

RESEARCH ARTICLE | THEMATIC EDITION

Reconfiguring *Tarbiyah* for the Market: Subject-Making of Pious and Prosperous Muslims in Digital *Pesantren*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the marketisation of alternative Islamic education in Indonesia through an ethnographic study of Pondok An-Najah, a ‘Digital Islamic Boarding School’ in Yogyakarta. I argue that Pondok An-Najah exemplifies how market forces are reshaping Islamic educational institutions. Marketisation operates at two interconnected analytical levels. First, at the institutional level, neoliberalisation has transformed Islamic educational institutions, particularly in the case of Pondok An-Najah, into hybrid entities, functioning both as a religious educational institution and a sharia outsourcing company that manages *santri* as productive workers. Second, at the individual level, consumerisation becomes a mode of subject-making, as *santri* actively consume the institution’s ‘free education’ and ‘work relationship networks’ to shape themselves into ‘Muslim Winners’—a subjectivity combining Islamic piety with entrepreneurial aspirations. This reconfigures *tarbiyah* into a technology of the self that aligns *santri* aspirations with market ideas and ideals. However, this self-formation comes at a cost: to succeed in this internal market, *santri* must navigate the debt financing behind ‘free education’ and vulnerable patronage relations, which blur the boundaries between religious devotion and economic value extraction in the digital economy.

Keywords: *marketisation; neoliberalism; consumerism; subject-making; digital pesantren; alternative education*

INTRODUCTION

September 2024. That afternoon, I was attending Abi Malik’s (leader of Pondok An-Najah)¹ regular ‘success mindset’ lecture, held after the Dhuhr prayer. I was sitting in the third row with the *santri*, participating alongside them in listening to Abi Malik’s lecture on mindset. At that time, Abi Malik was lecturing behind a podium that stood tall next to the imam’s row. In front of him, the *santri* sat cross-legged with their eyes downcast. Abi Malik then rhetorically asked his *santri* to repeat his words line by line:

“[Repeat after me!] The essence of Pondok An-Najah: Talk about the *Pondok*, talk about



religion. Talk about religion, talk about the future. Talk about the *Pondok*, talk about education. Talk about education, talk about the future. Talk about IT [information technology], talk about the future. Talk about youth, talk about the future. Pondok An-Najah, talk about the future! [...] You must know that. This pondok has a bright future. You must remember that well.”

(Malik, personal notes, 30 September 2024).

Here, a message is being instilled in the *santri* that they—as young Muslims—are building a bright future as ‘Muslim Winners’ who will be experts in technology and successful in the future. Religion, education, and information technology are three inseparable elements for building that “bright future”.

The message in Abi Malik’s lecture, however, reflects the precarious socio-economic conditions that represent the anxiety and hopes of today’s younger generation. Abi Malik, as the leader and founder of Pondok An-Najah, openly acknowledges the failure of the country’s education system as a ‘market opportunity’. First, he highlights how the formal education system in Indonesia—especially universities—is too ‘generalist’ and ‘unfocused,’ leaving graduates confused. He then also highlights the problem of the state’s decreasing role in subsidising higher education (Zulfikar, 2024), which, coupled with the commercialisation of higher education, has led to increasingly expensive tuition fees (Saputra, 2023). This makes quality university education seem like a luxury, out of reach for many people. Furthermore, he often laments the large number of college students who currently struggle to find a job. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that graduates account for 11.28% of the total number of unemployed people in Indonesia, around 842,378 people out of 7,465,599 (Taufiqurrahman, 2024). In other words, Abi Malik is referring to how the state is failing to provide access to affordable higher education and to guarantee the value of the credentials it offers (*ijazah*/degree certificate).

In a context where universities are becoming increasingly unaffordable for many groups of people and bachelor certificates are no longer a guarantee of social mobility, Pondok An-Najah emerges as an ‘alternative product’. This institution offers hope for ‘salvation in this world’ with the promise of ‘free education’ and offers an alternative credential system that is no longer based on degree certificates, but on ‘work relationship networks’. This landscape of job uncertainty and the devaluation of formal credentials plunges today’s youth into structural precarity. It is precisely this precarity—and the profound anxiety it generates—that becomes the precondition for Pondok An-Najah to market its alternative vision of salvation. To achieve this salvation in the world, *santri* are trained through a self-development programme based on the reconfigured *tarbiyah* methodology. Here, *santri* are taught to become Muslim entrepreneurs who can develop themselves as self-governing individuals who can survive in the digital economy. This self-development training is designed so that *santri* actively improve their human capital through their portfolios. However, most *santri* often struggle to build these portfolios due to the rigorous internal competition to obtain projects provided by the institution through its business network.

This article argues that Pondok An-Najah reflects the marketisation of Islamic education, functioning not as the traditional state-legitimised *pesantren* model (Azra et al., 2007), but as a hybrid entity driven by the global market regime (Gauthier, 2020). While formally constituted as a religious educational space, the institution functionally resembles a sharia outsourcing

company that produces and distributes *santri* labour to meet the needs of its business partners. Within this hybrid framework, the institution promotes a ‘spiritual economy’ (Rudnyckyj, 2011) by capitalising on the socio-economic anxieties of the younger generation. It reconfigures *tarbiyah* into a ‘technology of the self’ (Foucault, 1988), creating a competitive internal market where the traditional value of *barakah*/blessings (symbolic capital) is contested and converted into tangible work relationship networks (social capital). Ultimately, this strategy encourages *santri* to voluntarily demonstrate piety and perseverance, effectively aligning religious subjectivity with neoliberal imperatives of prosperity and competitiveness.

METHOD

To understand how the neoliberal doctrine underlying market-driven policies is internalised and negotiated in the daily practice of Islamic character education at Pondok An-Najah, an ethnographic study was conducted. Fieldwork was done intensively over a period of five months (August – December 2024) at Pondok An-Najah Yogyakarta.²⁾ I positioned myself as a participant observer. Although I was not formally enrolled as a *santri*, I was granted permission by the institution to reside within the *pesantren* complex and actively engage in their daily routines. This involvement allowed me to directly experience the rhythm of life at Pondok An-Najah, build rapport with the *santri*, and observe the relational dynamics between the *santri*, the administrators, SPA (*santri penerima Amanah*)³⁾, and the main authority figure (Abi Malik).

Primary data was collected through two main techniques. First, I was involved in various formal and informal activities at Pondok An-Najah such as (but was not limited to): attending regular *tarbiyah* sessions, participating in activities with *santri*, and engaging in informal conversations in communal spaces, rooms, and during breaks. These observations focused on recording the practices of self-discipline, the linguistic repertoire related to the *santri*'s self-development, and the dynamics of competition and collaboration among *santri*. Second, I conducted in-depth interviews with 12 key informants selected purposively. Informants included *santri* from various batches (to see progression), three outstanding *santri* who were close to the authorities, six ordinary *santri*, and three administrators. These interviews were semi-structured, focusing on the participants' emic understandings of their motivations, the meaning of self-development for them, their career and spiritual aspirations, and their perceptions of the role of Abi Malik and Pondok An-Najah's institution as sites of self-development towards aspirations of success.

Data analysis was conducted iteratively, meaning that the data collection and analysis processes ran simultaneously. Field notes and interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. I conducted open coding to identify patterns emerging from the data. These patterns were then categorised and conceptually linked to the theoretical framework that had been constructed, particularly regarding ‘self-technology’ (Foucault, 1988; McGushin, 2014; Rose, 1999), ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 2013; Rey, 2014), and ‘spiritual economy’ (Rudnyckyj, 2011), to construct an argument about the reconfiguration of *tarbiyah* within the logic of Islamic Market.

Finally, research ethics are also a major concern in this study. I followed applicable research ethics principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009; Kleden-Probonegoro, 2012; Pösö, 2021). Informed consent was obtained from all informants prior to the interviews. Informants were given an explanation of the research objectives, the

benefits of the research, and their right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time. Finally, based on various discussions with several key informants, it was decided to take a double-anonymity approach, to anonymise all informants' and institutions, in order to prevent harm or avoid conflicts that could cause harm to the informants in the future (Sadeghi & Smith, 2024).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Field: Market, Institution, and Authority

The Pondok An-Najah Milieu: Between Islamic Boarding Schools and Sharia Companies

From the surface, Pondok An-Najah is generally an alternative educational institution focused on job training, with a dual focus combining the Islamic boarding school model for learning religion (as soft skills) and the information technology boot camp model (as technical hard skills). Since the focus is on job training, Pondok An-Najah has an age limit for applicants, namely 18-23 years old. This pondok specifically has a social vision of 'poverty alleviation' through free education, especially for *santri* who choose to enrol in the regular programme. In a year, Pondok An-Najah can open its registration clusters two to three times. For each registration cluster, the administrators claim that the number of applicants can reach 40-60 prospective *santri*. This fact is cited as evidence of Pondok An-Najah's popularity as an alternative educational institution.

Operationally, Pondok An-Najah is managed like a sharia company with a four-division structure (the '4B' system) that forms a closed-loop capital circuit (see Figure 1), or what Abi Malik openly refers to as the 'Charity Machine' and the 'Money Machine'. *Baitullah* (the mosque) functions as the parent entity (holding company) of this circuit, which visualizes the institution's internal market through two main flows of value. First, the green arrows denote the flow of financial capital encompassing both external revenue stream—such as social fund inputs raised through *Baitul Maal* (a philanthropic fundraising initiative) and business profits generated by *Baitul Mu'amalah* (a commercial IT business unit named Griya Tekno)—and internal redistributions, such as operational costs, free education funding, and pocket money (*ihsan*). This accumulated capital directly funds the operations of *Baitul Quran* (the education division). Second, the blue arrows represent the movement of human capital, tracing the recruitment and supply of *santri*. Here, *Baitul Quran* is tasked with producing skilled workers through a six-month intensive education programme. These newly formed workers—also known as *Santri Penerima Amanah* (SPA)—are then reabsorbed into the 4B ecosystem as part of their 2.5-year service (*khidmat*). They are subsequently deployed to external business partners and within internal management as a 'repayment' for having been provided with 'free' education and career opportunities. In other words, the narrative of 'full scholarships' or 'free education' is not merely a religious social mission to 'improve the welfare of the people', but also a business mission to educate *santri* as an initial investment to produce its own workforce, which can later generate profits for the institution as a 'product'.

This process of value investment can be seen as a mechanism of governmentality, which subjectivises *santri* through strict discipline to shape their skills and morals, assesses their abilities and categorises them according to the economic utility—of their bodies (or labour) (Foucault, 1977, 1988). Here, *santri* are trained, supervised, and assessed by *musyirif* (mentors) to develop technical

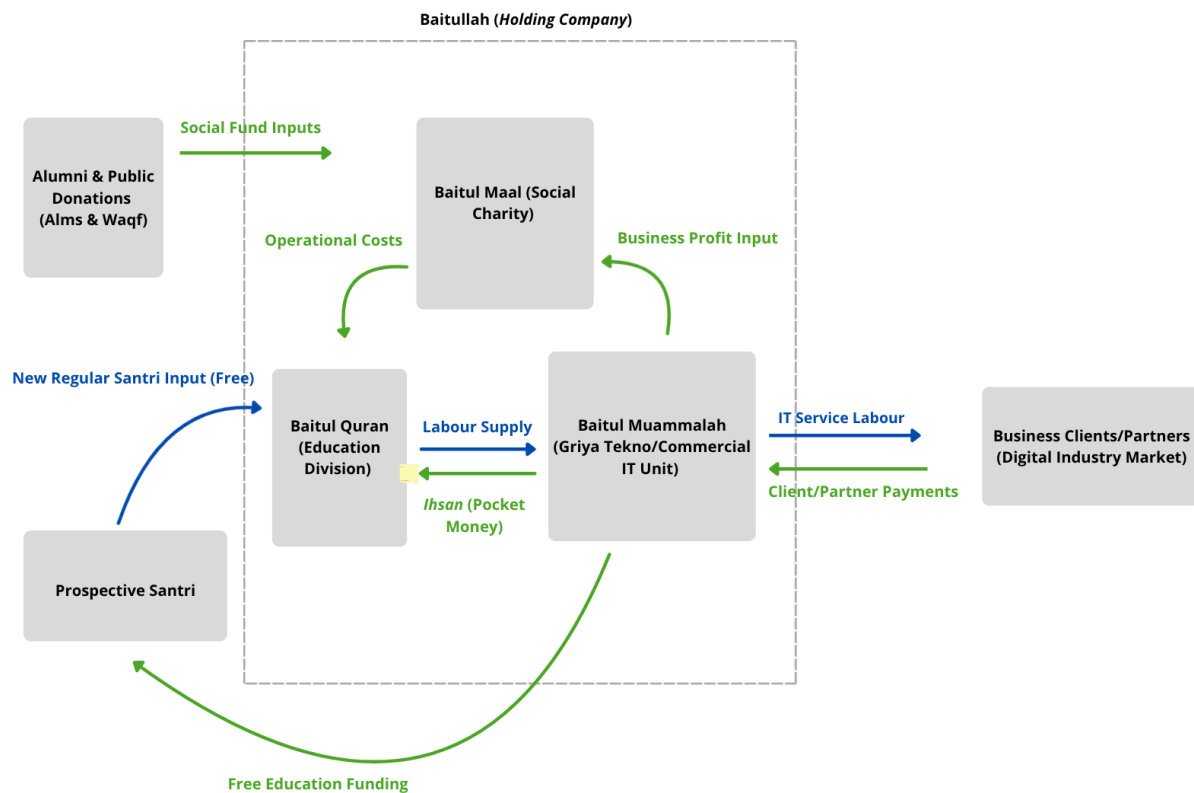


Figure 1. The closed-loop capital circuit and 4B structural system of Pondok An-Najah.

and non-technical skills. In this setting, the *musyrif* assess and monitor their daily discipline as a benchmark for their *adab* (moral conduct) qualifications. This assessment forms the basis for deploying *santri* workers across the 4B divisions, entrusting them with duties (*amanah*) and sending them as interns to business partners, which has become a goal for the majority of *santri*.

Furthermore, the 4B system also serves as an arena of contestation for the *santri*—particularly the SPA who have completed their six-month active study period. In this arena, they strive to accumulate cultural capital objectified in the form of a “portfolio”, which is then converted into the social capital of Pondok An-Najah in the form of a “network of working relationships” (Bourdieu, 2013; Grusendorf, 2016; Rey, 2014). This portfolio serves as an alternative credential pathway, replacing formal qualifications, containing a record of the *santri*’s digital projects as the primary lever for entering the labour market.

In my observation, there is also a process of categorisation that manifests in structured division of labour known as *amanah khidmat* (service mandates), where *santri* are stratified based on their perceived utility. Those demonstrating high intellectual or technical aptitude are retained within the internal pedagogical structure as mentors, tutoring juniors in either religious studies or IT skills in the Baitul Quran (the education division). *Santri* with strong communicative competencies are channelled into the Baitul Maal team, serving as a ‘charity machine’ for social charity and fundraising. Meanwhile, those possessing specialised market-ready skills are integrated into the ‘money machine’—entrusted with remote work and internships provided by business

partners through Griya Tekno as a sharia-based outsourcing intermediary. Finally, the majority of the remaining santri are assigned the foundational maintenance of the institution. Their labour is directed toward the operational and domestic upkeep of the Baitul Quran and Baitullah, including security (*kesantrian*/student affairs), supervision (guidance), cleaning, and kitchen duties to maintain the pondoks's daily subsistence.

Despite this systematic allocation, not all 4B divisions hold equal value from the perspective of the *santri*. Most *santri* aspire to enhance their technical information technology skills to realise their ambition of becoming 'Muslim Winners' in the workforce. Therefore, roles within the Baitul Mu'amalah (Griya Tekno) and Baitul Maal (Social Charity/fundraising), as well as position as mentors in the Baitul Quran (the education division), or being sent on internships to business partners are highly coveted, as they are perceived to augment the quality of human capital (especially IT skills) for success within the digital economy. On the other hand, if their qualifications assessed during the 6-month intensive study period are deemed insufficient, they will be assigned to operational and domestic work. Consequently, *santri* tend to avoid operational and domestic duties, as such roles hinder their capacity to cultivate the technical and non-technical skills needed to flourish in the arena.

Crucially, the struggles in this arena is inherently unequal as *santri* entering with prior technical skills—a form of cultural capital—hold a distinct advantage. Since the six-month intensive training often fails to adequately prepare all *santri*, many are relegated to operational tasks rather than their preferred IT roles. However, Pondok An-Najah systematically frames this structural shortcoming as an individual failure—a challenge that the *santri* are expected to overcome through personal resilience. Consequently, some *santri* internalise this as a 'natural'

Table 1. Summary of Education and Learning Pathways in Education Contracts

STAGE	TIME (MONTHS)	ACTIVITY / PROCESS	EXPECTED OUTPUT / RESULTS
INPUT	0	MOS (Masa Orientasi Santri / Santri Orientation Period)	Preparation period before entering Pondok An-Najah.
VALUE INVESTMENT PROCESS	1 - 3	<i>Tarbiyah</i> (Character and spiritual development)	Internalisation of the ideal santri characteristics: Pious, Professional, Independent, and Charitable.
	4 - 6	<i>Basic Skills</i> (<i>Basic vocational skills training</i>)	Mastery of basic technical skills based on the chosen IT major.
VALUE EXTRACTION PROCESS	7 - 12	Internal <i>khidmat</i> (Service within the internal environment)	Serving and contributing to various managerial affairs of the Pondok.
	13 - 15	Internships with Business Partners or continuing internal <i>khidmat</i>	Gaining work experience in the professional industry and contributing financially to Pondok An-Najah.
	16 - 36	Working in Business Units or pursuing a Career Path (Staff to Manager)	Making a tangible contribution to assist the development of business units and gaining career experience at Pondok An-Najah.
OUTPUT	37 onwards	Implementation of Long-Term Vision and Mission	Becoming the Big Family: Building Business Units; Building the Pondok; Building the Mosque; and Developing the <i>Pondok</i> area.

process of self-discipline, viewing their marginalisation simply as preparation for the competitive and harsh demands of the job market.

To legitimise and strengthen this governance structure, the idea of an internal market is formalised through binding educational contracts for *santri*. In Table 1, I have summarized the two phases of education at Pondok An-Najah: the Value Investment Process and the Value Extraction Process.

Based on the table above, an unbalanced ratio is evident. Six months of education followed by 30 months of service or work. This ratio shows how the Pondok An-Najah institution tends to exhibit characteristics of a company that provides labour (outsourcing), rather than being seen merely as a purely educational institution.

This structure is then enforced through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and a letter of commitment as an education contract. This education contract is quite transparent in outlining the key points that *santri* will receive from the free education facilities and the penalties for violations. For the second point, if a *santri* is expelled, the reasons for expulsion, sanctions, the amount of fines, and so on will be discussed internally before sanctions are imposed. Meanwhile, if a *santri* resigns within three years of signing the MoU, the *santri* will be charged an education fee of IDR 1,500,000 per month, multiplied by the length of the *santri's* stay at Pondok An-Najah. This section is also clarified by the affirmation that this compensation is the right of Pondok An-Najah, as the manager of *infaq/waqf*, in accordance with the initial agreement, if the *santri* does not complete their education and service period. On top of that, there is a clause stating the institution's right to take or seize goods as collateral for tuition fees if deemed necessary, as a guarantee of the *santri's* commitment to replace/pay fines in instalments. This fine mechanism serves as a control mechanism to ensure the stability of the internal market production circuit at Pondok An-Najah. This binding contract, supported by the threat of financial risk, can be seen as a technology of governmentality that mimics the Panopticon's function, ensuring that *santri* voluntarily submit to and remain within the system for the purposes set by the institution (Foucault, 1977).

Within this disciplinary framework, *santri* simultaneously occupy the roles of both 'consumers' and 'products.' They actively consume the institution's free education as a site for self-development to secure future economic prosperity. Simultaneously, they also act as 'products', as the utility of their labour is extracted to fuel the institution's charity and money machines. This creates a cyclical rationality: the accumulation of the *santri's* human capital directly becomes the institution's profit, which expands the capacity to recruit more *santri*.

However, from the perspective of the *santri*, the institution's systematic allocation of their labour is not universally perceived as mere exploitation. By situating themselves within a broader context of socio-economic precarity—where investing four years and substantial capital in a university degree no longer guarantees future employment—many *santri* view Pondok An-Najah's offering as a pragmatic alternative to the failing formal education system. They actively choose to endure the rigorous extraction process, recognising the institution's network of working relationships as a strategic step to secure their economic success in the future.

In the next section, this article will elaborate on this issue by referring to the figure of Pondok An-Najah's leader as the central figure who established the institution. His emergence serves as a response to the growing anxiety and hopes of the young Muslim generation regarding the recent precarious socio-economic condition in Indonesia.

“The Market for Salvation?”: Charismatic Authority Amid Youth Precarity

When discussing Pondok An-Najah, it is essential to consider the figure of Abi Malik and how his religious authority works. It is important to provide an overview of the appeal of the kind of “salvation” that he offers through his institution and how his ‘salvation product’ can be attractive to his *santri*. As the leader, he can be regarded as the highest authority in overseeing all aspects of education at Pondok An-Najah, similar to the figure of a *kyai* in a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) institution. He is known to his *santri* as the founder, owner, boss, father figure, and even a patron who connects them to professional networks. However, he tends to avoid being called a *kyai*, so his *santri* more often call him *Abi* (Arabic for Father).

To understand Abi Malik’s religious authority, it is useful to contrast it with the traditional authority of a *kyai* within the Weberian framework (Epley, 2015; Joosse, 2014). In *pesantren* culture, the *kyai* is the most important element of the *pesantren* itself. Following Zamakhsyari Dhofier’s (2011) definition of the title *kyai* as a designation for scholars from traditional Islamic groups linked through an intellectual chain, or “*sanad keilmuan*”: “A *kyai* does not gain status and fame solely because of his personality. He becomes a *kyai* because someone taught him” (p. 100 emphasis added). However, unlike most traditional *pesantren* that rely on the legitimacy of traditional *kyai* authority, which emphasises the networks of scholarly transmission, Abi Malik places more emphasis on more pragmatic values, such as his successful entrepreneurial experience. His ability to translate his personal success as an entrepreneur is the foundation of his authority to teach. As an entrepreneur, Abi Malik built Pondok An-Najah as a ‘product’ that offers solutions to the socio-economic problems he sees in the world of education.

In addition, another key advantage that some *santri* consider important and which substantiates his authority is his ‘network of working relationships’. This last point is an important source of his authority, recognised by the *santri*. In comparison, just as the intellectual chain of the *kyai* functions as social capital in traditional settings, Abi Malik offers a network of working relationships as a new form of social capital. Through the institution of Pondok An-Najah, *santri* actively compete for access to this network, treating it as a channel for *barakah*—which functions as their ultimate symbolic capital.

In Islamic tradition, *barakah* is a complex concept. Semantically, the term comes from the Arabic root word ‘b-r-k’ which is closely related to concepts such as prosperity, growth, abundance, wealth, improvement, and other related concepts such as health and fertility (Nigst, 2024). Loren Nigst notes that *barakah* is linked to those seen as ‘superior’ with close ties to God, and people seek it from these sanctified individuals to stabilize life’s uncertainties (pp. 55-60). In *pesantren* culture, this hope for *barakah* is called *ngalap berkah* (*tabarruk*) to the *kyai*, manifesting in traditions like *khidmat*, where *santri* serve the *kyai*’s needs to gain God’s blessings through the *kyai* as an intermediary (Habibi, 2024). However, Abi Malik offers something different and with a more pragmatic approach. The goal is no longer to seek the value of ‘blessings’ in an abstract doctrine, but to seek blessings in the form of economic benefits that can be obtained from his network of working relationships.

As a charismatic religious authority, the case of Abi Malik is not an isolated case that emerged from a vacuum. This phenomenon has been identified by several scholars as the ‘Market Islam’ phenomenon, which identifies as the rise of Islam in the contemporary era through the emergence of various preachers-cum-trainers of ‘materialistic piety’ in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The

emergence of this new type of cleric seemed to be a response to the discourse of mysticism and asceticism in Islam at that time, which was considered a reflection of Islam's decline from global civilisation. Examples of charismatic clerics who emerged from this era include Aa Gym, Jeffry Al-Buchory, and Arifin Ilham (Kailani, 2018; Njoto-Feillard, 2018). François Gauthier (2020) argues that the emergence of these charismatic religious authorities is the result of a structural shift in the global market regime that has eroded traditional and rational-legal religious authorities whose legitimacy is no longer guaranteed by tradition and rules, but rather by public opinion. He also argues that the rise of charismatic authority aligns with the ethos of consumerism that emphasises experience and authenticity, ultimately offering religion as a product of salvation in a world based on experience, emotion, and 'individual needs' (Gauthier, 2020, pp. 218-221). This religious charismatic authority also offers a new promise of salvation that focuses on worldly salvation, such as health, relationships, self-improvement, and even prosperity (Gauthier, 2020, 222; see also Illouz, 2008).

This article will now turn to how Abi Malik constructs and presents his life background as a 'gift' that he wants to share with his *santri*.⁴⁾ In an interview, he told me that he graduated from a major Islamic university in Yogyakarta with a degree in information technology. He also recounted that before establishing Pondok An-Najah, he founded a small company focused on programming projects that employed interns (vocational school and college students). Seeing the potential offered by the information technology business field and armed with his experience working at a *pesantren* in Yogyakarta, he then started Pondok Coding in 2014. After seeing the high interest among applicants who also wanted to study subjects other than programming, he decided to establish Pondok An-Najah with additional subjects of multimedia and digital marketing in 2016, which continues to this day. He also shared his pride in the journey of developing Pondok An-Najah; from starting with a small building, to having built a three-storey mosque and providing endowment houses for its administrators, as a testament to his relentless efforts.

This success story—which serves as 'living evidence'—is often used by Abi Malik as material for his sermons. In several of his sermons, he repeatedly recounts his struggles from difficult economic conditions to his current success. From someone who ranked 39th in his class and was looked down upon by many people, he has experienced significant changes. He moved from one rented house to another, starting from a place costing 150,000 rupiah per month and progressing to one costing two million rupiah per month. Despite lacking formal *pesantren* education, he was able to build the current Pondok An-Najah as large as it is now. He also managed to build a house, buy a car, and register for the Umrah pilgrimage. He repeatedly shared his story in the lectures. From his life experiences, Abi Malik crafts the 'from zero to hero' narrative, proving that someone without a *pesantren* background or academic gifts, can serve as a model of success for his *santri*. He claims that with hard work, an entrepreneurial spirit, and devotion to God, one can achieve success in this world. Through Pondok An-Najah, Abi Malik offers his expertise to lead his *santri* towards 'safety in this world/worldly security' in the form of economic prosperity for the current generation of young Muslims.

His rise as a charismatic figure offering salvation aligns with the socio-economic anxiety of today's youth, which he sees as a market opportunity. He envisions his institution focusing on 'alleviating poverty' among Muslims, aiming to provide an alternative to costly universities with rising tuition fees, which he describes as 'unfocused':

“[...] we see that the education system in Indonesia is too much, so that the youth are confused, ‘what should we do?’ In reality, the work isn’t that difficult, so I concluded that we should just learn religion and one skill. [...] The next concern is the high cost of education. We now have many universities that are regionally autonomous and not subsidised, which actually makes the costs quite high, so that people’s opportunities to change [become difficult]; people change mostly through education”

(Malik, personal interview, 11 November 2024).

He points to problems arising from Law No. 12 of 2012, Article 65, which regulates university autonomy in Indonesia. This law has contributed to a declining state role in subsidising higher education (Zulfikar, 2024). Combined with the commercialisation of higher education, this has driven the sharp increase for tuition fees (Saputra, 2023), making quality education inaccessible. This motivated him to establish a free education programme at Pondok An-Najah.

From free education, the next point concerns the ‘benefits’ offered by the education programme. Abi Malik offers *barakah* that addresses the anxiety and hopes of the current young generation, through the network of work relationships from Pondok An-Najah. During one of his lectures to the *santri*, he said:

“Think of yourselves as college graduates. [...] Think about it, friends, it’s tough out there looking for work. I don’t want the *santri* of Pondok An-Najah to be like that. I hope that people from outside will come [to Pondok An-Najah] to offer jobs. [...] big companies are waiting in line [to recruit *santri*]. That’s right, look at [Leading Travel Unicorn], [Enterprise Accounting Software Corp]”

(Malik, personal notes, 27 August 2024).

In fact, the working relationships offered extend far beyond those two companies. The institution’s network comprises nearly twenty business partners spanning in several key sectors: telecommunications and cloud infrastructure, digital creative agencies, corporate retail, and national philanthropic organisations. This network is not only offered personally by Abi Malik to his favoured *santri*, but is also systematically channelled through Griya Tekno, the *pesantren*’s affiliate for work placements. For the *santri*, this network functions as a tangible form of *barakah* that they actively compete for, as access to these professional connections allows them to build their digital portfolios and secure their future economic success.

Ultimately, Abi Malik’s charismatic authority reflects a synthesis of the traditional kyai and the modern CEO. His legitimacy stems from his ability to monopolise the solutions to structural precarity—such as affordable education and direct access to employment networks— that the state has yet to fully provide.

“Pious and Prosperous”: Subjectivication and Long Struggle for Success Reconfiguring Tarbiyah as “Technologies of Self”

Essentially, the subjectivication process at Pondok An-Najah is to fundamentally reconfigure Islamic religious education, also known as *tarbiyah*. Using the framework of governmentality, particularly in relation to how Islamic ethical knowledge and neoliberal norms are translated into *tarbiyah* teaching practices (Rose, 1999). This article will examine how *tarbiyah* is shaped

into a technology of the self that aligns *santri* subjectivities with neoliberal norms required by the market (Foucault, 1988, 2008).

In my observation, Pondok An-Najah's *tarbiyah* has a hybrid curriculum that teaches Islamic ethical values with 'success mindset' learning that instils moral values to encourage the productivity of *santri* as self-entrepreneurs. On the surface, their *tarbiyah* is designed similarly to learning in other Islamic boarding schools. For example, Pondok An-Najah uses several Islamic scientific books to teach *santri* the basics of Islamic science. For *Fiqh* (Islamic law), they use the book *Khulashah Minhajul Muslim*; for *Adab & Akhlak*, they use the books *Akhlaqul lil Banin*, *Al-Akhlaqul lil Banat*, and *Ta'lim Muta'allim*; and for *tahsin* (the science of reading the Qur'an), they use the book *Matan Tuhfatul Athfal*.⁵ To teach these Islamic books, they generally use the *bandongan*⁶ method; however, unlike traditional pesantren, the teachers are not *kyai* but selected *santri* whose knowledge is considered sufficient to teach as *ustadz*. In addition, the *santri* also have *halaqah* activities that require them to memorise the Quran with a target of memorising three *juz* (chapters) before they graduate.

On the surface, the content of the *tarbiyah* discusses issues of self-development, teaches how to become a holistic and ideal ethical Muslim. However, it is also quite common for the material to convey a practical vision and aim as a moral guide for *santri*, especially regarding the value of 'hard work' to encourage *santri* productivity. To illustrate, the following is an excerpt from field notes on a *tarbiyah* class with Syarif as a *tarbiyah* mentor,⁷ who was reciting a *hadith*:

"A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, and both are in goodness. Strive for what is beneficial to you, seek help from Allah, and do not be weak. If something befalls you, do not say, 'if only I had done such-and-such, then such-and-such would have happened.' Rather, say, '*qoddarallah wa maa syaa fa'ala* (Allah has decreed this, and whatever He wills will surely come to pass).' Indeed, the word "if" opens the door to the deeds of Satan [in HR. Ahmad 9026 & HR. Muslim 6945]."

(Syarif, personal note, 1 October 2024).

After reciting the hadith, Syarif continued,

"So we are required to strive, required to make an effort, because if we do not strive, we will not receive Allah's help. [...] What does that mean? Strive first, then have *tawakal*. This means that from this evidence, we [here] are required to make an effort and leave the results to Allah. [...] That is why, you all [here], we are guided to be motivated, why? To take action, to at least make an effort, because if we do not make an effort, Allah will not change our lives. What is the argument? *walladzîna jâhadû fînâ lanahdiyannahum subulanâ, wa innallâha lama'al-muhsinîn*: only those who are sincere will Allah give guidance and help. That's why from the beginning I reminded you to understand well what I am saying."

(Syarif, personal note, 1 October 2024).

The material delivered in the aforementioned class is an example of the instillation values that Syarif refers to as SDSP (*sadar diri dan sadar posisi* / self-awareness and position awareness). This process operates as the technologies of the self; it does not function through overt force, but

rather through suggestions rooted in *doxa* (unquestioned common sense in Islamic tradition). Consequently, the cited statement can be understood as the translation of Islamic theology into a discourse of power, deployed to encourage the productivity of *santri* (Rose, 1999).

It is important to note that the theological discourse of ‘helping Allah’s religion’ or striving as a ‘strong believer’ is not unique to Pondok An-Najah. It is a common and widespread narrative in broader Islamic tradition (Atia, 2012; Hoesterey, 2016). However, what gives this common discourse a particular neoliberal inflection is the institution’s specific configuration. By embedding these traditional ethics within a hybrid educational and sharia outsourcing structure, Pondok An-Najah repurposes general religious piety into a specific disciplinary tool that directly fuels its internal market and labour extraction. This spirit of productivity is closely related to the process of improving the quality of the *santri*’s human capital, which ultimately leads to the extraction of value during their period of *khidmat* as a ‘product’. However, the mechanism does not involve coercion alone, but rather ‘soft power’ which emphasises self-discipline in line with the subjectivity of the *santri* themselves, who receive Pondok An-Najah’s education with aspirations to achieve success in the future.

This resonates with the findings of Daromir Rudnyckyj (2011, p.131), which demonstrates how workers of state-owned enterprises are instilled with moral values that emphasise how their work is an act of worship. In other words, the above events show how the marketisation of Islamic boarding schools in the case of Pondok An-Najah has objectified Islamic spirituality for purposes in line with neoliberal norms that emphasise the idea of the market as a social imagination (Gauthier, 2020).

Beyond functioning as a technology of the self, this ethical curriculum also serves as a strict assessment tool. As Syarif explains, a *santri*’s behaviour during *tarbiyah* directly determines whether they will be recommended to the professional work network:

“I say this to them [*santri*] about *tarbiyah*, the mentors will look at your behaviour in *tarbiyah*. Whether you like to lie, or you like to run away, if you have a history of that, the mentors will not invite you [to job projects]. Others will get a job later on, you will get nothing, so you will just be unemployed. But if you are well organised, have a good attitude, behave well, and are serious, you can be recommended by the mentors”

(Syarif, personal interview, 4 December 2024).

The explanation might suggest that governmentality or institutional power is repressive and uses *santri* for its own ends. However, this article emphasises that cultivating morality is actually a governmentality mechanism aimed at regulating them so they can maximise their utility or potential and achieve success (McGushin, 2014). We must remember that power is not only suppressive, but also serves to improve the welfare of the population (Dean, 2009; Li, 2007; Rose, 1999). Here, *santri* are encouraged to become productive and calculative subjects, capable of maximising their own utility as self-entrepreneurs. Self-entrepreneurs in the sense of *homo economicus*, as Foucault said, “...as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings.” (2008, pp. 215-237).⁸⁾

Ultimately, *tarbiyah*—in the context of Pondok An-Najah—serves not only as a site for teaching Islamic knowledge but also used as a technology of the self and a strict surveillance mechanism for assessing the moral conduct of *santri*. The aim is to instil and measure the value

of *amanah* (trustworthiness). Within the digital economy—the institution’s primary site for capital accumulation—particularly in remote outsourcing and off-site internships where direct supervision is unfeasible, the unpredictability of *santri* is the institution’s greatest vulnerability. Therefore, the virtue of *amanah*—as highlighted by Syarif’s criteria—serves as a crucial safeguard and a direct assessment of how accountable *santri* will be when handling these external roles. In other words, the *tarbiyah* curriculum evaluates *amanah* to ensure *santri* reliably execute work projects and return financial contributions to Pondok An-Najah. This demonstrates how the integration of Islamic ethics with market logic occurs through the reconfiguration of *tarbiyah*: piety is rationalised into a calculated indicator, exchanged as professional credibility for both the institution’s profit and the *santri*’s own human capital.

The Transformation of “Ngalap Berkah”: The Dynamics of Struggle for Working Relationships

Through observation, the majority of the *santri* choose Pondok An-Najah mainly for pragmatic reasons—valuing education as a path to future economic success. The institution offers a network of work relationships as an alternative credential, encouraging *santri* to adopt the principle of S.A.P (“Spirit of Learning, *Adab*, Portfolios”) to measure success. Mentors, supervisors, and alumni assess *santri* to secure projects and internships. However, to achieve their goals, *santri* must first demonstrate obedience and contribute their labour during *khidmat*, which resembles the *pesantren* tradition of seeking blessings (*ngalap berkah*). Instead of spiritual blessings, *khidmat* here provides working relationships that can lead to advantageous positions, enhancing the *santri*’s human capital.⁹⁾

However, at Pondok An-Najah, “*ngalap berkah*” does not manifest as service to the personal needs of Abi Malik as the leader—or any individual—but in a tradition of service where *santri* are directed to work and develop the institution as a means (*wasilah*) to “help the religion of Allah”. For example, this principle was conveyed directly by Abi Malik in his lecture using Surah Muhammad verse 7:

“[Everyone], there is no other way to be successful than to get closer to [God] who owns that success. There is no other way to become wealthy except by getting close to [God] who owns that wealth. Allah has explained: ‘be close to Me, and I will be close to you; help My religion, and I will help your life’. *‘in tanshurullâha yanshurukum wa yutsabbit aqdâmakum*’ [Q.S. Muhammad, 7] [Meaning: O you who believe! If you help Allah’s religion, He will help you and strengthen your position]. This principle applies, friends, that by helping Allah’s religion, Allah will help you”

(Malik, personal note, 23 September 2024).

While invoking Quranic verses to encourage hard work is a common discourse in traditional Islamic education, Pondok An-Najah’s specific institutional configuration gives it a particular neoliberal inflection. Here, this Quranic verse functions as a technology of governmentality, providing moral legitimacy for the extraction of *santri* labour during their *khidmat* period. Rather than relying on coercion, the institution utilises the unquestioned authority (*doxa*) of the verse to align the religious duty of ‘helping Allah’s religion’ with the *santri*’s habitus—their internal aspirations for future success amidst structural precarity (Yasih & Hadiz, 2023). Consequently, the harsh realities of service are reframed as a sacred investment; *santri* voluntarily offer their

labour, trusting that their pious devotion will be ultimately rewarded with divine *barakah* that translates into valuable professional connections.

Within this arena, the promised network of working relationships functions as crucial social capital. However, access to this network is not merely administrative; it is institutionally consecrated as a reward for piety and obedience. To quantify their obedience, the institution employs a rigorous surveillance mechanism. Every aspect of a *santri*'s daily life—from academic performance to worship attendance and work discipline—is continuously monitored by *musyrif* and reported via the institution's WhatsApp group, which includes institutional leaders. Ultimately, these daily monitoring reports are transformed into statistical metrics by the Human Resources Department to calculate a *santri*'s 'spiritual worthiness' and professionalism. This data serves as the rational basis for determining whether a *santri* is deemed sufficiently pious to receive an 'amanah project'—an institutional label framing access to professional networks. As a result, *santri* compete for this institutional recognition—a form of symbolic capital (*barakah*). This exhausting struggle categorises *santri* based on their qualifications, reflecting an internal market competition driven by neoliberal doctrines of adaptability.

The story of Hanif serves as an ideal example used in Pondok An-Najah's branding, illustrating a personal journey of transformation through perseverance. Abi Malik often includes Hanif's story in his 'Success Mindset' classes, emphasising the importance of diligence and obedience in seeking blessings. Despite his reputation as a top *santri*, Hanif's path was challenging. He shared that he endured a dark period, during which he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and had to abandon his dream of becoming a machine technician. He viewed Pondok An-Najah as a second chance, with Abi Malik as a father figure instrumental to his current success. His decision to join Pondok An-Najah was personal, aiming to forge an alternative career or a 'second life.' At the outset, Hanif lacked basic habits, technical skills, and resources, owning only a few clothes and no study devices such as a laptop. He described his journey as complicated, often relying on friends to borrow equipment. Hanif acknowledged that his closeness to Abi Malik significantly assisted his employment prospects.

"Pak Malik used to say, '[Hanif], there is this person who needs "A", can you help?' So, I finally helped him. At that time, I didn't think about the money. I just helped until the system was complete. Then, I got paid. I didn't expect that after being paid, I was immediately offered a contract: '[Hanif], can you be contracted for 6 months? After 6 months, you will be paid a basic salary from the company. But you will work remotely.' That was my first job from Pak Malik's connections. Remote work paid [with] a Jakarta-level salary"

(Hanif, personal interview, 23 November 2024).

From that point on, Hanif recounted how he gradually built his "personal branding" (portfolio) through various job opportunities and professional connections offered by Abi Malik. Currently, Hanif works as a mentor in the Pondok An-Najah's programming class, while also working remotely for a start-up in Jakarta. Hanif achieved his dream of sending his mother on the Umrah pilgrimage and has also built a house for her. With his current income reaching tens of millions of rupiah, he no longer receives the Pondok An-Najah *ihsan*,¹⁰ and has even vowed to dedicate his life to Pondok An-Najah as a form of gratitude to Abi Malik and Pondok An-Najah for changing his destiny.

The story of fostering working relationships is also exemplified by Usman and Fathan. Usman is a new *santri* from the Tahfidz Quran Islamic boarding school near Jakarta, he previously worked in graphic design and has memorised around 10 *Juz* of the Quran. From my observation, Usman seems to be Abi Malik's favourite, shown by his consistent obedience through active participation in the mindset classes and his effort to keep the mosque clean at Pondok An-Najah. However, this earns him more responsibilities. When asked about his duties amid his studies, Usman expressed adherence to the principle of "*sami'na wa atha'na*," believing his obedience would secure a position and greater *barakah* through proximity to authority. Similarly, Fathan shifted from a public-school background to concentrate on digital marketing with the goal of fostering entrepreneurship. Currently, he is a key member of the Griya Tekno marketing team, having earned his role through active participation and assisting seniors, despite experiencing moments of humility and belittlement as a "*babu*" (a low-tier term for helper). His efforts have resulted in opportunities through projects and funding for online soft skills training, which he values highly.

The stories of Usman and Fathan illustrate how the *santri's* pattern of 'voluntary' struggle has been rewarded, securing their positions so that they can establish working relationships, specifically to improve the quality of their portfolios. While Usman shows his struggle in the arena of *tarbiyah*, Fathan shows the results of his struggle. The above stories reflect the success of the Pondok An-Najah institution in translating the discourse of neoliberalism, which is oriented towards market ideas and ideals, to its *santri*. On the *santri's* side, their desire for success underpins a consumerist ethos, motivating them to voluntarily pursue blessings as 'currency' to enhance their portfolios with alternative credentials for the competitive job market.

However, this article would like to take the analysis beyond the emphasis on 'success' alone to an analysis that diagnoses how the marketisation of Islamic boarding schools that bring neoliberal doctrine also reproduces social inequality in their arena. Revisiting earlier findings reveals that not all 4B divisions or '*amanah khidmat*' have equal value in the perspective of the *santri* themselves. Some are placed in positions of service that marginalise them from their main purposes and are even met with ambivalent responses.

Take the story of Syarif as an example. While it was described that Syarif's opinion about *tarbiyah* was to encourage *santri* productivity, Syarif also has mixed feelings about his own future. Syarif is a *santri* (SPA) who actually experiences precarious conditions due to his *khidmat* obligations. He is already a *tarbiyah* mentor while he is still actively studying in programming classes. The consequence of this dual role leads to his difficulty in balancing his time between studying and working as a mentor. As a result, he feels that his programming skills cannot develop to their full potential because of this obligation. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that he is now 24 years old. He said that at his age, it is very difficult to get a job without work experience, which is why he hoped that the Pondok An-Najah network would be a stepping stone for him to build his career.

Syarif's view seems to be in line with the fears of Indonesia's younger generation regarding the phenomenon of ageism in companies that limit the age of workers (Siregar et al., 2024), and even shows signs of 'job hugging' to a certain extent. However, despite being in a stagnant situation, he continued to work as hard as he could. Syarif himself considers teaching as a *tarbiyah* mentor to be a means of helping the Pondok's development, as well as a hope for gaining more benefits from his 'work relationships'. In a personal interview, he revealed his reasons for persevering:

“Because the undeniable advantage of Pondok An-Najah is one thing: relationships [working networks]. [...] 80% of your work is about relationships, only 20% is about skills”

(Syarif, personal interview, 4 December 2024).

Here, it is evident how Syarif emphasises professional relationships as a key advantage and how he understands that 80% of one’s ability to work comes from connections, rather than individual skills alone. However, for *santri* like Syarif, these working relationships are not merely a professional networking strategy, but rather their only coping mechanism amid fears of a job market that is considered closed to people of their age. Dependence on patrons is an absolute requirement for survival, creating asymmetrical relationships in which obedience is the currency used to buy a sense of security. Although he responds with conflicted feelings, he still holds the value of *barakah* in the form of a work relationship as the most important “currency” to be able to compete in the job market in the future.

Several *santri* also experienced similar problems. Most emphasised their criticism of the intensive six-month period as active education, which was their initial investment to gain better access to services to support their portfolios. Then, when the administrators considered their skills to be lacking, these *santri* were placed in operational and administrative work divisions that were unrelated to their original goals. Here, one of the administrators (*kesantrian*) refers to this as a mechanism of ‘natural selection’. Natural selection in the sense that their educational model is rigorous enough to test the sincerity of the *santri*. This sincerity is reflected in the stories of Syarif, Usman, and most of the *santri* who struggle hard to become relevant in the arena in order to gain access to the work projects offered by Pondok An-Najah for their portfolios. If successful, they can be like Fathan and Hanif, who have gained the blessings of a network of work relationships. However, a significant number of others choose to leave because they told me that the Pondok An-Najah arena marginalises them and even ‘exploits’ them. This natural selection shows how Pondok An-Najah’s governmentality strategy adopts neoliberal Darwinian competition values, where competition and adaptability are the main emphases in the internal market arena to reap the blessings of work relationships. This insecurity is not eliminated but is productively maintained by the institution. The anxiety of failure disciplines *santri* to remain obedient and work hard without any guarantees, ensuring that the wheels of the ‘charity machine and money machine’ continue to turn. Rather than being seen as a systemic ‘failure’, they emphasise this failure on the individual *santri* as a sign of unseriousness.

The question is, does this mean that this article is suggesting that Pondok An-Najah has failed to educate its *santri*? No, quite the contrary. Here, this article argues that Pondok An-Najah’s and its governmentality strategy is, to a certain extent, ‘successful’. Successful in the sense that its educational model has, from the outset, selected *santri* through a free education mechanism and positioned them as both products and consumers. Through the free education narrative, the *santri* are bound by the moral legitimacy that they have obtained through *waqf* money (alms from the community) and disciplined by strict contractual agreements. This mechanism functions as a financial panopticon (Foucault, 1977), where the threat of debt ensures self-regulation. Consequently, those who survive this ‘natural selection’ are those who voluntarily strive with faith in the promise of *barakah* offered through the professional network. This selection process

categorises *santri* based on qualifications, driving the survivors to relentlessly enhance their human capital to attract the attention of administrators for the sake of their portfolios. The process is indeed lengthy, arduous, and alienating. Yet, the ultimate outcome of this subjectification is the production of the ideal subject for the contemporary digital economy: the ‘Muslim Winner’. An individual who is ‘pious’ (ethically disciplined, obedient, and trustworthy) and ‘prosperous’ (economically productive, independent, and entrepreneurial)—a subject who believes their freedom is found in rational choices, even though those choices have been architected by the spiritual market that surrounds them.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Pondok An-Najah operates as a concrete manifestation of the marketisation of Islamic education in Indonesia, where market logic is not only adopted as a managerial strategy but has permeated the ontology of the Islamic Boarding School itself. Through ethnography, this article has demonstrated how the process of marketisation operates at two interconnected levels. First, at the institutional level, there is a neoliberalisation of Islamic boarding schools that transforms religious educational institutions into hybrid entities: a ‘charity machine and money machine’ that operates both as an Islamic educational institution and a sharia-based outsourcing company. Second, at the individual level, there is the consumerisation of subjects, where *santri* actively consume the narrative of ‘free education’ and the promise of a ‘network of work relations’ as pragmatic strategies for navigating future economic uncertainty.

The key finding of this article is that the traditional concept of *tarbiyah* has been radically reconfigured into a neoliberal-tinged technology of the self. The religious curriculum—such as the instilling of values of trustworthiness (*Amanah*), discipline in worship, and obedience—is no longer solely aimed at spiritual salvation but is instrumentalised as a disciplinary mechanism to produce ‘Muslim Winner’ subjects: individuals who are spiritually pious and economically productive. Theological obedience (piety) is translated into professional credibility and converted into a form of modality to compete in the digital labour market.

However, the success in shaping Muslim Winner subjects highlights a critical issue. Their subjectivity, emerging from the process of neoliberalisation and promising independence, has instead resulted in a form of bounded freedom. This situation is not an anomaly but stems from the systemic precarity caused by neoliberal doctrine itself. Consequently, the only way for *santri* to feel ‘safe’ from the threat of market failure is to submit themselves to a cycle of debt and institutional patronage. Therefore, this article suggests a reimagining to reflect on the new irony of the marketisation of contemporary Islamic education: that behind the promise of creating independent Muslim Winners and cultivating alternative futures, this system is actually preparing a workforce of pious individuals who are willing to accept market uncertainty and their own precarity as a byproduct of their duty to serve religion.

ENDNOTES

- 1) All names (institutions and individuals) in this article have been anonymised.
- 2) Although situated in Yogyakarta—a city known as the center of Indonesian education—this study

focuses on a specific institution that adopts a unique hybrid model of boarding school and syariah outsourcing company. The practices described here are specific to this institution's internal market logic and do not necessarily reflect the general operation of other *pesantrons* in the region.

- 3) SPA or *Santri Penerima Amanah* (Serving *Santri*) are senior *santri* who have completed their education (value investment) and work as “serving *santri*” for Pondok An-Najah and Pondok An-Najah's business partners as interns.
- 4) This discussion of authority is based on the ideas of François Gauthier (2021), who links Max Weber's charismatic authority with Marcel Mauss's concept of “the gift”.
- 5) Although these books originate from the Islamic tradition and are also used for teaching Islamic scholarship, it is important to note that at Pondok An-Najah, teaching does not emphasize the strict transmission of Islamic scholarly *sanad* and has not even been standardised.
- 6) *Bandongan* is a traditional teaching method in Islamic boarding schools where the teacher (*kyai*) reads and translates classical texts while *santri* listen and take notes on the meaning.
- 7) Syarif is a *santri* with a dual role, whose status differs significantly from that of most other *santri*. He is an active *santri* on the programming course whilst also serving as a *Tarbiyah* mentor (SPA).
- 8) The Calculative Self or *homo economicus* refers to a subject who internalizes market rationality, viewing themselves as an “entrepreneur of themselves” who calculates and maximizes capital (human capital) to obtain returns (see: Foucault, 2008, pp. 215-237).
- 9) This article utilises the term ‘*ngalap barakah*’ (seeking blessings) here not merely in its traditional theological sense—where *santri* seek divine grace through the *Kyai*—but as an analytical metaphor (etic model) to describe the patronage exchange within Pondok An-Najah. While *santri* may articulate their motivation pragmatically as ‘seeking connections’ (*cari relasi*), structurally they reproduce the traditional habitus of service (*khidmat*) to access these economic resources, which are framed by the institution as a divinely incentivised privilege. Thus, ‘*relasi kerja*’ functions structurally as the new ‘*barakah*’ in this internal ecosystem.
- 10) At Pondok An-Najah, *ihsan* means wages or is referred to as ‘pocket money’ to reward the labour of *santri* who serve at Pondok An-Najah.

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