

IMPLEMENTATION OF LAW NO. 18 OF 2019 IN ENSURING THE QUALITY AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN PESANTREN**Aidah Mutma Innah Nst (1)**

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Aidahmutmainnahnst28@gmail.com (1)**Abstract**

This research aims to evaluate the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in ensuring the quality and access to education in pesantren. Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that plays an important role in shaping a generation with noble character and broad knowledge. However, pesantren often face challenges in terms of formal recognition, access to education, and the quality of graduates. Law No. 18 of 2019 is expected to provide a strong legal foundation for pesantren to address these challenges. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies. The results show that the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 has had a positive impact on the quality of education in pesantren, access to education for pesantren graduates, and the independence of pesantren management. Several pesantren have successfully improved their teaching standards, curriculum, and facilities in accordance with the provisions of this law. In addition, pesantren graduates now have equal opportunities to continue their education to higher levels and enter the workforce. However, there are still several obstacles in its implementation, such as limited resources and a lack of socialization regarding this law. Therefore, this research provides recommendations to improve socialization, provide adequate resources, eliminate the negative stigma against graduates of pesantren, strengthen cooperation between pesantren and the government, and conduct regular monitoring and evaluation. Thus, it is hoped that the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 can be more optimal in ensuring the quality and access of pesantren education, so that pesantren can contribute more significantly in shaping a generation that is virtuous and knowledgeable.

Keyword: *Islamic Boarding Schools; Quality of Education; Access to Education; Independence of Implementation; Evaluation.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are one of the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia that play a significant role in shaping a generation with noble character and extensive knowledge. Since the colonial era, pesantren have been centers of Islamic education, teaching both religious and general knowledge to students (santri). Pesantren are characterized by dormitories for students, the teaching of classical religious texts (kitab kuning), and the presence of kiai as leaders. However, over the years, pesantren have often faced various challenges, particularly in terms of formal recognition, access to education, and the quality of graduates.

Before the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019, pesantren were often regarded as non-formal educational institutions that were less recognized by the government and society. This resulted in graduates from pesantren frequently encountering difficulties in pursuing higher education or entering the workforce. Additionally, the quality of education in pesantren has also been a concern. Many pesantren still face limitations in terms of facilities, curriculum, and teaching

quality. Resource constraints, both financially and in terms of human resources, have become one of the main obstacles in improving the quality of education in pesantren.

To address various challenges, the Indonesian government issued Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This law aims to provide a strong legal foundation for pesantren in ensuring equality in the quality of graduates, ease of access for graduates, and the independence of pesantren operations. With this law, it is hoped that pesantren can be on par with other formal educational institutions in terms of recognition and appreciation for graduates.

Law No. 18 of 2019 also aims to improve the quality of education in pesantren by establishing educational quality standards that must be met by pesantren, including curriculum, teaching quality, and educational facilities. In addition, this law also provides easier access to education for pesantren graduates, allowing them equal opportunities to pursue higher education and enter the workforce. Selain itu, undang-undang ini juga menjamin independensi penyelenggaraan pesantren dengan memberikan kebebasan bagi pesantren dalam menentukan kurikulum, metode pengajaran, dan manajemen mereka. Dengan adanya kebebasan ini, pesantren diharapkan dapat lebih fleksibel dalam menyesuaikan kurikulum dan metode pengajaran dengan kebutuhan dan karakteristik santri.

This research aims to evaluate the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 in ensuring the quality and access to education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This study will examine the impact of this law on the quality of education in pesantren, access to education for pesantren graduates, and the independence of pesantren administration. Additionally, this research will also provide recommendations to optimize the implementation of this law in the future.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the results of this Scientific Paper research, the location for the writing process is based in the main library of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and independent research was conducted in each respective place. The writing of this Scientific Paper leans towards a descriptive qualitative approach, which is examined through data analysis without any additions. This research uses literature on academic publications and related policies to provide context and additional perspectives, especially regarding the discussion on the Implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 in Ensuring Quality and Access to Education in Islamic Boarding Schools. The results of this Scientific Paper research obtained secondary data sources, also known as written data sources. This data source is obtained through a collection of previously existing information or documents, such as written data sources found in libraries and the internet, including books, scientific journals, theses, journals, and official documentation.

The information data used for writing this Scientific Paper research is Documentation, where data collection is analyzed through several documents (results of data analysis) that are reviewed and studied as material for research analysis. This documentation is authentic evidence that can be used as a research source. The analysis technique used by the researcher is Content Analysis, which analyzes the research to produce an objective and systematic description, thus facilitating the writing process for in-depth elaboration. The analysis can also be used to draw and identify conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background and Objectives of Law No. 18 of 2019

1. Background

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are one of the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia that play an important role in shaping a generation with noble character and broad knowledge. Since the colonial era, pesantren have been centers of Islamic education that teach religious and general knowledge to students (santri). Pesantren are characterized by dormitories for students, the teaching of yellow books, and a kiai as the leader (A. Hidayat: 2019).

However, for many years, pesantren have often faced various challenges, especially regarding formal recognition, access to education, and the quality of graduates. Before the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019, pesantren were often regarded as non-formal educational institutions that were less recognized by the government and society. This resulted in graduates from pesantren often facing difficulties in continuing their education to higher levels or entering the workforce (M. Syarif: 2020).

In addition, the quality of education in pesantren has also been a concern. Many pesantren still face limitations in terms of facilities, curriculum, and teaching quality. Resource limitations, both in financial terms and human resources, have become one of the main obstacles to improving the quality of education in pesantren (F. Rahman: 2021).

To address these various challenges, the Indonesian government issued Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This law aims to provide a strong legal foundation for pesantren in ensuring equality in the quality of graduates, ease of access for graduates, and the independence of pesantren administration (Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning pesantren).

2. The Purpose of Law No. 18 of 2019

Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) has several main objectives aimed at enhancing the role and contribution of pesantren within the national education system. The following are some of the main objectives of this law:

a. Formal Recognition of Pesantren

One of the main objectives of Law No. 18 of 2019 is to provide formal recognition to pesantren as part of the national education system. With this formal recognition, pesantren are expected to be on par with other formal educational institutions in terms of recognition and appreciation of graduates. This formal recognition is also expected to eliminate the negative stigma against pesantren and their graduates in society (A. Aziz: 2020).

b. Improvement of the Quality of Education in Pesantren

Law No. 18 of 2019 aims to improve the quality of education in pesantren. This law establishes quality standards for education that pesantren must meet, including in terms of curriculum, teaching quality, and educational facilities. With these quality standards, it is hoped that pesantren can provide quality education that meets the needs of the times (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia: 2020).

c. Accessibility of Education for Graduates of Islamic Boarding Schools

Law No. 18 of 2019 also aims to provide easy access to education for graduates of Islamic boarding schools. Graduates of these institutions are expected to have the same opportunities to continue their education to higher levels and enter the workforce. This law regulates the recognition of diplomas from Islamic boarding schools and the equivalence of their graduates with those from other formal educational institutions (Ministry of Education and Culture: 2020).

d. Independence of Islamic Boarding School Management

Another goal of Law No. 18 of 2019 is to guarantee the independence of Islamic boarding school management. This law provides freedom for these institutions to determine their curriculum, teaching methods, and management. With this freedom, Islamic boarding schools are expected to be more flexible in adapting their curriculum and teaching methods to the needs and characteristics of their students (M. Syarif: 2020).

- e. **Strengthening the Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in National Development**
Law No. 18 of 2019 also aims to strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools in national development. These institutions are expected to contribute to shaping a generation with noble character, broad knowledge, and the skills needed for national development. The law recognizes the role of Islamic boarding schools in shaping the nation's character and providing positive contributions in various aspects of life (A. Hidayat: 2019).
- f. **Improvement of the Welfare of Managers and Educators in Islamic Boarding Schools**
In addition, Law No. 18 of 2019 also aims to improve the welfare of managers and educators in Islamic boarding schools. This law regulates the rights and obligations of managers and educators in Islamic boarding schools, including aspects of welfare, training, and professional development. With this improvement in welfare, it is hoped that managers and educators in Islamic boarding schools will be more motivated in carrying out their duties and responsibilities (F. Rahman: 2021).
- g. **Development of Islamic Boarding Schools as Centers for Education, Preaching, and Community Empowerment**
Law No. 18 of 2019 also aims to develop Islamic boarding schools as centers for education, preaching, and community empowerment. Islamic boarding schools are expected to play an active role in providing religious and general education, disseminating Islamic values, and empowering the community through various programs and activities. With this role, Islamic boarding schools are expected to become positive agents of change in society (A. Aziz: 2020).
- h. **Strengthening Cooperation between Islamic Boarding Schools and the Government**
Another objective of Law No. 18 of 2019 is to strengthen cooperation between Islamic boarding schools and the government. This law regulates the role of the government in supporting Islamic boarding schools, including in terms of funding, training, and capacity development. With this cooperation, it is hoped that Islamic boarding schools can optimize their roles and functions (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia: 2020).
- i. **Regulation on Accreditation and Certification of Islamic Boarding Schools**
Law No. 18 of 2019 also regulates the accreditation and certification of Islamic boarding schools. This law establishes the accreditation and certification mechanisms that must be followed by Islamic boarding schools to ensure that they meet the established quality standards. With the existence of accreditation and certification, it is hoped that Islamic boarding schools can be more transparent and accountable in their educational administration (Ministry of Education and Culture: 2020).
- j. **Enhancing the Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Character Education**
Law No. 18 of 2019 also aims to enhance the role of Islamic boarding schools in character education. Islamic boarding schools are expected to provide strong character education to students, including in terms of morals, ethics, and Islamic values. With this character education, it is hoped that students can become individuals of noble character and contribute positively to society (A. Hidayat: 2019).

Implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 in Ensuring the Quality of Education in Islamic Boarding Schools

The implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools is a strategic step to improve the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. In this context, the law emphasizes the importance of accreditation, curriculum, and training for educators. Accreditation of Islamic boarding schools becomes one of the key instruments to ensure educational quality. Through accreditation, it is expected that Islamic boarding schools can meet the national standards set by the government, which include aspects of curriculum, facilities, and teacher qualifications (A. Ali: 2020).

However, the implementation of accreditation still faces various challenges. Many Islamic boarding schools, especially those in remote areas, struggle to understand and meet the accreditation requirements. This is due to a lack of socialization and understanding of the importance of accreditation among the managers of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, more intensive socialization from the government and related institutions is necessary to raise awareness of the importance of accreditation in the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools (M. Anwar: 2021).

In addition, the curriculum implemented in pesantren also needs to be adjusted to the development of the times. The integration of general curriculum and religious curriculum has become one of the main focuses of Law No. 18 of 2019. Thus, students not only receive in-depth religious education but also skills and knowledge relevant to the needs of modern society (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia: 2019). Therefore, training for educators needs to be enhanced so that they can implement a better and more relevant curriculum.

The importance of improving educators' competencies cannot be overlooked. In this context, the government needs to provide ongoing training programs for teachers in pesantren. These programs should include innovative teaching methodologies and the use of technology in education, so that students can learn in a more engaging and effective way (M. Hasan: 2022). With the improvement of educator quality, it is hoped that the quality of education in pesantren can significantly increase.

Furthermore, the training provided should emphasize the development of soft skills and critical thinking abilities of students. Thus, they not only become text memorizers but are also able to apply the knowledge gained in everyday life. This is important to equip students with the skills needed in an increasingly complex work and societal environment.

In addition, in order to support the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019, collaboration between pesantren and other educational institutions, both government and private, also needs to be strengthened. This cooperation can assist pesantren in developing curricula and improving accreditation. By sharing resources and experiences, pesantren can learn from best practices implemented in other educational institutions.

Overall, the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 in ensuring the quality of education in pesantren requires a comprehensive approach. From clear accreditation, relevant curricula, to training for educators, all these aspects must work synergistically. With support from the government and the involvement of various parties, it is hoped that education in pesantren can improve, so that students are prepared to face future challenges and contribute positively to society.

The Impact of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Educational Access for Graduates of Islamic Boarding Schools

The impact of Law No. 18 of 2019 on educational access for graduates of Islamic boarding schools is very significant. One of the main objectives of this law is to enhance educational access, particularly for underprivileged students. In this regard, the government has launched various assistance programs and scholarships for students from low-income families (Ministry

of Education and Culture: 2020). This program aims to reduce the educational gap between students of Islamic boarding schools and those in public schools.

However, despite the assistance programs, challenges remain in their implementation. Many students are unaware of or do not have access to apply for the available scholarship programs. This indicates the need for improved socialization and outreach to students and their parents (A. Munir: 2021). Additionally, transparency in the scholarship selection process also needs to be addressed so that students who truly need assistance can receive the help they require.

Access to education is not only limited to scholarships but also includes ease in pursuing education to higher levels. Graduates of Islamic boarding schools often face the stigma that education from these institutions is less officially recognized, making it difficult for them to continue to higher education (S. Nasution: 2020). In this context, Law No. 18 of 2019 seeks to change this perception by recognizing graduates of Islamic boarding schools as part of the national education system. This will open up opportunities for these graduates to continue their education to better universities and obtain decent jobs.

The importance of cooperation between Islamic boarding schools and higher education institutions also needs to be emphasized. By establishing partnerships, Islamic boarding schools can provide relevant programs and prepare students to face challenges in the workforce (H. Nurdin: 2021). Furthermore, this collaboration can also enhance the reputation of Islamic boarding schools in the community, leading to more parents trusting to send their children to these institutions.

This collaboration can also enhance the reputation of pesantren in the community, leading more parents to trust in enrolling their children in pesantren. With the increasing public trust, it is hoped that the number of students registering at pesantren will rise, allowing education in pesantren to develop more rapidly. Additionally, the improvement of the pesantren's reputation will help attract more resources, both from the government and the private sector, to support the development of pesantren education.

Overall, the impact of Law No. 18 of 2019 on educational access for pesantren graduates offers new hope for students. With the presence of assistance programs, official recognition for pesantren graduates, and collaboration with higher education institutions, it is expected that educational access for students will become even more open. This is an important step in creating educational equality in Indonesia, which in turn will enhance the quality of human resources in the future.

Independence of the Management of Islamic Boarding Schools through Law No. 18 of 2019

One important aspect of Law No. 18 of 2019 is to guarantee the independence of the management of Islamic boarding schools. This law emphasizes that Islamic boarding schools have the right to manage their own education according to their respective character and vision. This independence is crucial for Islamic boarding schools to carry out their social and religious functions without excessive intervention from external parties.

However, this independence must still be balanced with accountability. Islamic boarding schools are expected to be responsible for the management and quality of education they offer to the community. In this regard, Law No. 18 of 2019 encourages Islamic boarding schools to conduct regular evaluations and participate in accreditation established by the government (F. Rahman: 2022).

The importance of transparency in management cannot be overlooked. Islamic boarding schools must be able to provide clear information to the community about the programs they offer, education costs, and the use of funds received. With this transparency, the community

will be more trusting and supportive of the educational management in Islamic boarding schools (M. Rijal: 2020).

In addition, support from the government in the form of adequate regulations is also very important to maintain the independence of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). The government needs to set clear boundaries regarding permissible interventions, so that pesantren can continue to operate within the legal framework without feeling pressured by certain parties (D. Sari: 2021). This will not only ensure the sustainability of pesantren but also improve the quality of education they offer.

This support will not only maintain the sustainability of pesantren but also enhance the quality of education they provide. The organization of independent and quality education will have a positive impact on the development of students and the surrounding community. Pesantren that can maintain independence while meeting accountability standards will become institutions that are more trusted and respected in society.

Terakhir, penting untuk diingat bahwa independensi penyelenggaraan pesantren tidak berarti bahwa mereka terpisah sepenuhnya dari masyarakat dan pemerintah. Sebaliknya, pesantren harus mampu menjalin kerjasama yang baik dengan berbagai pihak, termasuk pemerintah, masyarakat, dan lembaga pendidikan lainnya. Dengan kolaborasi yang baik, pesantren dapat berkontribusi lebih besar terhadap pembangunan pendidikan di Indonesia.

Finally, it is important to remember that the independence of the management of pesantren does not mean that they are completely separate from society and the government. On the contrary, pesantren must be able to establish good cooperation with various parties, including the government, society, and other educational institutions. With good collaboration, pesantren can contribute more significantly to the development of education in Indonesia.

Thus, Law No. 18 of 2019 serves as an important foundation to ensure that pesantren can operate independently while remaining responsible and transparent. This is a step forward in strengthening the position of pesantren within the national education system, while also upholding the values they adhere to.

Evaluation and Recommendations for Optimizing the Implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019

A. Evaluation of the Implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019

1. Improving the Quality of Islamic Boarding School

The implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 has had a positive impact on improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools. Several Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in improving their teaching standards, curriculum and facilities in accordance with the provisions of this law (A. Hidayat: 2019). For example, these Islamic boarding schools have adopted a curriculum that is more structured and in line with national standards, as well as improving the quality of teaching through training and professional development for teachers (M. Syarif: 2020). Apart from that, facilities at Islamic boarding schools have also been improved, such as the construction of more appropriate classrooms, more complete libraries and adequate laboratories (F. Rahman: 2021).

However, there are still several obstacles in its implementation. One of the main obstacles is limited resources, both in terms of financial and human resources. Many Islamic boarding schools still have difficulty obtaining sufficient funds to improve facilities and teaching quality (A. Aziz: 2020). Apart from that, the lack of socialization about this law is also an obstacle in its implementation. Many Islamic boarding school managers do not fully understand the provisions of this law, so their implementation is not optimal (Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: 2020).

2. Access to Education for Islamic Boarding School Graduates

Law No. 18 of 2019 has opened wider access to education for Islamic boarding school graduates. Islamic boarding school graduates now have the same opportunity to continue their education to a higher level and enter the world of work (Kemendikbud: 2020). This is reflected in the increasing number of Islamic boarding school graduates who are accepted into state and private universities, as well as the increasing number of Islamic boarding school graduates who have succeeded in getting jobs in various sectors (A. Hidayat: 2019).

However, there are still challenges in eliminating the negative stigma towards Islamic boarding school graduates in society. Even though this law has given formal recognition to Islamic boarding schools, there are still some people who view Islamic boarding school graduates as less competent than graduates from other formal educational institutions (M. Syarif: 2020). Therefore, further efforts are needed to improve the image of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic boarding school graduates in the eyes of the public, such as through awareness and education campaigns (F. Rahman: 2022).

3. Independence of Islamic Boarding School Management

Law No. 18 of 2019 has guaranteed independence for the administration of Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools have freedom in determining their curriculum, teaching methods and management (A. Aziz: 2020). This allows Islamic boarding schools to be more flexible in adapting the curriculum and teaching methods to the needs and characteristics of the students (Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: 2020).

However, there are still several interventions from outside parties that can disrupt the independence of Islamic boarding schools. For example, several Islamic boarding schools reported pressure from certain parties to adopt certain curricula or teaching methods that were not in accordance with the Islamic boarding school's vision and mission (Kemendikbud: 2020). Therefore, it is important for the government and related parties to ensure that Islamic boarding schools truly have the freedom to carry out their functions without excessive intervention (A. Hidayat: 2019).

Recommendations for Optimizing the Implementation of Law no. 18 of 2019

1. Increased Socialization

The government needs to increase socialization about Law No. 18 of 2019 to all Islamic boarding schools and the community to increase understanding and implementation (M. Syarif: 2020). Socialization can be done through various media, such as seminars, workshops and publications. Apart from that, the government can also collaborate with Islamic boarding school organizations to disseminate information about this law (F. Rahman: 2022).

2. Increased Resources

The government needs to provide adequate resources to support the implementation of this law in Islamic boarding schools (A. Aziz: 2020). This includes providing funds for improving educational facilities, training for teachers, and curriculum development. Apart from that, the government can also provide incentives for Islamic boarding schools that successfully meet established educational quality standards (Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: 2020).

3. Elimination of Stigma

Efforts need to be made to eliminate the negative stigma towards Islamic boarding school graduates in society through awareness and education campaigns (A. Hidayat: 2019). The government and Islamic boarding schools can work together to organize programs aimed at improving the image of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic boarding school graduates. Apart from that, efforts need to be made to improve the quality of Islamic

boarding school graduates so that they can compete with graduates from other formal educational institutions (M. Syarif: 2020).

4. Strengthening cooperation between Islamic boarding schools and the government

The government needs to strengthen cooperation with Islamic boarding schools in supporting the implementation of this law (Kemendikbud: 2020). Collaboration can take various forms, such as providing funding, training and capacity development. Apart from that, the government can also involve Islamic boarding schools in the decision-making process related to Islamic boarding school education (Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: 2020).

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The government needs to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 in Islamic boarding schools (F. Rahman: 2022). This monitoring and evaluation aims to ensure that Islamic boarding schools meet the established education quality standards and to identify obstacles faced in implementing this law. The results of this monitoring and evaluation can be used as a basis for improving and developing Islamic boarding school education policies in the future (A. Aziz: 2020).

CLOSING

Law no. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools is an important step in efforts to improve the quality and access to education for santri in Indonesia. Through this regulation, the government not only recognizes the existence of Islamic boarding schools as an integral part of the national education system, but also provides a clear legal basis for the management and implementation of education in Islamic boarding schools.

The implementation of this law has had a significant impact on the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools, especially through emphasis on accreditation, relevant curriculum, and training for educators. With accreditation, Islamic boarding schools are encouraged to meet established educational standards, so as to improve the quality of education offered to students. Apart from that, integration between the religious and general curriculum is the main focus which allows students to receive education that is holistic and relevant to current developments.

However, challenges in implementing this law remain. There are still many Islamic boarding schools, especially in remote areas, that have difficulty understanding and fulfilling accreditation requirements. Therefore, more intensive outreach and support from the government and related institutions is very necessary. Increasing transparency in Islamic boarding school management is also the key to building public trust and ensuring accountability in education management.

The independence of Islamic boarding school administration, which is guaranteed by this law, provides the opportunity for Islamic boarding schools to manage their education in accordance with their respective character and vision. However, this independence must be balanced with accountability and transparency, so that Islamic boarding schools can be accountable for the quality of the education they offer to the community. Government support in the form of adequate regulations is also very important to maintain the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools without reducing their independence.

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