

Research Article

“Namanya juga Pesantren”: A Photovoice Study about Self-adjustment of Students in Islamic Boarding School

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ORCIDNurul Inayah Putri Rusli: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2904-9786>**Abstract.**

Pondok Pesantren (PP) or Islamic boarding school is a popular religious educational institution in Indonesia. The characteristic of PP required students to live in a boarding school, this encouraged students to be able to adapt to the differences and limitations of PP. This study aims to find out how students adapt to PP. The participants are four female students in grade 2 of a PP junior high school in the city of Ternate, North Maluku. The method used in this study is photovoice and analyzed using thematic analysis with Nvivo 12 Pro software. Four themes of adjustment emerged from the findings are as follows: new habits, religious habits, facing and resolving challenges, and relationships.

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1. Introduction

Students at the junior high school level who have just entered the Islamic boarding school (Pondok Pesantren or PP) environment will face this challenge along with the changes that exist within themselves. The obligation of students to stay in PP during their education requires sufficient courage because they have to leave home [1]. While the students are in PP, they must live simply and independently [2]. A student's adjustment to an Islamic boarding school can determine the success of the educational process they receive [3] and how they face their plans for the future [4].

In previous research by Pranoto et al [5] highlighted the difficulties experienced by students when entering Islamic boarding schools and how the school handled them, but did not explain clearly how the students tried to deal with the challenges or difficulties they had. Meanwhile, in Hasneli et al.'s [6] research, students' self-adjustment was only highlighted through the eyes of teachers and caregivers and the assessment of

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the extent to which students had been able to adapt was also based on the views and understanding of the teachers. Other research by Wahyuni & Barus [7], which is quantitative research, can only show differences in adjustment abilities based on the gender of students without explaining the reasons why these differences occur. We hope that the shortcomings in terms of views and stories from the students who are the main actors in their adjustment process can be filled through this research.

In this study, researcher used photovoice method in hope it will not only highlight students' personal views but also provide space for students to share stories of their adjustment process.

2. Method

This research was conducted in the city of Ternate, North Maluku province, Indonesia. The city of Ternate, as the center of economic movement, is the island with the highest population concentration when compared to other cities and islands in North Maluku [8]. The city of Ternate has a religious city program which pushed and carried out based on support from the sultanate of Ternate, this decision departs from Ternate's history with the Islamic religion which influences beliefs, culture, to the traditional buildings of the city of Ternate [9].

2.1. Research design and Participants

This research is a qualitative research using the photovoice method. This research was conducted at a junior high school (SMP) which is one of the Islamic boarding schools (PP) in the city of Ternate. There were four students who participated in this study who took part in the research stages from start to finish and the names of the four participants had been changed by the researchers to protect the confidentiality of participant data. Interviews were conducted four to five-times with an average total duration of each participant is 1 hour 48 minutes. Participants were recruited with the help of pesantren's teachers and met the following criteria: (a) the individual is a female student, (b) comes from outside the island of Ternate, (c) is in grade 2 SMP, and (d) is actively studying and living in a boarding school environment. Table 1 shows the demographic data of the participants.

TABLE 1: Participant demographic data.

Name	Age	Gender	Origin
Nana	13	P	Morotai
Zafrah	13	P	Bacan
Ana	14	P	Tidore
Sana	13	P	Bacan

2.2. Research Stages

This research was conducted when the PJJ (distance learning) policy had been withdrawal & Indonesian students could return to face-to-face learning. The study was conducted from July to September 2022. Participants were recruited using a purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling technique with certain considerations [10].

The researcher acquainted with the participants for approximately two weeks before starting to explain the photovoice method and the research process. The researcher asked for the willingness of the participants by signing personal informed consent and the signature of the student's guardian. The participants were each lent a cell phone with a camera by the researcher whose use was strictly monitored by the caregiver and the teachers so that it was used only for research purposes. The instructions given by the researcher to the participants were to photograph anything that the participants thought could describe their adjustment. Researchers have also explained the ethics of asking permission if participants want to involve other people in their photos. The researcher and participants then agreed on a time to take photos of participants for two weeks and for two weeks participants were free to take photos according to the instructions.

The five best photos that had been taken for approximately two weeks were then selected based on the participants' decisions. A discussion process was carried out between participants and researchers for each photo with the main question "*Why did you take this photo?*" which is based on the SHOWeD technique [11] or an interview technique with five questions based on photos. Five interviews were conducted for Nana & Zafrah, four times for Ana & once for Sana. Interviews were carried out after the photo taking and follow-up interviews & member-checking stages, but this could only be done with the three participants, Nana, Zafrah and Ana. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in Ternate language and dialect and recorded by the researcher. Researchers also carried out member-checking on the three participants who could still be contacted, namely, Nana, Zafrah, & Ana.

2.3. Analysis

Researchers conducted a thematic analysis with the help of Nvivo 12 Pro software. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across data sets. By focusing on meaning across data sets, thematic analysis allows researchers to see and understand collective or shared meanings and experiences [12]. Thematic analysis is then carried out by research by (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial code, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, (6) and generating reports [13]. The resulting themes are the result of discussions between researchers and supervisors.

3. Result and Discussion

The results of the thematic analysis produced four themes, namely, (1) New Habits, (2) Religious Habits, (3) Facing and Resolving Challenges, and (4) Relationships. The following is an explanation of four themes.

TABLE 2:

Themes	Sub-themes
New Habits	-Following the rule -Adapting with limitation -Daily schedules
Religious Habits	-Do the mandatory activities -Increasing religious activities -Knowing and understanding Al-Qur'an
Facing and Solving Challenges	-Pay attention to other people's circumstances - Coping mechanism -Dealing with the feeling of longing for parents
Relation	-Knowing the differences personality of peers - Helping each others -Building a relationship of trust with caregivers and teachers

3.0.1. New Habits

New habits are a process of adjustment by behaving, behaving, or participating in activities repeatedly. Participants as a santri when entering the life of Islamic boarding schools (PP) must be able to adapt to the situations and conditions that exist in Islamic boarding schools. This self-adjustment process is passed by behaving, behaving, or participating in activities that are carried out repeatedly which then become a new habit for the participants. The participants follow and carry out the set rules and obligations, such as cleaning activities that must be carried out by every santri.

”Yes, cleaning, every evening, when miss comes, after the Asr prayer, and before the halaqah, all students must take part in cleanliness”[?] (Zafrah, WS-Z, 8/22/22, 297-298)



Figure 1: Photo showing the students doing cleaning activities, taken by Nana.

There is a cleaning schedule that has been set by the pesantren management for each student. Cleaning activities are carried out every day, especially in the afternoon after performing the Asr prayer together. Cleaning activities are carried out jointly by both junior high school students and high school level students.



Figure 2: Photo showing the students waiting for their turns, taken by Ana.

Another habit that became new to the participants was the habit of queuing. The large number of students makes the students have to be patient waiting for their turn.

"Hmm.. If it's like queuing.. Queuing for wirid, cleaning, all queuing" [?](Nana, WFL-N3, 1/04/23, 7)

The queue they usually do is related to bathroom facilities. The number of bathrooms that are not sufficient for the number of students living there, and water that is only available at certain times is one of the challenges faced by the students. This limited water then becomes a common thing because it is considered a normal experience faced by students in Islamic boarding schools.

"We live here, with limitations anyway, that's why its called a pesantren"[?](Zafrah, WS-Z, 8/22/22, 232-235)

Another habit that is different from the habits carried out by the participants before is following the rules for sleeping and waking up. The students must complete their activities at night before going to bed and wake up at dawn to pray and recite the Qur'an. This was something new that participants encountered at PP because before entering the school they did not have these rules at home.

"... at home usually I wake up at the dawn for Subuh prayer and still can sleep after praying, but at pesantren, you can only sleep after for five minutes." [?](Zafrah, WS-Z2, 25/03/23, 49-50)

The daily schedule that includes when to wake up-sleep and what activities to do everyday is are part of PP rules must be carried out by the students because those who violate the rules will be given penalty points depending on what violation they have committed. For minor violations such as being late for prayers, not carrying out cleaning duties properly, or not wearing an appropriate headscarf, points will be given, which will then be collected once a week to decide what type of punishment the teachers will give to students who violate them.

"Yes, just go along with it, just follow the rules, so that you don't get punished, Zafrah did cry when first enter pesantren but not for long, no, how, no, not like, too much, because there was a friend Zafrah had in the past who has moved away now, she won't listen to ustadzah (teachers), got angry, kept crying and screaming, so she moved away, because she could not survive in here"[?] (Zafrah, WS-Z, 22/08/22, 374-377)

Following and following the rules, mandatory activities, and accepting the limitations of PP are forms of adjustment strategies carried out by the participants which then produce new habits that they had not done before entering PP.

3.0.2. Religious Habits

Religion Habits is a process of adjustment by doing activities religious repeatedly. Santri living in PP, as expected, must participate in all religious activities. This religious activity is in the form of five daily prayers together, halaqah, attending evening classes related to religious knowledge, and other activities. These activities are carried out every day and become part of the participants' lives.

"There are more religious learning activities here, such as fiqh, Arabic, adab, imla' as well, so there are a lot of them, but before entering the boarding school, all that was required was reciting the Qu'ran, if you were here, you would memorize the Qur'an as well" [?(Ana, WFL-A3, 3/04/23, 121-123)



Figure 3: Photo of the students carrying out the halaqah activity, taken by Sana.

Halaqah is a mandatory activity that is carried out by students together with murobbior tutor. This activity is carried out in groups, that is, the students form groups of at least five students based on directions from the teachers and recite and memorize verses of the Al-Qur'an with the murabbi. Halaqah is held twice a day, in the morning before school hours and in the afternoon after cleaning activities are carried out.

Apart from halaqah activities, other religious activities are also mandatory in PP, such as five daily prayers, sunnah prayers, evening prayers, and so on. These things can become new things for students's experience before it become their habits in the future.

"... activities such as reading the Qur'an every day, memorizing it, studying at night, and praying together, the Lail prayer too, every day is something new for me" [?](Nana, WS-N2, 24/03/23, 37-38)

Participants admitted that their prayer activities had increased since PP because they had to pray on time and perform sunnah prayers such as the Lail prayer, the Tahajjud prayer, which was performed at 3 in the morning and this was a challenge for participants who before entering the Islamic boarding school had never performed these prayers and had to get used to it. self. The participants, who before entering PP were not used to reading the Qur'an and other religious activities, also later became accustomed to it and made these religious activities part of their daily routine.

3.0.3. Facing and Solving Challenges

Facing and Resolving Challenges is a process of adjustment by responding to a problem with the aim of solving it. In the process of adjustment, participants cannot be separated from obstacles and challenges. In order to be able to carry out their daily activities, participants must be able to face and resolve these challenges. These challenges come from daily life in Islamic boarding schools which require participants to interact and try to establish relationships among fellow students.

"Hmm, when I get together with friends, I'm afraid I said wrong words that can make them feel offended"[?](Zafrah, WFL-Z3, 2/03/23, 332)

The statement above reveals how participants must consider words when interacting with other students to avoid misunderstandings that offend other students.

"When you enter PP, at first you don't get used to it, but over time you get used to it because you have to, we are no longer alone in the bedroom, there are other people, there are other friends, so we can't act as we please, we have to consider other people, like, what, um, behave well, have good attitude, especially with older students, ustadzah, and our friends"[?] (Nana, WS-N2, 03/24/23, 50-52)

In PP one bedroom can accommodate 15-20ish of students depending on the size of the room. Santri from the SMP and MA/SMA (high school) levels join together with caregivers in one room. The caregiver is an alumnus of the santri who served after graduating from the MA level from the same pesantren. This situation encourages students to live in harmony and establish good relationships with fellow students in order to avoid problems. However, differences in attitudes and behavior of each santri can still give rise to differences of opinion between one another.



Figure 4: Photo shows one of the students' bedrooms by Nana.

"How about it, you see, like when someone their hangshheadscarf and then it falls to the floor, if you see that, you should help lift it up, but instead they leave it or even sweep it or throw it out" [?](Nana, WS-N, 22/08/22, 365-367)

Reprimanding is one of the actions taken by participants when they see things they don't like or things that are not in accordance with the rules being carried out by other students. However, participants did not always choose to respond to the behavior of other students verbally, some responded by ignoring it because it would make the other students stop bothering the participants. But for Ana, she chose to think positively, trying to understand the diverse attitudes of her friends and believing that they needed each other because they lived in the boarding school together.

"Ana thinks positively because previously Ana often overthought, thought negatively (to friends), because she was an introvert (alone) for a long time, over time she realized that we need each other here, so maybe Ana needs a friend, a friend needs Ana, so that's it, greet each other and call each other like that "[?] (Ana, WMC-A4, 3/04/23, 242-244)

Another challenge that participants have to face when entering PP is being separated from their parents. Paarticipants must be able to live away from home and parents. This is a challenge that participants have faced since entering PP.



Figure 5: Photo of the 11th verse of Surah Ar-Ra'd, taken by Nana.

”It’s difficult (separating from her parents) but because maybe Ana is still new, Ana feels she still needs mom’s guidance, so mom tries to visit every day” [?](Ana, WFL-A3, 3/04/23, 409-410)

The Al-Qur’an for the participants has become a source of solutions and a source of calm, as Nana expressed below:

”In eleventh ayat (Al-Qur’an verse) there is an explanation that Allah SWT will not change the condition of a people until they change the situation of themselves, so, if we want to connect it with adaptation, Nana, in PP here it is everything is limited, mm, far from parents too, so Nana’s condition or situation here is depends on Nana, how Nana makes Nana comfortable with what we have here”[?] (Nana, WS-N, 08/23/22, 560-564)

The statement above shows one of the participants who read the meaning of surahs or verses of the Qur’an to understand and apply it to his life. Understanding the meaning or message of the verses of the Qur’an which are then connected to the participant’s condition can help participants respond positively to challenges. The four

participants also admitted that reading the Qur'an not only gave them rewards but also calmed them down, cleared their minds, and believed it could make their future plans easier.

Relation

The theme of Relation or relationship is the process of adjustment by interacting and establishing relationships with the people around the participants. One of the uniqueness of attending a boarding school is the obligation of the students to live together in PP. This not only allows the students to live side by side with other students, but also lives with the caregivers and teachers of the pesantren. The relationship between the students and adults in the pesantren is not only unidirectional but also reciprocal, which means that it is not only the students who respond but also the response from the adults, this then forms the relationship between the two.



Figure 6: The photo shows the students gathering to read the Qur'an, by Zafrah.

"When you were friends in elementary school, I think not too many different people, but in here, there are more diversity, some are uh, grumpy, some are friendly, some are introverted, and so on" [?(Ana, WS-A2,03/25/23, 33-34)

The statement above shows the participant Ana who compared the differences in the characteristics of her friends before entering the PP or still at the elementary school and when she had entered PP and recognized the differences in the characteristics of her friends. The difference in these traits made Ana's friendship patterns even more

interesting for her and helped her to know more about her friends in living together in Islamic boarding school.

Participants share rooms with other students, praying together and live their daily lives together. This gives birth to bonds of friendship between students to support and share the joys and sorrows as fellow students. Living side by side encourages participants to get to know each other among the students, understand each other's characteristics, and filter out which students have similarities and differences. These similarities and differences determine the extent and how close the friendship between participants and other students is. This assessment is important to produce good interactions that meet participant expectations.

Understanding the differences also makes it easier for participants to ask for help. Participants have realized that living in PP requires help or assistance from other people, estimating how they will respond when they need someone's help is an important strategy for participants.



Figure 7: Photo shows students helping each other to lift cupboard, taken by Ana.

The attitude of mutual cooperation can be said to be one of the cultures in Islamic boarding schools. In photo 7, students can be seen lifting the cupboard with the help of other students, this shows that students often work together to complete a task or

goal. This mutual cooperation attitude is also one of the goals of learning in Islamic boarding schools, students are not only taught to be able to take care of themselves or become independent, but are also encouraged to work together to solve a challenge.

"Yes, In here, we are all far from home, far from our parents, things are also limited, there are lots of activities, quite a lot, we can't go out, there are rules, so we all have to be able to get along with each other, get to know each other, help each other, because we all share the same situation, that's how it is here" [?](Ana, WS-A, 04/09/22, 183-186)

Apart from interacting with other students, participants also have to interact with their caregivers and teachers. The older caregiver who has the task of supervising and guiding the students in their daily lives makes interactions between the two occur periodically, especially because caregiver sleeps and lives the same as the students, unlike the teachers who have houses around school area. However, even though the teachers are not in the same room as the students, PP's teachers still maintain close relationships with the students through daily interactions.

4. Discussion

This research found four theme of self-adjustment of students entering Islamic boarding schools. Four this themes includes a set of decisions and actions that have been taken by fourth participants during their stay at the pesantren. The participants were in the second grade of junior high school, so these participants had adjusted to PP since the first grade or approximately one year. The transition from elementary school to dormitory-based junior high school or PP is a challenge faced by the participants. Students who enter a boarding school must face these changes with the boarding situation of having to be separated from their parents, following rules and schedules, as well as the urge to discipline themselves [14], in addition to gender, cultural background, age, and friendship patterns will also influence the conditions of students in boarding schools [15]. These students must go through all of this to get used to it in order to maximize their school experience.

In the first theme, New Habits, talks about the routines carried out by the participants. This routine is based on the obligatory activities of the students, such as cleaning activities, worship together, wake-up time, and so on. Behaghel et al [16] explained that individuals who enter boarding-based schools have daily routines that can boost academic and social abilities, especially for individuals who have spent the first two years in boarding schools. The four participants in this study have realized that as long as they live in the pesantren, they must be able to follow the rules set in order to avoid

consequences or punishment. Following the existing rules was acknowledged by one of the participants is not difficult.

The four participants realized that during their stay at PP, they had to be able to follow the rules set in order to avoid consequences or punishment. One of the participants admitted that following the existing rules was not difficult. Carrying out activities and avoiding prohibitions according to the rules becomes easy as long as individuals are able to control themselves [17]. Controlling oneself or acting according to one's wishes is part of a good adjustment strategy because consistently choosing to behave in a certain way can give birth to habits that are in line with goals [18], which in this context are PP rules.

Apart from following the rules, participants must also be able to adapt to limited facilities and the culture of queuing. The limitations of facilities seen in this study were limited water which meant that participants had to try to save water and queue when bathing. Efendi & Wahyudi [19] explained that limited water and queuing for baths can be a source of discomfort for students in PP. On the other hand, according to Hidayati & Pusari [20], although the urge to queue can be a challenge for an individual, if you get used to it it will build time management skills, self-control, respect for the rights of others, discipline, improving social skills, and honesty. An individual's success in adapting to the new things they face can not only predict individual success academically but also socially, especially in relationships between peers [21].

Activities that are routine for participants in PP are religious activities. Praying and learning activities in PP are the core of Islamic boarding school learning. These activities take the form of five daily congregational prayers, Lail prayers, halaqah, and other activities that create PP culture. Religious activities directed and supervised by teachers are a form of teaching Islamic values which are not only carried out in the classroom, through books, but also in daily activities in the lives of the students, so that the students' self and identity cannot be separated from Islamic teachings [22]. As in halaqah activities, students under Murabbi's (the reciting Al-Qur'an's teachers) teachings not only memorize the verses of the Qur'an but can also understand the meaning, significance and how to practice them in everyday life. This religious routine not only helps form an identity as a santri but also helps how he faces new situations. Wortmann & Park [23] found that religious beliefs and activities can help individuals face challenging situations. Khamida et al [24] explained that religious routines will encourage understanding, belief and love for God which will influence individual satisfaction with the environment and hopes in a positive direction. This feeling of satisfaction is born from belief in God's power and the urge to surrender to Him. Apart

from that, Zakariyah et al [25] explained that the way to understand Islamic values is divided into two, namely, beliefs or creeds and morals. Participants in this study showed how they believe Islamic teachings are based on a surah or verse to be applied in everyday life and build social relationships and look after and help each other.

In the adjustment process, participants must be able to face and resolve obstacles and challenges in PP. Participants must have certain strategies that can help them reduce conflict and achieve the desired goals. Participants can use several coping techniques at once to solve their problems [26]. In this research, participants faced differences in the characteristics and behavior of other students and applied what they learned and believed as a solution. Nicolaisen & Thorsen [27] explain that young individuals tend to take actions that are in harmony with their friends in order to have close friendships, and according to Duell & Steinberg [28] by establishing communication, individuals can recognize the character of their friends which can then help them. determine the quality of good friendships. Participants who have interacted with their friends since PP have highlighted the differences in the characteristics of their friends which then help them in dealing with these friends and living their daily lives together.

In terms of age, the participants in this study were in their teenage years, namely, 10-24 years [29,30]. Individuals at this age entering a boarding school or Islamic boarding school will encounter challenges in separating themselves from their parents, home, or the environment where they were raised [31], anxiety resulting from this separation can affect academic performance [32] as well as adjustment. the individual's self [33]. Mwangi & Mbogo [34] said that on average the reason an individual enters a boarding school is because of parental encouragement, parents see boarding schools as a solution for disciplined and independent education for their children, but in reality boarding schools can have both positive and negative effects [31]. Negative effects such as decreased self-confidence, academic performance, and the emergence of trauma can be suffered by individuals who enter boarding schools [35]. According to Hodges et al [14], school facilities, the ability and cooperation between school staff, the relationship between school staff and students, as well as the relationship between school staff and students and parents can help prevent these negative effects.

In the results of this research, participants believed that by praying and reading the Koran, participants could calm themselves, clear their minds, and their plans would run smoothly, this was part of the religious coping inherent in the participants as students. Carrying out religious activities in the face of stressful situations can produce more stable personality traits and a tendency to have hope or a positive outlook [36]. Another coping strategy seen in this research is how to respond to the behavior of

other students. Participants responded to the behavior of other students based on the experiences they had had since entering the Islamic boarding school. Participants chose to resolve these challenges in a way that minimized conflict by not putting pressure on themselves. This strategy is the result of cognitive development while participants live and interact with their environment and can be said to be a positive coping strategy [37,38].

Living at PP encourages participants to build and maintain relationships between fellow students and with adults in the Islamic boarding school environment. Cocorada & Mihalascu [39] found that teenagers who actively seek social support in adjusting to their environment is a form of good adjustment. Social support from peers, older siblings, and adults in the participant's surrounding environment, helps participants navigate their daily life at the Islamic boarding school. Establishing friendships and having several close friends can make it easier for individuals to adapt [40], Hargreaves et al [41] even found that friendships can be the only thing teenagers like at school. Apart from friendship relationships, individuals in boarding-based schools also develop relationships with teachers and staff or the boarding house. These relationships can become the social support that individuals need in their daily lives and have a role in influencing a good and healthy quality of life in the hostel [42]. The quality of the relationship between students and dormitory administrators can influence an individual's emotional condition [43], social status [44], self-regulation ability [45,46], satisfaction and comfort in the classroom [47–49]

Apart from the relationship between the students and the teachers, the relationship that is also important is the relationship between the parents and the students. Family involvement can encourage a student to enjoy school life more [50] and increase student abilities and success in both academic and non-academic areas [51,52]. Forms of support from teachers, seniors and parents are important factors for female students to adapt, as explained.

5. Conclusion

Participants who have entered the second grade of junior high school, have learned and recognized how they navigate their life in Islamic boarding schools. Based on this research, there are four themes or ways in which the participants adapt themselves, namely by creating new habits, religious habits, facing and solving challenges, establishing relationships not only with friends, but also caregivers, teachers, and their families.

This research also found that the way participants adapt is by paying attention to other people's conditions. Participants make decisions by assessing the surrounding circumstances, especially the circumstances of the people around them, such as peers. Participants also showed various coping mechanisms, there were participants who reprimanded or ignored students who behaved unpleasantly, there were also participants who encouraged themselves to think positively when establishing relationships with fellow students as an effort to build good friendships. Apart from that, in friendship relationships, participants recognize the different characteristics of other students as a way of understanding each other.

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