



Creative Education as An Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

Innovation is essential for Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), which are inclusive institutions adaptable to various changes. As independent educational entities, pesantren determine their own educational innovations. However, the government and other related institutions also influence and initiate educational innovations in pesantren. This literature study examines educational innovation in pesantren, proposing creative Islamic education as a key aspect of innovation in Indonesia. Theories and insights on enhancing creativity in pesantren are discussed from two perspectives: creative pedagogy and an environment that fosters creativity.

Creative pedagogy in pesantren can be implemented through creative teaching, creative learning, and teaching for creativity, all of which are interconnected and complementary. An environment that stimulates creativity arises from the understanding that creativity is not an innate talent but the result of the interaction between an individual's creative potential and their experiences and processes. Therefore, pesantren need to cultivate an educational culture that stimulates creativity and innovate in program implementation to provoke creativity, such as art performances, competitions, and activities that develop students' talents and interests.

ABSTRAK

Inovasi merupakan sebuah keniscayaan yang harus dilakukan oleh pondok pesantren. Pesantren sendiri diklasifikasikan sebagai institusi yang inklusif dan mampu beradaptasi dengan berbagai perubahan. Sebagai lembaga pendidikan yang mandiri, pesantren menentukan inovasi pendidikannya sendiri. Meskipun demikian, pemerintah dan lembaga lain yang memiliki hubungan dengan pesantren juga memengaruhi dan menginisiasi inovasi pendidikan di pesantren. Penelitian ini merupakan studi literatur yang mengkaji inovasi

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pendidikan pesantren, dengan menawarkan pendidikan Islam kreatif sebagai bagian dari inovasi pesantren di Indonesia. Teori dan wawasan tentang peningkatan kreativitas di pesantren dapat dibahas dari dua perspektif, yaitu pedagogi kreatif dan lingkungan yang merangsang perkembangan kreativitas. Pedagogi kreatif di pesantren dapat diimplementasikan melalui pengajaran kreatif, pembelajaran kreatif, dan pengajaran untuk kreativitas. Ketiganya saling terhubung dan saling melengkapi. Sementara itu, lingkungan yang merangsang kreativitas muncul dari kesadaran bahwa kreativitas bukanlah bakat yang dibawa sejak lahir, tetapi hasil dari interaksi antara potensi kreatif setiap individu dengan pengalaman lingkungan dan proses yang dijalani. Oleh karena itu, pesantren perlu menciptakan budaya pendidikan yang dapat merangsang kreativitas, serta berinovasi dalam pelaksanaan program-program yang memprovokasi kreativitas, seperti pertunjukan seni, kompetisi, dan kegiatan pengembangan bakat serta minat santri.

Introduction

Initially, Islamic boarding schools only taught Islamic religious material (*ulumu ad-din*) in a non-classical manner (Mustofa, 2024; Steenbrink, 1986). However, because these schools are such adaptive and open educational institutions, they can adjust to various changes (Fauzi, Suryapermana, & Ruhmawan, 2022). This adaptation is evident in the implementation of modern schooling systems, the incorporation of non-religious subjects into their curriculum, and their dynamic integration into the national education system (Isbah, 2020). It's no wonder that the existence of pesantren remains strong and is even increasingly popular among the community.

According to data from the Directorate of Islamic Boarding School Education of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, in 2022 there were 37,614 Islamic boarding schools with a total of 4,495,735 students ("Statistik Pondok Pesantren," 2023). Amidst the flourishing growth of pesantren in this country, there are not a few who criticize the role of these schools, especially in responding to various developments in the contemporary world. The gap between the knowledge received in pesantren and the needs of the modern world is still considered disproportionate (Ma'arif, Zuana, & Sirojuddin, 2022). On one hand, many pesantren are already teaching general knowledge, but graduates of pesantren are often considered to lose in the competition in the world of work compared to graduates of general schools.

Currently, these schools face increasingly heavy challenges. The flow of globalization, the industrial revolution 4.0, demands that pesantren not only produce prospective scholars who are experts in the field of religious sciences, but also have intellectual and creativity so that they can contribute more to the advancement of Islam. The challenges of pesantren in the future cannot be separated from the process of globalization and therefore pesantren must have the ability to integrate culturally with the international system (Anshori & Pohl, 2022; Mastuhu, 1999). As a container for forming an integrated Muslim generation, these schools must be proportional, in the sense of being balanced between religious education, science, and technology. This, as conveyed by Malik Fajar, that "Islamic boarding schools are required to contextualize without having to sacrifice their original character" (Fadjar, 1999). In another sense, pesantren can respond to various social change challenges, engage in social change, and simultaneously position itself as the center of that social change (Arkam, 2018).

In general, Islamic boarding schools can be categorized into two, namely Salafi boarding schools and Khalafi boarding schools. If the components of Salafi boarding schools, as Zamakhsari Dhofier (Dhofier, 2011) stated, consist of mosques, kiai (religious leaders), santri (students), *yellow books*, and boarding; then the components of Khalafi (modern) boarding schools add skill content to their educational curriculum. A santri, according to Mukti Ali as the initiator of the skill boarding school curriculum, states that a santri ideally can harmonize between the brain, morals, and hand skills (Ali, 1974).

Even so, the goal of Islamic boarding school education is not aimed at preparing workers to fill modern sectors, as is formal education in general. Education in boarding schools should be more oriented towards education that forges santri to have an understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic religion (Suryana, 2024). The santri are educated to be pious, righteous, and can become agents of change in society. Boarding schools must continue to be a “home” for spiritual mental defense while still adjusting to the times (Kesuma, 2017).

This heavy task necessitates boarding schools to continue to innovate. Moreover, we have now entered the industrial era 4.0 (Mundial & Schwab, 2016) which has a broad impact on various aspects of life, including education. In the industrial era 4.0, graduates of Islamic education are faced with various challenges and needs that are completely new. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions must adjust it by making updates and innovations. This is done so that Islamic education does not lag behind and even become obsolete. Therefore, concrete steps for the renewal and innovation of Islamic education need to be thought about, sought, and applied, so that Islamic education can continue to develop and compete in this era of disruption. The solution steps, among others, are by also disrupting themselves (Priatmoko, 2018).

Meanwhile, many Islamic boarding school education systems—without mentioning all—are trapped in what Paulo Freire called banking-style education. This type of education model is considered only capable of producing students who are ready to meet market needs, rather than being critical of their times. Ideally, education should be part of the humanization process, in the sense of making humans actively think and act, not dehumanize by making humans as objects (Freire, 2000; Ho & Tseng, 2023) The banking-style education system does not liberate students (santri) at all, because it takes place by viewing the student’s brain as a safe deposit box. The teacher (kiai) acts as a filler, while the students (santri) as the filled ones who accommodate anything conveyed by the teacher (Escobar, 2016).

However, several recent empirical studies show a shift in the application of creativity in pesantren. For example, a study by Yusmaliana dan Suyadi revealed how some pesantren have started to adapt elements of creative learning without neglecting traditional values. While significant challenges remain in maintaining a balance between creativity and more conservative pesantren values, this study highlights the great potential for introducing creative methodologies that enhance the understanding and critical thinking of students towards religious texts. (Yusmaliana & Suyadi, 2019)

Mastuhu stated that in the learning process at Islamic boarding schools, the emphasis is often on mastery and enrichment of subject matter rather than scientific thinking methodology. Although indeed, in most Islamic boarding schools, santri are also taught *mantiq* (logic) and syllogism, but its nature is mechanical and does not encourage the development of rational thinking. This cannot be separated from the kiai of Islamic boarding schools who experienced the fiqh-sufistic education model during the colonial period with a value orientation that greatly emphasizes the importance of *ukhrawi* (hereafter) over worldly, religion over science, and morals over reason (Escobar, 2016; Mastuhu, 1999). Although Mastuhu's research results cannot be generalized to all Islamic boarding schools, but another statement from Mastuhu, that an education system will determine whether the concerned educational institution is of interest or not to the public, can still be accepted. The Islamic boarding school education system that continues to undergo transformation is an effort of Islamic boarding schools to answer the challenges of their times (Efendi & Bueraheng, 2023).

Criticism of the learning education system in Islamic boarding schools was also expressed by Nurcholis Madjid. Nurcholis Madjid assessed the mismatch between the world of Islamic boarding schools and the outside world, both in terms of material and teaching systems. Although many Islamic boarding schools have taught general knowledge, Madjid views it as still being implemented half-heartedly. Islamic boarding schools do teach *fiqh* (Islamic law), *aqaid* (theology), and *nahwu sharaf* (Arabic grammar science) which contain rationalism and foster intellectualism, but the strong memorization system in Islamic boarding schools, and the lack of truly rationalistic lessons cause Islamic boarding school education to fall into verbalism (Madjid, 1997). Verbalism, whether realized or not, makes santri reproductive and less creative.

Almost all scholars agree on the importance of developing students' creativity and religiosity, but the author has yet to find books or research results related to the application of creativity development in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). If there are any, they are discussed separately. Sutrisno touches on creativity development in contemporary Islamic education (Assegaf, 2006). This writing responds to the tendency of static-repetitive thinking in education by offering a dynamic, constructive, scientific, and philosophical Islamic education through Iqbal's thoughts on education. However, the discussion does not address how a model of creative education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools, can be implemented. Nonetheless, the critical analysis of Iqbal's thoughts regarding creativity development in Islamic education reinforces the importance of fostering creative Islamic education. Additionally, discussions about creative education are often more focused on creative education in formal schools, and even more specifically, on creativity development linked to particular subjects.

The good news is, not a few Islamic boarding schools are now making breakthroughs in their education systems. This article intends to examine the innovation of Islamic boarding schools, by offering the concept of creative Islamic education as an innovation in the Islamic boarding school education system. Specifically, this study identifies forms of creativity emerging in the development of curricula, teaching methods, and institutional management models within *pesantren*. Although the theme of innovation in *pesantren* has been explored in previous literature, this paper offers a new contribution by deepening the analysis of how creativity within *pesantren* can shape Islamic education's response to global dynamics, such as social change, technological advancement, and the demands of 21st-century skills. Thus, this research is not only relevant to the context of Islamic education in Indonesia but also provides insights that can serve as a reference for the development of community-based education in various parts of the world.

Methods

This study employs a literature review approach with a qualitative-descriptive method. This approach is used to analyze creative education as an educational innovation in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). The qualitative method allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the concepts and ideas found in various available literature. Through the literature review method, the author aims to identify and formulate how creative education is applied in pesantren, based on solid references. The literature sources are derived from scientific articles, books, and other documents to provide a theoretical framework and critical analysis.

Data was collected using documentation techniques, which include reading, examining, and reviewing literature relevant to the research topic. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to access a comprehensive and diverse range of information sources, encompassing both theoretical perspectives and empirical findings. The literature selection process was conducted through searches in several academic databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ, with inclusion criteria consisting of scholarly publications discussing educational innovation in pesantren and issues related to contemporary Islamic education. Meanwhile, literature consisting of opinion pieces without an empirical research basis was excluded. To ensure rigor, cross-referencing among sources was carried out, and content validation was conducted by consulting two Islamic education experts with extensive experience in pesantren studies. The analysis was carried out systematically, following a discussion structure divided into three sections: (1) Educational Innovation in Pesantren, (2) Dynamics of Innovation in Pesantren, and (3) Creative Islamic Education in Pesantren.

The collected data was analyzed using content analysis techniques. This technique was chosen for its ability to understand and interpret the meaning of the texts examined in the literature, particularly regarding the dynamics of contemporary pesantren education. The analysis was conducted systematically, following a discussion structure divided into several sections: (1) Educational Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools, (2) The Dynamics of Innovation in Pesantren, and (3) Creative Islamic Education in Pesantren.

Results and Discussion

Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools

Innovation is a word adopted from the English language, innovation. The definition of educational innovation did not appear in educational literature until 1964 when Matthew Miles wrote the book *Innovation in Education*. According to Miles, as cited by Sajid Khan, educational innovation is a deliberate and planned change made in response to internal and external pressures to enable the system to achieve the expected goals in a relatively more efficient way. (Khan, 2018).

Discussions about innovation are usually always associated with transformation and modernization. The study of innovation in Islamic boarding schools within the scope of their transformation is used to understand how far shifts and changes have occurred in the body of Islamic boarding schools. Every transformation carried out by Islamic boarding schools can give birth to innovation. Likewise, every innovation or new finding can encourage transformation (Soebahar, 2013).

The meaning of innovation itself, according to Rogers, is "an idea, practice or object that is considered new by an individual or unit that adopts it" (Rogers, 2003; Rogers, Singhal, & Quinlan, 2003). Meanwhile, according to Noeng Muhajid, innovation can be interpreted as a discovery, which in English is called discovery, invention, innovation. Discovery usually refers to the discovery of something that already exists but is not widely

known by the community, for example, the discovery of the American continent by Columbus. Invention is the discovery of something completely new, like the discovery of electricity. While innovation is closely related to efforts made to solve a problem. Substantively, innovation is divided into three, namely, innovation of concepts/theories, innovation in the form of structure and function, and technology product innovation (Muhadjir, 1987; Weiss & Nemeczek, 2022).

Modernization and innovation indeed have different meanings, but both have a close relationship. The word “modern” is commonly used to indicate a change towards something better, more advanced in the sense of being more enjoyable, and improving human welfare (Nata, 2016; Paquin, Wilson, Cellard, Lecomte, & Potvin, 2014). Modernization emphasizes the process of change, while innovation emphasizes “something new”. It can be said, the acceptance of an innovation is a sign of modernization.

From the perspective of Islamic boarding schools, innovation is more appropriately interpreted as efforts made to solve problems faced by Islamic boarding schools. As Rusdiana’s understanding of innovation in Islamic boarding schools, innovation in Islamic boarding schools can be in the form of ideas or actions that are considered new, but the novelty is relative (Rusdiana, 2014). Innovation has a slightly different meaning from renewal. According to Hasbullah (Hasbullah, 2008), changes in innovation only concern certain aspects, which are narrow and limited in scope. While “renewal”, changes occur more broadly covering several aspects and even totally.

Azumardy Azra stated, at least, the response of Islamic boarding schools to innovation and modernization of Islamic education can be mapped onto four components, namely: first, the substance of education, by adding general material and skills; second, innovation in methodology, in the form of classical and stratification; third, institutional, diversification of educational institutions and leadership of Islamic boarding schools; and fourth, function, from what was originally an educational function to a broader social and economic function (Azra & Thaha, 2012). Almost the same as Azra, Haidar Putra Daulay wrote that there are at least three aspects of innovation in Islamic boarding schools: first, method, from traditional methods such as sorogan and wetonan to classical methods; second, content, which has included new material while still maintaining the yellow book; and third, management, especially related to the single leadership of kiai towards the democratization of collective leadership (Daulay, 2018).

However, the innovation of Islamic boarding schools is a response to various problems they face. So it can be said, the innovation of Islamic boarding schools takes place dynamically, in accordance with the context and basic nature of Islamic boarding schools that are flexible to various changes, and also because of the encouragement or initiative from interested parties. Abd. Halim Soebahar has made three types of innovation initiatives in Islamic boarding schools, namely, first, innovations pioneered by the government; second, innovations initiated by P3M (Association for Islamic Boarding School and Community Development), LP3ES (Institute for Research, Education and Information on Economy and Social Affairs); and third, innovations that occur sporadically (Soebahar, 2013). The first two innovation initiatives bring uniformity of themes, while sporadic innovations are more free and not binding.

Government-initiated Islamic boarding school innovations occur due to government policy pressures on Islamic boarding schools which are a subsystem of national education. The birth of several rules related to Islamic boarding schools indirectly forces Islamic boarding schools to adjust. Government initiative innovation is quite effective in driving transformation in the body of Islamic boarding schools. Even so, the model of government initiative innovation cannot be applied in all Islamic boarding schools, considering each Islamic boarding school has its own uniqueness. Meanwhile, LP3ES and P3M initiative

Islamic boarding school innovations have also brought various changes to the pattern of Islamic boarding school education. The emphasis, namely making Islamic boarding schools not only Islamic education institutions but also social empowerment institutions, brings Islamic boarding schools to play a wider role and be grounded. The studies conducted by LP3ES and P3M also made many Islamic boarding schools aware of their roles and positions. Then, sporadic Islamic boarding school innovations, carried out by kiai as the main leader of Islamic boarding schools. Innovative kiai strive to make breakthroughs aimed at developing Islamic boarding schools.

Dynamics of Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools

These three models of innovation initiatives should ideally be able to greet each other, synergize. Government initiative innovations must be developed (innovated) further, so as not to fall into the valley of formality. For example, the innovation of the Islamic boarding school curriculum. It is a government initiative innovation, at least according to the opinion of Abd. Halim Soebahar. This innovation is carried out in an effort for santri to get general education and skills, in addition to Islamic religious education. However, if it only stops there, without then trying to change the education pattern that takes place in Islamic boarding schools, the innovation will lose its excitement.

According to Ekosusilo and Kasihadi in Rusydi Ananda (Ananda & Amiruddin, 2017), educational innovation as a new idea, must be able to solve various problems that were previously unsolved if only using traditional methods. The problems faced by Islamic boarding schools are not only the absence of formal recognition in the form of diplomas from the government, the lack of natural science material, and skills as a provision for life, but also the education system that is memorization, and less developing the rationality and creativity of santri as conveyed by Nurcholis Madjid at the beginning of this writing. Therefore, the innovation of the Islamic boarding school curriculum, which is considered a government initiative, is important to continue to be developed. One important aspect of innovation in pesantren education is the development of creative education. Creative education not only enriches teaching and learning methods, but also constitutes an integral part of curriculum innovation efforts, aiming to shape students who are active, imaginative, and adaptive to the changing times.

Dalin, in Rusydi Ananda, mentions the dimensions of educational innovation which include: "technological change, behavioral change, organizational change, social change, centrality, complexity, nature and amount of change, goal fit, goal stability" (Ananda & Amiruddin, 2017). The keyword that drives innovation is the word "change". Therefore, the innovation of Islamic boarding school education is a manifestation of the response to various changes that have occurred and are preparing to face changes that will occur.

Among several aspects of innovation in Islamic boarding schools, curriculum innovation is the biggest concern in efforts to develop Islamic boarding schools, in addition to management innovation. Curriculum innovation is a form of transformation of Islamic boarding schools that are sensitive to symptoms of social change in society. Therefore, in facing the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, the curriculum of Islamic boarding school education needs to be designed as an effort to form an Islamic generation that is not only good at reciting, but also has creative abilities.

The education curriculum is a foothold in determining subject matter, education mechanisms, and also used as a standard in measuring success and quality of education (Nasution, 1995). Although there are differences of opinion about what the ideal curriculum is for Islamic education institutions, but in general a good curriculum is an integral and comprehensive curriculum, which includes a combination of religious and general sciences (Takdir, 2018).

Initially, Islamic boarding schools did not know the term curriculum, especially before independence. Most Islamic boarding schools of that era did not formulate the basis and explicit goals of their education programs. The selection of material and learning methods was determined by the kiai's policy (Madjid, 1997). In the contemporary era, the term curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is no longer foreign. Innovations to the curriculum have also been carried out a lot. The orientation of Islamic boarding school education has also transformed a lot, from initially being a place to cadre prospective scholars, now the orientation of Islamic boarding schools is aimed at also printing intellectual scholars. Scholars who not only master *ulum ad-din*, but also general sciences.

So far, many Islamic boarding schools are increasingly aware of the urgency of integrating general knowledge and religion. Many Islamic boarding schools are open to general sciences and do not only make the yellow book the only source of learning besides the Qur'an and hadith. This is different from the explanation of the books taught by Islamic boarding schools as stated by Martin Van Bruinessen (Bruinessen, 1995). Many Islamic boarding schools, especially Ma'had Aly, have provided several new reference texts and this is not only limited to Islamic books in Arabic (*kitab kuning*/yellow books). The dichotomy of science in the body of Islamic boarding schools is starting to erode, not to mention it has disappeared completely. The acceptance of this curriculum innovation is proof of modernization in Islamic boarding schools.

Unfortunately, as mentioned at the beginning, the innovation of the Islamic boarding school curriculum is still formalistic. The discussion of the innovation of the Islamic boarding school curriculum so far often emphasizes changes or additions to material in the curriculum structure. In fact, the curriculum is broader than that. It is any activity carried out by santri within Islamic boarding schools, to achieve an educational goal. How teaching and learning activities, setting strategies in the teaching and learning process, how to evaluate the teaching development program, are important aspects of the innovation of the Islamic boarding school curriculum.

Islamic boarding schools that have adopted government initiative innovations are still considered to maintain a tendency to think statically-repetitively, and less provide space for freedom of thought. As a result, the innovation of the Islamic boarding school curriculum is actually much complained about and even considered a failure. Graduates of Islamic boarding schools have less mastery of religious knowledge and general knowledge, so they cannot compete with graduates of formal education schools.

It is natural that many Islamic boarding schools still adhere to the Salaf tradition. For example, Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School, Mojo, Kediri, still maintains the Salafi system, such as sorogan, bandongan, and wetonan because it is considered the right way to study religious sciences from their sources, in the form of classic Arabic books. Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School views that the textualist-perennialist Salafi creed is considered a doctrine that should be maintained. The cautious attitude in making religious law decisions, noble in acting, and correct in believing are the characteristics of the *salafus saleh pamah* which are considered capable of maintaining the correct creed. In addition, Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School also wants to focus on educating santri in religious sciences, by giving a lot of portions to religious sciences and slightly incorporating the general curriculum (Sulthon, 2022).

The Raudlotul Muhsinin Al-Maqbul Kuwolu Bululawang Islamic Boarding School in Malang, East Java, as Sulthon revealed, also refuses to incorporate a formal education curriculum into the boarding school education system due to concerns that it could disrupt the concentration of students who are deeply studying religion, and also fears it could damage the sincerity and motivation of students who merely want to earn a degree (Sulthon, 2022).

Regarding this matter, Abdurrahman Wahid expressed that this tendency can actually be understood. Because the pattern of boarding school development with a mixture of religious components and “general” lessons has not had a significant impact for several decades. What happens is, boarding school graduates do not become competent religious scholars, and also do not become quality non-religious scientists. However, according to Wahid, what should be done is not to return to the old (salaf) education pattern and eliminate the general education component. Because, according to Abdurrahman Wahid, returning to the salaf education pattern does not then eliminate future challenges. The future of mankind demands the possession of a strong spiritual provision and at the same time mastery of knowledge and technology (Sulthon, 2022).

Creative Islamic Education in Islamic Boarding Schools

Islamic boarding schools, in addition to being a place for deep religious study, should also be able to develop the creativity of students. Creativity is considered essential for personal growth and success, in this case, it is even vital for the development of Indonesia (Dwi Rahmawati, 2019; U. Munandar, 1999). Menurut According to David Campbell, creativity is an idea, concept, or innovative thought that is useful and can be understood. Creativity can be interpreted as the ability of a person to generate new ideas or concepts, it can also be an activity or synthesis of thought that has a predetermined purpose and goal. Meanwhile, the meaning of “creative” itself revolves around the issue of producing something new (Ambarjaya, 2012).

Discussions about creative education began to flourish in the nineteenth century. Baer and Kaufman (2006) in Yu-Sien Lin stated that creative education began to be accepted along with studies on human genius and creative achievements that became the main concern. Before the mid-1950s, creativity received little scientific (Sternberg, Kaufman, & Pretz, 2002) attention despite the fact that many creative people lived in the years, decades, and centuries before the mid-20th century (Lin, 2011). Prophet Muhammad, as a role model for Muslims in the world, is a creative figure, both in politics, economics, social and religious fields (Sulaiman, Mohd Zarif, Azmir, & Nizah, 2015). Therefore, the discourse on fostering creativity in Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools is something relevant and important.

Islamic boarding schools are a very strategic environment in developing student creativity. Basically, creative education is not limited to teaching students in creative ways through environmental conditioning and instant mental processing. More than that, creative education must be based on the formation of a creative mindset, culture, and environment, and the character of the students. Creative education must be holistic, in the sense of covering all components of education, starting from classes, schools, institutions, content, curriculum to the existing national education system. Utami Munandar, a creative education expert, in her dissertation titled *Creativity and Education* provides quite a lot of criticism of education that is only dogmatic and does not provide a wide space for the development of creativity. Munandar realizes various obstacles in the development of creativity, among them is the lack of encouragement from leaders and educational institutions. According to Munandar, educators play a big role in the development of creativity and creativity. What educators can do is develop attitudes and abilities of students that will help them face future problems, creativity, and creativity (Latuconsina, 2014).

Utami Munandar, a creative education expert, in her dissertation titled *Creativity and Education*, provides quite a lot of criticism of education that is only dogmatic and does not provide a wide space for the development of creativity. Munandar realizes various obstacles in the development of creativity, among them is the lack of encouragement from

leaders and educational institutions. According to Munandar, educators play a big role in the development of creativity (Brauer, Ormiston, & Beausaert, 2024; S. C. U. Munandar, 1977).

However, there are several differences to note between Munandar's findings and those of this study. Munandar focuses more on the development of creativity within formal education, while this study broadens the scope to include the context of pesantren, which has its own distinctive characteristics. Although both suggest the importance of support from educators and institutions, pesantren, with its more traditional educational model, faces its own challenges in applying creativity more widely. For example, the pesantren curriculum, which is still dominated by the teaching of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), often hinders the implementation of more innovative creative education.

What educators can do is develop attitudes and abilities of students that will help them face future problems, creativity, and creativity. Basically, creativity is closely related to efforts to optimize productive mental potential to find something to solve problems with various approaches. It should be underlined that the productive mentality as intended has been widely discussed in the Qur'an, with expressions such as ruh, qalb, aql, fikr. If viewed from the perspective of creativity classification (the creative person, the creative intellectual, the creative product), it is clear that the Qur'an itself has given many signals of creative norms and axioms, in the form of commands, suggestions, statements, and i'tibar in terms of thinking and behaving. Based on the verses of the Qur'an and hadith, Taufik succeeded in strengthening the concept of Creative Islamic Education, education which he believes must strive to encourage creative activities and manage learning that is in line with the potential of students (Taufik, 2009).

Islamic education has a vision and mission to form and develop creativity, intellectuality, skills, and moral personality. Through Islamic education, it is hoped that a generation will be born that is independent, disciplined, innovative, and able to solve various life problems ((Al-Razi, Madjid, & Khalil, 2024), as well as being beneficial to society (Hidayat, 2016). In a more concise way, the goal of Islamic education is to develop the various potentials of students as a whole (physical and spiritual) and have creative power.

Meanwhile, creative education, according to Farid Najjar, is an education that strives to stimulate learning by encouraging the creative activities of students so that it can help them produce something new as a result of the relationship and interaction of thinking (Najjar, 2003). Lund (2010) in Tiana Chemi, et al., said that when creativity is then positioned as an individual skill that is a prerequisite needed for the development of innovation, discovery, and national entrepreneurship, the call for its improvement in future generations, through the education system, seems to be a logical consequence (Chemi, Grams Davy, & Lund, 2017). Thus, nurturing creativity through boarding school education is to support the development of individuals in creative quality to deal with daily problems, to support their self-actualization needs, and to increase their capacity for success in the future (Lin, 2011).

The concept of enhancing creativity in boarding schools can be done if two aspects are considered, namely creative pedagogy and an environment that stimulates creativity. The author will explain these two things in more detail, as follows:

a. Creative Pedagogy

Etymologically, pedagogy comes from the Greek word "paidagogos," which means a child's guide. Thus, pedagogy is often interpreted as the education or teaching of children. In England, pedagogy has been narrowly defined, often connoted with the practice of teaching. Some also interpret it as the science of teaching or merely refer to the techniques and strategies of teaching in schools. Clearly, there are various interpretations of the term

pedagogy. In this article, the author adopts Rajendra Kumar Shah's interpretation, defining pedagogy as a teaching and learning activity, or in other terms, as learning. (Shah & Campus, 2021)

Lin has created a triangle model of creative pedagogy, namely creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning. All three are interconnected and complementary (Lin, 2011). The creative triangle model as offered by Lin can be adopted by Islamic boarding schools in an effort to develop creative pedagogy.

The following table summarizes the key elements of Lin's creative pedagogy model and its potential implementation in the context of pesantren education:

Element of Creative Pedagogy (Lin, 2011)	Definition	Implementation in Pesantren
Creative Teaching	An imaginative approach to teaching that makes learning more engaging, enjoyable, and effective.	Kiai/ustadz utilize various creative methods in delivering <i>kitab kuning</i> material, including technology integration and interactive discussion techniques.
Creative Learning	Active participation of learners in building understanding through physical and mental engagement.	Strengthening of <i>sorogan, musyawarah, mudzakah, and bahtsul masail</i> , methods to encourage active participation among santri.
Teaching for Creativity	An educational process that supports the development of students' creative capacities.	Providing space for exploration, problem-solving, and fostering students' learning interests through project-based assignments or case studies.

The element of creative teaching highlights the creative efforts of teachers in designing and teaching by "using an imaginative approach to make learning more interesting, enjoyable, and effective". If so, the key to creative learning is actually on the teacher as the main controller of learning activities. Creative learning is not determined by how sophisticated the media used by the teacher, but by the teacher himself. So creative teaching cannot be separated from the creative teacher.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the kiai or ustadz has a big role in implementing creative teaching. Each kiai has a different art in teaching. Even though what is taught is the yellow book, it does not mean that the teacher cannot design learning that is enjoyable and effective for students. The bandongan method may indeed be effective for teaching quickly in classes with many students, but it may be less effective for understanding students who only act as listeners while reciting the book. Kiai also needs to utilize technology to create learning that is more comfortable and impresses students.

Meanwhile, in the element of creative learning, students or santri must be positioned as learning subjects. Students must be actively involved in learning activities. The practice of creative learning cannot be separated from active learning. According to Mayer, the student is said to be active when he is not just present in class, memorizing, doing exam questions, but the student must be physically and mentally involved (Asmani, 2009). Santri should be active in practicing in the learning process.

Education in Islamic boarding schools in some cases has actually implemented creative learning. The sorogan method (individual learning process) could potentially

encourage creative learning in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, various activities carried out in Islamic boarding schools are a manifestation of real learning, and can also be interpreted as creative learning. However, the strong memorization model in Islamic boarding schools could be an obstacle in the actualization of creative learning. Memorization is indeed important, especially when what is memorized are the sacred texts of Islamic teachings. But memorization should not then be made a sign of educational success. Understanding must be prioritized over mere memorization.

Creative learning requires innovative teaching. Innovative teaching is the practice of teaching for creativity and the application of innovation to teach. Both of these aspects require an educational culture that appreciates creativity and sees it as an asset in the classroom. Teachers are key figures in building a creative climate, but they need support both from policymakers and institutions. Specifically, the curriculum and assessment are the main areas that must be addressed to enable creativity in the classroom. The curriculum must undergo skilled and comprehensive development, giving equal importance to each subject, considering creativity and defining it coherently across the curriculum, providing freedom and time for discovery, and considering the interests of students (Ferrari, Cachia, & Punie, 2009)

Active and creative learning tends to be constructivist. In constructivist theory, good thinking is more important than just having the right answer. A person will be able to solve their problems when they are able to think well. The essence of constructivist learning is the formation of knowledge, where cognitive structures are formed in the interaction of students with their environment. Cognitive interaction itself will only occur when that reality is arranged through the cognitive structure created by the subject itself, in this case, the students (Zaini, Munthe, & Aryani, 2008).

To gain a deep understanding, students must be actively involved in learning activities. The discussion/musyawah model should be aimed not only at high-level students but also new students. Also, the mudzakah and bahtsul masail methods could be strengthened to carry out the scientific tradition of the students.

The last element of creative pedagogy is teaching for creativity. Creative education is not education that teaches about creativity, but an educational process that supports the growth of student creativity. Teaching for creativity focuses more on the goals and strategies for developing students' creative capacity. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, development strategies can be carried out by facilitating student involvement in learning activities. The bandongan method might be appropriate to add discussions and question and answer sessions in order to facilitate student involvement in learning activities. In addition, it could also be with a learning to learn strategy, or to explore more new possibilities, often trying to be inventive to arouse curiosity and learning motivation. Learning for problem-solving and appreciating the creative contributions of students are important principles of teaching for creativity (Lin, 2011).

b. Environment that Stimulates Creativity

Learning in typical classes is just a small part of the education process in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Education in pesantren occurs 24 hours a day, which is an advantage not found in formal educational institutions such as schools. Efforts to develop creativity in pesantren are becoming increasingly feasible and will succeed when pesantren can optimize the role of their educational environment.

Zakiyah Daradjat states that the environment includes climate and geography, residence, knowledge, education, customs, and nature. The environment encompasses everything visible and constantly evolving, including humans, nature, events, and other human-related aspects (Daradjat, 1992). The environment of pesantren can be

categorized into two types: physical and non-physical. The physical environment consists of facilities, infrastructure, and geographical conditions, while the non-physical environment includes social and emotional aspects, such as the location of pesantren, rules, and various activities, both regular and extracurricular. The environment of pesantren significantly influences the growth of student creativity.

This finding aligns with Torrance's assertion in Asrori (Asrori, 2009) that creativity is not an innate talent but the result of the interaction between an individual's creative potential and their environmental experiences. A conducive pesantren environment supports the growth of student creativity. So, what constitutes a pesantren environment that supports creative Islamic education? Pesantren have long possessed such an environment; it just needs to be reflected upon and developed to truly support creativity. The culture of modest living, independence, mutual cooperation, and deliberation in pesantren indirectly fosters creativity. Through the pesantren environment, students learn to manage and solve problems, which is part of creative education.

Another aspect that needs improvement is the implementation of programs that provoke creativity, such as art performances, competitions, and activities aligned with students' talents and interests. While facilities and infrastructure are important, their benefits are less optimal without supporting activities and programs.

Conclusion

The Islamic boarding school education system, which continues to undergo transformation, is an effort by pesantren to address contemporary challenges. Curriculum innovation is a major concern in the development of pesantren, alongside management and leadership innovations. Curriculum innovation is a form of transformation sensitive to social changes in society. From the perspective of pesantren, innovation is more appropriately seen as efforts to solve the problems they face. Therefore, in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, the pesantren education curriculum needs to be designed to form a generation of Muslims who are not only proficient in recitation but also possess creative abilities.

However, pesantren innovation is a response to various problems they face. Thus, it can be said that pesantren innovation occurs dynamically, in accordance with the context and basic nature of pesantren, which are flexible to changes and driven by encouragement or initiatives from interested parties. Innovation is carried out to provide students with general education and skills, in addition to Islamic religious education. However, if it stops there without changing the educational pattern in pesantren, the innovation will lose its excitement.

The orientation of pesantren education has also transformed significantly. Initially aimed at producing scholars proficient in religious sciences, pesantren now also aim to produce intellectual scholars who master both *ulum ad-din* and general sciences. Many pesantren realize the importance of integrating general knowledge and religion. They are open to general sciences and do not solely rely on the yellow book as the only source of learning besides the Qur'an and hadith. The dichotomy of science in pesantren is starting to erode. The acceptance of curriculum innovation is proof of modernization in pesantren. Unfortunately, pesantren curriculum innovation is still formalistic, often emphasizing changes or additions to curriculum material. The curriculum encompasses all activities carried out by students within pesantren to achieve educational goals. How learning

activities are conducted, strategies in the learning process, and evaluation of teaching development programs are important aspects of curriculum innovation.

Creative education emphasizes the importance of developing student creativity, a crucial character needed to face technological advances, including for pesantren graduates. Without creativity, humans will not produce anything new. Therefore, creativity should be a main character instilled to produce a pioneering generation.

Theories and insights about enhancing creativity in pesantren can be discussed from three perspectives: creative pedagogy and an environment that stimulates creativity. Creative pedagogy in pesantren can be implemented through creative teaching, creative learning, and teaching for creativity. All three are interconnected and complementary. An environment that stimulates creativity arises from the awareness that creativity is not an innate talent but the result of the interaction between an individual's creative potential and their environmental experiences. Therefore, pesantren need to innovate by organizing programs that stimulate student creativity, such as art performances, competitions, and talent and interest development activities. Facilities and infrastructure are important, but without supporting activities and programs, their benefits are less optimal.

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