
Innovative Revenue Models for Islamic Boarding Schools: Achieving Economic Autonomy

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the concept of self-generated revenue in Islamic boarding schools to support their economic independence. This research employs a qualitative with a case study approach, using interviews, document studies, and observations for data collection, Focus Group Discussion to gather views and ideas from various stakeholders regarding innovative revenue models for Islamic boarding schools, validation, and triangulation, assisted by NVIVO software for data analysis. The research is conducted at the *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School in Ciamis Regency. The findings indicate that the *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School is currently running and developing businesses in agriculture, fisheries, mining, farming, and integrated waste management. The profits from these businesses promote the economic independence of the boarding school and have a wide impact not only on the school itself but also on the surrounding community involved in the boarding school's businesses.

Keywords

Economic independence,
Islamic boarding school
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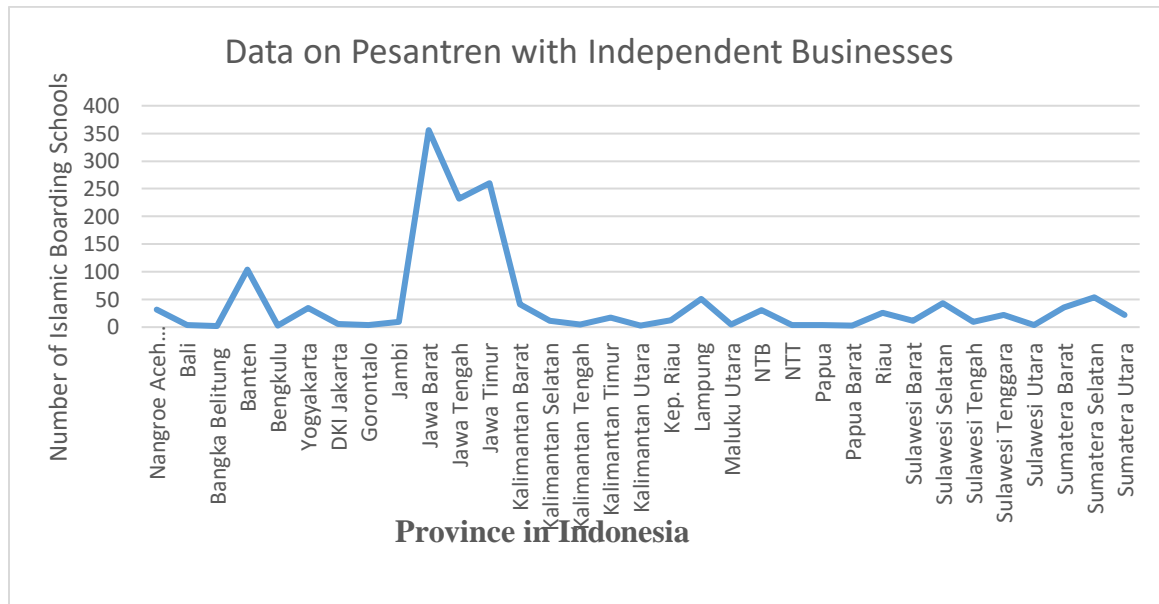
Introduction

Educational institutions must become more financially independent (Boldureanu et al., 2020; Shaturaev, 2021). It will enable them to secure the necessary resources for stable and sustainable operations (Figueiró et al., 2022). The economic independence of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren* is an effort to ensure sustainability through self-generated revenue sources (Insawan & Asnawan, 2023; Pakkanna, 2024; Rusli, 2023). Specifically, it includes various funding sources other than donations, such as agribusiness (Badrudin et al., 2021) agriculture (Mustapa & Saripudin, 2022), fisheries (As-Salafiyah & Rusydiana, 2022) mining (Izza & Mi'raj, 2023), or small enterprises managed by the *pesantren* and their communities. By introducing these activities, *pesantren* gain the financial capability to cover their educational and operational (Darma & Siregar, 2022; Shulhan, 2021). This approach not only ensures reliability but also maintains the autonomy of the *pesantren* while educating students in practical skills necessary for successful businesses. Additionally, it enhances the local economy, empowering the *pesantren* and fostering a self-sufficient and robust community (Baratullah et al., 2023; Keilbart, 2021).

The significant potential of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia is expected to have a positive impact on all elements that interact with them (Deporos et al., 2022; Tubagus et al., 2023), both directly and indirectly. As institutions of Islamic education (Nurtawab & Wahyudi, 2022), centers for the transmission of Islamic culture (Hakim, 2023), and producers of Islamic scholars (Maulida, 2022), *pesantren* today have assumed a new role as economic institutions responsible not only for their financial independence but also for the welfare of their communities (Affandi & Nasution, 2023). This new economic role underscores the *pesantren's* responsibility to ensure the well-being and prosperity of their students and the broader community.

Today's *pesantren* are required to be financially independent and not rely solely on external funding sources (Lathifah et al., 2022; Safiudin et al., 2023). Therefore, *pesantren* must begin analyzing potential businesses that can be developed to support the institution's economic independence (Rusli, 2023). The importance of institutional business lies not only in the financial context but also in building a strong community. By engaging in economic activities, *pesantren* can strengthen relationships with the surrounding community, creating a supportive and sustainable environment (Zaki et al., 2022). Institutional business ventures represent a strategic step towards a more secure and competitive future. The data on *pesantren* who run institutional businesses in various regions of Indonesia is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Data on Islamic boarding schools that have independent businesses



Source: <https://www.detik.com/>

The businesses operated by *pesantren* play a crucial role in achieving the institution's economic independence. By managing internal businesses, *pesantren* can create self-generated revenue sources (Pakkanna, 2024), reducing their reliance on donations (Hidayah et al., 2021). Business initiatives, such as fisheries, livestock farming, mining, plantations, and service provision provide *pesantren* with control over their financial resources.

Self-generated revenue refers to income generated by an entity through its internal activities or initiatives without relying primarily on funds or support from external sources (Ahmad, 2021; Oliński, 2022). In this context, the entity can be a nonprofit organization, a private company, or a public sector. Increasing self-generated revenue can have a positive impact on the growth and sustainability of an entity (Lehoux et al., 2021). By relying on internal revenue, the entity can have greater financial flexibility and better withstand economic fluctuations (Green et al., 2021). Although it has the potential for significant profit, the self-generated revenue concept also faces various challenges (JP et al., 2022; Rosdiana et al., 2024). These challenges involve risk management, competitiveness, and adaptation to market changes. Self-generated revenue enables Islamic boarding schools to develop financial independence (Fruk & Badurina, 2021).

Research on the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools has shown significant development in recent years. The primary focus is on the diversification of economic activities within the boarding schools (Sonita et al., 2021), including agriculture (Iltiham & Rohtih, 2023), Farm (Sholikhah, 2022), micro-enterprises (Irfan et al., 2024), and

involvement in the service and trade sectors. Some boarding schools have successfully established cooperatives that help improve the economic situation of students and the surrounding community (Anggadwita et al., 2021). The research also highlights the importance of entrepreneurial education for students to develop an independent mindset from an early age (Cui et al., 2021). Support from the government and non-governmental organizations through training, access to capital, and mentoring is crucial to accelerating the economic independence of boarding schools (Kassanga & Lekule, 2021; Matsuoka & Rocha, 2021). The research also finds that technology and digitization in boarding school businesses can enhance efficiency and market reach. Overall, this research demonstrates the significant potential of boarding schools to contribute to the local and national economies through economic independence (Hendriarto, 2021).

The issue emerging in most Islamic boarding schools today is their excessive reliance on external funding sources without having independent businesses. This dependency can lead to various problems, including financial instability, especially when donations decrease or stop altogether. Several critical aspects require further attention. First, there is still a lack of comprehensive empirical data on various successful business models. Second, research often fails to deeply examine internal challenges, such as fiscal management and human resources, faced by boarding schools in developing independent enterprises. Third, there is a limitation in analyzing the impact of government policies and support from financial institutions on the success of boarding schools' economic independence programs. With institutional economic independence, they can broadly expand education programs, improve institutional quality, develop infrastructure, empower local communities, and foster institutional innovation.

Research on the Economic Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools encompasses various initiatives and contemporary approaches to achieve economic independence. Boarding schools are beginning to implement diverse business models, such as fisheries, agriculture, horticulture, farms, microenterprises, and agribusiness, managed by students and school administrators. Entrepreneurial approaches are also taught through the educational curriculum, providing students with practical skills to manage businesses. Collaboration with the government, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations helps boarding schools access capital, training, and business mentoring.

The research on building the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools through self-generated revenue is expected to empower these institutions to become more financially independent. By identifying and developing local economic potentials, Islamic boarding schools are anticipated to create sustainable revenue sources. Furthermore, this research aims to provide practical guidelines for business management, strengthen the students' entrepreneurial skills, and encourage collaboration with the business sector and government. Economically independent boarding schools can focus more on developing education and religious values without relying on external donations.

Methodology

This research is conducted at *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School in Ciamis, West Java. The development of this *pesantren* has been remarkably rapid because it has established potential business ventures that support the economic growth and overall development of the institution. The potential businesses currently operated by *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School include mining, fisheries, plantations, educational services, and integrated waste management.

To systematically explore "Building the Economic Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools through Self-Generated Revenue." The researcher adopts qualitative research with a case study approach. The research was conducted in natural or real-life contexts without any interventions. This approach excludes numerical measurements and instead focuses on interpreting the findings. The data collected are descriptive and verbal, emphasizing the participants' perspectives. The case study approach is characterized by a focus on specific processes (Farquhar et al., 2020), experiences (Tomaszewski et al., 2020), human relationships (Tobon & Luna-Nemecio, 2021), and unique events. The structure of the case study includes investigating a specific case or problem, (Schoch, 2020), diagnosing the initially suspected causes of the problem (De et al., 2021), employing causal logic in the analysis (Moschis, 2024), and generating one or more potential solutions to the problem (Campbell & Domene, 2024).

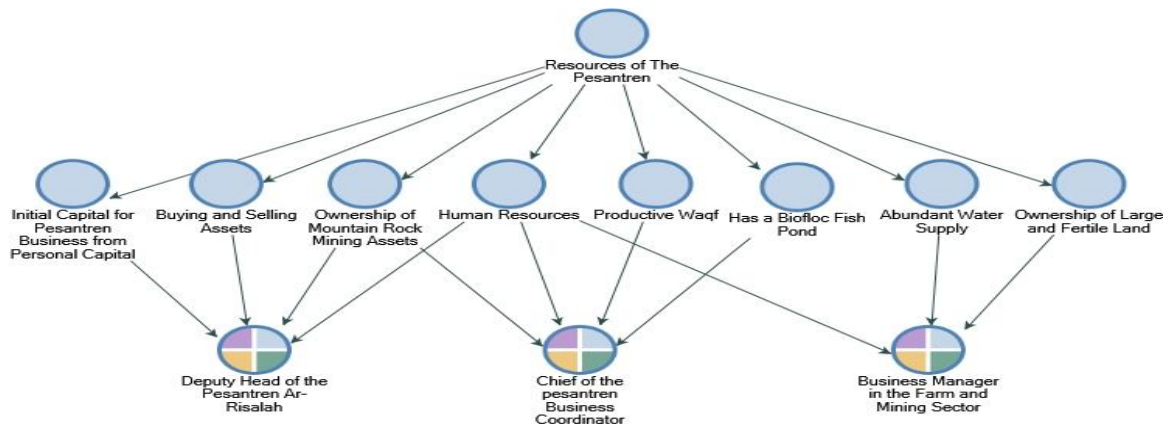
Data are gathered through interviews, document studies, and observations. Focus Group Discussion to gather views and ideas from various stakeholders regarding innovative revenue models for Islamic boarding schools. Validation to verify findings by member-checking, where interview results are confirmed back to respondents, and triangulation, to combine data from various sources (interviews, FGDs, surveys) to increase the validity of findings. The analysis process involves unitization, categorization, interpretation, and validation of the data, assisted by NVIVO software for qualitative data processing.

Findings

The characteristics of potential businesses that can be developed by the pesantren.

Ar-Risalah Islamic Boarding School is on a plot of land measuring approximately four hectares in Ciamis Regency, West Java. The *pesantren*'s geographical location is in rural areas. Most of the population works as farmers and owners of productive fishery lands, either as landowners or laborers working for the landowners. Additionally, some rural residents work as traders for various daily necessities, while others engage in home industries. This situation gives the *pesantren* a strategic position to act as an agent of empowerment and economic development, contributing to the social community and serving as a basis for developing the people's economy and the *pesantren*'s economy, several resources that support the potential businesses of *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School are depicted in Figure 2, which is a visualization created using NVIVO from interviews with stakeholders at the *pesantren*:

Figure 2. The depiction of potential resources owned by the pesantren

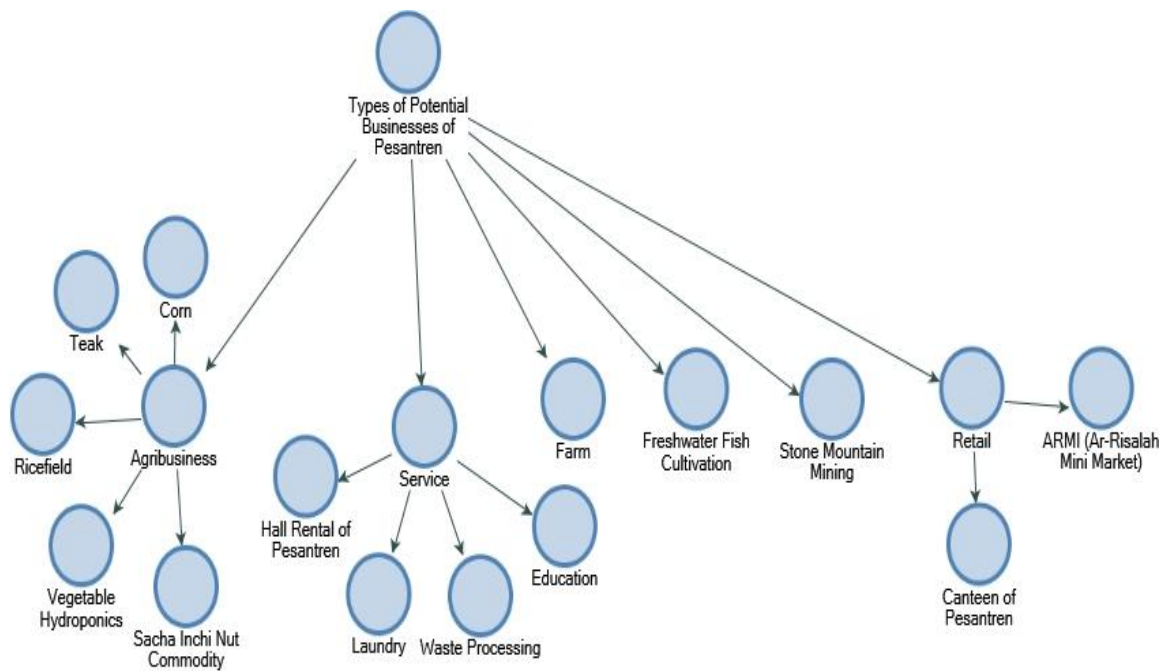


The *pesantren* possesses various resources that support economic self-sufficiency, including receiving productive waqf from the local government, owning mountain quarry mining assets, productive fishponds, and agricultural land that provides significant income. The extensive and fertile land around the *pesantren* is suitable for farming, and the abundant water supply offers great opportunities for development in various potential business sectors.

It was confirmed by the deputy leader of the *pesantren*, who stated that the resources possessed for business development encompass various aspects. For initial capital, the *pesantren* uses personal funds and engages in buying and selling assets to finance its business ventures. Additionally, the *pesantren* own a mountain quarry in Banjar City, an important asset for business development. The abundant human resources, including students and kiai, are also an advantage, especially since they have participated in several training courses related to *pesantren* business. These factors together form a solid foundation for the economic self-sufficiency of the *pesantren*.

Based on the data analysis conducted using NVIVO software, the project map visualization shows that the potential businesses of *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School can be divided into several main sectors: livestock farming, mining, agribusiness, and the microeconomic sector. However, additional information was obtained from interviews with the deputy leader of the *pesantren*, who revealed that one of the potential businesses that can be developed by the *pesantren* is in the services sector. The following is a visualization of the details of the potential businesses of *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Project map visualization details of potential Islamic boarding school businesses



It was confirmed by the deputy leader of the *pesantren*, who stated that the resources possessed by the *pesantren* for business development encompass various aspects. For initial capital, the *pesantren* uses personal funds and engages in buying and selling assets to finance its business ventures. Additionally, the *pesantren* owns a mountain quarry in Banjar City, an important asset for business development. The abundant human resources, including students and *Kyai*, are also an advantage, especially since they have participated in several training courses related to *pesantren* business. These factors together form a solid foundation for the economic self-sufficiency of the *pesantren*.

The potential businesses owned and developed by Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) support implementing economic self-sufficiency programs within these institutions. Economic self-sufficiency aids *pesantren* in developing their organizations across various aspects without relying on external or government funding. Financial independence also empowers the *pesantren* community, fostering collaboration between the *pesantren* and the broader society.

The implementation of self-generating revenue by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in supporting their economic sustainability

Since its establishment, the *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School has consistently adhered to the concept of a self-sufficient *pesantren*, employing a model of empowerment based on independently managed businesses, run professionally with the support of competent human resources. This concept of self-sufficiency has continued to evolve and become a distinguishing feature of the *pesantren*. The presence of these resources has also become one of the supporting factors for the growth of independent and potential businesses developed by the *pesantren*.

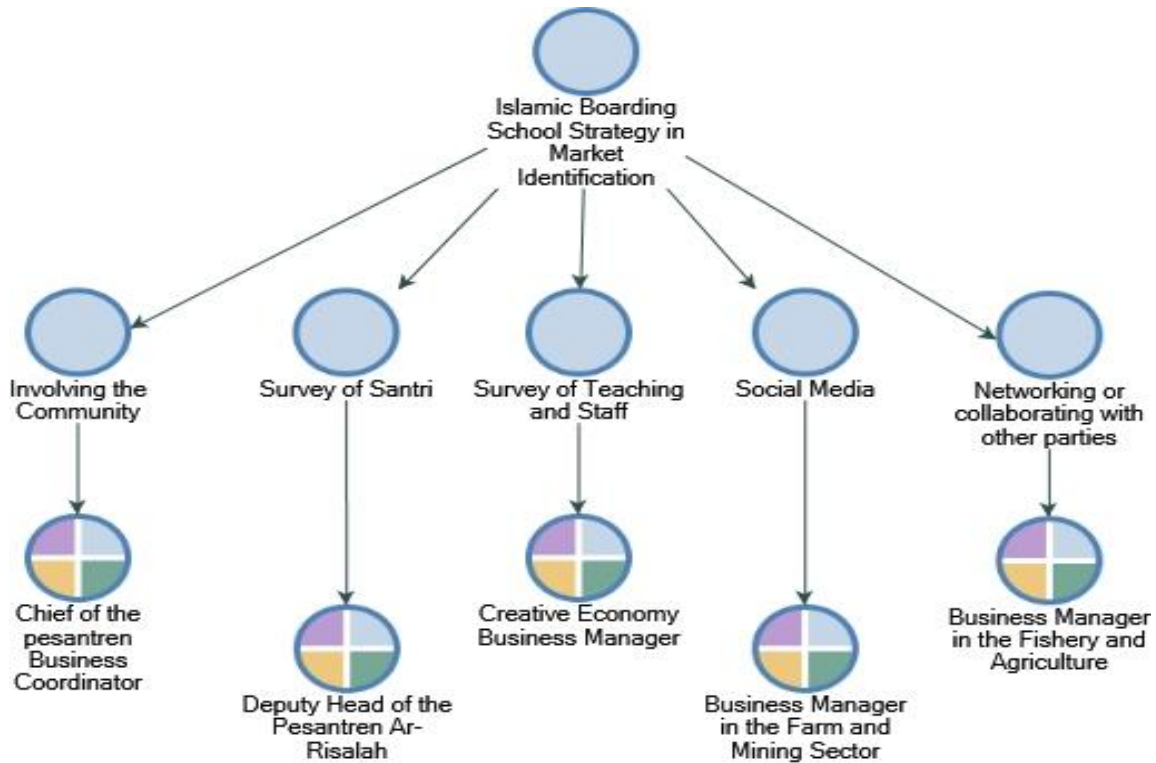
Potential businesses run by the *pesantren*, such as agribusiness, livestock farming, fisheries, and integrated waste management, have proven to have an economic impact in achieving economic self-sufficiency for the *pesantren*. The profits gained from these potential businesses are significant and beneficial for all aspects of the educational institution. The potentials include,

- Fisheries
 - a. Collaboration with the Regional Fisheries Department (Materials, Legality)
 - b. Collaboration with the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
 - c. The *pesantren*'s fisheries area covers approximately 1.5 hectares.
 - d. Profits from this business are around IDR 425,000,000 per year.
- Mining
 - a. Collaboration with the Regional Mining Department
 - b. Collaboration with contractors and project developers
 - c. Profits from this business reach up to IDR 1,500,000,000 per year.
- Agriculture
 - a. Collaboration with the Regional Agriculture Department and livestock feed suppliers
 - b. Agricultural areas: Panumbangan (200 hectares), Cisaga (2 hectares), Pamarican (1 hectare)
 - c. Profits from corn farming activities reach up to IDR 3,500,000,000 per year
- Farming
 - a. Collaboration with the Regional Livestock Department and Animal Slaughterhouses
 - b. Revenue from livestock farming activities reaches up to IDR 500,000,000 per year
- Waste Management
 - a. Waste is sourced from the activities of students at *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School and the surrounding community
 - b. Revenue from waste management activities is IDR 125,000,000 per year

The potential businesses operated and continuously developed by Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) succeed not only due to the leadership of the *kiai* (Islamic scholar) but also because

the *pesantren* implement effective strategies and marketing in their business development process. This is depicted in Figure 4 below:

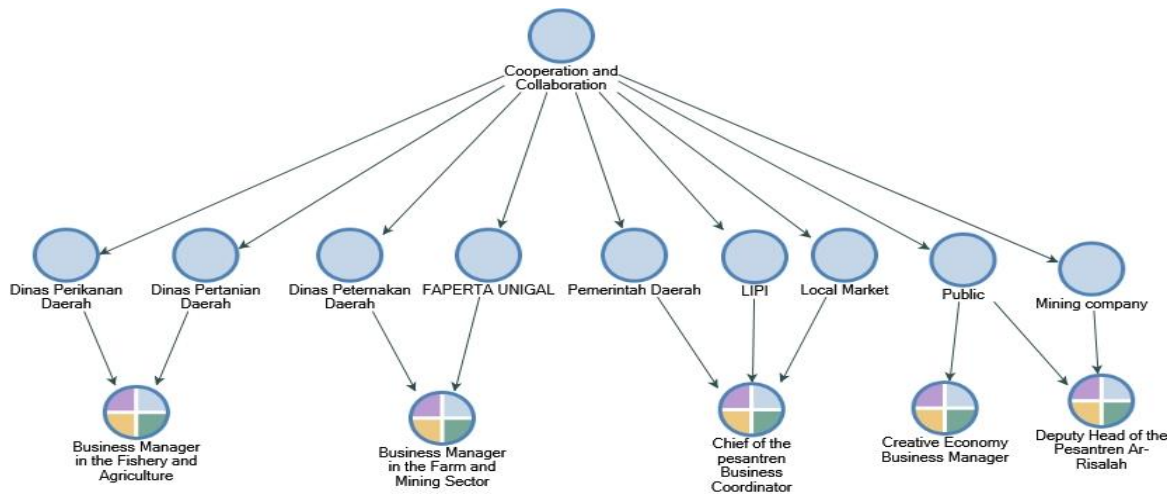
Figure 4. Project map visualization of Islamic boarding school strategy in market identification



Based on research findings analyzed using NVIVO 12 software, the strategy of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in identifying markets shows a comprehensive approach. This was articulated by participants in the research who revealed that the *pesantren* conduct surveys among teachers and staff, as well as among students, to gather relevant data about their needs. Additionally, *pesantren* actively network and collaborate with other parties, involving the local community to obtain broader and deeper information. In this digital era, market identification strategies also include leveraging social media, enabling *pesantren* to reach a wider audience and gather up-to-date information.

In addition to the business strategies and marketing continually developed by Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) to expand their potential businesses, they also engage in various collaborations and business partnerships. This is illustrated in the data analysis depicted in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5. Visualization of the Islamic boarding school economic cooperation and collaboration project map

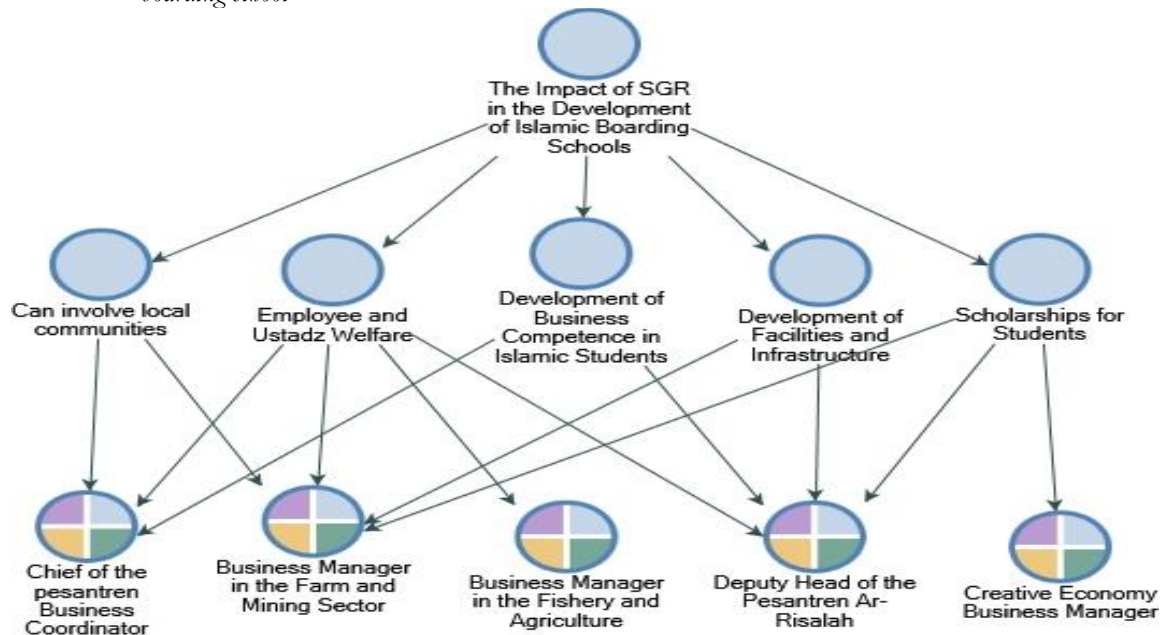


Based on the research findings that have been summarized, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) engage in strategic collaborations with various entities to optimize their business development. These collaborations involve the local government of Ciamis Regency, regional departments of fisheries, agriculture, and livestock, the Faculty of Agriculture at Galuh University (Faperta Unigal), the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), local markets, the surrounding community, and companies in the mining sector. This information was gathered through interviews with representatives of the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) leadership, business coordinators, and business managers in their respective fields. These collaborative strategies demonstrate the Islamic boarding school's commitment to building extensive and diverse networks to support economic self-sufficiency.

The impact of self-generating revenue on the development of Islamic boarding schools

The concept of self-generated revenue in fostering economic self-sufficiency within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), as developed by *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School, undoubtedly yields significant impacts. These impacts extend from internal institutional development across various facets to the surrounding community involved in the school's businesses. Internally, this concept influences the growth of the Islamic boarding school in diverse dimensions. Externally, it contributes to the economic benefits accrued by the community through the profits generated by the institution's businesses. The impact of self-generated revenue developed by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) on the internal aspects of the *pesantren* encompasses various areas depicted in Figure 6 below:

Figure 6. Visualization of the project map: Impact of self-generated revenue in the development of Ar-Risalah Islamic boarding school



This research explores the impact of economic self-sufficiency on the development of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), based on interviews with various stakeholders. The first impact identified is the enhanced cooperation with the surrounding community of the *pesantren*, as articulated by the head coordinator of the Islamic boarding school business and supported by business managers in the farming and mining sectors. The subsequent impact is the improved welfare of employees and teachers, as stated by managers in the fisheries and livestock sectors and confirmed by representatives of *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School. Additionally, the school's leadership mentioned that economic self-sufficiency contributes to the infrastructure and facilities at the *pesantren*, such as the construction of halls, scholarships for students, and the enhancement of business competencies among students.

The businesses operated by Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) indeed impact external stakeholders, particularly the involved community, who play a role in these potential businesses. Several businesses at Islamic boarding schools involve the community and provide economic impacts, including:

- The fishery business involves approximately thirty community members.
- The mining business involves sixty community members.
- The agriculture business involves up to four hundred community members.
- The laundry service business involves fifty community members around the *pesantren*.

The development of businesses by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) significantly relies on the backing and active engagement of the local community. Support from nearby residents enhances market access for products and services offered by Islamic boarding schools, boosting potential earnings and ensuring business sustainability. Community involvement also fosters closer social ties between the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) and residents, expanding networks and fostering partnerships for collaborative projects that enhance shared prosperity. Moreover, the community's active participation in Islamic boarding school (pesantren) businesses strengthens social and political backing for their longevity as educational institutions and catalysts for local economic growth. This collaborative environment encourages innovation, growth, and sustained achievements in Islamic boarding school (pesantren) businesses, benefiting the broader community.

Discussions

The characteristics of potential businesses that can be developed by the pesantren

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have the ability in the commerce industry for sustainable business in their self-sufficiency development (Kaltsum et al., 2023). Many objective conditions are in business development on Islamic boarding schools (pesantren); there is a wide reach of land access used for farming, availability, so many general and specific infrastructures such as buildings and facilities, and an available trained internal workforce that can be collaborated. Islam boarding schools (pesantren) also tend to have strong networks and alumni loyalty within the community.

The types of business ventures that can be developed by Islamic boarding schools range from organic farming to halal food processing, skills training services, and handicraft production as well as hospitality services. Likewise, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can develop business models that are sustainable in terms of economy, society, and environment by utilizing their resources (Zaki et al., 2022). Business development in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can generate various economic benefits, such as job creation, improving the welfare of the entire Islamic boarding school (pesantren) community, and skill up-grades (Nuraini, 2022).

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) must be economically independent to sustain their operations and development (Faisol et al., 2023). With economic independence, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) do not depend on the support of aid or donations from foreign donors which is inconsistent and minimal. Financial independence allows Islamic boarding school (pesantren) to better manage their finances, provides better educational and social programs of higher quality, and supports the welfare of students and staff. In addition, financial self-sufficiency also provides Islamic boarding school (pesantren) autonomy. It borders on making decisions without having to be answerable to the public, less dependency on grants, programs, and stakeholders, and strengthens their identity and values. More sustainable internal revenue sources are created enabling Islamic boarding schools (pesantren)

to grow continuously and to provide high-tech dividends for the community as well as for future generations (Budiantoro et al., 2022).

The implementation of self-generating revenue by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in supporting their economic sustainability

The self-generated revenue of businesses originating in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is important for attaining the economic independence of these institutions (Muhamad, 2023). Businesses at Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can be a source of income that solid and ongoing. If self-reliant some of the Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) will not be subject to donor funds, and external help that controls their purse and direction.

Income from Islamic boarding school (pesantren) programs can be used to develop infrastructure, improve the quality of education and training, expand social services, and improve the lives of students and workers (Zaki et al., 2022). In addition, the *pesantren's* economic independence through increased profits can create new employment opportunities, stimulate local economic growth, and strengthen ties with surrounding communities. Therefore, the self-made products of the pesantren business not only support the economic independence of the *pesantren* itself but also contribute to the development and well-being of the surrounding community (Schwidtal et al., 2023).

The impact of self-generating revenue on the development of Islamic boarding schools

The business benefits developed in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have significant effects on the surrounding community (Babalola et al., 2022). In it, the self-generated revenue from the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) business reinforces his financial independence, which allows him to expand his resources for the development of education, infrastructure, and society projects. It can improve the quality of educational services and the well-being of students and staff.

Externally, the impact of implementing self-generated revenue is also felt by the surrounding community. The businesses developed by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can create new job opportunities, stimulate local economic growth, and open business opportunities for residents (Muhardi et al., 2022). Additionally, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can serve as centers for skills training and economic potential development for the community (As'ad & Hakim, 2022). Thus, the implementation of self-generated revenue from *pesantren* businesses not only provides internal benefits to the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) but also has a broad positive impact on the surrounding community in economic development, improved welfare, and social empowerment.

The self-generated revenue from businesses developed within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has a significant and sustainable long-term impact. This impact includes increased economic independence for the Islamic boarding school (pesantren), enabling more autonomous and sustainable operations. Additionally, stable income from Islamic boarding

school (*pesantren*) businesses can enhance the quality of education, facilities, and development programs within the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*).

Furthermore, the concept of implementing self-generated revenue can serve as an inspirational example for other entrepreneurs to develop sustainable business models. It can foster innovation, creativity, and economic independence among Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Thus, the long-term impact of implementing self-generated revenue is not only felt internally within the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) but also provides a positive Today, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are required to become accommodative institutions that embrace new developments, one of which is economic advancement. impetus for economic and social empowerment efforts across the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) broadly.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The significant potential of modern Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), both in quantity and role, extends beyond their traditional function as educational institutions. As deeply rooted educational institutions flourish in many productive regions, *pesantren* are encouraged to develop productive businesses to generate revenue for institutional growth. *Ar-Risalah* Islamic Boarding School (*pesantren*) exemplifies this approach by implementing self-generated revenue through various potential business ventures to support its development. Engaging in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, retail, and waste management, the *pesantren* significantly enhances its economic self-sufficiency.

These businesses not only benefit the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) internally, such as through facility development, scholarships for students, welfare for teachers, and curriculum development but also have a positive external impact. By developing potential businesses, the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) empowers and improves the welfare of the surrounding community and those involved in its business ventures.

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