Service Innovation Model in Boarding School Programs for New Students at Islamic Higher Education

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Abstract
This research seeks a service innovation model at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, a unit at an Islamic religious university in Indonesia, both during the Covid-19 pandemic and its sustainability after the pandemic subsided. This research is based on field studies using a mix-method with a sequential exploratory design. Observations, documentation, interviews, and questionnaires with a sample of 172 students are used to gather the data. As for analysis techniques: preparing data to be analyzed, exploring data, conducting post-exploration data analysis, selecting data that represents the results of the analysis, displaying the interpretation of the results, and validating the data and results. The results show that service innovation is carried out using a configuration model through the application of CLER (configuration, linkage, environment, resources) based on the use of technology to deal with existing situations and the application of five innovation characteristics. The implementation of service innovation is directed at information and registration, learning, and evaluation services. Based on the existing sample, the percentage of students participating in the Islamic boarding school program in the BTA-PPI competency test reached 78%.

Abstrak

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INTRODUCTION

Education cannot be separated from the influence of other fields in life, such as history, sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology, technology, politics, art, and even religion. The influence of these fields is significant in giving color to education. And this influence simultaneously confirms that education is part of everyone's human rights and will not develop without actively responding to the dynamics of life in society. This dynamic response will provide many advantages for the development of the field of education, especially in carrying out various innovations in it, especially for solving problems to achieve profit or progress. Innovation in the field of education appears in various parts and various forms, including the use of technology in learning, classroom management, policy and its relation to classroom management, strengthening teacher capacity, and on curriculum. Specifically,
innovation models in education at least include research, development, and diffusion models,16 the organizational development model,17 and configuration models.18 Innovations made in the field of education will undoubtedly provide a variety of tangible benefits in the development of the education sector, including: providing equal opportunities for everyone to obtain educational services19, increasing the flexibility in implementing the educational process20, making it easy for everyone to participate in the education sector21, opens opportunities to increase capacity or skills for educators, education staff and students.22, The benefits of innovation can be felt at all levels, from early childhood education to higher education, as well as from formal, non-formal, and informal channels of education.23 Of course, implementing innovation will adjust to the capabilities of each existing educational institution, including the parts and forms of innovation that will be applied.

In Islamic Religious Higher Education, service innovation can be carried out in various parts, including Ma’had Al-Jami’ah. Ma’had Al-Jami’ah, in this case, is a differentiator from public universities. And this is confirmed by enacting a policy related to Ma’had Al-Jami’ah at State Islamic Religious Colleges by the Government through a Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No 1595 of 2021. Moreover, the existence of Ma’had Al-Jami’ah at Religious Colleges Islam, apart from being a distinction compared to other Public Universities, also has a significant position in building a religious and nationalist mindset and character.24 At the end of 2019, a new virus that attacked the human respiratory organs later developed into a pandemic.25, This condition brings different consequences in human life, including education.26 Many policies, efforts, and methods have emerged as a response and adjustment to this condition, both at the early childhood education and

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18 Muhammad Kristiawan; Irdi Suryantri; Muhammad Muntazir; Ribuwati; Ahmad Jon Areli; Mediarti Agustina, Inovasi Pendidikan, 1st ed. (Ponorogo: Wade Group, 2018).
24 Kementerian Agama, Modul Penyelenggaraan Ma’had Al-Jami’ah Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN) (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2021).

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tertiary levels. This response and adjustment require speed and accuracy, although it has some weaknesses. And this is natural because the spread of the Covid-19 virus is so fast, massive, and unpredictable. This response and adjustment also spurred the emergence of various breakthroughs, which became the basis for innovation in multiple aspects of educational services, including Ma’had Al-Jami’ah in Islamic Religious Colleges. Several studies have been conducted on this matter, including religious coaching by online-based Ma’had Al-Jami’ah at IAIN Kendari, learning Fiqh through M-Learning at Ma’had Al-Jami’ah UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, learning primary Fiqh material during the Covid-19 Pandemic at Dormitory IV UPT Ma’had Al-Jami’ah UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. Although several studies on innovation from Ma’had Al-Jami’ah have been carried out, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic, some of these studies still have some limitations, especially regarding how the innovation model is carried out at Ma’had Al-Jami’ah in managing services, user response and the impact on the services provided, especially for new students. Even though this aspect is one of the essences of innovation at Ma’had Al-Jami’ah, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic and its post-pandemic sustainability, this research seeks to analyze in depth through mixed research methods regarding innovations carried out by Ma’had Al-Jami’ah, especially at state Islamic religious universities for new students during the Covid-19 Pandemic in the 2021/2022 academic year, so that can complement previous research, especially in terms of the model applied, including the response and impact on students for the services provided. The results of this research can be an alternative model for managing Ma’had Al-Jami’ah, not only during the Covid-19 Pandemic but also when the pandemic subsides and things gradually return to normal.

METHOD

This research was carried out based on field studies at one of the Ma’had Al-Jami’ah at the State Islamic religious university in Central Java Province using a mixed method with an exploratory sequential design. Techniques used to find data using documentation, observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Documentation is directed

at finding data related to research themes: institutional policies, policies and technical guidelines from Ma’had Al-Jamiah, evaluation instruments and results of evaluating student abilities, documentation of the implementation of activities at Ma’had Al-Jamiah, and supporting infrastructure at Ma’had Al-Jamiah. At the same time, the observation is directed at compiling the program and the sustainability of the innovation process at Ma’had Al-Jamiah. The interviews were conducted with the Ma’had Al-Jamiah team, using a semi-structured interview model whose interview instruments included:

### Table 1. Criteria and indicators in interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reasons for innovation</td>
<td>Driving factor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The pattern of planning and</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various services</td>
<td>Service types</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures and technical services</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and sustainability</td>
<td>evaluation models</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability design</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire instrument was directed to see the response and impact on students who participated in the boarding school program managed by Ma’had Al-Jamiah. The sample was selected using the random sampling method from all undergraduate students (S1) for the 2021/2022 academic year by determining the sample size using the Yount percentage model, with a population in the population range of 1,001 – 5,000 so that students obtained as a sample of 200 people. The questionnaire instrument, in general, refers to the guidelines for compiling a community satisfaction survey for public service delivery units, especially directed at:

### Table 2. Criteria and indicators in the questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information and registration services</td>
<td>Clarity of registration information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of registering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of activities</td>
<td>Clarity of learning material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of participating in activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Service</td>
<td>Clarity of exam instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The suitability of the exam with the module</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For measuring the results of a questionnaire compiled using a Likert scale, several steps will be used, namely: 1) calculating the total score of respondents (Formula: T x Pn), 2) Interval (I = 100/Total Score), and 3) Index Formula % = Total Score/Y x 100.

The research data analysis was carried out through several steps: preparing data to be analyzed, exploring data, conducting post-exploration data analysis,

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The service innovation model at *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* is carried out by considering the institution’s capabilities and existing conditions and situations. In 2021, amid the Covid-19 Pandemic and the enactment of a policy for every new student to participate in Islamic boarding school activities, the director and team from *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* designed several service breakthroughs in Islamic boarding school activities. The flow of preparing the breakthrough steps begins through the preparation of a plan. The process of compiling this plan produced: 1) supporting documents for Islamic boarding school activities amid the Covid-19 Pandemic, such as registration information/procedures, *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* online learning guidelines, competency tests guidelines in reading, writing the Qur'an and worship practice (BTA-PPI), 2) module distribution patterns to students, 3) the use of social media, especially *Telegram* during *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* activities, 4) and the existence of technology-based software/applications, replacing the previous application used until 2020.

As for the implementation stage of the Islamic boarding school activities program, at least the implementation can be seen in the various stages of existing activities, including information and registration, activity, and evaluation services. The description is as follows:

**Information and Registration Services**

*Ma'had Al-Jamiah* carries out information about the Islamic boarding school program and its registration procedures by carrying out several actionable steps. This is based on the results of interviews with the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah*, which stated that the first step before carrying out socialization regarding *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* activities and various procedures, the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* compiled materials related to this matter. After that, the director of *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* invited administrators from each Islamic boarding school that collaborate with *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* in an online forum using the *Zoom* application. In the meeting, the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* gave an explanation to each administrator of the partner Islamic boarding schools that collaborate with *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* in an online forum using the *Zoom* application. In the meeting, the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* gave an explanation to each administrator of the partner Islamic boarding schools that collaborate with *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* in an online forum using the *Zoom* application. In the meeting, the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* gave an explanation to each administrator of the partner Islamic boarding schools that collaborate with *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* in an online forum using the *Zoom* application. In the meeting, the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* gave an explanation to each administrator of the partner Islamic boarding schools that collaborate with *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* in an online forum using the *Zoom* application.

After holding the meeting, the team from *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* provided an opportunity for each administrator from the Islamic boarding schools partner to carry

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out internal coordination of the Islamic boarding schools, including the Kiai (owner) at the Islamic boarding schools. Apart from maintaining safety and health amid a pandemic, this meeting model facilitates meetings and supports the information’s quality. The flow of coordination can be described as follows:

Figure 1. The flow of the socialization process

![Diagram](image)

This flow shows that the information that reaches every student participating in the Islamic boarding schools program activities can go through several parties from the Islamic boarding schools, both administrators and managers. This is because the information obtained by the Islamic boarding school administrator is then conveyed to the Kiai, if the Kiai has expressed an agreement with the information/procedure from Ma’had, then the Kiai will forward it to the administrator or manager so that the information then will be sent to students (santri). In addition, the Ma’had Al-Jami’ah service information system also provides information about the names of Islamic boarding schools, addresses, and existing contact persons to make it easier for students to choose Islamic boarding schools for places of study.

With such a socialization model, it can provide convenience to students in selecting and registering for an Islamic boarding school that will be used as a place to take part in Islamic boarding school activities. This is in line with the percentage of responses from the student sample, that the level of information clarity and ease of registering is relatively high, namely at a clear and accessible level. As in the following table:

**Table 3. Level of clarity of registration information and ease of registering**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of clarity of registration</th>
<th>Information level of ease to registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>scale</strong></td>
<td><strong>respondent choice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the total score, the clarity of registration information provided by Ma’had Al-Jami’ah has a percentage index of 67%. As for the ease of registering at partner Islamic boarding schools, it has a percentage index of 75%. With an interval length of 20, the percentage index result is 67%, indicating that the registration
information provided by Ma'had Al Jami'ah is in a particular category. Meanwhile, the percentage index of 75% for the ease of registering at Islamic boarding schools shows that the process for registering at Islamic boarding schools is in the easy category.

**Learning Services**

In general, the process of implementing learning in Islamic boarding school activities is managed by Islamic boarding schools in collaboration with Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. The role of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah in this matter is to ensure that learning in Islamic boarding schools is still carried out, even though, in general, it is online based because it is still in the Covid-19 Pandemic. So that Ma'had Al-Jami'ah itself also encourages Islamic boarding schools to use online meeting applications, such as Zoom, and Google Meet, as contained in the guidelines provided by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. Efforts to build certainty that the learning process is still carried out and meets minimum standards were carried out by the Ma'had Al-Jami'ah team by conducting monitoring. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, this monitoring activity was carried out directly by visiting Islamic boarding schools. In a pandemic, monitoring efforts are generally carried out online through social media, Whatsapp, Telegram, or online meetings.

In this monitoring, the Ma'had Al-Jami'ah team ensured that every student who took the BTA-PPI competency test was deemed worthy and capable and received a recommendation from the Islamic boarding school. And for each student to obtain this recommendation, they are required to take the eligibility test from the Kiai at the Islamic boarding school in which the students take part in activities. Without this due diligence, students (santri) cannot take the BTA-PPI competency test organized by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah.

The seriousness of the Islamic boarding school efforts to continue learning amid the Covid-19 Pandemic and the support and monitoring carried out by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah made the learning process run well. This is in line with the percentage of responses from the student sample that the level of clarity of the material presented during learning at Islamic boarding schools and the ease of participating in learning activities at Islamic boarding schools are at a clear and accessible level. As in the following table:

| Table 4. The level of clarity of the material and the ease of following the lesson |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Level of clarity of material explanation | Information level of ease of following the lesson |
| scale | respondent choice | score | scale | respondent choice | score |
| 1     | 1                  | 1     | 1     | 1                  | 1     |
| 2     | 16                 | 32    | 2     | 15                 | 30    |
| 3     | 52                 | 156   | 3     | 53                 | 159   |
| 4     | 73                 | 292   | 4     | 68                 | 272   |
| 5     | 30                 | 150   | 5     | 35                 | 175   |
| Total score | 631 | | Total score | 637 |
From the total score, the clarity of the material delivered during learning at Islamic boarding schools has a percentage index of 73%. As for the ease of participating in learning activities in Islamic boarding schools, it has a percentage index of 74%. With an interval length of 20, the result of the percentage index is 73%, indicating that the clarity of the material presented during learning in Islamic boarding schools is in a particular category. Meanwhile, the percentage index of 74% for the ease of participating in learning activities at Islamic boarding schools shows that the process of participating in learning at Islamic boarding schools is in the easy category.

Evaluation Service

Evaluation activities related to learning in Islamic boarding schools, especially those related to the BTA-PPI competency test organized by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, the service is directed at giving instructions to take the BTA-PPI competency test and the compatibility between the modules provided by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah with competency test questions. The Ma'had Al-Jami'ah team has provided information regarding the registration procedure and test flow from the start to every admin in the collaborating Islamic boarding school. This is done so that students are given the convenience of taking competency tests from the start. Besides that, the registration of students who will carry out the competency test is input directly by the Islamic boarding school administrator into the application provided by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. And the names of students inputted by the Islamic boarding school administrator are accompanied by letters of recommendation.

The competency test consists of two main parts: the written and practical exams. The written exam is carried out based on the application provided by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. To guarantee quality in its implementation, each student prepares two devices: a laptop and a mobile phone or two mobile phones. This is intended so that one device is used to conduct exams and another to monitor the exams being carried out. In addition, students are also directed to provide a wall clock that is easily visible from the monitor screen to ensure that students (santri) are carrying out the exam according to the provisions in the schedule.

As for ensuring that the questions tested are by the modules provided by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, each student will be given a module in the first semester. Usually, the modules are taken directly by students to Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, Ma'had Al-Jami'ah provided accessible services for each student to obtain modules, namely through module delivery services according to the address given by the student to Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. Ma'had Al-Jami'ah delivers this module using expedition services, although each student bears the shipping costs. With this module, students can take part in learning well at Islamic boarding schools in collaboration with Ma'had Al-Jami'ah and obtain the necessary training to take the BTA-PPI competency test.
With such an effort, the BTA-PPI competency test process can run well. This is in line with the percentage of responses from the student sample that the clarity of information regarding the procedures for taking the competency test, the suitability between the modules provided, and the questions in the competency test are at a clear and appropriate level. As in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of information clarity in registration</th>
<th>The suitability the module and tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scale</td>
<td>respondent choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the total score, the clarity of information regarding the BTA-PPI competency test registration procedure has a percentage index of 66%. As for the suitability between modules provided by Ma’had Al-Jami’ah with questions in the competency test, it has a percentage index of 74%. With an interval length of 20, the percentage index result is 66%, indicating that the clarity of information regarding the BTA-PPI competency test registration procedure is straightforward. Meanwhile, from the results of the percentage index of 74% for compatibility between modules provided by Ma’had Al-Jami’ah with questions in the competency test, it is in the appropriate category.

One of the goals of this Islamic boarding school program implemented by Ma’had Al-Jami’ah is to equip students (santri) with skills in the BTA-PPI competencies. The graduation rate for students (santri) participating in the 2021 Islamic boarding school program in the BTA-PPI competency test, based on the results of a questionnaire from existing respondents, can be described in the following picture:

**Figure 2. The pass rate in the BTA-PPI competency test**
Discussion

The service model performed by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* in this pesantren program can be analyzed using the Diffusion of Innovation theory, especially from the aspect of characteristics which are the main factors of innovation which include: first, relative advantage, where the innovations carried out by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* are more directed at profits in terms of safety, health and the continuity of the Islamic boarding school program during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Second is compatibility, where efforts are made to consistently maintain the learning climate in Islamic boarding schools as before the Covid-19 Pandemic, even though it is online. This means that *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* tries to support societal values and beliefs related to learning patterns in Islamic boarding schools, including preserving their continuity. Third, complexity, where *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* prefers to use existing technology, easily accessible and inexpensive, although *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* also continues to develop internal supporting applications. Fourth, trialability, where for online meeting applications, social media is generally well known by users, both students and Islamic boarding school partners, so all that remains is to adjust the instructions or desired content. The information system/application developed by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* before being widely used has gone through several trials. Fifth, is observability, where the innovation model and tools used by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* are open and accessible to interested parties, including monitoring by partner Islamic boarding schools and university leaders.

In general, the innovation model used is based on configuration theory, by implementing CLER (configuration, linkage, environment, resources) on the *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* service. This is supported by using existing technological advances to impact the implemented programs. Thus, the application of the innovation model carried out by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* has become one of its distinctions amid the various patterns of implementation of activities carried out by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* in various Islamic religious universities in Indonesia amid the Covid-19 pandemic. And in general, it can be concluded that the innovations carried out by *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* are more toward the configuration model.

Even though *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* has carried out innovation, there are still some limitations in it, such as limitations in conducting direct outreach to new students, limitations of *Ma’had Al-Jami’ah* in providing online meeting facilities for partner boarding schools, limitations in monitoring learning at partner boarding schools, limitations in evaluating services during the pandemic. Especially after the pandemic began to become endemic gradually and returned to normal, not all service innovations were continued, especially for implementing the Islamic boarding school program for new students starting the 2022/2023 academic year. Only the utilization of online meeting facilities is still being used, especially in the scientific enrichment

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of students (santri) by conducting studies of Turats books through online guidance from Kiai, such as the Hadith book Arba' in An-Nawawiyyah and the book Adabul 'Alim Wal Muta'allim. In addition, the use of Ma'had Al-Jam'i'ah social media, the Ma'had Al-Jam'i'ah application system, and written exams are still based on the application system but are carried out directly on campus, not using the two-device model.

CONCLUSION

The service model provided by Ma'had Al-Jam'i'ah in the Islamic boarding school program for new students in 2021 shows that there have been breakthroughs made during the Covid-19 Pandemic, especially to keep the Islamic boarding school program running using a partnership pattern model, and to maintain the quality of learning in it and achieving the goals set. Innovation is carried out by implementing a configuration model through CLER (configuration, linkage, environment, resources) on the Ma'had Al-Jam'i'ah service based on communication and information technology. This is done at the stage of socialization and registration, in learning services, and in evaluation services. This service innovation can contribute to developing a management model for Ma'had Al-Jam'i'ah, especially to complement some of the previous research, which did not touch on aspects of service, response, and impact on students. Nevertheless, the research that has been carried out still has several limitations, namely: not all service indicators are included in the questionnaire, limitations in conducting in-depth interviews with respondents, especially from students (santri), have not fully measured the effect of the services provided on student graduation in the BTA-PPI competency test or other factors that influence graduation, as well as the lack of information from Islamic boarding schools that collaborate with Ma'had Al-Jam'i'ah as feedback on the services performed. So it is necessary to conduct further research, especially in the service aspect, when the Covid-19 pandemic begins to subside and learning models in tertiary institutions and Islamic boarding schools begin fully offline.

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