INTEGRATION OF ACADEMIC EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE AT PKBM BUDI LUHUR

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ABSTRACT

Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) are a strategic solution for providing equivalency education. This study aims to analyze the innovative boarding school-based PKBM model at PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto, which integrates academic learning (Packages A, B, and C, PAUD-TK) with spiritual and character development. This study used observation and descriptive qualitative research methods to identify programs, resource management (human resources and finance), and work program management of the institution. The results showed that PKBM Budi Luhur successfully implemented the concept of integrated education, supported by simple yet effective resource management. The head of PKBM applies a transformational leadership style oriented towards religious values. The work program is managed in a participatory manner, applying a continuous improvement (PDCA) approach, and includes superior life skills programs such as basreng-making training. In conclusion, this PKBM is a model of good practice in providing non-formal education based on religious values, producing intelligent, independent, and moral graduates.

Keywords: PKBM, Non-Formal Education, Islamic Boarding School, Character Building

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen and a fundamental pillar in efforts to develop superior human resources with character. However, the reality on the ground shows that various challenges, ranging from economic limitations, geographic barriers, to failures in the conventional school system, often limit people's access to formal education (Directorate General of Non-Formal Education, 2022). This situation demands alternative educational solutions that are flexible, inclusive, and oriented to the needs of local communities. Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) exist as strategic non-formal educational institutions, providing equivalency education services (Packages A, B, and C) and actively playing a role as centers for skills training and community empowerment (Ramdhan, 2025). The development of the PKBM

model has now taken a step further with the emergence of the innovative Islamic boarding school-based PKBM.

This model offers a unique integration of a standard government-regulated academic curriculum with a system of spiritual, moral, and religious character development through a boarding system. This unique boarding system aims to produce graduates who possess not only intellectual prowess but also spiritual depth (akhlaqul karimah) and practical life skills. This integration is important considering the global challenges that demand a balance between mastery of general knowledge and appreciation of religious moral values (Supriatna, 2022; Mulyana, 2021).

PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto is an interesting institution to study as an implementation of this integrated education model. This institution operates under the auspices of the Baitul Mahmud Islamic Boarding School, with a vision that explicitly emphasizes balance: "Excellence in achievement in harmony with noble character." The system implemented at PKBM Budi Luhur promises a holistic learning environment, where students not only pursue an equivalent diploma but also receive comprehensive guidance that shapes their character. This phenomenon triggers the need for an in-depth analysis of how the institution manages its systems, resources, and work programs to achieve this vision. The quality of PKBM services, especially those adopting a boarding model, is largely determined by the effectiveness of management, which includes planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising resources and programs. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the management system and work programs implemented at PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto to identify best management practices to support the success of this Islamic boarding school-based non-formal education.

B. Research Questions

1. How are non-formal (equivalency) education programs integrated with religious education within the boarding school system at PKBM Budi Luhur without compromising the quality of either program?
2. How do human resource and financial management practices support the institutional vision and sustainability of PKBM Budi Luhur, particularly in the context of limited resources faced by non-formal education institutions?
3. What flagship programs and evaluation mechanisms are implemented to ensure the quality, competitiveness, and moral character of graduates at PKBM Budi Luhur?

C. Research Objectives

1. Analyze the types and characteristics of non-formal education programs, both equivalency programs and other additional programs, held at PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto.
2. Identify the resource management system implemented, including human resource management (HR) and institutional financial management.
3. Describe the work program management, including the flagship life skills program and the evaluation system used by the institution for continuous improvement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Concept and Role of Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM)

Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) are a form of non-formal educational unit regulated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. These institutions serve as centers for equivalency education services (Packages A, B, and C), providing a second chance for citizens unable to access or complete formal education. Furthermore, PKBMs also serve as centers for information, skills training, and community empowerment, making them a crucial pillar in realizing inclusive and equitable education(Ramdhan, 2025b).

The strategic role of Community Learning Centers (PKBM) is vital in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to ensuring equitable access to quality education and increasing lifelong learning opportunities for all. The flexibility of PKBM's curriculum and learning methods allows it to adapt programs to local contexts and the specific learning needs of communities, making it an effective solution for addressing school dropout rates and improving functional literacy and life skills (Yusuf, 2024)

B. Boarding School-Based Education Model

The boarding school model refers to an educational system in which students live in an institutional environment under full supervision for the duration of their studies. The integration of this model with Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) creates a holistic environment that combines cognitive (academic), affective (character), and psychomotor (skills) aspects. Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have historically prioritized moral, ethical, and spiritual development through intensive religious instruction.

The Islamic boarding school-based PKBM model is an important innovation that aims to develop individuals with academic competencies equivalent to those of formal school graduates, while also possessing the depth of religious and ethical knowledge (akhlaqul karimah) that are characteristic of Islamic (Ramdhan, 2025b). Balanced. The success of this model depends heavily on the existence of an integrated curriculum, disciplined dormitory management, and the quality of educators who can fulfill the dual role of academic tutors and spiritual guides (kyai/ustadz).

C. Non-Formal Education Management

Non-formal education management presents unique challenges and characteristics that distinguish it from formal school management, particularly related to program flexibility, resource constraints, and a focus on community empowerment. Effective management in PKBM includes adaptive program planning relevant to job market needs, dedicated human resource organization (tutors, administrators, volunteers), and transparent and sustainable financial management. Leadership plays a crucial role in the successful management of community-based learning centers (PKBM). Transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiration, motivation, and the instillation of noble values, is often more effective in community-based and religious institutions like PKBM Budi Luhur.

In addition, aspects of evaluation and continuous improvement, such as the implementation of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) cycle, are very important to ensure that the programs implemented remain relevant, efficient, and achieve

the quality targets set by the institution and the community.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
A. Research Types

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. This descriptive qualitative research was chosen because it aims to describe and analyze in-depth the phenomenon of non-formal Islamic boarding school-based education management, as well as explore the meaning and processes underlying the work system at PKBM Budi Luhur. The data collected is narrative and contextual. explains the what and how of the institution's programs and management. The data collection methods applied include:

1. Observation: Direct observation was carried out to observe daily activities, the learning process in the equivalency class, boarding activities at the boarding school, as well as the implementation of life skills and character building programs.
2. In-Depth Interview: Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with key informants (Head of PKBM, tutors, and administrators) to obtain detailed information regarding policies, leadership style, financial management, and challenges faced.
3. Documentation: Used to collect secondary data in the form of the institution's vision and mission, organizational structure, student statistical data, activity schedules, and work program reports.

This research was specifically conducted at the Budi Luhur Community Learning Center (PKBM) complex in Purwokerto. To ensure the validity of the research data, source triangulation techniques were used, namely comparing and checking information obtained from various different informants on the same topic, for example comparing the views of the PKBM Head, tutors, and students on the effectiveness of the boarding program. Furthermore, data validity was also strengthened through member checking, namely the process of confirming data or interpretation of results with informants to ensure accurate data representation.

B. Population and Sample
1. Population

The population of this study includes all stakeholders involved in the implementation of academic education and spiritual guidance programs at PKBM Budi Luhur. This population comprises institutional leaders, educators, administrative staff, spiritual mentors, and learners who actively participate in both academic and religious activities within the learning center.

2. Sample

This study applies a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on their direct involvement, experience, and knowledge of the integration process between academic education and spiritual guidance (Ramdhan, 2021). The research sample consists of:

a. The head or coordinator of PKBM Budi Luhur
b. Academic instructors (equivalency program teachers)
c. Spiritual guidance mentors or religious educators
d. Administrative staff involved in program coordination

e. Selected students participating in both academic and spiritual programs

These informants are chosen to provide comprehensive perspectives on program planning, implementation, management, and outcomes. The sample size is determined based on data saturation, typically involving 8–15 participants, ensuring that the collected data adequately represent institutional practices and learning experiences.

C. Location and Subject

This research is a qualitative case study conducted with a focus on the operational activities of PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto, which is under the auspices of the Baitul Mahmud Islamic Boarding School. The scope of this research specifically covers three main areas of non-formal Islamic boarding school-based education management, namely:

1. The types and characteristics of educational programs held (equivalency and integrative programs of the boarding school).
2. the resource management system implemented, especially human resource (HR) and financial management.
3. work program management, including the flagship life skill program and the evaluation mechanisms used by the institution.

In this study, the main subject of the study was the Budi Luhur Purwokerto Community Learning Center (PKBM) institution. The researcher acted as a key instrument actively collecting data in the field. Informants or sources involved in data collection were those with in-depth knowledge of the institution's management and operations, including the Head of PKBM (Mr. Kasirun), tutors teaching in equivalency classes, Islamic boarding school administrators responsible for spiritual guidance, and representatives of students (santri) who were direct beneficiaries of this integrated program. Informants were selected using purposive sampling to obtain relevant and rich data.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT
A. Pkbm's Program

PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto is a non-formal educational institution based on the Islamic boarding school model that integrates academic equivalency education, religious instruction, and life skills development within a unified learning environment. The institution provides educational services ranging from early childhood education (PAUD–TK) to equivalency programs Package A (elementary level), Package B (junior secondary level), and Package C (senior secondary level), serving learners from diverse age groups. Currently, PKBM Budi Luhur accommodates a total of 197 students, including children, adolescents, and adult learners who seek alternative educational pathways due to social, economic, or academic constraints.

Academically, PKBM Budi Luhur adopts the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), which emphasizes learner-centered instruction, flexibility in learning outcomes, and contextualized teaching approaches. However, this national curriculum framework is strategically modified to align with the Islamic boarding school culture implemented at the institution. Daily learning activities are complemented by structured religious programs such as Qur'an recitation, memorization (tahfidz), congregational prayers, and spiritual reflection sessions.

This integration enables students to develop not only cognitive competencies but also spiritual awareness, discipline, and moral character. Through this model, education is perceived as a holistic process that nurtures intellectual growth alongside ethical and religious values.

Beyond academic and religious instruction, PKBM Budi Luhur places strong emphasis on life skills education as a means of empowering learners and fostering independence. The institution organizes various practical training programs, including basreng (fried meatball snack) production, sports activities, and community-based entrepreneurship initiatives. These programs are designed to equip students with applicable skills that can support economic self-reliance and encourage an entrepreneurial mindset. Such initiatives are particularly significant for learners from marginalized backgrounds, as they provide alternative opportunities for income generation and social mobility.

The integration of a boarding system further strengthens PKBM's educational ecosystem. Students residing on campus engage in continuous learning experiences that extend beyond formal classroom hours. Daily routines are structured to promote responsibility, cooperation, and self-discipline, creating an immersive environment for character formation. As a result, PKBM Budi Luhur functions not merely as a learning center but also as a comprehensive space for personal, social, and spiritual development. The boarding-based approach facilitates close interaction between educators and learners, enabling consistent mentoring and individualized guidance.

This integrated educational model aligns with contemporary research indicating that non-formal institutions grounded in Islamic boarding traditions contribute positively to students' religiosity and character development. Nugroho (2021) highlights that pesantren-based non-formal education environments are effective in cultivating moral values, religious commitment, and social responsibility, particularly among learners who have limited access to formal schooling. In this context, PKBM Budi Luhur demonstrates how alternative education pathways can be structured to address both academic needs and character-building objectives.

Overall, PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto represents an innovative example of non-formal education that combines academic equivalency programs, spiritual guidance, and life skills training within a boarding framework. By integrating national curriculum standards with religious and practical learning components, the institution offers a holistic educational model that responds to the diverse needs of its learners while promoting intellectual competence, spiritual maturity, and socio-economic empowerment.

B. PKBM's Resources Management

Resource management at PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto encompasses three interconnected dimensions: human resource management, financial management, and institutional collaboration. These components function as the backbone of the institution's operational sustainability and educational quality. The Head of PKBM plays a central leadership role, overseeing 17 active tutors recruited through an internal selection mechanism that prioritizes both academic competence and religious character. This recruitment approach reflects the

institution's commitment to integrating professional qualifications with moral integrity, ensuring that tutors not only possess pedagogical skills but also serve as role models for students in their spiritual and personal development.

Human resource management at PKBM Budi Luhur demonstrates characteristics of transformational leadership. The Head of the institution acts not merely as an administrator but also as a moral guide and motivator, fostering a shared vision among tutors and boarding school administrators. Regular coordination meetings, informal mentoring, and value-based guidance are employed to strengthen team cohesion and institutional commitment. This leadership style encourages tutors to participate actively in decision-making processes and program development, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility toward institutional goals. Such a model aligns with the findings of Mardhotillah and Rahmawati (2023), who emphasize that transformational leadership in non-formal education environments enhances tutor motivation, organizational loyalty, and instructional effectiveness.

Financial management relies primarily on two sources: School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds and student tuition fees (SPP). These funds are allocated to support daily learning operations, maintenance of educational facilities, procurement of teaching materials, and the implementation of boarding school activities. Budget planning is conducted annually and adjusted periodically based on emerging needs, such as infrastructure repair or program expansion (Ramdhan & Pasaribu, 2022). Although financial reporting is still relatively simple, transparency is maintained through internal documentation and routine accountability meetings. The integration of academic and boarding programs requires careful financial prioritization, particularly to balance classroom learning needs with dormitory operations, religious activities, and life skills training. Despite limited resources, the institution strives to optimize expenditures to ensure continuity of services for all learners.

Institutional collaboration represents another strategic pillar of PKBM resource management. Partnerships have been established with local stakeholders, including the Community Health Center (Puskesmas), the police, and the village government. These collaborations support student health services, safety awareness programs, and community empowerment initiatives. Health check-ups and counseling sessions are conducted periodically through Puskesmas cooperation, while coordination with local security authorities helps maintain a safe learning environment. Engagement with village officials facilitates community-based activities and social outreach programs, reinforcing PKBM's role as both an educational and social development center. Such cross-sector partnerships strengthen institutional capacity and expand learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

Program management at PKBM Budi Luhur follows participatory principles involving tutors and boarding school administrators throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Annual work programs are developed collaboratively to ensure alignment with institutional vision and learner needs. Learning methods are intentionally varied, encompassing lectures, group discussions, hands-on practice, and module-based independent study. This multimodal approach accommodates diverse learner backgrounds, ranging from early childhood students to adult participants, while supporting both academic

mastery and practical skill acquisition.

Evaluation mechanisms are designed to be flexible and context-sensitive. Academic assessment includes mid-term examinations (UTS), final examinations (UAS), and standardized tests for Package C learners. In parallel, boarding school evaluations focus on students' religious participation, discipline, and character development. These dual assessment pathways reflect the institution's holistic educational philosophy, which values cognitive achievement alongside spiritual and behavioral growth. Although documentation of quality improvement processes remains informal, continuous reflection is embedded in routine meetings and instructional reviews. Tutors regularly discuss learning outcomes, student challenges, and program effectiveness, leading to incremental adjustments in teaching strategies and institutional practices.

This management model implicitly aligns with the PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Action) cycle commonly recommended in educational quality assurance frameworks. Planning is conducted through annual program formulation, implementation occurs via coordinated instructional and boarding activities, checking takes place through academic and spiritual evaluations, and action emerges in the form of program refinement and resource reallocation. Sari et al. (2022) highlight that PDCA-based management supports sustainable improvement in educational institutions by fostering systematic reflection and adaptive change. While PKBM Budi Luhur has not formally institutionalized this framework, its operational practices demonstrate key PDCA elements in practice.

Overall, PKBM Budi Luhur Purwokerto illustrates how integrated resource management combining transformational leadership, participatory program planning, diversified funding, and multi-stakeholder collaboration—can sustain non-formal education within a boarding school context. Despite constraints in documentation systems and financial capacity, the institution continues to develop adaptive strategies that support academic learning, spiritual growth, and life skills development. This holistic management approach contributes significantly to institutional resilience and positions PKBM as a meaningful alternative education provider within its local community.

V. CLOSURE
A. Conclution

Research on the Budi Luhur Community Learning Center (PKBM) in Purwokerto shows that the institution successfully implements an integrated educational model that combines academic learning with Islamic boarding school-style spiritual development. This integration of the two aspects is harmonious, supported by the institution's well-organized management, despite its modest resources. The PKBM head's transformational leadership style has positively impacted tutor motivation and the students' learning culture. Furthermore, the boarding system implemented fosters character, independence, and religiosity in students through familiarization with religious activities and practical life skills, such as entrepreneurship training. Participatory work program management and the use of the principle of continuous improvement (PDCA) make the institution's activities more focused and responsive to the needs of its participants. Overall, PKBM Budi Luhur can be categorized as a good practice in the implementation

of non-formal education based on religious values.

B. Suggestion

1. Strengthening Management System Documentation

   Institutions need to develop more systematic management documentation, particularly regarding SOPs, program evaluations, and PDCA (Developmental Implementation Cycle) records. Good documentation not only facilitates quality control but is also beneficial if institutions wish to pursue accreditation or broader collaborations.

2. Tutor Competency

   Improvement Regular training for tutors, both in pedagogy, digital literacy, and teaching techniques for the Independent Curriculum, will significantly improve the quality of learning. Competent tutors are key to the success of equivalency education.

3. Diversification of Life Skill Programs

   Existing skills programs can be developed by adding other training relevant to job market needs, such as basic graphic design, digital entrepreneurship, or modern agricultural skills that are appropriate to the local context.

4. Strengthening External Partnerships

   Collaboration with village governments, businesses, and educational institutions will open up more opportunities for assistance, internships, and marketing of students' work. This is crucial for enhancing the sustainability of the PKBM program.

5. Further Research

   An in-depth study of the long-term effectiveness of the Islamic boarding school-based PKBM model is needed. Further research could examine the impact of alumni on the community, factors contributing to success, and managerial challenges that arise as the institution develops.

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