



Improving Life Skills in Sewing for the Independence of Female Students at the Al-Khoirot Gondanglegi Islamic Boarding School – Malang

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Abstract

Life skills are needed to develop independence, creativity, and innovation in the future. The research on the development of sewing skills at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang Girls' Islamic Boarding School aims to describe the concept of developing sewing life skills learning at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang Girls' Islamic boarding school, identify the stages of developing sewing skills learning, and analyze the factors that influence success or failure at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang girls' Islamic boarding school in developing sewing skills learning. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data were collected using interviews, observation, and documentation techniques. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Hubman analysis technique, which consists of data reduction, data display, and verification stages. The results of this study show the development process through the stages of introducing sewing learning media, understanding the basics of sewing safety, teaching basic techniques, reading fabric patterns and making sewing patterns, simple sewing exercises, introducing sewing terms and procedures, introducing creative design, mass production skills, business management training, collaboration with industry, marketing and sales programs. In the final evaluation, female students were able to produce independently sewn products that were worthy of sale, such as simple clothes, games, buns, and teacher uniforms. This study concluded that project-based sewing training is an effective method for developing life skills and increasing the independence of female students. Recommendations for developing product designs, marketing strategies, and partnerships with various parties are strategic steps to improve the quality and competitiveness of female students' work. In addition, personal branding and the use of social media, as well as participation in local exhibitions, are compelling opportunities to expand marketing reach and support the development of female students' potential in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Life Skill, Sewing, Santriwati, Independence

Introduction

As an Islamic educational institution that is rooted in tradition, Islamic boarding schools have a crucial role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. However, in the midst of the rapid flow of globalization and the dynamics of social change, Islamic boarding schools are required to adapt and innovate in order to remain relevant. With an ever-evolving approach, Islamic boarding schools need to ensure that students not only gain a strong understanding of Islam. However, they are also equipped with appropriate skills to face the challenges of modern life (Gustriani & Kholis, 2024). Rofiq (2005) stated that Islamic boarding schools are traditional Islamic educational institutions that teach Islamic teachings with a focus on the formation of religious morals for everyday life, which are applied in the social context of society (Rusydi, 2016).

Islamic boarding schools that have so far focused on Islamic education need to strengthen vocational skills for students in order to face future challenges. In addition to being educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools also play a role in preaching and community empowerment. Law No. 18 of 2019 is present as a form of government recognition and support,

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ensuring the independence of Islamic boarding schools, the diversity of their models, and their role in the national education system (Ghofarrozin & Janah, 2019).

One significant innovative step is to integrate life skills learning into the Islamic boarding school curriculum. Life skills include various practical abilities and knowledge that are crucial to face the dynamics of everyday life. The development of a creative economy in Islamic boarding schools is important for forming students with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Life skills learning is carried out with various learning methods implemented both as intracurricular and extracurricular, one of which is sewing skills for female students. Classroom learning can be designed so that students are active in each stage so that hard skills and soft skills develop in an integrated manner with the 3P principle (Provision, Protection, and Participation). This process can be aligned with the exploration, elaboration, and confirmation methods commonly used in schools (Muhdi et al., 2012).

Given the above problems, innovation in Islamic boarding school education is a necessity. Learning life skills is not just following trends but rather an effort to improve the quality of Islamic boarding school education to be more relevant, effective, and able to produce quality graduates. Ensuring students have life skills in various fields is a need that must be met (Lestari, 2017).

Integrating life skills into the Islamic boarding school curriculum is an innovative step to equip students with relevant practical skills. This approach not only builds independence but also encourages them to contribute positively to society while remaining in line with Islamic values (Gustriani & Kholis, 2024, p. 291).

Islamic boarding schools have different experiences in managing businesses, from those just starting to those reaching trillions in turnover. However, the common challenges faced are the management of Human Resources (HR) and capital (Ryandono, 2018). Open, wise, and adaptive reforms are important to improve the quality of Islamic boarding schools, improve their image, and benefit Islamic boarding schools and society. Currently, Islamic boarding schools develop the entrepreneurial skills of students in preparation for competing in society by producing goods and providing services (Firmansyah et al., 2020).

Murtadlo (2021) stated that the development of economic enterprises in Islamic boarding schools faces several challenges, such as the assumption that business interferes with the focus of education, the unclear role of management, low awareness of economic independence among students, irresponsible use of government assistance, and difficulty in finding markets (Mohsen et al., 2022, p. 264).

One of the Islamic boarding schools that develops life skills and sewing learning is the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang female Islamic boarding school. The caretakers of the Islamic boarding school have high expectations for students to learn life skills in sewing. These skills will not only be practical provisions for economic independence but also as a medium for character development, such as discipline, independence, and innovation. Through sewing skills, students are expected to be able to create valuable business opportunities, both for themselves and for society. In addition, these skills are also expected to encourage students to actively contribute to community life while still upholding Islamic values and applying the principle of usefulness that is in line with the teachings of the Islamic boarding school. Islamic

boarding schools play a role as drivers and catalysts in empowering human resources and development, including in the economic sector (Khairuddin & Fitri, 2017).

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Literature review

Previous research that is relevant to the author's research is a study conducted by Intan Rahmadhani Fitri and Isna Rahmawati on "Empowerment of Santri through Sewing Course Program at Al-Bayan Rangkasbitung Islamic Boarding School." The purpose of this study was to determine the process and results of empowering santri through the sewing course program at Al-Bayan Rangkasbitung Islamic Boarding School (Fitri & Rahmawati, 2023).

The second study, as a reference, was conducted by Zainal Abidin on "Implementation of Life Skill Education at Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School." This study is based on the development of globalization and the advancement of science and technology; Islamic boarding schools are required to improve their quality, not only in religious aspects but also in intellectual and life skills. Considering that not all graduates of Islamic boarding schools will work in the field of religion, the development of other skills is important. This study aims to explore the implementation of life skill education at Darussalam Blokagung Tegalsari Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School. Using a qualitative approach with observation, interview, and documentation methods, the results of the study indicate that life skill education is implemented in the form of voluntary extracurricular activities, depending on the personal awareness of the students to follow them (Abidin, 2014).

In contrast to the two researchers above, in this study, the author focuses on the results of the development of life skills learning (life skills) sewing in the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang girls' Islamic boarding school. The study has the following aims and objectives: 1) Describe the concept of developing life skills learning (life skills) sewing at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang girls' Islamic boarding school. 2) Identify the stages of developing life skills learning (life skills) sewing at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang girls' Islamic boarding school. 3) Analyze the factors that influence success or failure at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang girls' Islamic boarding school in developing life skills learning (life skills) sewing.

Research method

This research on the development of sewing life skills began with observations in December 2024. Furthermore, the researcher conducted interviews with the informants. This research was conducted at the Al Khoirot Islamic Boarding School for Girls located on Jl. KH.

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Suhut Zayati Karangsono Pagelaran Malang in the same month. Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang Islamic Boarding School for Girls was chosen as the subject of the research because it implemented the development of sewing life skills learning.

This research uses a qualitative method with descriptive analysis and a case study approach because the researcher wants to describe the actual conditions of the research subjects. According to Walidin et al. (2015: 77), Qualitative research aims to understand human or social phenomena in depth by describing the views of informants in a natural and comprehensive context (Fadli, 2021). The data in this study are divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from interviews with one caretaker of the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang female Islamic boarding school, one sewing teacher, and two female students of the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang female Islamic boarding school. The purposive sampling interview technique was used by the researcher, considering that the informants had sufficient information so that they could answer the researcher's questions.

Secondary data was in the form of observation results and documentation of activities. In the observation activity, the researcher observed every activity carried out by the female students. The documentation used was in the form of the results of the female students' work, photos of activities and the results of the female students' work, and the sewing teacher's notes. The data analysis process was carried out through certain stages, one of which was data reduction. Data reduction refers to the activity of summarizing, selecting important information, focusing attention on aspects that are considered relevant, and identifying themes and patterns in the data. When in the field, researchers usually collect a large amount of data. The more data collected, the easier it is for researchers to get an overview of the research results.

Miles et al. (2018) explained that through the data reduction process, researchers could compile a global, specific, or mixed picture and gain a specific understanding of the research object. Next, the summarized data will be grouped into specific categories according to the research objectives. To ensure accuracy and relevance in the data reduction process, researchers can consult with colleagues or experts who have competence in related fields. Researchers compile data in narrative form to facilitate understanding of the phenomena that occur. Through this data presentation, researchers can describe information in a more structured way, thus allowing planning of the following steps based on the understanding that has been obtained (Saleh, 2017).

The next stage is verification, which includes drawing conclusions and validating them. Initial conclusions are temporary and can develop along with the increasing data collected by researchers in the field. Suppose the initial conclusions are supported by valid and consistent evidence during the additional data collection process. In that case, the conclusions produced can be considered credible and can be scientifically accounted for (Saleh, 2017).

Result and Discussion

The implementation of life skills learning development in sewing at the Al Khoirot Putri Islamic Boarding School is one of the educational innovations developed to support the independence of female students after graduating from boarding school. The selection of sewing skills to develop the skills of female students at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang

Putri Islamic Boarding School is based on important considerations for the progress of female students' output. Life skills education equips students with fundamental values and skills to be ready to face real life and contribute to society (Yuliwulandana, 2015).

The primary consideration is sewing as a practical skill that is useful for daily needs and business opportunities. This skill can provide financial independence for female students after graduation and enable them to create jobs for others (Hidayati et al., 2019).

Second, sewing is in line with the principle of empowerment in Islamic boarding schools, which not only aims to equip female students with religious knowledge but also equip female students with applicable life skills. Thus, female students can contribute to their families and communities, create products that have sales value, and open up creative business opportunities that are based on Islamic values. The knowledge and skills acquired by female students in Islamic boarding schools can be important capital in making positive contributions to their families and communities. One of them is creating products that have sales value and opening up creative business opportunities. From an Islamic perspective, skills such as sewing, making crafts, or other productive activities are highly recommended because they can reduce economic dependence and increase independence.

Third, the selection of sewing skills also takes into account the potential and needs of the environment around the Islamic boarding school. By sewing, the Muslim clothing market can be met with a modern feel, making school uniforms and textile products. Sewing skills are seen as a strategic innovation useful for developing discipline, precision, patience, creativity, and innovation to support the future of female students in society.

The development of sewing life skills by sewing teachers at the Al Khoirot Putri Islamic Boarding School is carried out through several stages. The introduction to sewing activities begins with activities 1) Introduction to sewing learning media, such as sewing machine parts, needles, types of threads, fabric scissors, sewing chalk, various types of fabric, etc. 2) Understanding the basics of sewing safety, namely by providing ways and tricks for using sewing machines safely, to reduce the risk of work accidents. 3) Teaching basic sewing techniques, such as sewing by hand (straight stitches, basting stitches, simple embroidery stitches) and operating a sewing machine. 4) Reading fabric patterns and making sewing patterns. This is, of course, equipped with the ability to measure sewing objects and understand the fabric patterns that will be cut and sewn. 5) Simple sewing exercises. 6) Introduction to sewing terms and procedures, such as cutting, hemming, fitting, and pressing. As well as an introduction to the sewing process, starting from measuring, pattern making, cutting, sewing, and finishing processes. 7) Introduction to creative design. The development of simple designs that have been mastered, in the next stage, female students can develop designs according to their imagination and creativity. 8) Mass production skills. It is done in order to train female students to be able to complete work in large quantities according to consumer demand. 9) Business management training is provided so that female students know how to market products, calculate production costs, etc. 10) Collaboration with Industry. Female students learn directly from professionals who have previously been successful in the sewing field. 11) Marketing and sales programs. The development of digitalization must also be balanced with online marketing capabilities through various digital platforms, such as Facebook, TikTok, Shopee, etc. Promotion through social media platforms has become one of the marketing strategies that has been proven to have a high level of effectiveness (Setyawan et al., 2020).

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Sewing skills have great potential as a source of economic capital for female students, providing financial independence and opening up entrepreneurial opportunities. By utilizing this expertise, female students can reduce economic dependence, strengthen the family economy, and develop businesses through the use of technology and e-commerce, which in turn can encourage women's economic empowerment in Islamic boarding schools. According to Kasmir (2006:20), an entrepreneurial spirit is an independent attitude in seeking income through business or creativity. Developing an entrepreneurial spirit is important so that an entrepreneur can think creatively and innovatively to achieve his goals ((Afifurohim & Sembodo, 2023)

The development of sewing skills at the Al Khoirot Putri Islamic Boarding School is applied in intracurricular learning, which has been implemented since the 2021 academic year and has been attended by approximately 600 female students. The number of students taking sewing classes in the 2024/2025 academic year is listed in the following table:

Table 1. Table of the number of students taking sewing classes in the 2024/2025 academic year

No	Class	Number of Classes	Student / Class	Number of Students
1	IPA	3	35	105
2	AGAMA	3	35	105
TOTAL				210

Based on the research results, of the 210 female students who participated in sewing skills development activities in the 2024/2025 academic year, there were 22 female students, or 10% of female students, who were already at the stage of being able to apply sewing, where female students at this stage could sew with patterns that were still very simple. A total of 178 female students, or 80.90% of female students, were at the stage of being able or capable of applying sewing. At this stage, female students were able to make more complicated sewing patterns, such as simple shirts or dresses for children. Meanwhile, as many as 20 female students, or 9.09% of female students, were already at the advanced stage in developing sewing skills. At this stage, female students were able to make their patterns with their imagination and could apply them to their sewing models. The results of sewing at this stage include making robes with various contemporary styles, teacher jackets, etc. Developing sewing skills at the Al Khoirot Putri Islamic Boarding School is successful in providing sewing life skills for female students. This is proven by the development results that show achievements above 89% of all female students.

According to Manfred Open and Wolfgang Karcher (1988), Islamic boarding schools play an important role in community development through four main things. First, freeing and making people aware of social pressures such as poverty. Second, it encourages participation and independence by helping them identify problems and find solutions. Third, educating and creating knowledge. Fourth, being a pioneer in solving various social problems (Bakhri, 2019).

In the implementation of life skills development learning (life skills) sewing by sewing teachers at the Al Khoirot Putri Islamic Boarding School, Mrs. Siti Suliha, for 2 years accompanying female students, several results of female students' sewing work can be seen.

The results of female students' sewing at the advanced stage can be seen from the sewing results below:



Picture 1. Gamis ordered by parents



Picture 2. Sewing results made into teacher uniforms



Figure 3. Sewing results for a jacket for a teacher's uniform



Figure 4. The result of sewing a children's skirt with a simple pattern.



Figure 5. The results of sewing a bun from elementary school students

The chances of success or failure of the implementation of sewing skills development for female students cannot be separated from the challenges and obstacles faced during the process of developing sewing life skills by sewing teachers at the Al Khoirot Putri Islamic Boarding School, including limited sewing equipment such as sewing machines, overlock machines and raw materials for sewing. In addition, the ability of female students with diverse learning characteristics to absorb sewing materials and sewing practices is also an obstacle to the implementation of sewing activities. To overcome the possibility of failure in the learning process, teachers provide different learning treatments for female students who are able to learn quickly and female students who have difficulty learning. A person's learning style is considered to be influenced by personality, cognitive abilities, psychological conditions, life background, and previous educational experiences. Therefore, educational management is needed to develop learning activities. Management of educational program development involves planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and evaluating to achieve educational goals by utilizing existing resources effectively and efficiently (Nurmadiyah & Murtopo, 2021).

It is important to identify the various learning styles of students since they are first accepted into an educational institution. This step aims to facilitate the learning process so that both students and teachers can feel the benefits (Chania et al., 2016). Understanding students' learning styles helps them learn more effectively and achieve optimal results. By recognizing learning styles, learning can be adjusted to needs so that educational goals can be adequately achieved (Chania et al., 2016).

In the learning process, teachers provide rewards in the form of small gifts to perfect scores for female students who are able to complete assignments well and produce good work. It is done as a form of appreciation for the hard work of female students. Sewing teachers also carry out the written evaluation process to determine the extent to which female students understand the theory and practice of sewing. Giving positive rewards and punishments contributes to the success of the learning process. With this approach, students become more motivated to learn diligently and consistently. This success is highly dependent on the creativity of teachers when delivering material to students. Teachers who can create an active, comfortable, and enjoyable learning atmosphere will make students feel at home learning while maintaining focus and seriousness in their learning activities (Febianti, 2018).

From the perspective of female students, the life skills development activities of sewing by sewing teachers at the Al Khoirot Girls' Islamic Boarding School are carried out in fun stages. Husnul Khotimah, one of the female students who has been boarding for 4 years, stated the reasons for liking the development of life skills of sewing, including: 1) The learning delivery process is easy for female students to understand and comprehend. 2) The availability of equipment and supplies that support complete sewing activities such as cutting tools, sewing machines, overlock machines, sewing machines, etc. 3) Sewing skills can be used to repair female students' uniforms or their clothes as well as clothes belonging to family members at home. 4) Sewing skills encourage them to have the ambition of becoming a tailor who can later have their brand. A teacher's essential ability in teaching plays an important role in creating an effective and enjoyable learning process for students (Jaya, 2017).

In the final process, the sewing teacher equips students with entrepreneurial skills. This entrepreneurial ability is considered important for the sustainability of a product so that it can innovate and produce products that the wider community can accept. So far, students are encouraged to make sewing products. However, the products created have not been given a manufacturer's label. So far, the marketing of female students' sewing products in the form of headscarf buns, headscarves, and games is through the Islamic Boarding School Cooperative, student guardians, and the procurement of teacher uniforms. The school directly orders the production of teacher uniforms. Entrepreneurship education equips students with the skills to face future challenges so that they are ready to become confident and independent entrepreneurs (Asri, 2022).

It is fitting that the development of entrepreneurship is a highlight of the institution to bring up the personal branding of each female student's product. An entrepreneur who has a vision for the future will continue to strive to innovate by creating new things that are different from what already exists today. This perspective encourages entrepreneurs not to be easily satisfied with the achievements that have been achieved and to always look for new opportunities. In addition, sensitivity to the surrounding environment is important in producing products that are oriented toward the future.

Conclusion

The development of sewing life skills at the Al Khoirot Gondanglegi Malang Islamic Boarding School for Girls is packaged in a fun learning process through several stages. The development of sewing skills has a positive impact and shows its effectiveness in supporting the independence of female students. This program not only provides technical skills but also helps shape the character of female students to be more independent, patient, responsible, and competitive. Strategic recommendations for developing this sewing life skills program focus more on product design, product marketing, and partnerships with other parties. In addition, increasing the marketing of female students' work through social media or local exhibitions can be an option to develop the wings of female students.

Declaration of conflicting interest

As a researcher, I emphasize that in writing this article, I have no attachment to any interests or conflicts, whether in the professional, personal, or financial realms, that could affect the objectivity of the research results. The entire research process was carried out independently, adhering to the principles of academic honesty and scientific integrity.

The main objective of this research is to make a real contribution to the development of the world of education, especially by enriching insights and opening new horizons for educators, academics, and interested parties. I hope that the results of this research will not only be a scientific reference but can also inspire positive changes in educational practices in various environments.

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