The Dynamics of the Pesantren Adaptation Patterns Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic has made many changes in all spheres including in education. To minimize the spread of Covid-19, the Indonesian government issued a policy for student to study at home, and since March 16, 2020 schools have implemented online learning methods. However, this cannot be applied to the education system of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) due to limitations in access and use technology of information, as well as digital literacy. In addition economic considerations, make *pesantren* continue for conducting offline learning. Therefore, this study focuses on how the process of adapting *pesantren* in handling the Covid-19 pandemic? This study aims to determine and analyze the pattern of adaptation of *pesantren* in carrying out activities during the pandemic. The research was conducted at the Ar-Rohmah *pesantren*, Malang City as a modern *pesantren* that is part of 'the *pesantren tangguh*' program. By using Robert K. Merton's theory as an analytical tool, this research conducted an explanatory case study. Data collection techniques carried out through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with informants are determined purposively. The results of this study showed that at the beginning of the pandemic, the adaptation of *pesantren* tended to conformity pattern with longer school holidays to minimize the spread of Covid-19. At the beginning of re-entry, the Ar-Rohmah *pesantren*'s adaptation tended to an innovation pattern by conducting offline learning with health protocols that are not strict. After an *ustadz* passed away and he was confirmed as positively infected Covid-19, the adaptation process carried out was more conformity by conducting blended learning and all *pesantren*'s members more adhered to health protocols. However, in June 2021 Ar-Rohmah *pesantren* tend to be innovation pattern with *pesantren* activities that are carried out offline, which can be followed by community around the *pesantren*.

Keywords: Blended learning; *pesantren*; offline learning; pandemic Covid-19.

Abstrak: Pandemi Covid-19 telah banyak membuat perubahan di segala bidang termasuk di bidang pendidikan. Untuk meminimalisasi penyebaran Covid-19 pemerintah mengeluarkan kebijakan agar siswa belajar di rumah dan sejak 16 Maret 2020 sekolah menerapkan metode pembelajaran secara online. Namun demikian hal ini tidak bisa diberlakukan di pesantren, karena keterbatasan pada akses dan penggunaan teknologi informasi, serta digital literasi. Selain itu, pertimbangan ekonomi juga membuat pesantren tetap memberlakukan pembelajaran secara offline. Oleh karena itu penelitian ini memfokuskan pada bagaimana proses adaptasi pesantren dalam penanganan pandemi Covid-19? Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menganalisis pola adaptasi pesantren dalam melakukan berbagai kegiatan selama pandemi. Penelitian dilakukan di Pesantren Ar-Rohmah, Malang sebagai pesantren modern yang menjadi bagian program pesantren tangguh. Teori Robert K. Merton digunakan sebagai pisau analisis dengan pendekatan studi kasus eksplanatori. Proses pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, dokumentasi dan in-depth interview pada informan yang ditentukan secara *purposive*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses adaptasi pesantren di awal pandemi lebih pada *conformity* dengan meliburkan santri lebih panjang untuk meminimalisasi penyebaran Covid-19. Pada awal masuk kembali, proses adaptasi Pesantren Ar-Rohmah lebih ke arah *innovation* dengan melakukan pembelajaran secara offline dan protokol kesehatan yang longgar. Setelah adanya ustadz yang meninggal karena positif Covid-19, maka proses adaptasi yang dilakukan lebih ke *conformity* dengan melakukan pembelajaran secara *blended* dan semua pihak lebih mematuhi protokol kesehatan. Namun, pada Juni 2021 Pesantren Ar-Rohmah cenderung ke *innovation* dengan kegiatan pesantren yang bisa diikuti oleh masyarakat umum secara offline.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran blended; pesantren; pembelajaran offline; pandemi Covid-19.

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes in social life, including in learning activities from elementary education to high education (Saraswati & Mertayasa, 2020). The Indonesian government also issued a policy for students to study at home, and since March 16th, 2020, schools applied the online learning system for students (Harnani, 2020). Even so, this cannot be applied to the education system of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). This is due to *pesantren*'s limits in accessing information technologies as well as the limited digital literacy of *santri* (Islamic boarding school students), *ustadz/ustadzah* (Islamic boarding school teachers), and administrators (Makruf, 2020).

Apart from that, according to Makruf (2020), there are some economic reasons linked to online learning that cannot be applied in *pesantren*, for instance: First, as education institutions, *pesantren* also provide the economic trickle-down effect to the surrounding community, such as to *warung* (small restaurants), laundry services, etc., where these activities depend on the physical presence of *santri* in *pesantren*. Second, *pesantren*'s funding originates from *santri* dues (read: the *santri*'s parents) and donations from society. Thus, the *pesantren*'s continuity depends on the *santri*'s stay in the boarding schools. These conditions make the *pesantren* apply offline learning and the *santri* still stay in the boarding schools. In line with that, in the news report from Antaranews.com, KH.Abu Choir, stated that the approach to handle the Covid-19 in *pesantren* must be different from that of the general society, as the *pesantren* has its own culture that is different from other educational institutions. But on the other hand, he also acknowledged that the cases of Covid-19 in *pesantren* are like an iceberg, where the *pesantren* administrators tend to have a covert attitude (Nugroho, 2020).

Because of that, Arie Rukmana, Head of the UNICEF's East Java Representative Office and also a Communication Team of the Covid-19 Task Force reminded us that this pandemic calls for changes in learning activities. Thus, the *pesantre*n must also adapt by modifying or seeking the best methods in organizing the learning activities (Nugroho, 2020). Apart from that, the Ministry of Religion issued a Circular Letter No. 15 of 2020, which stipulates the guidelines to organize religious activities at houses of worship in creating a productive and safe society amid the Covid-19 pandemic, where this must be complied with by the *pesantren* community. But in reality, there are still many religious activities that violate health protocols. Even, the report of the Task Force stated that some large clusters originated from religious activities, including the religious activities organized in Temboro *Pesantren*, Magetan, East Java (Alam, 2020).

Based on the report of Kompas up to July 11th, 2020, there were four other *pesantren* apart from Temboro *Pesantren* that became a Covid-19 cluster, namely Gontor *Pesantren* in Ponorogo, Sempon *Pesantren* in Wonogiri, a *Pesantren* in Tangerang, and a *Pesantren* in Pandeglang (Kurniati, 2020). Then, the data from the Ministry of Religion up to October 1st, 2020 showed that there were 28 *pesantren* that were exposed to Covid-19 spread out in ten provinces. The total number of *santri* that were positively infected with Covid-19 reached 1.489 people (Mufarida, 2020). In four months, 22 more *pesantren* became Covid-19 clusters. Based on the information from the Vice Minister of Religion, of the total *santri* who were infected with the Covid-19, 969 healed, 519 were undergoing treatment, and one died (Mufarida, 2020). In this case, the Ministry of Religion suggested the formation of a joint task force team to handle the Covid-19 clusters in *pesantren* areas.

Although the people in *pesantren* have applied health protocols, the quick and extensive spread of Covid-19 infections in *pesantren* may originate from guests from outside of the *pesantren*, the activities carried out by the *santri*, administrators or leaders from outside of the *pesantren*, and *santri* or *ustadz/ustadzah* who went home then returned to the *pesantren* without a Covid-19-free certificate. Apart from that, there is also the internal condition of the *pesantren*, for instance: a small room may be occupied by more than twenty *santri*, the sanitation system is inadequate, and their activities run 24 hours a day every day with highly intensive interactions between the *santri* as well as between the *santri* and the *ustadz/ustadzah* or the administrators (Makruf, 2020; Susanto, 2021). Some of these factors may trigger the spread of the Covid-19 in the *pesantren* area.

Some studies and cases show that religious communities directly impact the spread of the virus— whether they inhibit or accelerate the spread of the pandemic. This is because religious figures, including the *kyai* (Islamic religious figures), can influence their community to make moral decisions in complying with the health protocols (Wildman, Bulbulia, Sosis, & Schjoedt, 2020). Then, the epidemiologic model so far has not paid attention to social, cultural, and religious issues such as ideologies and the interpretation of religious values in influencing the spread of the virus. Thus, scientific studies need to bring issues related to religion that can influence behaviors in the spread of the virus to the surface. This was also recommended by the WHO, which has released a guideline for religious figures to give understanding and accurate medical information to the congregation (Bavel et al., 2020; Wildman et al., 2020; World Health Organisation, 2020).

Some of the previous studies on the relationship between religion and the Covid-18 pandemic focus on the analysis of the relationship between religious concepts with the pandemic (Hidayah, 2020; Indriya, 2020; Mufarida, 2020; Syafrida & Hartati, 2020; Telaumbanua, 2020). Some other research focus on the role of religious institutions in handling Covid-19 (Mushodiq & Imron, 2020; Pabbajah, Said, Pabbajah, & Jubba, 2020), as well as the role of religious figures in handling the Covid-19 via social media (Aula, 2020; Kosasih, Raharusun, Dalimunthe, & Kodir, 2020). Apart from that, Husni et al. (2020) focused their study on the response of religious figures to the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of that, this research focuses on the role of *pesantren* in handling the pandemic, including concerning the policies or the regulations in *pesantren*, as well as the adaptation of the learning process amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

In East Java Province, Indonesia, there are 4.452 *pesantren* with a total of 757.055 *santri* (Kementrian Agama, 2020). The total *santri* accounts for 14.4% of the total students in East Java Province (Kemendikbud, 2020). This rate is rather significant as one of the focuses of minimizing the spread of the Covid-19. Because of that, this research was conducted in East Java Province, especially in Malang City. There are 46 *pesantren* in this city, with a total of 8.191 *santri*, and 90,7% of them stay in boarding schools (Kementrian Agama, 2020). What's interesting is that some pesantren in Malang City also accept university students as *santri*. Usually, for their university classes, they undergo online learning. Then, they undergo offline learning in *pesantren*.

This research was conducted in Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* (pseudonym). This *pesantren* also accepts college students from various universities in Malang City as *santri*. This *pesantren* applies offline learning amid the pandemic. Apart from that, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* has become part of the Fierce *Pesantren* program since June 10th, 2020 (Ardiansyah, 2020). In its application, the Fierce *Pesantren* program encompasses three points, namely: the healthy *pesantren*, the clean *pesantren*, and the TOPP (*Tanaman Obat Pondok Pesantren/Pesantren* Medical Plants) *pesantren* (Kurniawan, 2020).

This research uses Robert K. Merton's theory for the analysis. Merton's theory is a middle-range theory, where as a student of Talcott Parson, Merton's theory is also included in the functional structural theory. Merton is also known for his theory on deviant behavior. The typology of Merton's deviant behavior is based on two criteria: First: one's motivation or compliance with a cultural objective. Second, is one's belief on how to achieve a goal. Then, Merton explained five types of an individual's adaptation as follows (Neuman, 2000):

1. *Conformity*: an individual reaches an objective according to the method that was formally determined.
2. *Innovation*: an individual reaches an objective using a different method, or even by violating the applicable regulations.
3. *Ritualism*: an individual holds on to the determined method, but this individual has her own, different objective.
4. *Retreatism*: an individual does not follow the determined objectives or method, but he has different behavior.
5. *Revolution*: an individual no longer acknowledges the existing social structures and tries to create a new social structure.

Table 1. The Types of an Individual's Adaptation According to Robert K. Merton

No	Adaptation Type	Social Objective	Institutional Facility
1	*Conformity*	Accepts	Accepts
2	*Innovation*	Accepts	Rejects
3	*Ritualism*	Rejects	Accepts
4	*Retreatism*	Rejects	Rejects
5	*Revolution*	Substitutes with a new one	Substitutes with a new one

Source: Neuman (2000)

Merton's typology shows how someone can shift into deviation in chasing social values and objectives that are extensively accepted. The deviation that happens may be a result of accepting a norm, but simultaneously violating other norms in the effort to comply with the first believed norm. According to Merton, social structures are only analyzed in their static form by seeing the stability in society and the dynamic form through the social changes that happen (Elwell, 2013). Social disfunction allows the chance for the functional approach to focus on the changes that happen in the social system, where the social changes in society require an adaptation process to achieve a new balance. Then, Merton explains that in a system, there are latent and manifest functions (Gilani, 2020). The manifest function is a function intended and aware of in a social action that is created for people's interests. Then, the latent function is an unintended and unknown function of social action, where this function may not directly be visible.

This research discuss how the *pesantren* tries to maintain balance during the pandemic. This is because there are many changes—in the social, economic, and systemic aspects—in the *pesantren* that is so far known as an institution that has more autonomy compared to other educational institutions in Indonesia. This situation becomes a challenge in the event of the pandemic, where the government issued some policies in the education sector—one of which concerning the online learning process. Meanwhile, the *pesantren* still carry out offline learning with various internal policies made by the *pesantren* administrators that are adapted to the condition in each *pesantren*.

This research used the qualitative research method with the explanatory case study approach. The explanatory case study strategy aims to provide explanations of a series of similar events and show how such explanations may be applied in other situations (Yin, 2015, 2018). The data were obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation. The informants were determined purposively with the criteria that they must understand and experience the policy processes in the *pesantren* during the Covid-19 pandemic, including the learning process in *pesantren*. All informants in this research were given pseudonyms. The informants in this research were the foundation administrators, head administrator of the male *santri*, head administrator of the female *santri*, and head of the *Poskestren* (*Pos Kesehatan Pesantren/Pesantren* Health Post) who also became the Covid-19 Task Force in the *pesantren*, as well as some *santri*.

2. Results and Discussion

The idea of establishing the Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* started from the routine *pengajian* (Qur'anic recital) carried out each Friday that was organized in turns from one house to another. In 1984, a figure gave his land for *waqaf* (donation of assets for charitable causes) where a small *musholla* (a small mosque) was then built. Through this *musholla*, the founders of the Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* initiated the activity of religious development in the surrounding community.

These religious activities obtained positive responses from society. Then, in 1986, a local village official gave a plot of land with an area of 800m2 for waqf to build a mosque. In 1989, the mosque was built and used to continue the routine pengajian activity that was organized every Saturday and

Wednesday night. More and more congregations participated in the activity from Malang City and the surrounding area. In 1989, a committee was formed to create a foundation that would become the center of religious activities. Then, on July 3rd, 1989, the Ar-Rohmah Foundation was officially founded. It had activities in three sectors: *Majlis Ta'lim* (study of religion) and *Da'wa* (the preaching of Islam), Human Resource Development, and Ar-Rohmah College Student *Pesantren*.

At the start of its establishment, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* only accepted *santri* from students of non-Islamic universities in Malang. Because of that, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* is known as one of the pioneering *pesantren* for college students in Malang City. This is in line with the pesantren's mission to combine the positive dimension of universities that emphasize scientific knowledge and technologies with the positive dimension of *pesantren* is a place to weld personality and morality.

In implementing the curriculum, there are three sectors, namely: *Dirosah*, concerning learning affairs, *Kepengasuhan* (i.e., fostering) concerning the mental-spiritual sector, and *Kesantrian* (i.e., of *santri*) concerning character and personality building as well as the *santri*'s place for actualization. The materials in *dirosah* include: *aswaja* (theological understanding), *fiqih* (Islamic law), *amtsilati* (the method of reading Islamic books), *Mustholah tafsir* (interpretation method), hadeeth, reading and writing the Holy Qur'an, English, etc. The *kepengasuhan* materials include: *Riyadhussholihin* (meadows of the righteous), *tafsir jalalain* (a book on interpretation), *kifayatul adkiya* (a book on Islamic laws), *at-tahdzib* (concerning moralities), *ta'lim muta'allim* (the manners in learning). The *kepengasuhan* activities are carried out by all of the *santri* together in the mosque after subh (the prayer carried out at dawn).

In 2003, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* accepted *santri* who are graduates of *pesantren salaf* (traditional *pesantren*) from all over Indonesia to be educated in an Islamic High Educational Institute or *Ma'had Aly*. These differences in the background of the *santri* resulted in the term *santri pesma* for *santri* who stay in *pesantren* but study in universities in Malang City and *santri ma'had aly* for *santri* who stay and pursue college-level study at Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren*. Through the varying backgrounds of the *santri*, it is hoped to create communication between religious knowledge and scientific knowledge in Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren*.

Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* has developed rapidly. There are currently around 200 male *santri* and around 70 female *santri*. The female *santri* are obliged to stay and pursue college at the *Ma'had Aly* Ar-Rohmah. But there are some female *santri* who also study at universities in Malang, apart from pursuing college-level study at the *Ma'had Aly* Ar-Rohmah. Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* is not only known as a *pesantren* for university students that holistically combines scientific and religious knowledge without the dichotomy of knowledge but it is also known as a *pesantren* that becomes a political reference. This is because, in general elections or elections of regional leaders, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* becomes the destination of the visit (*sowan*) for some Indonesian political figures.

The Pesantren's *Adaptation at the Start of the Covid-19 Pandemic*

In March 2020, the Indonesian government announced that an Indonesian was infected by Covid-19. Then, based on the governmental policy, on March 16th, 2020, all students must study at home. This made Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* decide to dismiss its *santri*. The homecoming of the santri was carried out from the end of March to the start of April 2020. The *santri*'s holidays were also longer than usual, as stated by Ira as follows:

> At the start of the pandemic, everyone was still in the *pesantren.* Then, there were holidays at the end of March 2020. The holiday was quite long, around three months. Usually, the *pesantren*'s holidays only last two weeks, there are no long holidays. Before the pandemic, the longest holidays were only three weeks (Interview with Ira, a female *santri*, July 26, 2021).

The *pesantren*'s adaptive model at the start of the pandemic tended to be characterized as conformity. This was to minimize the spread of the Covid-19. Apart from that, the *pesantren* must be careful in restarting the learning program, as the learning process was carried out offline, while the *santri* came from different cities in Indonesia. Apart from that, the *pesantren* also prepared facilities and

infrastructure to fulfill the health protocol, aided by the *pesantren* administrators and the *pesantren* health post.

In June 2020, the government issued the Joint Decision of the Four Ministers on the Guidelines to Establish the Learning Process in the Academic Year and the New Academic Year Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. For non-boarding school and boarding school educational institutions including *pesantren*, four main stipulations apply in the learning process (Sari & Kuwado, 2020). First, forming a Task Force to Accelerate the Handling of the Covid-19. Second, there must be facilities that fulfill health protocols. Third, it must be safe from Covid-19, proven by a certificate from the Task Force to Accelerate the Handling of the Covid-19 or the local government. Fourth, the leader, *pesantren* administrators, educators, and students are in healthy conditions, proven by a health certificate from the local health service facility. Apart from these four points, specially for dormitory-based religious education facilities, there must be facilities and infrastructure that support the three health protocol points—namely washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing—that must be complied with by everyone in the dormitory. There must also be facilities to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 such as isolation rooms, etc. (Sari & Kuwado, 2020).

In line with the aforementioned Joint Decision of the Four Ministers, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* formed the Covid-19 Task Force that is structurally right under the order of the *pesantren* leader and *asatidz* (a plural term for '*ustadz*'), consisting of *pesantren* administrators and the members of the *pesantren* health post. Apart from that, since June 10th, 2020, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* also became part of the Fierce *Pesantren* program. The Covid-19 Task Force obtained direct instruction from the asatidz in handling the pandemic to prepare facilities and infrastructure that fulfills the health protocol. For instance, there are hand-washing stations, hand sanitizers, and a place to check the body temperature at the *pesantren*'s entrance. Apart from that, the Covid-19 Task Force also prepared the procedures to undergo self-isolation. The contents of the regulations were proposed by the Covid-19 Task Force. If the asatidz approves, a *pesantren* notice is issued that is determined by the *pesantren* leader.

Concerning the boarding school complex in this *pesantren*, according to *Ustadz* Wawan (an administrator of the foundation), it has already fulfilled the requirement, where each room has the size of around 30-60m2 and is inhabited by six to twelve *santri* using their own bunk beds. Thus, there is no change in the mechanism of inhabiting the dormitory during the pandemic. This is different from what was stated by Makruf (2020) and Susanto (2021) that there were some internal conditions of *pesantren* that can accelerate the spread of the Covid-19—one of which is the small size of the *pesantren* bedrooms, which are usually inhabited by more than twenty *santri*.

At the start of August 2020, the *santri* returned to the *pesantren*, though they were obliged to bring a health certificate from the Community Health Center or health workers to their cities of origin. After that, the *pesantren* organized antigen tests for all *santri*. From the results of the antigen tests, all *santri* were declared as non-reactive. Thus, the learning process can be carried out offline as usual. Even so, some campuses where the *santri* studied still applied the online learning process. The consideration of the limited human resource in accessing technologies and the online facilities and infrastructure of the *pesantren* and the *santri* makes it impossible to undergo online learning. Thus, the offline learning process is applied.

The Various Changes in the Pesantren's Policies in Adapting to the Pandemic

Innovation: offline learning with loose health protocols

The *pesantren*'s adaptation during the pandemic since August 2020 tended to be in the Innovation category, where the *pesantren* complied with the stipulations of the Joint Decision of the Four Ministers on the Guidelines to Establish the Learning Process at the Academic Year and the New Academic Year Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic by providing facilities that support health protocols, such as handwashing stations with soap and hand sanitizers. Apart from that, the *pesantren* also encouraged the *santri* to comply with the three health protocol points—namely washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing. But, in the practice of offline learning, the *santri* sometimes refrained from wearing

masks and they did not maintain their distances by sitting close to one another in class. There were no sanctions for those who violated the health protocols.

According to the Head of the *Pesantren* Health Post, Tomi, at the start of the offline learning, it was very difficult to educate the *santri* to wear masks. They tended to refuse to wear masks under various excuses. The adaptation carried out by the *santri* tends to be categorized as retreatism, they suggested that the health protocol regulations do not need to be applied in the *pesantren*. They regarded that their activities are limited to the dormitory, thus they do not need to wear masks.

In offline learning, the number of *santri* in the class was the same as before the pandemic, namely 25 to 30 people. Every *ustadz* were allowed to teach, both those who live in the *pesantren* and those who don't. When letting people from outside of the *pesantren* enter the *pesantren* area, there should be a stricter control as the mobility of those who live outside of the *pesantren* cannot be controlled as those who stay in the *pesantren*. But because the learning process was carried out as usual, if the *ustadz* who live outside of the *pesantren* are not permitted to teach, it will result in the lack of educators.

After approximately four months of offline learning, in December 2020, an *ustadz* died and he was confirmed as positively infected with Covid-19. This condition made the *pesantren* arrange antigen tests for all *santri*. These antigen tests were carried out by cooperating with the Community Health Center and the Nadhlatul Ulama Covid Task Force of Malang City. Apart from that, the *pesantren* made some policies to minimize the spread of the Covid-19 as stated by Hasan:

> In December, there was a case in the *pesantren*. An *ustadz* died due to Covid-19. Then, after the case of the *ustadz* with Covid-19, all the *santri* were tested with antigen. Those who have symptoms were isolated, and the rest were allowed to leave, the *santri* was sent home again (Interview with Hasan, the Head Administrator of Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren*, June 25, 2021).

All *santri* with non-reactive antigen results were allowed to directly return home. Then, the *santri* with reactive results were directly isolated in a special room in the *pesantren* for fourteen days and they were not yet allowed to go home, as there was the concern that they may endanger themselves and the people around them. All the *santri* with reactive results did not show any symptoms. Thus, after fourteen days they were retested. When the results were negative, they were allowed to return to their own rooms.

Conformity as a response after the case of Covid-19 positive

The confirmed positive case of Covid-19 in the *pesantren* area resulted in policies that tended to have a conformity characteristic, by applying a blended learning program through Zoom, Youtube, and the *pesantren* TV. This was so that the *santri* who returned home can still participate in the learning process. This was also to limit the mobility of the *santri* and the people outside of the *pesantren* that were to visit. The *santri* who studied directly in *pesantren* must comply with the health protocols. Dirosah and *pengajian* were still carried out face-to-face with the *santri* in the *pesantren*. Then, the *santri* who were in other cities participated online via Zoom. *Kepengasuhan* activities were carried out by streaming the *pesantren*'s TV channel. Thus, the *santri* who was still in isolation can still follow the online *pengajian* via Youtube (Interview with Tomi, August 1, 2021). Then, *santri*'s mobility to go outside of the *pesantren* was also limited, except for campus activities such as lab work or research—these were still allowed.

This showed that the *pesantren* was adaptive in using information technologies. In the current digital era, all sectors are demanded to adapt, including *da'wa*. This also applies to Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* which has the mission to combine scientific knowledge and technology emphasized on campuses with character building and morality that are the focus of the *pesantren* since the start of its establishment. The learning process during the pandemic became a challenge for this *pesantren* to manifest its mission which has been designed since 1989. The situation in Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* was different from the opinion of Makruf (2020); that online learning cannot be carried out in *pesantren* due to the limitations in accessing and using information technologies, as well as the limited digital literacy of the *santri*, *ustadz/ustadzah*, and the administrators.

Then, at the end of February 2021, some *santri* who was sent home in December 2020 returned to the *pesantren*, although they must bring a health certificate stating that they were free from Covid-19. The *pesantren* tried to comply with governmental stipulations, that the *santri* who were to follow offline learning must be healthy and there was no obligation for the *santri* to return to *pesantren*. The *santri* who chose to follow offline learning must bring a Covid-19-free certificate. But some *santri* chose not to return to *pesantren*, as they regard that the Covid-19 tests were too expensive. Thus, they chose to follow online learning.

Apart from that, there were also changes in the implementation of the activities in *pesantren*. For instance, the *pengajian* that was usually carried out in each class was carried out collectively in one place, and it was only taught by the *ustadz* who lived in the *pesantren*. In following the *pesantren* activities, the *santri* were encouraged to follow health protocols, as stated by *Ustadz* Wawan:

> All activities still go on, but those that were usually carried out in each class were now carried out collectively in the Mosque. According to the *pesantren* leader, this was because it is too risky to invite *ustadz* from outside of the *pesantren*. Thus, the *ustadz* are only from inside [those who live in *pesantren*]. The *santri* are encouraged to wear masks and undergo prayers in the congregation using masks. For Friday prayers, they must wear masks also (Interview with Wawan, an administrator of Ar-Rohmah Foundation, June 5, 2021).

With the centered *pengajian* system, the need for educators was fulfilled with the *ustadz* who live in the *pesantren*. According to Hasan, since February 2021, the *ustadz* who lived outside of the *pesantren* was temporarily made non-active. This step was taken by the *pesantren* to minimize the spread of the Covid-19, as the *pesantren* cannot control all activities of the *ustadz* who lived outside.

Then, the female *santri* also underwent blended learning. Those who stayed in the Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren*, apart from learning *diniyah pesantren*, also studied in the Islamic High Educational Institute or *Ma'had Aly* in Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren*. The *diniyah* activities were carried out face-to-face, while the campus activities were carried out online, as stated by Fina as follows:

> For *diniyah* studies of female *santri*, it was carried out offline. The online learning was for the campus. There are two programs for the female *santri*, *kitab* (studying Islamic books) and *tahfidz* (memorizing the Qur'an). There are classes in the *kitab* program. There are many students in the first class, but I don't know the exact number. The higher the level, the fewer the classes. The *ustadz/ustadzah* are still in the *pesantren* area. For activities in the mosque [with the male *santri*] we must wear masks. If the learning activities are still in the area of the female *santri* dormitory, we do not have to wear masks but the *ustadz/ustadzah* must wear masks. There are gaps between people who pray. Then, there are written data on those who enter or exit the *pesantren*. For the prayer in the congregation, people bring their own prayer equipment [*sajadah*, i.e., prayer rug], it is not mandatory to wear masks. In the female *santri* dormitory, there is a special prayer place, thus we don't wear masks. There is a congregation for female *santri* (Interview with Fina, head administrator of female *santri*, June 30, 2021).

Inside the female *pesantren* area, health protocols are not mandatory when undergoing prayer in the congregation or for *diniyah* studies. But, they must wear masks when undergoing collective *pengajian* with male *santri* in the Mosque. They regard that so far, they only stay in the *pesantren*, they do not go far from the *pesantren* area, and they still wear masks. The adaptation of the *female santri* tends to be categorized in *innovation*, as they regard that *pesantren* regulations to follow the health protocols in every activity is important to handle the pandemic. But wearing masks and keeping distances only apply to those with high activities outside of the *pesantren*. Thus, they only wear masks when exiting the *pesantren*.

Even so, both female and male *santri* are strictly controlled and limited in exiting and entering the *pesantren*. This is to minimize the spread of the Covid-19 in the *pesantren*. There are officials in posts who control the *santri* who enter and exit the *pesantren*, the as stated by Hasan as follows:

Amid the pandemic, there are guard posts in front of the *pesantren.* There, every time the *santri* want to exit, they must write where they will go, from what time until what time. There are also thermoguns, hand sanitizers, and handwashing stations (Interview with Hasan, June 25, 2021).

The *santri* who exit the *pesantren,* they must write when they exit and reenter the *pesantren,* though there is no limitation on how long they can exit the *pesantren.* But there is an *ustadz* who checks the notes in the guard post. If some exceed the time needed to complete their affairs outside of the *pesantren,* this *santri* will be called and warned. If they repeat the actions after some time, then during the *pengajian,* this *santri* will be called and he/she will be scolded in public. The stipulations to exit the *pesantren* are even tighter for female *santri,* as stated by Ira:

There is a curfew for the exit-entrance access at night. Before the pandemic, the *santri* can enter and exit anytime. But now, they must write what time they will go and what time they will return. Before, the *pesantren* gate is closed at 9 or 10 p.m. After the Community Activity Restriction Enforcement, it was closed at 8 p.m. Thus, people can no longer go out. If they want to go out, they must obtain permission from the Security Section. For the male *santri,* it is to the *kesantrian* section. For the female *santri,* they must go to the security twice, then to the *pesantren* leader. For the male *santri,* they only need to go to the *kesantrian.* Such a permit is for male *santri* who wants to go far or to another city for recreation or for undergoing a student-teacher program. For the female *santri,* the permits are for going home or for going somewhere far with a permit card. The male *santri* seldom need such permits, unless they stay for the night somewhere else, *rihlah* (a journey), or for the student-teacher program, they must obtain such permits. But to go to campus or anywhere [around the *pesantren*], we only ask for permission from the security post at the entrance (Interview with Ira, a female *santri,* July 26, 2021).

The *santri* who go around the *pesantren* or to the campus only need to write at the *pesantren* security post, so long as they do not go more than 5 kilometers from the *pesantren.* If they go to another city or undergo campus activities in another city, there must be permits from the Security Section and the *pesantren* leader for the female *santri.* Meanwhile, the male *santri* only needs to go to the *kesantrian* section. The application of the permit regulations to exit the *pesantren* is tighter for female *santri* as there is double control—to the Security Section and the *pesantren* leader. This shows that the *panopticon* system for female and male *santri* has different levels. The female *santri's* mobility tends to be more limited and controlled.

Apart from the limited activities of *santri* outside of the *pesantren,* some activities that were usually carried out by *pesantren* such as public *pengajian* every week that was participated by people around the *pesantren* were also dismissed. For prayers in congregation, the local people can still participate by following health protocols—such as *shof* (the line where to stand in prayer) with gaps and wearing masks—as stated by *Ustadz* Wawan as follows:

The congregation from outside are welcome but they must wear masks. And there is no more *pengajian* for outside people, they were dismissed. The Sunday *pengajian* with local people was dismissed. It is only for the *santri* (Interview with Wawan, June 5, 2021).

Before entering the *pesantren* area, there are security posts that are also used to control the *santri* that enter or exit the *pesantren,* as well as the people around the *pesantren* who will follow prayers in congregation. Based on information from Tomi, if there are people who do not wear masks, they will be given masks that were prepared by the *pesantren.* Moreover, for Friday prayers, the *pesantren* made a budget for many masks for the congregation (Interview with Tomi, August 2, 2021).

Pengajian for the public was intentionally dismissed to minimize the spread of the Covid-19 and to prevent the creation of crowds, as this *pengajian* was carried out offline in the Mosque, and it was participated by many local people. Apart from that, the *pesantren* does not welcome guests from outside who want to meet the *pesantren* leader, unless they already have a permit to meet them. This is because until now, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* has often been visited by society, social figures, and even political figures. Many guests from inside and outside of the city want to visit the *pesantren* leader.

Innovation: pesantren activities are followed by the public with the application of health protocols

The rather tight control over the *pesantren* activities changed in June 2021, where the *pesantren's* adaptation tended to be in the *innovation* category with offline activities that can be followed by the public. *Pesantren* complied with the regulation during the pandemic as stipulated in the Joint Decision of the Four Ministers, but it loosened the activities that involved people outside of the *pesantren* with tight protocols. The learning process was carried out offline in classes. They were no longer centered in the Mosque and *ustadz* from outside were allowed to return and teach. Apart from that, the public *pengajian* was also reorganized by still following health protocols, as stated by Hasan:

> Starting from this July, the learning process is normal again like before. Normally, it was carried out in classes, where in the roll, there are 25 to 30 people in each class. But usually, the ones present are not that many. When the learning process is carried out in the dormitory area, there are no tight regulations [wearing masks, maintaining distances]. But for public *pengajian*, there is still a tight regulation on health protocols, such as masks etc. (Interview with Hasan, June 25, 2021).

Pesantren activities are also followed by the public under health protocols. This is carried out as an act of care during the pandemic, as the *pesantren* do not know the mobility and the transmission of the public who followed that activity. When the activities only involve people from the *pesantren*, the protocols are not strictly applied. According to Tomi, several events around the *pesantren* have motivated the *santri* to realize the importance of masks. Thus, most already wear masks during activities. The *santri* tends to conform more to the *pesantren*'s policies.

Public *pengajian* was also carried out offline in the *pesantren* mosque. But it is carried out earlier in the morning. This is a strategy to limit the number of *pengajian* participants, as stated by Ira:

> *Pesantren* has activated the public pengajian, it runs as usual but certainly with health protocols. But the Community Activity Restriction Enforcement policy was carried out in 3 to 4 sessions. Thus, we moved the schedule. Before it was carried out from 6 to 7 a.m., now it is organized earlier. Thus, after the *subh* prayer, there was a public *pengajian* to minimize people's mobility. This is because if it was carried out from 6 to 7 a.m., people have more time to get ready, and many people usually come. But if it is after the *subh* prayer, people need to rush, it's really early and cold, thus it depletes their intention. This is to minimize the number of the congregation (Interview with Ira, a female *santri*, July 26, 2021).

The emergency Community Activity Restriction Enforcement policy on July 3rd, 2021 also made the *pesantren* adapt its policy, including concerning the public *pengajian*. During this time, the government prohibited offline religious activities at houses of worship by optimizing worshipping at home (Aida, 2021). This governmental policy emerged as there were Covid-19 clusters in several areas due to the pandemic, such as in Magetan, Ponorogo, Wonogiri, Pandeglang, and Tangerang that originated from offline religious activities and activities in *pesantren* (Alam, 2020; Kurniati, 2020). Even, at the end of 2020, 49 *pesantren* in Indonesia became Covid-19 clusters (Mufarida, 2020). Covid-19 clusters that originated from religious activities did not only happen in Indonesia but there were similar cases in other countries such as Malaysia and the United States (Ikhwan & Yulianto, 2020; Yee, 2020).

Because of that, so that it does not become a Covid-19 cluster, Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* changed the *pengajian* schedule that was usually participated by the public to become earlier to minimize the number of the congregation and to avoid creating crowds. Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* tried to comply with the governmental regulations amid the pandemic, as it is part of the Fierce *Pesantren* program of East Java. Thus, indirectly, the policies created by the *pesantren* must be in line with the governmental policies in handling the pandemic. Because of that, when the *pesantren* carried out offline activities that are followed by *santri* and the public, they obliged the participants to follow the health protocols.

There is still *pengajian* streaming through the *pesantren*'s TV, but it was not only fully used in undergoing online *pengajian*. This situation ever strengthens the *pesantren*'s adaptation pattern that is categorized in innovation, where according to Merton individual accepts the present social goals though he uses a different method or even violates the present regulations (Neuman, 2000). Just like

this *pesantren* that accepted government policies in handling the pandemic, but to reach that goal, it still organized offline activities by still complying with the health protocols.

It must be underlined that during the pandemic, all individuals are demanded to understand technology. The demand is not only for the institution that must have adequate technological facilities and infrastructure, but the human resources in the *pesantren*, the *santri*, and the congregation must also follow the technological developments. Thus, *pesantren* activities and other religious activities can still be organized without causing physical mobility and crowds as they are carried out online.

Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* actually has the ability to undergo online learning and *pengajian*. But the online learning technologies of the *pesantren* were not maximally used. Some people in *pesantren* regard that offline learning and *pengajian* are more effective in understanding religious knowledge. This is different from the opinion of Makruf (2020), who said that the present *pesantren* and human resources have limitations in accessing and using information technologies. On the other hand, the results of this research strengthened the argument of KH. Abu Choir in Nugroho (2020) stated that *pesantren* has its own culture that is more autonomous compared to other educational institutions, thus the method to handle the pandemic must also be different.

The government's effort to make Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* part of the Fierce *Pesantren* is a governmental method to approach the *pesantren* leaders so that they take the role in handling the pandemic, especially in supporting and delivering the governmental policies to *santri* and the public that became its congregation. Moreover in Indonesia, the position of religious figures still highly influences society. This is in with the research of Alexander (2020) in Uganda and Yezli & Khan (2020) in Saudi Arabia who showed that religious institutions and figures can influence society to follow governmental regulations in handling the pandemic, concerning the postponement or the cancellation of the religious activities, as well as the closing of education institutions.

3. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic demanded *pesantren* to adapt to a new pattern of life. The *pesantren*'s adaptation patterns experienced dynamics according to the internal condition of the *pesantren* and the governmental policies. Conformity and innovation tended to be the adaptation patterns of Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* in responding to government policies to minimize the spread of the Covid-19. This is because this *pesantren* is part of the fierce *pesantren* program of East Java. Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* is a modern pesantren that was able to undergo blended learning. But this potential was not maximally applied as they regard that offline learning and da'wa to the community around the *pesantren* are more effective. What must be considered when developing the *pesantren* in the future is that *pesantren* must have capabilities to adapt to the development of information and technologies, as the mission created by Ar-Rohmah *Pesantren* since its establishment, that tried to collaborate the education systems in universities and *pesantren*.

The results of this research showed the importance of the *pesantren*'s role in handling the pandemic, as well as undergoing adapting to digital technologies in learning and *da'wa*. Even so, this research was limited to modern *pesantren* that were dominated by *santri* who pursued high education in universities. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there are many types of *pesantren*. Thus, there needs to be future research on traditional *pesantren* or modern *pesantren* with students from various educational levels to understand and analyze the adaptations carried out during the pandemic and/or the new normal era.

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