

Santri Cooperatives (Kosan) as a Means of Realizing Economic Empowerment and Independence of Santri

Dyah Syahira Tara Dewi¹, Aulia Rahma Diniya Putri²,
¹²Universitas Islam Negeri K.H Abdurrahman wahid Pekalongan

E-mail: dyahsyahira2017@gmail.com

E-mail: 2diniyaa588@gmail.com

Abstract (English)

A new initiative called Koperasi Santri (Kosan) aims to help santri gain financial strength and become independent in Islamic boarding schools. The purpose of this study is to see how the santri cooperative functions as a way to encourage economic empowerment and independence of santri. This research uses a qualitative method by conducting in-depth interviews with cooperative administrators, santri, and Islamic boarding school managers. Participatory observation was also used to collect data, which allowed for a better understanding of the way the cooperative program is implemented in the Islamic boarding school environment. The results show that the Santri Cooperative (Kosan) has an important role in helping santri become more financially independent. By providing them with access to various financial services, entrepreneurship training, and the opportunity to provide financial coaching, the cooperative has built awareness of the importance of financial management and business development among santri.

Keywords; Santri Cooperative, Santri, Economic Empowerment.



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are traditional educational institutions that were born and grew at the same time as the arrival of Islam to Java. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools are called the oldest and original educational institutions in Indonesian society¹. The role of Islamic boarding schools in religious and character education is felt by the community because apart from developing intellectual potential, Islamic boarding schools also strengthen students with their spiritual soul. The functions of Islamic boarding schools from the beginning of their growth include: (1) Being able to prepare and produce cadres of ulama from the students who are mastering religious knowledge, and helping to educate Indonesian society, which is then followed by tasks as expected, (2) Spreading the teachings of the Islamic religion and da'wah, and (3) In forming a stronghold for the people, the material studied and taught in the Islamic boarding school all consists of religious material (Aji, 2018).

Religious education plays a crucial role in shaping individual character and morality, while economic empowerment has been widely recognized as a key ingredient in fighting poverty and achieving financial independence. In this context, santri cooperatives have emerged as an important instrument with the potential to combine religious values with economic development, with a focus on building santri economic independence. In recent years, attention to the role of santri cooperatives

as a means of realizing economic empowerment has increased significantly, especially in Indonesia, where Islamic boarding schools play an important role in religious education.

Santri cooperatives are one of the means that can be used to realize economic empowerment and independence of santri. Islamic boarding schools as traditional educational institutions have an important role in developing the economic potential of students and the surrounding community. Islamic boarding school cooperatives have become a vital instrument in encouraging the economic empowerment and independence of Islamic boarding school students in various religious education institutions in Indonesia. In recent years, attention to the role of cooperatives in empowering society has increased, with special attention to cooperatives related to the educational environment, especially for students. In the midst of global dynamics and local economic challenges, santri cooperatives play a central role in facilitating access to resources, training and capital needed to develop santri economic independence (Halim, 2010).

This research aims to analyze the role of santri cooperatives as the main means of realizing economic empowerment and independence for santri in religious education institutions. Through this research, we seek to provide a comprehensive picture of how cooperatives can function as a platform for integrating the values of religion, education, and economic independence in the specific context of the Islamic boarding school environment. With a focus on the values of economic and social sustainability, this research will also explore the positive impacts produced by santri cooperatives in the context of poverty alleviation, skills improvement and sustainable economic empowerment.

Through this research, it is hoped that the community, government and related stakeholders can gain deeper insight into the effectiveness of santri cooperatives as an instrument for encouraging economic growth and social empowerment in the context of religious education. In addition, it is hoped that this research can provide relevant policy recommendations and implementation strategies to strengthen the role of cooperatives in creating a conducive environment for economic growth and student independence in the future.

By investigating the role of santri cooperatives from various dimensions, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the literature on cooperative economics, religious education, and economic empowerment in Indonesia. Through in-depth analysis and new discoveries, it is hoped that this research can enrich our understanding of how Islamic boarding school cooperatives can be an important instrument in promoting economic independence and social development amidst ever-growing global and local challenges.

METHOD

In this research, the author uses a type of library research, namely a series of activities related to library data collection methods. According to Abdul Rahman Sholeh, library research is research that uses methods to obtain information data by placing existing facilities in the library such as books, magazines, documents, records of historical stories or pure library research related to the object of research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Santri Economic Empowerment Program through Santri Cooperatives

The santri economic empowerment program through santri cooperatives can be developed using similarities found through reality investigations in various santri cooperatives. These similarities include the following: The Islamic boarding school cooperative is restarting management and membership development which was delayed due to the regeneration process. The cooperative has not yet completed the development of management, membership, finance and business units. Leaders of Islamic boarding schools actively seek to obtain permits both informally and officially, especially those related to institutional improvements, management, membership and financial management of Islamic boarding school cooperatives. So far, the management and administration of Kopontren is still based on trust and sincerity as an informal task of the boarding school leaders, so it has not been managed formally and requires socialization or counseling and training as an empowerment program (Muttaqin, 2019).

Forming a management team and joint business group to obtain legality is the first step in carrying out the empowerment process through training. Fasa (2014) stated that many Islamic boarding schools have tried to develop productive economic activities both as part of the students' educational activities and as Islamic boarding school activities with the community. All santri are members of the Santri Cooperative, even though they have not received a membership card, basic savings, mandatory savings, borrowing rights and the right to borrow goods. Aji (2018) believes that Islamic boarding school cooperatives require participation, commitment and innovative abilities of members and administrators by providing educational and training opportunities, openness to ideas and obtaining equal opportunities. In accessing information, improving welfare and service to members, members are always involved in various strategic policies. Likewise, according to Suryono (2016), increasing community participation by involving the community in every process, starting from planning, implementation, evaluation to taking benefits.

The empowerment program has a strong emphasis on capital, which is very important for the development of Kopontren, as well as institutional, managerial and membership management. Syahza

(2019) emphasized that organizations such as financial institutions and institutions that are structured in networks based on the skills and expertise of various actors need to develop good services, especially to stimulate the economy. Institutions involve issues of values, norms, ethics and various written rules. Further aspects of study are about belief systems, morals, ideas, ideas, doctrines, desires, needs and orientations. Therefore, when developing an empowerment program, consideration must be given to the following stages: (1) Identifying issues, such as membership, institutions, and capital; and (2) Potential for student cooperatives.

Challenges in Managing Santri Cooperatives

In managing student cooperatives in several Islamic boarding schools, there are certainly several challenges and inhibiting factors. Some of them are as follows: 1) The current management system and structure is hampered by continuous turnover of human resources. 2) The cottage management system is still poorly controlled, starting from punctuality, HR recruitment, to electronic SIMs which still have performance problems and need to be improved in function (Ubaidillah, 2020).

What is another challenge in several Islamic boarding schools is that the management of Santri cooperatives lacks knowledge and skills in managing cooperatives, including membership, organization, finance and economic development. Between the management of the Santri Cooperative which is based on non-formal Islamic boarding school education and the Santri Cooperative which is based on formal school education there is still no good coordination and cooperation.

Driving Factors in Efforts to Empower Santri Economics

The demand for education, the need to reduce the financial burden on Islamic boarding schools, and the demand for da'wah are the three main driving forces behind efforts to empower Islamic boarding school students to achieve the intended goals.

The first adjustment to educational needs is made to achieve the three desired outputs or criteria: mental-spiritual, intellectual, and psychomotor. Santri are able and expected to be accustomed to working hard, communicating well in two languages - Arabic and English - verbally and in writing, and have a leadership spirit so that in the future they can lead their families and the wider community as a whole.

Another important element, especially in terms of price, is the pressure for Islamic boarding schools to reduce operational costs. The funding sources for Islamic boarding schools usually come from various sources, including the government, sponsors, and original ideas from the founders of the institutions. One way to reduce or eliminate operational burdens is to empower students.

Third, the Santri Empowerment Program encourages them to become preachers to meet the needs of da'wah. Santri must have skills as part of this empowerment initiative, it is believed that they

can be accepted into society easily. Many people state that the essence of da'wah is lectures, but the definition of da'wah is broader and includes the transmission of Islamic values according to each individual's abilities (Rahmawati & Dewi, 2020).

CLOSING

This research shows that santri cooperatives can be a significant platform in facilitating access to economic resources, skills training and capital needed to increase the financial independence of santri in the Islamic boarding school environment. Islamic boarding school cooperatives are able to increase economic growth and social development in the Islamic boarding school environment, according to in-depth analysis of various case studies and empirical data.

Santri cooperatives are essential for economic empowerment because they can expand access to economic opportunities, reduce economic inequality, and increase financial independence. Students can obtain knowledge and skills that suit the needs of the current job market through training, mentoring and market access programs provided by student cooperatives. Additionally, it has been proven that actively participating in a cooperative can increase awareness of the importance of wise financial management and teamwork, both skills that are critical to success in the corporate world.

The potential of student cooperatives as a driving force for inclusive and sustainable economic growth cannot be ignored. This is despite the fact that challenges such as economies of scale, access to capital and market changes are still important issues to overcome. Islamic boarding school cooperatives have the ability to expand their scope and impact by encouraging positive social and economic change in Islamic boarding school communities by implementing the right strategies, which include support from the government, financial institutions, and society as a whole.

Therefore, this research shows that the development of santri cooperatives must remain the main focus in efforts to increase the economic empowerment and independence of santri. Joint efforts are needed between stakeholders, educational institutions and the government to create an environment that supports Islamic boarding school cooperatives to grow and contribute optimally to inclusive and sustainable economic growth in fast communities.

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