

Strategic Management in Empowering Economic Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools

Moch. Rusli*

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia

mochrusli@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

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*corresponding author

Abstract

An Islamic boarding school, known as "Pondok Pesantren," serves as an institution for religious education and a place for practical engagement in social, artistic, and economic activities. These schools have the potential for economic development and the realization of economic self-reliance through their cooperative units, referred to as "Koperasi Pondok Pesantren." However, many Pesantren have yet to fully harness their potential due to a lack of knowledge in strategic management. Strategic management can be implemented under the guidance of leadership to achieve the institution's vision and mission. Riyadlotut Thalabah Islamic Boarding School is one such Pesantren that possesses a cooperative unit (Kopontren). This research aims to assess the extent to which strategic management and stakeholder theory are applied in this context. Through a qualitative descriptive analysis method, which includes interviews and primary reports, the study has revealed several factors that influence the economic self-reliance of the Pesantren. The findings indicate that the planning function is the most influential aspect in achieving economic self-reliance for the Pesantren. Additionally, strong leadership from the school's administrators, teachers (ustadz/ustadzah), students (santri), stakeholders, an effective information system, and a viable market are all crucial factors in realizing the economic self-reliance of Riyadlotut Thalabah Islamic Boarding School in the economic field.

Keywords: *management, economic self-reliance, Islamic boarding schools, Islamic boarding school cooperative*

INTRODUCTION

Management is a crucial discipline for understanding the art of formulating, implementing, and evaluating decisions within an institution to achieve its goals. In other words, thoughtful resource management can assist a company in mitigating risks associated with limited resource availability, environmental regulations, and various stakeholder expectations (Regmi et al., 2023). Strategic management, in particular, focuses on the process of setting organizational objectives, developing policy directions, and planning activities to align with the desired outcomes and purposes of an institution (Bartosova et al., 2023). This is achieved through the application of concrete and strategic steps.

In the management process, a comprehensive analysis is conducted to determine the appropriate formula for directing everyone toward a common goal. This analysis is carried out by the top leadership within the institution and involves all levels of the organization (Varela-Vaca et al., 2023). Formulating strategies is essential to assess the direction and steps for the future activities of the institution. Often, an institution appears to progress when it has

capable leadership that understands the institution's developmental direction and formulates management strategies. This management activity is applicable to institutional settings, including educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) (Indrawati, 2014).

Islamic boarding schools (Pondok Pesantren) share common characteristics when it comes to effective institution management through a strategic management approach, which includes having clear leadership and goals (Purnomo et al., 2015). A place can be referred to as a Pondok Pesantren if it contains elements such as a kiai (leader), resident students (santri), dormitory buildings (pondok or asrama), mosque or prayer rooms, and a curriculum that involves the study of Islamic texts, particularly Kitab Kuning, through a structured educational system (PMA RI No. 30 of 2020).

Pondok Pesantren represents a microcosm of community life, where resident students are taught the value of self-reliance. One aspect of self-reliance nurtured in the world of Pondok Pesantren is economic self-sufficiency. These institutions, with their wealth of knowledge, hold significant potential for the development of Islamic economics, particularly through various business units operating within the Pesantren. The optimization of economic business units will empower students to become self-reliant and, in turn, enhance the economic self-sufficiency of the Pondok Pesantren as a whole (Gonda, 2014).

Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) also serve as a source for developing human resources by imparting distinctive skills to their students. Pesantren have gained the attention of the government and various institutions, with the National Committee for Islamic Economic and Financial Affairs (Komite Nasional Ekonomi dan Keuangan Syariah or KNEKS) recognizing Pesantren as stakeholders due to their significant influence and potential impact on the development of Islamic economics. The effects of Pesantren's economic activities extend beyond the Pesantren community to the surrounding society and those who care about these institutions.

Economic activity within Pesantren holds immense potential because many students reside within the same environment around the clock, providing an opportunity to learn about strategic management for empowering economic self-sufficiency through "kopontren" (Pesantren cooperatives). The aim is to make Pesantren a place for theoretical and practical knowledge acquisition before students engage with the broader society.

Economic opportunities within Pesantren can be harnessed through various means, with one of the most direct avenues being Pesantren cooperatives. These cooperatives, often referred to as "Kopontren" (Pesantren Cooperatives), serve as platforms for applying the theories and knowledge learned during entrepreneurial education. The existence of Kopontren can help create economic self-sufficiency for Pesantren, particularly in the economic sector. Government regulations from the 1988 GBHN (General Guidelines for State Policy) emphasize support for the growth and development of cooperatives in society to realize economic justice and democracy.

In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (Pondok Pesantren) are widespread, with data from 2022 indicating the presence of 36,600 such institutions. However, when compared to the number of Pesantren cooperatives (Kopontren), which stands at around 2,400 according to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, the mathematical calculation shows that only approximately 15.2% of Pesantren have business units in the form of Kopontren. This national data is also distributed across provinces, including Central Java, which has 4,254 Pesantren. However, data regarding Kopontren in

this province is still unclear. The Provincial Cooperative, Small, and Medium Enterprise Office continually encourages the administrators of Pesantren to engage in benchmarking studies to enhance the performance and economic self-sufficiency potential of Pesantren (Dinkop dan UKM Jateng, 2022).

One of the most renowned success stories of Kopontren in terms of management governance is found in the cooperative owned by Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School in Pasuruan. Research conducted by Siti Nur Azizah and Yeny Fitriyani in 2018, titled "Development Model of Pesantren-Based Economy with Local Wisdom: A Case Study of Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School," indicates that Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School is a formidable economic base for Pesantren. This is achieved through the optimization of Pesantren and community potentials to synergize cooperative business models that have both economic and social impacts. Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School operates a minimarket named "Toko Basmalah Mart" that is spread across Indonesia and also has a cooperative.

Another study conducted in East Java titled "The Implementation of Cooperative Development Strategy in Pesantren as a Center for Economic Independence at Pesantren Al-Qodiri, Jember" by Villatus Solikhah in 2022 mentions that in developing the economic self-reliance of Pesantren through cooperatives, a management strategy is essential. While the management strategy is carefully formulated, there is flexibility in its practical implementation by the administrators. The previously written strategy must still be promptly applied and gradually evaluated for further development.

In contrast to the above research, a study conducted by Zaenal Afandi in 2019, titled "Entrepreneurship Education Strategy in Al-Mawaddah Pesantren, Kudus," suggests that boarding school-type Pesantren also need to have distinctive features that enable them to compete in future life. These Pesantren provide entrepreneurship education for the development of their own economic self-reliance and to equip their students with the necessary skills for the future. The strategy for entrepreneurship education must also be carefully organized to achieve the expected outcomes.

Riyadlotut Thalabah is one of the Pesantren institutions with a curriculum that combines traditional Salaf teachings with modern education. It appears that they need to adapt to the changing times while preserving Islamic values and local wisdom. Situated in Sedan, a district known for its Muslim fashion and hijab industry in Rembang Regency, Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah has also participated in training and activities organized by the Cooperative and Small and Medium Enterprises Office of Central Java in 2020. Therefore, it is crucial to explore the challenges and opportunities in the development of Pesantren's economy further. Issues related to the management process, the application of economic self-reliance, and governance that is not yet aligned need to be addressed promptly (Pontren Riyadl, 2020). Furthermore, it is expected that through Kopontren, Pesantren will engage in empowerment activities and institutional development in the future, acting as a catalyst between stakeholders and the community in the economic field. Based on this background, Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah, through Kopontren, seeks to address the challenges it faces by implementing a strategic management effort to enhance its economic self-reliance.

METHOD

This paper serves as an exposition of ideas and concepts designed through a qualitative descriptive analysis approach. Qualitative descriptive analysis is employed to convey data in a verbal form, emphasizing the contextual context and minimizing the use of numerical figures or calculations (Cresswell, 2012; Triana & Nugroho, 2021). The data used in

this study include primary data derived from the cooperative's annual reports, and techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation with policymakers were utilized (Arikunto, 2002). Furthermore, secondary data were incorporated from various sources such as journals, scholarly articles, books, and other references. The obtained data were then processed and analyzed descriptively to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the subject. The paper includes the research design, a description of the research methodology, which encompasses the population and sample, data collection instruments and methods, and data analysis techniques. The results section presents the characteristics of the data and the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The potential of Kopontren at Riyadlotut Thalabah

Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah is one of the economic empowerment organizations located within the Pesantren's environment, aimed at improving the well-being of both the Pesantren community and the broader community. It optimizes the available resources, stimulating the formation of profitable new ventures. The businesses managed within the Pesantren can provide economic benefits to the Pesantren community and the Pesantren's own economy.

Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah is situated on Jalan Raya Sidorejo Sedan KM 01 RT 01 RW 02 Sidorejo Sedan, Rembang, Central Java. This cooperative owned by the Pesantren is a type of consumer cooperative, often referred to as a retail cooperative, primarily intended for internal use by the Pesantren's santri (students). It is not yet open to the surrounding community. The members of this cooperative include the family members of the ndalem (the kiai's household) who serve as managers, as well as the Pesantren administrators. The management of the cooperative's capital by its members is carried out through businesses like small food stalls, beverages, office supplies, toiletries, and some feminine products, as the Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah primarily focuses on female students, with around 160 active santri.

Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah aims to support the Pesantren in its funding and operational activities. The benefits of Kopontren have been widely enjoyed by various parties, including the students themselves, as it is expected to serve as a platform for personal development, cooperation, relationship building, and a knowledge hub in entrepreneurship that will be valuable in their daily lives.

The presence of Kopontren serves the hope that the students can easily, affordably, comprehensively, and conveniently shop within the Pesantren. This eliminates the need for students to purchase their necessities outside the Pesantren. Simultaneously, the students indirectly contribute to the Pesantren's well-being through their spending at Kopontren. Kopontren provides services to the students and operates when the students are in the Pesantren, while it remains closed during school or madin activities. Kopontren is assisted by two employees, one responsible for procurement and the other for service and financial matters. Additionally, aside from the two assigned employees, the service at Kopontren is also supported by student volunteers who assist with customer service and take shifts among the administrators. As a result, Kopontren often serves as a learning space for students, especially for student administrators when they are on duty or have free time.

The procurement of goods at Kopontren is carried out through collaboration with local merchants in the vicinity of the Pesantren who sell packed meals, fried snacks, and even

various types of cold beverages. However, direct procurement from suppliers is also conducted by the procurement team by personally meeting with suppliers in the market, ensuring competitive pricing. Kopontren operates in accordance with Sharia principles, such as an-tarodhin (mutual consent), transparency (no hidden information), tangible or clear goods that are permissible for trading, and avoiding gharar (ambiguous or uncertain terms).

Although it is not a form of capital association, as a business entity, cooperatives must still have capital. Capital is a crucial factor of production. One way to support the capital of Koperasi Pondok Pesantren is through the surplus (Sisa Hasil Usaha or SHU) saved by its members. According to the Law No. 25 of 1992 on cooperatives, Article 31 specifies that cooperative capital consists of:

1. Own capital, which includes share capital, compulsory savings, reserve funds, and grants.
2. Loan capital, which includes loans from members, loans from other cooperatives, banks, bond issuance, and other legitimate sources.
3. Participation capital, which is capital sourced from the government or the public in the form of investments.

In the case of Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah, the capital primarily comes from its members' share capital. Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah uses this capital for its retail business, which includes the sale of small meals, stationery, bathing supplies, and other necessities. Additionally, Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah operates on a consignment system in its retail business, where goods are consigned directly by external sellers. In this arrangement, the Pesantren receives all the proceeds from consignment sales, and the buying and selling of goods operate as usual.

The current cooperative leadership is headed by a family member of the kiai, and an Annual Year-End Meeting (Rapat Akhir Tahun or RAT) is held once a year during the odd-semester break (between December and January). The RAT is attended by all cooperative members, and during this meeting, the surplus from business operations (SHU) is distributed.

Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah operates following the schedule of the students. The average daily revenue ranges from Rp. 300,000 to Rp. 400,000, and it can sometimes exceed or fall below these figures. It's important to note that the revenue may not be substantial due to the limited market, which consists of internal Pesantren members and a relatively small number of about 160 students.

Regarding the variety of goods available at Kopontren, it may not be perfect. Coupled with the small market and operating hours that are not necessarily convenient, it's essential to consider expanding the range of items available for the students' convenience and possibly extending business hours to attract a broader customer base. However, despite the limitations faced by Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah, it has significantly contributed to various Pesantren activities. It has enabled the addition of facilities such as more bathrooms, a Pesantren Health Post (Pos Kesehatan Pesantren), a water refill station, and even clothes drying machine. These achievements have been possible with the modest support from Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah.

Economic Empowerment of Pesantren

Empowerment is the process of providing individuals or groups with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to take action and make decisions, often associated with the concept of authority that is continually present in human social life, both as a process and an objective. In the context of economic empowerment in Pesantren, there are some distinctive

features. Pesantren possess substantial religious knowledge that enables them to connect religious teachings with various aspects of life. Additionally, they employ a system of proselytization (dakwah) to convey their message. The dakwah movement serves as a strategic tool for empowering students and can be harnessed for social engagement.

Furthermore, Pesantren serve as microcosms of economic life and provide practical examples of Islamic economic activities. Pesantren play a vital role in applying Sharia-compliant economic practices because they not only possess deep religious knowledge but also act as laboratories for the practical application of Sharia-compliant economic theories. Their role is strategic, as Pesantren serve as role models in the daily economic activities of the community. If Pesantren successfully develop their Sharia-compliant economic potential, it is likely that the broader community will follow suit. Conversely, if Pesantren are passive or indifferent, this can influence the community, especially if the community continues to engage in conventional economic activities.

Pesantren can actively participate in empowering the economic well-being of the community through social and community-based activities, utilizing their dakwah skills. Economic empowerment of the community can begin with activities within the Pesantren's Cooperative or Kopontren. One straightforward approach is to establish a Kopontren, which can serve as a microcosm of economic activities within the Pesantren. Kopontren plays a role in empowering the economic well-being of the community in several ways. For example, the human resources working in Kopontren can absorb labor from both within the Pesantren's community and from outside. The human resources prepared by the Pesantren, especially in Riyadlotut Thalabah, primarily consist of students who are responsible for managing the cooperative. This practical experience teaches them simple economic principles and emphasizes the values of honesty, in accordance with the teachings of religion.

The scholars who emerge from Pesantren will have clear roles in the field of economics as the Islamic economic activities grow. They will be needed to serve as Sharia Supervisory Boards (Dewan Pengawas Syariah) within Islamic Financial Institutions (Lembaga Keuangan Syariah). The presence of scholars produced by Pesantren becomes crucial in guiding the path of Sharia-compliant economics. Their dakwah skills position them as agents for disseminating knowledge about Sharia-compliant economics. The voices of these da'is (Islamic preachers) are more likely to be heard than those from outside Pesantren. Developing human resources by enhancing their dakwah skills and knowledge of fiqh muamalah (Islamic jurisprudence related to economic transactions) is a powerful combination for explaining these fiqh matters to the broader community. Thus, it is hoped that economic empowerment for the community can indeed be initiated and facilitated through Pesantren.

Furthermore, Kopontren also engages in economic activities, such as consignment or a system of consigning various types of snacks, like packaged foods, fried snacks, crackers, and more, which are supplied by local vendors. This presents an opportunity for micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (UMKM) in the vicinity of the Pesantren to consign their products. Given that the daily activities of Riyadlotut Thalabah's students are centered around the Pesantren 24 hours a day, they have limited access to food, basic necessities, and other essential items outside the Pesantren. This business opportunity is promising, and if the products are in demand and sell well, it can contribute to the economic well-being of the community beyond the Pesantren.

Pesantren also have a Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah (ZIS) institution that can collect funds and distribute them to those in need. While Pondok Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah may not

have a dedicated ZIS institution, it operates through a foundation and is managed by the foundation. The Pesantren and its foundation conduct annual charity events to provide aid to orphans and donate to the less fortunate in the community. The presence of a ZIS institution is expected to gather, distribute, and uplift the economic well-being of the community.

Pesantren students also have the opportunity to become agents of economic development for the community in the future. They receive education on economic skills in addition to serving as administrators in the Pesantren's cooperative. This education aims to prepare students to become entrepreneurs when they return to the broader community, in addition to being knowledgeable in religious matters. The education provided at Pondok Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah includes training in creating gift arrangements with items such as flowers, money, and food, as well as training in making brooches, ribbons, mask straps, and other similar items, along with instruction in the art of calligraphy. Other activities include seminars on entrepreneurship.

To strengthen the economic power of Pesantren, attention is needed in three key aspects:

1. Institutional Stability: This includes strengthening governance, enhancing professionalism, and ensuring accountability.
2. Resource Optimization and Digitalization: Conduct feasibility studies, transfer knowledge, and transform infrastructure and payment systems. Digitalization plays a crucial role in modernizing economic activities.
3. Active Cooperation and Synergy: Establish active collaborations with stakeholders to accelerate the economic self-reliance of the Pesantren.

The Quran and Sunnah provide guidance for social activities, including economic empowerment, with the principles of ta'awun (mutual assistance) and shura (consultation). Ta'awun, or mutual assistance, should be performed through a harmonious system that encourages collaboration among various parties, including Pesantren, the community, and relevant organizations. Shura or consultation involves Pesantren and other stakeholders who can facilitate and regulate economic development, ensuring that all parties work together harmoniously to achieve common goals.

The Application of Strategic Management

The management in Pesantren involves planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating the activities to achieve the desired goals. In the context of Pesantren, this managerial approach is used to build the institution with the aim of fulfilling the vision of faith, achievement, and good character to attain happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Currently, Riyadlotut Thalabah Islamic Boarding School is in its third generation, led by Kiai Fakhisotur Rohmah Adib Munawwir and his son, Gus M Fariz Aziz, S.Psi. The strategic management of the leadership of the pesantren aligns with Islamic teachings and begins with the vision of faith. Santri are taught to have transparency in both education and finance, addressing matters with care, fairness, open discussion, and without hiding any information. This style of management is exemplified by all the heads of institutions within the Pesantren, including the management of Kopontren. Kopontren shares the same vision, mission, and objectives as the pesantren.

The strategies implemented for guidance encompass various activities that are relevant and beneficial for the future of pesantren's santri. The strategic planning for the economic self-sufficiency of Riyadlotut Thalabah Islamic Boarding School aligns with the established vision. The planning process involves a combination of existing and new

programs, which have evolved from the time of KH Adib Munawwir to the present leadership of his wife and son. New programs have been introduced, existing ones have been improved, and they all prioritize regular evaluations. In the formulation of these programs, the leaders of the pesantren engage in consultation with the *asatidz* (teachers) and other stakeholders to determine the steps needed to achieve the established vision and mission. These consultations occur at the beginning of each academic year. The programs include:

1. Recording the purchase of products for the needs of the pesantren.
2. Establishing rules for recording financial transactions in Kopontren's financial ledger.
3. Defining and implementing criteria for the consignment system.
4. Identifying the human resources responsible for Kopontren operations.
5. Planning annual activities such as seminars and entrepreneurial training.

These programs reflect the pesantren's commitment to achieving its economic self-sufficiency objectives through thoughtful planning and collaboration.

The strategic organization for the economic self-sufficiency of Riyadlotut Thalabah Islamic Boarding School is designed to efficiently allocate responsibilities and authorities to individuals based on the planned activities. Regarding human resources, the highest-ranking leader remains the head of the pesantren, who is supported by resident *ustadzah* (female religious instructors) in the pesantren to oversee and supervise the operations. The implementation and execution of tasks are carried out by the *santri* (students).

Santri are assigned responsibilities according to a pre-arranged schedule. Furthermore, the delegation of authority and tasks is determined at the beginning of each academic year, prior to the commencement of classes. This is due to the annual change in human resources and the addition of new roles that are determined on an ad-hoc basis. Organizational activities are conducted on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis, aligning with the specific activities taking place within these timeframes.

The implementation of the economic self-sufficiency strategy at Riyadlotut Thalabah Islamic Boarding School, as per the principles of strategic management theory, aims to achieve economic self-sufficiency for the pesantren and to contribute positively to the local community, as well as to provide quality education to the *santri* (students). During the implementation phase, there were no significant obstacles encountered due to effective communication among all involved parties. The planned activities were executed successfully, with detailed evaluations conducted.

Every activity is conducted in an organized manner, following the principles of *musyawarah* (consultation) and *mufakat* (consensus), and the active involvement of the pesantren's leadership. The openness and accessibility of the pesantren's leadership play a significant role in ensuring the successful execution of planned activities. However, some challenges were observed during seminars and training sessions, such as students showing signs of laziness and a lack of enthusiasm. Some students also faced difficulties in adhering to schedules, often citing incomplete preparations or clashes with their regular pesantren routines. To address this, the training sessions need to be engaging and well-structured to maintain the students' interest.

Additionally, in the implementation of human resource development within Kopontren, the activities involve shifts for managing and recording all sales within the cooperative. *Santri* selected to undertake practical tasks are often drawn from the management or active students, and special training is provided. The pesantren consistently instills values of cooperation and self-sufficiency, with the aim of enabling students to assist

the broader community in achieving economic self-sufficiency through Kopontren. The pesantren also emphasizes values of tolerance and collaboration to achieve their mission and vision.

In the evaluation phase, Pondok Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah conducts assessments at the end of the planned activities. This evaluation serves multiple purposes, including measuring the extent to which the activities have achieved their targets and objectives as set during the implementation phase. It is a form of accountability and provides valuable insights for future planning and improvement. The evaluations conducted are documented and serve as reference points to enhance the quality of activities in alignment with the pesantren's mission and vision. The strategic evaluations conducted include:

1. Direct observation of the students' behavior in performing economic activities within the pesantren.
2. On-site evaluation during planned activities.
3. Programmed evaluations conducted weekly, monthly, and annually.
4. Incidental evaluations that occur when leadership provides guidance.

It is important to manage certain activities effectively through appropriate guidance, as some activities might not be well-received by students. Students at the pesantren are engaged in both formal education outside the pesantren and interactions with individuals from outside the pesantren, which can influence their perceptions and attitudes. The desired solution is to maximize the existing resources and infrastructure to address these challenges effectively.

Pondok Pesantren Riyadlotut Thalabah recognizes the importance of stakeholder engagement as a means to build a responsive framework that adapts to changes in its environment. Stakeholders consist of various groups that influence or are influenced by the institution's goals. Primary stakeholders in Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah include the pesantren leadership, ustadz/ustadzah, students as consumers, and other suppliers. Public stakeholders encompass government agencies, community members, cooperatives, small and medium-sized enterprises (UKM), and trade associations. Additionally, there are secondary stakeholders who do not have direct influence on the institution.

Emphasis on responsibility within the institution takes precedence over individual performance. The stakeholder theory emphasizes that both ethical reasoning and managerial practices must align with the organization's mission and benefit multiple parties. This approach creates a circular relationship where the benefits received are shared among the pesantren, pesantren leadership, ustadz/ustadzah, and students. The stakeholder theory should consider the following:

1. Social issues that involve common interests in enhancing the quality of life for the community.
2. Products offered at Kopontren should incorporate eco-friendly programs to align with the preferences of buyers and investors.

The primary goal of the stakeholder theory is to promote better and more effective management while fostering positive relationships with the surrounding community. It aims to assist pesantren leadership in enhancing economic activities and generating a positive impact.

CONCLUSION

Manajemen plays a fundamental role in guiding and organizing all aspects of life. It is essential for leaders to use management as a tool to align and direct the institution toward a common goal, as reflected in the institution's vision and mission. This is crucial for tracking the progress and development of activities. For example, Pesantren, with its distinct characteristics that revolve around following the leadership's instructions, needs to develop strategic management. Another defining characteristic of Pesantren is the round-the-clock centralized activities within the institution, including economic activities. Therefore, an approach to make the Pesantren self-reliant in economic matters is necessary. Self-reliance of Pesantren in the economic sector can be practiced through the presence of a pesantren cooperative, serving as a miniature platform for economic practices within the Pesantren and the community at large. The function of Kopontren as a place for self-reliance within Pesantren is demonstrated through the development of human resources, enabling practical real-world experiences while inside the classroom as a da'i who can propagate economic activities from an Islamic perspective. Additionally, it serves as a training ground for nurturing budding entrepreneurs prepared through various workshops.

Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah has been growing well and plays a significant role in realizing the self-reliance of the community in the economic sphere. It also employs four management functions: Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling. Furthermore, the Stakeholder theory, which revolves around mutual benefit and has already been applied by Kopontren Riyadlotut Thalabah, aids in facilitating the achievement of the Pesantren's vision and mission, benefiting Pesantren leaders, ustadz/ustadzah, administrators, and students.

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