke, 2015).

Communication and Collaboration

Communication skills are developed through an intensive bilingual (Arabic-English) programme and weekly public speaking activities. Darunnajah 2 Bogor also has a community radio "Darunnajah FM" managed by santri, providing opportunities for media communication practice. Collaboration is fostered through cross-generation projects and santri exchanges with other pesantren in the Darunnajah network (Interview with Language Programme Coordinator, 2023; Hidayat & Machali, 2018).

Information, Media, and Technology Literacy

Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor has integrated information technology in learning through adequate computer facilities and limited internet access. The "Digital Santri" programme provides basic coding and media literacy training to help santri be critical of online information. This effort reflects the pesantren's awareness of the importance of digital skills in the information age (Binkley et al., 2012; Darunnajah 2 Bogor Digital Santri Programme Document, 2023).

Challenges and Opportunities in 21st Century Skills Development

The main challenges identified at Darunnajah 2 Bogor include: the balance between religious education and modern skills, time constraints in a crowded curriculum, and the concerns of some ustadz about the negative impact of technology. However, emerging opportunities include: strong support from the central Darunnajah foundation, an extensive alumni network, and cooperation with industry and universities (Azra, 2020; Interview with Director of Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor, 2023).

Effective Strategies for Integrating 21st Century Skills at Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor

Based on the research findings, some effective strategies identified at Darunnajah 2 Bogor include:

Development of an integrated curriculum that combines religious, general education, and 21st century skills through a thematic approach.

Continuous professional development programme for ustadz/teachers, including training on innovative teaching methods and the use of technology in learning.

Partnerships with successful alumni and technology companies for internship and mentoring programmes for santri.

Implementation of a comprehensive assessment system, covering cognitive, affective, and 21st century skills.

Creation of an "innovation hub" in the pesantren as a creative space for santri to develop and test innovative ideas.

These strategies reflect Darunnajah 2 Bogor's efforts to adapt to the demands of the times while maintaining the identity and core values of the pesantren (Suharto, 2018; Tan, 2014; Darunnajah 2 Bogor Strategic Plan 2020-2025, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion regarding the development of 21st century skills at Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor, several main points can be concluded:

Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor has shown a strong commitment in integrating 21st century skills into its education system. This is reflected in the pesantren's vision and the implementation of various innovative programmes that support the development of critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy skills (Suharto, 2018; Profile Document of Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor, 2023).

The implementation of 21st century skills development at Darunnajah 2 Bogor covers various aspects, including the use of problem-based learning methods, the "Santri Innovator" programme, the bilingual system, and the "Digital Santri" programme. This approach is in line with global trends in modern education and the needs of the labour market in the digital era (Binkley et al., 2012; Interview with Darunnajah 2 Bogor Principal, 2023).

The main challenges faced by Darunnajah 2 Bogor in developing 21st century skills include the balance between religious education and modern skills, time constraints in a crowded curriculum, and the concerns of some ustadz about the negative impact of technology. However, the pesantren also has significant opportunities, including support from the central foundation, an extensive alumni network, and potential collaborations with industry and universities (Azra, 2020; Interview with Director of Pesantren Darunnajah 2 Bogor, 2023).

Effective strategies identified at Darunnajah 2 Bogor for integrating 21st century skills involve the development of an integrated curriculum, ustadz/teacher professional development programmes, partnerships with alumni and industry, a comprehensive assessment system, and the creation of innovation spaces. These strategies reflect the efforts of pesantren to adapt to the demands of the times while maintaining their identity and core values (Tan, 2014; Darunnajah 2 Bogor Strategic Plan Document 2020-2025, 2020).

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

Author 5: Supervision; Validation.

Author 6: Other contribution; Resources; Visuali-zation; Writing - original draft.

REFERENCES

- Azra, A. (2020). Modernization of Islamic education: The model of Muhammadiyah and NU education. *Journal of Islamic Education*, 9(1), 1-22.
- Binkley, M., Erstad, O., Herman, J., Raizen, S., Ripley, M., Miller-Ricci, M., & Rumble, M. (2012). Defining twenty-first century skills. In P. Griffin, B. McGaw, & E. Care (Eds.), *Assessment and teaching of 21st century skills* (pp. 17-66). Springer.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Fauzi, A. (2017). The perception of barokah in Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic boarding school, Probolinggo. *Al-Murabbi: Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 3(2), 120-132.
- Fauzi, A. (2018). Transculturation of pesantren social capital; as a paradigm of contextual Islamic education. *Al-Tahrir: Journal of Islamic Thought*, 18(1), 161-181.
- Hidayat, N., & Machali, I. (2018). Educational management: Concepts, principles, and applications in managing schools and madrasahs. *Kaukaba Dipantara*.
- Israel, M. (2015). *Research ethics and integrity for social scientists: Beyond regulatory compliance* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Koh, J. H. L., Chai, C. S., & Lim, W. Y. (2015). Teacher professional development for TPACK-21CL: Effects on teacher ICT integration and student outcomes. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 55(2), 172-196.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2014). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Larson, L. C., & Miller, T. N. (2011). 21st century skills: Prepare students for the future. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 47(3), 121-123.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Lukens-Bull, R. (2010). Madrasa by any other name: Pondok, pesantren, and Islamic schools in Indonesia and larger Southeast Asian region. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 4(1), 1-21.
- Partnership for 21st Century Learning. (2019). *Framework for 21st century learning*. Battelle for Kids.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Rahim, A. (2021). The relevance of pesantren education in the 21st century: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Islamic Education*, 7(1), 1-18.
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.
- Steenbrink, K. A. (2018). *Pesantren, madrasah, school: Recent developments in Indonesian Islamic education*. Doctoral dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit te Nijmegen.
- Suharto, T. (2018). Transnational Islamic education in Indonesia: An ideological perspective. *Contemporary Islam*, 12(2), 101-122.
- Tan, C. (2014). Educative tradition and Islamic schools in Indonesia. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 14, 47-62.
- Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st century skills: Learning for life in our times*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Wekke, I. S. (2015). Arabic teaching and learning: A model from Indonesian Muslim minority. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 286-290.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Copyright Holder :

© Aghni Zakiatun Nabila et.al (2024).

First Publication Right :

© Journal of Multidisciplinary Sustainability Asean

This article is under:

