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Management of Islamic Education During Covid 19

H. Asep Idrus Alawi¹, Obsatar Sinaga²

Abstract

The COVID pandemic caused very crucial distortion and destruction to every field of life and the most affected and damaged sector was the education sector during the pandemic times; managing the education system was the biggest challenge overall in the globe including Indonesia. To empirically investigate the status of the management of education specifically Islamic education, this study investigated the management strategies adopted and the best strategies that have played a robust managing role in effectively maintaining the Islamic education system in Indonesia. The study was structured using a qualitative research strategy with interview-based data collection. The data was collected from the Islamic school administrators purposively and a total of 7 interviews were conducted. The data analysis revealed many themes that have been comprehensively highlighted in the findings section. This study has provided a novel addition by illustrating the status of Islamic education management from Indonesian perspectives to the literature.

Keywords: Education management, Covid-19, Islamic education, online education.

1. Introduction

The proliferation of covid-19 has emerged as a significant public health emergency that initially surged in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The virus rapidly disseminated to over 213 nations, resulting in the infection of 2,402,350 individuals. The documented death toll was 163,097, which accounts for 6.78% of the total number of infected patients (Tian et al., 2020). Due to the significant impact of the virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially classified the present situation as a worldwide pandemic (Nuryana & Fauzi, 2020). Amidst the ongoing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, several sectors, including education, were being affected. Efforts were being made to guarantee that e-learning for Islamic education and Pancasila continues throughout this crisis, with the aim of shaping the character of the nation's youth. The government has a policy on remote education; yet there were other obstacles. Teachers can maintain the use of a blended learning approach while ensuring the integration of character development (Elihami, 2021). The objective of this study was to examine the management of Islamic education during the Covid-19 pandemic. When it comes to fighting the epidemic, Islamic boarding school-based education in Indonesia has a broad range of resilience; as a result, some are being swept away by the political policies of the government, while others are attempting to survive. Third, the technological techniques that are used to respond to the pandemic crisis as well as the policies that are implemented by the government are at the center of the debate over the advantages

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi, Email: asephabib@staisa.ac.id

² Padjadjaran University, Email: Obsatar.sinaga@unpad.ac.id

and downsides of Islamic boarding educational programs. The fourth point is the critical need for crisis management in the context of Islamic boarding school-based education during pandemic (Sarnoto et al., 2021). This research aims to enhance the administration of boarding school-based schooling in Indonesia and establish a more solid framework for dealing with crises in Islamic school education.

Students can have the ability to comprehend the material, and interpersonal skills, critical analysis, communication skills, problem solving skills, and skills in increasing faith, piety, and noble character, religious tolerance and harmony, and other skills that are required by students during the pandemic. The collaboration of the two concepts of cooperative learning and e-learning difficulties makes a very significant contribution to students' ability to have these abilities. Consequently, by virtue of the availability of technology 4.0, it is able to offer a great deal of ease in the constraints of the learning process by means of ideas and approaches that may be quickly resolved through cooperative challenges (Supriyanto & Amrin, 2022).

2. Literature Review

Amidst the Covid-19 epidemic, there has been a notable alteration in the conventional learning method, with face-to-face instruction being replaced with online learning as a prominent example. The transition to this new learning paradigm has started to provide difficulties for instructors or Ustaz in assessing the pupils' learning progress. Similarly, it is rather challenging to regulate the behavior of pupils during activities like mandatory worship and other religious practices. Similar to Islamic educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools have not implemented a flexible approach to address this issue (Khaeroni et al., 2021).

2.1 Management of Education During Pandemic

The outcomes of implementing the "learning from home" policy appear to be unsatisfactory. While the regulation may successfully decrease the rate of transmission. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant influence on the education sector, altering the methods of delivering instruction and changing the dynamics of teacher-student interactions. Concomitant impacts arise because of the alterations in the teaching model. The influence is also received by relevant stakeholders such as the government, parents, and the community (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021).

The study Putra et al. (2020) identified limited resources and parental ineptitude as contributing causes to kids' learning difficulties. In addition, parents encounter challenges in effectively organizing their timetable and financial resources.

Several nations use the "remote learning" policy as a measure to prevent interaction with individuals who are infected (Viner et al., 2020). Regrettably, the "learning from home" endeavor necessitates parental involvement in aiding their children. Consequently, it is necessary for them to remain at their residence or engage in remote work. Regrettably, not all occupations can be performed remotely. According to (Hasan et al., 2021), the research showed that only a small proportion of tasks, specifically 10%, can be performed remotely from home. Hence, parents are unable to provide support to their children during remote learning. In addition, economically disadvantaged families have additional barriers in facilitating their children's learning as a result of restricted resources, such as cellphones and internet connectivity (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021).

2.2. Islamic Education and Covid-19

From the standpoint of Fikih Kebencanaan (Coping with Disaster), Covid-19 is classified as a health calamity. Based on this rationale, Muhammadiyah places priority on providing health services, particularly hospitals, to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. It is intriguing to explore the rationale behind Fikih Kebencanaan (Coping with Disaster) since it presents a distinct notion compared to other fiqh reasoning that is only based on religious guidance (Fauzi, 2019).

The variation in the resilience of the educational framework in Islamic boarding schools is intensified by the discussion around these institutions, which solely focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of technical approaches to adapting to change (Hanafi et al., 2021; Sarnoto et al., 2021).

Amidst a global biological warfare scenario, not only are Islamic boarding schools incapacitated in their ability to engage in internal combat, but the state and the Indonesian government are also experiencing defeat. Aqil Sirad stated that the national health system's vulnerability is mostly attributed to the significant reliance on imported medical equipment. As per (Sarnoto et al., 2021), approximately 94 percent of medical equipment now in circulation are imported. The prevalence of imported goods highlights the vulnerability of the domestic healthcare system.

2.3. Proactive Strategies During the Pandemic

Upon the onset of the global COVID-19 epidemic, which also affected Indonesia, the administrators of Islamic Boarding School promptly implemented precautionary measures by adopting the following policies: (1) Expedite the attainment of knowledge, the activities at formal schools include in-person classes, examinations, and the assessment of exam results or student assignments. 2) There is a plan to expedite the return of students. To ensure uniform fasting and holiday observance among all students, and to allow them to spend time with their families at home, the following measures will be taken: (3) Collaboration with affiliated institutions to authenticate online coursework; and (4) Implementation of a partial lockdown at the Islamic Boarding School (Khaeroni et al., 2021).

Further, in anticipation of the start of the academic year 2020/2021, the caretakers of Islamic Boarding School have devised the following learning activity plans: (1) Configuring the e-learning server to ensure its operational readiness. One individual is designated as the responsible party for overseeing the whole process of implementing e-learning, from installation to training and maintenance. Moreover, this individual is accountable for delivering training on the efficient utilization and enhancement of e-learning to all Ustaz/Ustazah, encompassing those in regular and foundation programs. Hence, the program complies with the curriculum criteria established by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Foundation. Furthermore, it integrates an e-learning platform that has been specifically tailored for the management of Islamic Boarding Schools amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Not only this solution incorporates the utilization of video conferencing via Google Meet but also the person in charge of the program is responsible for arranging the conference timetable and distributing video conference links from the Ustaz/Ustazah to the guardians of the children. The homeroom instructor is accountable for delivering regular lessons, whilst the management of the academic domain is responsible for overseeing the foundation program.(Khaeroni et al., 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

This study looked at the management of Islamic schools in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on managers of Islamic institutions around the country to obtain insights into strategies, barriers, and innovations used to address the difficulties related to learning caused by the global pandemic. A qualitative methodology was chosen so as to look into the managers' varied experiences as well as perspectives to offer a thorough and in-depth understanding of the subject. The managers of Indonesian religious learning institutions made up the study's intended audience. Strategic sample method was employed because the investigation was exploratory in character. Seven individuals were selected based on their roles and responsibilities in supervising the academic operations of Islamic schools over the period of the outbreak. In order to ensure a variety of respondents' experiences as well as maintain the feasibility of collecting and analyzing data, this participant count was selected. Additionally, data were gathered through structured interviews, allowing for an organized examination of key themes. Thematic analysis was done in the data evaluation procedure to find trends, similarities, and differences in the managers' answers. Also, the study complied with ethical standards, guaranteeing participants' privacy, informed approval, as well as confidentiality.

4. Findings

The present study aims to uncover underlying thematic concerns within the data gathered from Indonesian Islamic educational institutes' administrators via structured interviews.

4.1. Thematic Analysis

The discussion was thematically analyzed to delineate recurring thematic patterns. Table 4.1 shows the thematic patterns and their characteristics.

Table 4.1: Main Themes in Data.

Theme	Characteristics
Theme I: Adaptation of Management Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Adaptation • Hybrid Excellence • Tech-driven Resilience
Theme II: Difficulties in Making the Switch to Online Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity in Digital Access • Overhauling Technology Infrastructure • Empowering Teachers with Virtual Pedagogy
Theme III: Use of Technological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging LMS • Interactive Multimedia and Electronic Evaluation Instruments • Personalized Learning Platforms as well as Digital Libraries
Theme IV: Innovative Strategies for Students Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Mentorship • Islamic Arts Exhibition • Buddy System

4.1.1. Theme I: Adaptation of Management Approaches

The Islamic educational institutes in Indonesia quickly put digital learning platforms into operation in reaction to COVID-19, making sure that virtual classes ran smoothly. Digital education training was provided to faculty members, and administrative procedures were

optimized. Maintaining the dedication to provide top-notch Islamic education, constant interaction with parents as well as students made the transition easier. Moreover, the institutions adopted a hybrid approach, combining both digital and physical resources, in response to the pandemic. Strict wellness and safety regulations were applied to on-site operations, guaranteeing a safe learning atmosphere. Workers and faculty worked closely together to improve curriculum delivery as well as maintain the high standards of Islamic learning. According to one of the administrators:

“In order to address the COVID-19 difficulties, our institution adopted technology to facilitate remote instruction. Strong e-learning platforms were put in place, encouraging participation and teamwork among students. Frequent evaluations were carried out to determine the efficacy of remote learning techniques, enabling us to adjust and maintain the norms of superior Islamic education.”

4.1.2. Theme II: Difficulties in Making the Switch to Online Education

At first, there were difficulties due to student differences in technology. The institutions worked with supporters and the community to conquer this by providing devices and the web access. To ensure that all pupils could take part in online learning and preserve the quality of education, regular technological assistance sessions were arranged. Furthermore, barriers to the shift included gaps in digital proficiency and connectivity. In response, Islamic educational institutes made investments in the modernization of its infrastructure and planned extensive teachers and pupils training programs. According to one of the administrators:

“Faculty members had problems with adaptability as well as resistance to transformation. In order to address these our institute developed an organized training course on online pedagogy that encouraged a change in perspective. The implementation of feedback mechanisms and continuous assistance prompted educators to employ digital resources while adhering to Islamic educational principles.”

4.1.3. Theme III: Use of Technological Resources

Islamic learning institutions employed Learning Management Systems (LMS) to provide material in an organized and accessible manner. Video conferencing technologies enabled live lectures as well as spirited debates. The enhanced collaboration facilitated by such technologies allowed them to maintain the breadth as well as depth of Islamic education in a virtual setting. Additionally, the institutions employed modern virtual learning environments, interactive multimedia resources, and technological assessment instruments for ongoing reviews. Gaining understanding of students' progress through educational analytics made tailored support possible. As per the statement of an administrator:

“The addition of e-libraries and well-chosen internet resources to our educational framework has improved it and made instructional and religious literature more readily available. AI-powered adaptive instructional systems tailored every pupil's educational encounter by adjusting the content to suit their requirements. Technology integration enhanced the educational framework and encouraged a comprehensive Islamic learning encounter.”

4.1.4. Theme IV: Innovative Strategies for Students' Involvement

In an effort to maintain the sense of community, virtual mentorship programs were launched, pairing students and teachers for regular check-ins. In order to increase pupil engagement over

the outbreak and foster connections beyond the classroom, digital clubs and web-based ethnic events were launched. Furthermore, by launching a web-based "Islamic Arts Showcase," the educational institutions extended an invitation to pupils to present creative interpretations of their faith. In the face of social estrangement, digital discussion platforms were used to promote communication creating a strong sense of belonging. According to one of the administrators:

"We implemented an online "Buddy System," which pairs students to offer support to one another, in an effort to combat loneliness. Weekly online assemblies highlighted student talents as well as honored accomplishments. In the face of pandemic difficulties, these programs sought to strengthen the school's feeling of collective spirit by fostering an atmosphere of belonging."

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion of the Results

The generated themes in the section of results have highlighted the concentrated and most repeated concepts addressed or communicated by the participants of the study. In the start, the themes results indicated a challenge in the adoption of the online medium of education from teachers and students both sides due to different reasons like resistance for the technology which was later adjusted by training and empowering the faculty with effective knowledge to fulfil the online education requirement during the Covid (Rahmadi, 2021). The other themes highlighted that the administration of the Islamic education institutes adopted effective management practices were using a hybrid approach, developing a more resilient technology based system and shifting the system to virtual medium and the similar management practices and adoption of virtual online platforms have been mentioned by (Adeyinka-Ojo & Ikumoro, 2020). The innovative technology has been highlighted as intensively embraced and practiced and different AI and digital assessment tools were adopted to first verify the transmission of Islamic education to the students and also to check the quality of communication, similarly, Al-Marroof et al. (2023) in their study illustrated the high adoption of digital technologies and tools like Google meet based on its quality features and favorable perception of the involved parties i.e., students and teachers for this online virtual tool for online education. Further, to ensure the students engagement, the Islamic education institutes have practiced and the students' engagement was ensured just like Zayapragassarazan (2020) has mentioned that they concluded flexible learning, choice learning, and appropriate scheduled learning practices as effective techniques to ensure the students' engagement.

5.2. Conclusion of the Research

The study designed its aim to investigate the most effective strategies that were practices by the Islamic education institutes in Indonesia. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology and structured interviews were utilized and Islamic education institutes administrators were targeted with prior time adjustment. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis and 4 major themes were revealed as the output of the analysis. The key findings revealed that the in initial times of Covid, the education institutes were encountered with the difficulty of switching the physical education to online education medium, but after effective integration of appropriate management practices, innovative technology, efficient strategies to enhance the students' involvement, the Covid pandemic time and its crisis was adjusted and mitigated.

5.3. Research Implications

The study has provided significant implications and contributions that can be utilized and has highlighted the key areas that were found practically effective in the practice of Islamic education institutes of Indonesia. The study illustrated that it is no doubt an overall fact that Covid disturbed the life systems, but the Indonesian Islamic education administration having efficient and brilliant intellectual capabilities overcome or at least mitigated the challenge encountered during the pandemic. The study further enlightened the effectiveness of the integration and implementation of innovative strategies, advanced technologies, and suitable management approaches, the uncertain and surprising drastic event was adjusted so, the same or similar strategies can be counted for any further turbulent challenge.

5.4. Limitations Identified During the Research.

In addition to the significance and implications, the study also has some limitations that have been observed during this research. Firstly, this research has used a small sample size of 7 participants, and it added to the limitations. Second, the study has used a qualitative strategy and has not provided any explanation based on a diverse, dispersed and generalized viewpoint of the respondents.

5.5. Future Research Directions

The future potential scholars can use the same research methodology with a large sample size to provide more robust implications to the literature. A quantitative or a mixed-method approach can also be utilized to provide a multi-dimensional viewpoint to the empirical knowledge. The same investigated concepts can be applied in other demographics and geographics and the significance of the highlighted key results can be stretched. Lastly, future researchers can use a specific domain of educational institutes like higher education institutes and can investigate the students viewpoint on the strategies they used to maintain their educational status and performance during Covid-19 pandemic.

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Interview Questions

1. Throughout the COVID-19, how did your Islamic educational institution modify its management practices to maintain the provision of high-quality education?
2. What obstacles did your institution encounter when making the switch to digital or distant learning, as well as how did you get past them to continue providing high-quality Islamic education?
3. What technological resources or systems did your institution use to manage Islamic education throughout the breakout, as well as how did they enhance the efficacy of educational system as a whole?
4. Could you describe any creative strategies or programs your school has put in place to keep students engaged and preserve a feeling of community in the midst of COVID-19 constraints?