

# **Freedom to Learn at the Rohmatul Umam Islamic Boarding School, Kretek Bantul**

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## **Abstract**

This article departs from the fact that since the beginning, Islamic boarding schools have instilled an attitude of independence, creativity, independent thinking, and innovation in students, by training and fostering them to adapt to society and not depend on others except only God. This is what will later be able to help the students to survive in this 4.0 era, a qualitative field approach (field research). The main data sources of this research are primary data and secondary data. The results of this study are that the Islamic boarding school has one program that is in great demand by the students and also supports the creation of independent learning, namely (free learning in happiness, freedom to think, freedom to innovate, and independent independent and creative) in the Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school environment, namely the program Islamic personal development. Because in Islamic personal development, students are given the opportunity to increase their thinking power, creativity, and innovation independently when teaching children and adolescents in mosques.

## **Abstrak**

Artikel ini berangkat dari kenyataan bahwa sejak awal, pondok pesantren telah menanamkan sikap kemandirian, kreativitas, kemandirian berpikir, dan berinovasi pada diri santri, dengan cara melatih dan membina mereka agar dapat beradaptasi dengan masyarakat dan tidak menggantungkan diri kepada orang lain kecuali hanya kepada Tuhan. Hal ini lah yang nantinya dapat membantu para santri untuk *survive* di era 4.0 ini, pendekatan kualitatif lapangan (*field research*). Sumber data utama penelitian ini yaitu data primer dan data sekunder. Hasil penelitian ini yaitu di pondok pesantren memiliki salah satu program yang sangat diminati oleh para santri dan juga mendukung terciptanya merdeka belajar yaitu (merdeka belajar dalam kebahagiaan, merdeka berpikir, merdeka berinovasi, dan merdeka mandiri dan kreatif) di lingkungan pondok pesantren Rohmatul Umam yaitu program bina pribadi Islami. Karena dalam bina pribadi Islami santri diberi kesempatan untuk meningkatkan daya berpikir, kreatifitas, inovasi secara mandiri saat mengajar anak-anak dan remaja di masjid.

**Keywords:** Freedom to learn, national education, Islamic boarding school

## INTRODUCTION

The function of education in the national education system, as outlined in Republic of Indonesia Law Number 22 of 2003, chapter 2 article 3, is to develop skills, shape character, and cultivate a civilized society. The aim is to educate the population and cultivate pupils' potential to become individuals who are dedicated to God, possess virtuous qualities, maintain good health, acquire information, demonstrate competence, exhibit independence, foster creativity, and demonstrate responsibility. The individual holding the position of Minister of Education and Culture in the Republic of Indonesia. The citation for this information is from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020, specifically on page 20.

Educational practitioners refer to and implement the contents of the law in line with current advancements. The progress of this period presents a formidable issue that must be confronted and carefully strategized to effectively address it. As a response to the challenges posed by current developments, Nadiem Makarim, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, has implemented an independent learning program. This program aims to grant educational institutions the freedom and autonomy they need, while also freeing lecturers from burdensome bureaucracy. Additionally, students are given the freedom to choose their preferred field of study. (Dwi Arjanto, 2022: <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1560429/apa-itu-merdeka-belajar-tersebab-survei-jebloknya-mathematics-dan-literasi-siswa>. Accessed on June 30, 2022).

The aforementioned statement indicates that the government's approach to addressing contemporary difficulties and attaining educational objectives involves the establishment of an autonomous learning initiative. Students anticipate that the freedom to acquire knowledge will positively impact their societal existence. Thus, they have become self-reliant. Within the context of this educational freedom, students are granted the autonomy to engage in critical thinking, exercise creativity, foster innovation, and cultivate independence. The Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school has fostered a culture of free thinking, creativity, invention, and independence among its students.

The application utilized at the Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school incorporates educational systems, programs, and methodologies that significantly contribute to the field of education. It aims to foster individuals who possess critical thinking skills, creativity, innovation, and independence. Additionally, it aims to train and cultivate students to become self-reliant, minimizing their reliance on others. Aside from God.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative field research methodology, with the Rohmatul Umam Kretek Islamic Boarding School in Bantul serving as the research setting. Researchers will analyze instructional activities at the Pondok. In order to provide informative data in the form of narratives regarding the observed issues, specifically pertaining to the Rohmatul Umam Bantul Islamic boarding school. The primary data source for this research consists of data obtained through interviews with multiple informants, as well as data collected through direct observation or researcher observation. Secondary data refers to additional information that supports a subject, such as documents, literature, books, and other relevant sources. When identifying informants, researchers selectively choose individuals based on specific criteria (purposive). There are three strategies used in the data collection process: observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation. The data analysis encompassed data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. To assess the accuracy of the data, researchers employ triangulation techniques (Sugiono, 2018).

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The term "freedom to learn" consists of two syllables, specifically "independence" and "learning". According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, "independence" refers to freedom, autonomy, being self-reliant, and not being constrained or reliant on others. Meanwhile, the term "learning" refers to the process of acquiring intelligence or knowledge, engaging in practice, and modifying behavior or responses as a result of experience (KBBI, 2009).

According to various experts, including Supartinah Pakasi in his book "Children and Their Development," learning can be defined as: 1) The process of communication between children and their environment; 2) The act of thinking and utilizing cognitive abilities; and 3) The process of integration (Ahdar Djamarudin and Wardana, 2019). According to Piaget, as cited by Abuddin Nata (2009), learning is a dynamic and ongoing process that involves the interaction between pupils and their ever-changing environment.

Slameto defines learning as a deliberate process undertaken by an individual to acquire new behavioral changes, which occur as a consequence of personal experiences and interactions with the surrounding environment (Slameto, 2015). "According to Syaiful Bahri Djamarah and Aswan Zain (2014), learning can be defined as a modification in behavior, encompassing the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and affecting all aspects of an individual or organism."

According to the given definition, independent learning refers to the process of comprehending a particular subject matter in an enjoyable manner (learning freely with happiness). This process is facilitated by educators who grant students the freedom to work independently, without relying on others, in their pursuit of knowledge (freedom to think), ability to innovate (freedom to innovate), and capacity to be self-reliant and creative (freedom to be independent and creative).

The objective of implementing the autonomous learning program at educational institutions is to give students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills. First and foremost, the ability to engage in independent and unrestricted cognitive processes. Nadiem, during the National Education Standards Discussion at Century Park Hotel in Central Jakarta on Friday, December 13, 2019, emphasized that the ability to learn freely is synonymous with the ability to think independently (Halida Bunga, ). The thinking process allows the human mind to see and understand the external universe in order to uncover the truth about its existence (Posangi, 2018). It is expected that by having the freedom to think, students can cultivate the capacity to think independently and effectively. This will enable students, as persons with cognitive capacities and intellect, to enhance their own growth and contribute to their surroundings.

Furthermore, the ability to freely innovate. Richard Lyons defines innovation as the act of generating new ideas that bring about value. This concept is also echoed by A. Garavaglia in 2016. He asserts that the value created serves as a metric for distinguishing between the initial state and the ultimate one achieved through the educational process. Rogers in Rusdiana defines innovation as an idea, activity, or thing that is perceived as novel by individuals or groups inside a specific social system (H.A. Rosdiana, 2014).

Furthermore, cultivate self-reliance and ingenuity. Knowles, as defined by Fisher, describes independent learning as a process where students take the lead in identifying their learning needs, setting learning goals, choosing learning materials, employing suitable learning strategies, and assessing their learning outcomes (Fisher, et al., 2001). According to this viewpoint, autonomous learning can be understood from two angles: as a learning process or method, and as the personal traits of pupils. Independent learning presupposes that students possess personal attributes such as responsibility, proactivity, openness, goal orientation, and problem-solving skills, as they actively engage in the learning process.

Regarding creativity, Runco and Chand in Hosseini define creative thinking as a cognitive process that results in the generation of novel ideas, innovative solutions, and deep insights. This type of thinking necessitates the involvement of interactive elements and complex processes (Hosseini, 2014). The determining factors are the students' individual knowledge and motivation. Independent learning activities are

specifically developed to cultivate and enhance students' capacity for creative innovation and their sense of responsibility.

Furthermore, the ability to acquire knowledge in a state of joy. The independent learning policy aims to establish an amiable learning environment that fosters contentment among students and instructors (Sherly, et al., 2020). Schools that promote student well-being have the potential to be more efficacious, yielding superior educational outcomes and fostering greater accomplishment in students' lives (Sisodia, 2019).

The fundamental principle of education in schools is to establish an environment that fosters students' freedom and enjoyment during the learning process, hence facilitating effective learning and engagement. The factors that significantly impact and decide students' learning satisfaction include the existence of a positive psychological ambiance, a favorable learning environment, and the effectiveness of educators in the instructional process.

Findings from field observations, interviews, and research procedures. The Rohmatul Umam Kretek Bantul Islamic boarding school offers a variety of activities to its students based on their individual interests, in addition to Quran recitation. The aim of these activities is to cultivate students who, upon completing their studies at the Islamic boarding school, will emerge as scientists capable of effectively adjusting to advancements in science and technology.

This aligns with the vision and mission of the Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school, which aims to establish itself as a high-quality educational institution that can produce national leaders who are deeply committed to their faith, knowledgeable, cultured, and possess a comprehensive understanding of religious, social, economic, and humanitarian matters. b) Islamic boarding schools serve as institutions for cultivating an autonomous Muslim identity, grounded in five fundamental principles: faith, knowledge, camaraderie, democracy, and prosperity.

The Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school is organizing a program called Islamic personal development as part of its efforts to achieve its vision and goal. According to an interview with KH. Ahmad Muzammil, the Islamic boarding school teacher, the program at Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school primarily focuses on student involvement, with the ustadz serving as a guide. The activities revolve around Islamic personal development. Islamic personal development seeks to facilitate self-actualization and cultivate the inner essence of individuals, known as the "soul of mundzirul qaum," which guides them towards engaging in Islamic struggle within society.

Subsequently, when engaging in Islamic personal development endeavors, students are directed to the nearby mosque that is in close proximity to the Islamic boarding school. Santri engage in imparting religious instruction to children and adolescents. Through Islamic personal development initiatives, our aim is to not only emulate the

Prophet, but also to optimize the role of the mosque as an educational institution. We strive to transform the mosque into a community-centered alternative education center. Nevertheless, the Rohmatul Umam Islamic Boarding School aspires for the comprehensive development of students' character, encompassing their psychological, social, and spiritual well-being.

The Rohmatul Umam Islamic Boarding School endeavors to facilitate students in attaining self-actualization by aligning with their fundamental capabilities and individuality. Rohmatul Umam Islamic Boarding School offers its students an environment that fosters both intellectual freedom and the joy of learning. In addition to engaging in Islamic personal development activities, the Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school also fosters an environment that encourages students to learn and think freely. Specifically, during the learning process of the Yellow Book with the kiai, students are granted the liberty to inquire and engage in discussions pertaining to the themes being studied.

Regarding the santri, the responsibility of imparting Islamic lessons to children and teenagers at the mosque is entirely entrusted to them. The students have entire autonomy in choosing the methods or material they utilize for learning, while the ustaz only offers instruction. The approaches frequently employed by students in Islamic personal development activities include discourse, problem-solving, practice, habituation, and exemplification. This process fosters the development of significant concepts (vision and mission), passion (dedication to jihad), and da'wah, resulting in the emergence of exemplary figures, inspiration, and motivation for the pupils.

By engaging in these Islamic personal development activities, students acquire the ability to take accountability for their actions. The Rohmatul Umam Islamic Boarding School facilitates the acquisition of knowledge (freedom of thought) by addressing societal issues and promoting innovation and creativity (freedom to innovate and be creative). It allows students to independently manage their classes when teaching religion to children and teenagers, and fosters independence by entrusting Islamic personal development activities solely to the students and ustaz as guides.

## **CONCLUSION**

The components and processes inside the Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school are crucial in fostering the growth and development of students' personal skills. One highly favored program among students at the Rohmatul Umam Islamic boarding school is the Islamic Personal Development Program. This program promotes various freedoms, such as the freedom to learn joyfully, the freedom to think critically, the freedom to innovate, and the freedom to be independent and creative. It creates an environment that supports these freedoms. In this Islamic personal development program, students are provided with

the chance to enhance their cognitive abilities, foster their creativity, and cultivate independent thinking while instructing children and teenagers at the mosque. This research aims to serve as a vehicle for expanding knowledge, both for the researchers and others. It is desirable that researchers will continue to advance in scientific understanding in the future.

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