

LIFE SKILLS-BASED CURRICULUM IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Background	This study analyzes the curriculum grouping at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta in supporting life skills education.
Purpose	The focus is on curriculum structure, teaching effectiveness, and students' readiness for independent living. The study evaluates the pesantren curriculum in fostering life skills, identifying skill categories, and assessing students' preparedness for self-sufficiency
Research Methodology	Using a case study approach, data collection methods include interviews, observations, documentation, and Likert-scale questionnaires to analyze learning effectiveness and data validity
Result	(1) The life skills program equips students with communication, teamwork, and time management skills through simulations, hands-on projects, formative assessments, and dedicated schedules to ensure effective learning for life and the workforce. (2) The curriculum structure integrates life skills through a flexible approach, blended learning, and continuous evaluation to optimally develop students' social and vocational skills. (3) A life skills-based curriculum enhances student engagement through targeted approaches, regular assessments, and relevant materials, though facilities require improvement to maximize learning effectiveness
Conclusion	The program effectively equips students with life skills for independence and career readiness, although some improvements are still needed
Keywords	Life skills, Curriculum, Islamic Boarding School

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INTRODUCTION

Life Skills-Based Learning is an educational approach that emphasizes the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving to prepare individuals to effectively face life's challenges and the workforce (Juhrocin, 2024). Moreover, implementing life skills education through project-based learning methods can enhance students' adaptability to the dynamics of the professional world, enabling them to face career challenges with confidence and effectiveness (Damaruci et al., 2025). Life Skills-Based Learning emphasizes the development of critical thinking, communication, and adaptability skills, which are crucial for overcoming life challenges, including improving students' career planning through digital content in distance learning (Hani et al., 2021).

The importance of life skills learning has been widely recognized in various international studies. For instance, a systematic review highlights that developing life skills helps students overcome challenges in transitioning to the professional world, enhancing their adaptability and self-confidence (Damaruci et al., 2024). Additionally, other studies indicate that integrating life skills education into the elementary school curriculum can foster students' independence, shaping them into creative, productive, and critical-thinking individuals for the future (Utami & Habiby, 2024). Furthermore, applying life skills education to children with special needs in inclusive schools through practical training or visits to places such as factories and markets can help them understand themselves and their potential in life (Nursafitri et al., 2020).

Integrating life skills education into the learning process is a crucial step in preparing excellent human resources capable of competing in the era of globalization (Kantun, 2016). Life skills-based learning significantly influences various aspects of individual development. Studies show that life skills training in traditional food production has encouraged learners to engage in entrepreneurship, increase their income, and continue lifelong learning (Ramadan, 2018). Furthermore, implementing life skills-based learning can enhance students' academic performance in specific subjects (Choirur, 2024).

The application of life skills education in schools provides various significant benefits. Research suggests that integrating digital content-based life skills education effectively enhances students' career planning (Hani et al., 2021). Additionally, implementing life skills learning can cultivate students' entrepreneurial spirit, preparing them to become independent and productive members of society (Murjani et al., 2023). Integrating life skills education into the school curriculum contributes to shaping individuals who are ready to face life's challenges and make positive contributions to society (Gustriani & Kholis, 2024).

Life skills education in Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) plays a crucial role in preparing students (*santri*) to face the challenges of modern life. Implementing life skills programs, such as extracurricular activities and practical skills training, has been proven to enhance students' independence in emotional, economic, intellectual, and social aspects (Shobirin & Putri, 2024). Additionally, career guidance based on life skills, using problem-solving techniques, has been effective in increasing students' entrepreneurial motivation, as applied at the Al-Mawaddah Kudus Entrepreneur Islamic Boarding School (Sa'adah & Azmi, 2022). Life skills education strategies are also implemented at Al Hikmah Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School to promote students' independence through activities such as doing laundry, managing finances, cleaning their rooms, and cooking for themselves (Muttaqin et al., 2022).

Existing life skills programs generally emphasize communication, teamwork, and vocational skills through structured curricula, blended learning, and continuous assessment. However, most studies remain focused on formal school settings and pay insufficient attention to the cultural needs and specific contexts of Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*). Previous research has highlighted the importance of life skills education in enhancing students' independence and entrepreneurial motivation through practical activities and career guidance, yet the integration of a comprehensive and culturally sensitive curriculum remains lacking. This

study aims to develop an innovative framework that holistically integrates academic, social, and vocational aspects tailored specifically for pondok pesantren. The results demonstrate significant improvements in student independence, motivation, and social skills, as well as preparedness to face the challenges of modern life. The impact is expected to strengthen educational quality and serve as a model adaptable to other religious education settings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study examines the life skills-based curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta. The research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in-depth how the curriculum is structured to enhance students' life skills. Data collection is conducted using three main techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews are conducted with pesantren administrators, teachers (ustaz), and students to understand how the curriculum is developed and implemented. Observations are carried out to directly examine life skills-based learning activities, such as entrepreneurship, agriculture, and social skills training. Meanwhile, documentation is used to analyze curriculum documents, activity schedules, and student evaluation reports. To comprehensively assess the impact of life skills learning on students, the researcher employs a Likert-scale questionnaire to ensure the accuracy and validity of the results.

Data analysis is conducted in three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation aims to summarize essential information relevant to the research, while data presentation is done in a descriptive narrative format to make patterns and relationships between data easier to understand. Finally, conclusions are drawn to determine how curriculum structuring supports life skills-based learning. The reliability of the data in this study is ensured through two key aspects: confirmability and dependability. Confirmability ensures that research findings are not influenced by the researcher's subjectivity but are based on valid and objective data. Meanwhile, dependability is maintained by ensuring the consistency of the research process through rechecking the collected data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Life Skills-Based Learning at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta

Life skills-based learning in schools is initiated by the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, who reports directly to the Principal. The Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs ensures the optimal implementation of the curriculum by organizing lesson schedules, assigning teacher responsibilities, and coordinating various school activities. Additionally, teaching material development and program evaluation are conducted systematically to ensure the effectiveness of learning. The Principal grants full authority to the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs to design and implement this program in alignment with the school's vision and mission. With a clear structure and well-planned execution, this program is expected to enhance students' readiness in facing life challenges. These skills encompass emotional, behavioral, and value-based aspects, reflected in increased responsibility, discipline, and self-confidence (Noor, 2015).

Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, the life skills-based learning program covers various essential competencies, such as communication, teamwork, time management, and financial literacy. The primary goal of this program is to equip students with skills that help them adapt to daily life and the workforce. By integrating life skills into the curriculum, students are not only focused on academics but also on developing relevant competencies. This approach ensures they are better prepared to face future challenges and changes. The implementation of life skills education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) also aims to produce graduates who can contribute to economic and social development on a broader scale (As'ad, 2022).

Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, the teaching methods in this program adopt practical approaches, such as real-life simulations, case studies, hands-on projects, and role-playing. These methods allow students to learn through experience, gain a deeper understanding of concepts, and apply skills in real-world situations. Through direct practice in environments resembling the workplace or daily life, students can develop stronger competencies. Additionally, guidance is provided to enhance their critical thinking and communication skills, making them more adaptive in different situations. Furthermore, a science literacy-based approach has been introduced in life skills education to align pesantren learning with modern-day demands (Setiawan et al., 2023).

At Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, life skills-based learning is scheduled every Thursday as a dedicated time for practical skill development. Program evaluation is conducted formatively, with continuous monitoring to assess students' progress. Moreover, direct observation serves as a key evaluation method to determine how well students can apply the skills learned in their daily lives. With a structured monitoring system, the school ensures that life skills learning provides tangible benefits for students and helps them develop managerial and social skills. Additionally, implementing career guidance programs using problem-solving techniques has proven effective in enhancing students' entrepreneurial motivation (Sa'adah & Azmi, 2022).

To ensure the program's effectiveness at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, mentoring teachers are selected based on relevant expertise. This decision is made through school meetings, where task distribution and curriculum development are discussed. These meetings also serve as a platform for evaluating program effectiveness and ensuring that life skills education aligns with its objectives. Task assignments are completed before the new academic year begins, allowing sufficient time to develop or revise the curriculum. This approach helps students develop critical and creative thinking skills in real-life situations, preparing them for productive economic activities after graduation (Fatkhuronji et al., 2015).

Curriculum Structure at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta

The curriculum structure at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta is designed to support life skills-based learning through an integrated, flexible, and comprehensive approach. Each subject incorporates life skills elements to better prepare students for real-world challenges. To ensure effective learning, each class is accompanied by one main teacher and one assistant teacher, providing optimal guidance for students. This approach allows students not only to understand theoretical concepts but also to apply skills in daily life, fostering independence and enhancing their adaptability in both social and professional environments. Additionally, Qur'anic moral-based education in the pesantren contributes to the development of strong character and work ethics among students (Sule & Mainiyo, 2024).

The curriculum design at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta process is carried out collaboratively, involving various stakeholders such as the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, the Principal, main teachers, assistant teachers, and the treasurer. These discussions aim to design an effective curriculum, integrate life skills into learning, and adapt teaching strategies to student needs. With good coordination, the curriculum can provide a more relevant learning experience. Moreover, teaching strategies are structured to be adaptive to students' learning styles, enabling them to better understand and develop life skills and apply them in different situations. Teachers also play a crucial role in shaping students' critical thinking skills, which are an essential part of life skills education (Yasir & Alnoori, 2020).

To achieve the vision and mission of life skills education at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, the curriculum focuses on equipping students with fundamental skills that support self-reliance and

adaptability. The curriculum planning process is completed before the new academic year begins to ensure sufficient time for designing, integrating, and preparing the necessary resources. Life skills education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) not only enhances individual independence but also contributes to community empowerment as a whole (Yulianto et al., 2023).

The curriculum is structured using an interest-based grouping approach, allowing students to choose groups that align with their interests at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta. This method aims to increase student engagement and maximize learning outcomes. The grouping process is conducted at the school office under the guidance of teachers and the coordination of the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, ensuring that each student receives personalized guidance based on their potential. A study conducted at Pondok Pesantren Modern Muhammadiyah Boarding School (PPM MBS) Yogyakarta found that integrating life skills education into the curriculum is effective in developing students' character (Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021). Furthermore, life skills education policies in pesantren-based schools across Indonesia have been successful in enhancing students' competencies in facing real-life challenges (Mufarokah et al., 2021). The curriculum at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta is designed to support life skills-based learning by dividing students into two main categories: Social Skills and Vocational Skills, as detailed below:

Table 1. Life Skill Learning

Category	Description	Skills	Number of Students
Social Skill	Focuses on social and communication skills	Public Speaking	25 siswa
Vocational Skill	Practical skills that support student independence	Cooking, Planting, Sewing, Handicrafts, Sports	25 siswa

The integration of life skills-based learning at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, takes place every Thursday from 10:05 AM to 11:50 AM WIB, with continuous evaluations conducted directly by the students. The curriculum structure supports life skills-based learning, ensuring one main teacher and one assistant teacher per class. The curriculum planning and grouping process involves the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, the Principal, teachers, and the treasurer. Through task and responsibility distribution, students' adaptability, communication, and critical thinking skills are expected to improve. The implementation of environment-based life skills education at Pondok Pesantren Agroecology Biharul Ulum (PPBU) Cisarua, Bogor, has also proven effective in enhancing students' environmental awareness and practical skills (As'ad & Hakim, 2022).

The Impact of Curriculum to Support Life Skill-Based Learning at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz, Yogyakarta.

Curriculum at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz enhances the effectiveness of life skill-based learning through a more structured approach. The vice principal for curriculum affairs and teachers are responsible for adjusting the curriculum, teaching methods, and facilities to align with students' interests and talents. Continuous evaluation ensures that learning remains optimal and meets students' needs. With an appropriate grouping system, students receive more relevant material, making it easier for them to understand and master life skills, both in academic aspects and daily life. Life skills education is also a key focus. Research indicates that life skills education can improve students' adaptability and social competence (Dey et al., 2022).

Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, Curriculum planning is carried out through joint meetings and the preparation of the Education Budget Plan (RAP) to ensure effective grouping strategies. Learning materials are structured more efficiently to be delivered using focused and targeted methods. This

approach not only enhances the efficiency of content delivery but also encourages active student engagement. With a curriculum that aligns with their interests, students are more motivated to learn and participate in every learning activity. Additionally, learning objectives can be evaluated more easily, ensuring that the set targets align with the school's vision and mission. The development of life skills learning models for elementary school students has shown positive results in improving their practical and social skills (Suriswo et al., 2021).

Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta, to ensure the program's effectiveness, evaluations are conducted regularly through weekly assessments and monthly progress reviews. This approach allows the learning program to be continuously improved and adjusted to meet students' needs. Evaluation results show that students are more enthusiastic and actively engaged in life skill-based learning because the material provided is more relevant to their lives. This approach not only helps them develop academic skills but also equips them with essential life skills for the future, preparing them to face various challenges and changes in life. The implementation of life skill-based education in schools has proven to enhance students' ability to deal with daily life challenges (Pangaribuan et al., 2021).

Based on these findings, seven key impact points have been identified through the results of a Likert scale questionnaire completed by 25 students regarding the Curriculum for Supporting Life Skill-Based Learning at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz, Yogyakarta. This questionnaire measures the level of satisfaction and effectiveness of the curriculum in equipping students with relevant life skills. The Likert scale used consists of five levels: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. These results provide insights into students' perceptions of the implemented curriculum.

Table 2. Survey Results

No	Question	Number of Students Responding to the Score					Average Score
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Is learning more structured and efficient?	1	2	5	10	7	3.8
2	Is the curriculum aligned with students' talents and interests?	2	3	6	8	6	3.6
3	Are teaching methods suited to students' talents and interests?	1	3	7	9	5	3.6
4	Are facilities aligned with students' talents and interests?	3	4	8	7	3	3.2
5	Do students understand and master the skills being taught?	1	2	6	10	6	3.8
6	Are students enthusiastic and actively engaged in life skill learning?	0	2	5	12	6	3.9
7	Can life skills provided be applied in daily life?	1	1	4	11	8	4.0
Total							3.7

The analysis results interpret the scores based on the Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5. Scores between 1 and 2.4 are categorized as low (poor), 2.5 to 3.4 as moderate (fair), 3.5 to 4.4 as high (good), and 4.5 to 5 as very high (excellent). The highest average score (4.0) is found in the question regarding the application of life skills in daily life, indicating that students find these skills beneficial. Meanwhile, the lowest average score (3.2) appears in the question related to the suitability of facilities with students' talents and interests, suggesting the need for improvements in this aspect. Overall, the average score ranges from 3.2 to 4.0, reflecting student satisfaction with the curriculum and teaching methods, although there is still room for improvement, particularly in terms of facilities and alignment with students' interests. The total score of 3.7 indicates that students are generally satisfied with the life skill-based curriculum and learning process. This learning approach is considered beneficial in daily life, helping students develop practical skills relevant to the workforce and social life. Additionally, students demonstrate high enthusiasm in the learning process, reflecting the effectiveness of the applied teaching methods. Other contributing factors to this satisfaction include the relevance of the material to

future needs and an interactive and applicable approach. However, some aspects still need improvement to ensure that the life skill-based learning program runs more optimally. One key area for enhancement is the facilities, which should be better tailored to students' talents and interests to maximize the learning process. Additionally, teaching methods need to be refined to be more interactive and relevant to students' needs. The curriculum should be more personalized so that students can more easily understand and master the skills being taught. With improvements in these various aspects, the learning program is expected to be more effective in equipping students to face future challenges.

CONCLUSION

The life skill-based learning program at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta is designed to equip students with essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and time management. The vice principal for curriculum affairs is responsible for planning and implementing the program, including scheduling and teacher coordination. Learning is conducted through practical methods such as simulations and hands-on projects, with formative assessments used to measure student progress. A dedicated schedule every Thursday ensures that life skill practice is carried out optimally. Additionally, teachers are selected through a school meeting process to ensure the program's effectiveness in preparing students for life challenges and the workforce.

The curriculum structure at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz Yogyakarta is designed to integrate life skills into every subject. With a flexible and comprehensive approach, students are guided by a core teacher and an assistant teacher to ensure optimal learning. The curriculum is collaboratively developed by the vice principal for curriculum affairs, the principal, teachers, and the school treasurer to ensure its effectiveness. Students are grouped based on their interests into two main categories: social skills and vocational skills. Learning takes place every Thursday, with continuous evaluations.

The curriculum at Salafiyah Wustha Islamic Centre Bin Baz enhances the effectiveness of life skill-based learning through a more structured approach. It is designed based on students' interests to ensure the relevance of the material and increase their engagement. Regular evaluations indicate that students are more enthusiastic and active in learning, with an average score of 3.7 on the Likert scale. Life skills are considered beneficial in daily life (4.0), although facilities still need improvement (3.2). Overall, the program successfully equips students with skills that support independence and readiness to face real-world challenges, though some areas still require improvement.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

- Author 1 : Concept developer, data collection, and data processing
- Author 2 : Data collection, report drafting
- Author 3 : Methodology and research questionnaire
- Author 4 : Data validation and translator

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