

ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS' STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT ALUMNI UNEMPLOYMENT (A STUDY OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN GREATER MALANG)

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Abstrak: Pengangguran merupakan isu sosial yang terus menjadi tantangan di Indonesia, termasuk di wilayah Malang Raya. Lulusan naspakta Islam seringkali mengalami kesulitan memasuki dunia kerja formal karena kurangnya keterampilan teknis dan akses terhadap pekerjaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi pendidikan yang diterapkan oleh naspakta Islam untuk mengatasi pengangguran di kalangan naspakta Islam. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini berfokus pada beberapa naspakta Islam di Malang Raya yang telah mengintegrasikan pendidikan vokasi, pelatihan kewirausahaan, dan penggunaan teknologi digital ke dalam sistem pembelajaran mereka. Dimana letak keterbaruan penelitian ini adalah memfokuskan kepada strategi di pesantren dan juga hasil pada alumni pesantren tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang paling efektif meliputi penguatan kurikulum vokasi, pembentukan unit usaha naspakta Islam, kolaborasi dengan lembaga pelatihan dan industri, serta penanaman rasa kemandirian dan etos kerja. Lebih lanjut, naspakta Islam menerapkan strategi berdasarkan integrasi pendidikan agama, pelatihan keterampilan praktis (pertanian, pertukangan, kuliner, teknologi informasi, kerajinan tangan), pengembangan kewirausahaan berbasis nilai-nilai Islam, dan kemitraan dengan industri dan lembaga pelatihan kerja. Strategi-strategi ini memberikan kontribusi signifikan dalam mengurangi angka pengangguran di kalangan siswa pesantren dan mendorong terciptanya siswa yang mandiri secara ekonomi. Studi ini merekomendasikan dukungan berkelanjutan dari pemerintah dan masyarakat untuk memperkuat peran pesantren sebagai agen pemberdayaan ekonomi bagi masyarakat.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan, Pesantren, Pengangguran, Siswa, Strategi, Malang

Abstract: Unemployment is a social issue that continues to be a challenge in Indonesia, including in the Greater Malang area. Islamic boarding school graduates often experience difficulties entering the formal workforce due to a lack of technical skills and access to employment. This study aims to examine the educational strategies implemented by Islamic boarding schools to address unemployment among Islamic boarding school students. The method used was a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The research focused on several Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang that have integrated vocational education, entrepreneurship training, and the use of digital technology into their learning systems. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the strategies employed Islamic boarding schools and the outcomes observed among their alumni. The results indicate that the most effective strategies include strengthening the vocational curriculum, establishing Islamic boarding school business units, collaborating with training institutions and industry, and instilling a sense of independence and a work ethic. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools implement

strategies based on the integration of religious education, practical skills training (agriculture, carpentry, culinary arts, information technology, handicrafts), Islamic value-based entrepreneurship development, and partnerships with industry and job training institutions. These strategies significantly contribute to reducing the unemployment rate among Islamic boarding school students and encouraging the creation of economically independent students. This study recommends continued support from the government and community to strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools as agents of economic empowerment for the community.

Keywords: Education, Islamic Boarding Schools, Unemployment, Students, Strategy, Malang.

Introductions

Islamic boarding schools, as long-standing educational institutions in Indonesia, play a vital role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. They serve not only as centers of religious instruction but also play a significant role in fostering independence, leadership, and life skills (Mujtahid et al., 2023). In this context, Islamic boarding schools can be a strategic place to educate the younger generation to avoid becoming trapped in the cycle of unemployment, particularly in the Greater Malang area. Therefore, strategic steps are needed to design education in Islamic boarding schools to address existing economic and social challenges and provide solutions to problems, including those related to unemployment (Alfaiz, 2023).

In Greater Malang, unemployment is a significant issue. This is evidenced by data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in August 2024, which reached 28,353 people, or 6.1%. The highest unemployment rate is experienced by graduates of *Diploma IV* to Doctoral degrees (7.5 percent), followed by graduates of Vocational High Schools or equivalent (6.5 percent), and graduates of *Diploma III (DI-DIII)* (6.2 percent) (Aminuddin, 2024). Based on this data, the rapid population growth and diverse job sectors available mean that not all formal education graduates possess skills and competencies relevant to the needs of the job market. Islamic boarding schools, which have long been known for their religious-based education systems, have great potential to contribute to producing graduates who are ready to work and independent in facing the world of work, as explained by KH Muhammad Baidhawi Muslih in Indana's research on the importance of producing graduates who are ready to work and ready to face challenges in society (Almas Azhar, 2023).

However, the biggest challenge faced by many Islamic boarding schools is how to design a curriculum that focuses not only on religious education but also provides skills relevant to the world of work. Islamic boarding schools that only teach religious knowledge without providing the practical skills needed by the job market will produce graduates who struggle to compete in the workforce, potentially increasing the unemployment rate. This is also caused by a culture of excessive laziness and resignation that lacks initiative to make changes within oneself. Therefore, it is not surprising that in Malang, with 247 Islamic boarding schools, according to the Directorate of Islamic Boarding Schools, they are continuously updating and adapting to the times, both traditional and new Islamic boarding schools (Tim Universitas, 2021). This change was made by changing the curriculum, which was initially too cultural with the old culture, and finally changed to a more modern curriculum (Zainiyati, 2017). Indeed, in this case, not all Islamic boarding schools do it on a large scale, but based on field data, there are many *Salaf* Islamic boarding schools that have adapted to modernity, and likewise, *Khalaf* Islamic boarding schools have adapted very much to the modern world and the current era (Nona & Soleha, 2021).

Based on observations, many Islamic boarding schools in Malang have taken various strategic steps. One such step is integrating practical skills education into the curriculum, which not only teaches religious knowledge but also general knowledge and technical skills needed by the workplace. Another strategic step is strengthening relationships between Islamic boarding schools and industry, both independently and collaboratively. This collaboration can take the form of internships or job training, allowing students to gain hands-on experience in the workplace (Widodo, 2025). Meanwhile, independence can take the form of training programs in hospitality, culinary arts, or even technology that can prepare students to contribute to strategic and independent sectors, in addition to strengthening religious understanding. Through the introduction of these independent and collaborative programs, it is hoped that students will be able to navigate the modern era effectively, including addressing existing unemployment issues (Sahila et al., 2024), (Haddade, 2023). Thus, the development of an adaptive Islamic boarding school education model is an important step in reducing unemployment rates while increasing the competitiveness of Islamic boarding school students in the modern era.

Several previous studies have focused more on the role of Islamic boarding schools in character development, religious education, or general economic empowerment. However, there have been few studies that specifically examine Islamic boarding schools' strategies for comprehensively addressing student unemployment, particularly in the Greater Malang area. Azizah's research (Azizah & Aimah, 2022) highlighting the collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and industry, while Hermanto (Hermanto et al., 2020) and Khoiri (Khoiri & Fuadi, 2020) highlighting Islamic-based skills and entrepreneurship education, as well as several other studies focusing more on implementation in Islamic boarding schools in terms of culture, religious education and the history of the aims of Islamic boarding schools (Tolib, 2015), (Muhakamurrohman, 2014), (Syafe'i, 2017). However, these studies have not integrated three important aspects: (1) strengthening the vocational curriculum, (2) establishing Islamic boarding school business units, and (3) systemic collaboration with training institutions and modern industries in the context of addressing student unemployment. Furthermore, there are not many studies that map how traditional and traditional Islamic boarding schools in Malang Raya adapt to the demands of the times and digitalization to address the unemployment problem. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in a comprehensive analysis of Islamic boarding school education strategies in addressing student unemployment in Malang Raya by combining empirical field data and an integrative approach involving religious, vocational, entrepreneurial, digitalization, and industrial partnership aspects. This research is expected to provide an actual contribution in formulating a more adaptive, modern, and sustainable Islamic boarding school education strategy model in facing the challenge of unemployment, while simultaneously strengthening the role of Islamic boarding schools as agents of economic empowerment of the community.

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Moleong, this approach aims to describe, understand, and analyze the object of research (Lexy J Moleong, 2019). In this case, what will be discussed are Islamic boarding school education strategies in addressing student unemployment in the Greater Malang area. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research lies in exploring the meaning, in-depth understanding, and interpretation of educational practices and policies in the Islamic boarding school environment. Meanwhile, the type of research used is a case study, with an emphasis on several Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang that have or are currently implementing strategies to address unemployment among their alumni. Case studies are used to gain a detailed and in-depth contextual understanding of the educational strategies implemented. The research location was carried out in several representative Islamic boarding schools in the Greater Malang area, including Malang City, Malang Regency, and Batu City. Some of the Islamic boarding schools that are the focus of the study include: An-Nur Bululawang Islamic Boarding School, Sabilurrosyad Gasek Islamic Boarding School, Anwarul Huda Malang Islamic Boarding School, Miftahul Huda Malang Islamic Boarding School, Luhur Malang Islamic Boarding School, and Darul Ulum Batu Islamic Boarding School. Of the six Islamic boarding schools, some have the status of *Salaf* and modern *Salaf* Islamic boarding schools. These Islamic boarding schools were selected purposively because they represent diverse characteristics regarding education, institutional management models, and approaches to preparing students for life after graduation. Furthermore, these institutions have implemented various programs aimed at enhancing students' competencies upon graduation.

This research was conducted for seven months, from September 3, 2024, to March 2025. The data sources in this study consist of two things, namely: 1) Primary data, obtained directly from interviews, observations, and documentation at the Islamic boarding school that is the object of research. 2) Secondary data, obtained from books, scientific journals, reports, Islamic boarding school policy documents, and statistical data related to unemployment and education in Malang Raya. Data collection techniques were carried out using several methods, namely: 1) In-depth interviews with Islamic boarding school caretakers, teachers, alumni students, and managers of Islamic boarding school business units. 2) Participatory observation, namely directly observing educational activities and skills training at Islamic boarding schools. 3) Documentation studies, namely reviewing Islamic boarding school documents such as curriculum, training programs, graduate data, and Islamic boarding school collaborations with external parties.

The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes three stages: 1) Data reduction, filtering relevant data according to the research focus. 2) Data presentation, organizing data in narrative, matrix, or tabular form to facilitate analysis. 3) Conclusion drawing and verification: drawing conclusions based on interpretations of the analyzed data and re-verifying them to ensure validity (Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, 2020). Meanwhile, the validity of the data is tested through four things, namely 1) Source triangulation (comparing information from various sources), 2) Technical

triangulation (comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation), 3) Member check, which is asking respondents to re-verify the data or interpretation of the interview results, and 4) Peer debriefing, which is consulting with fellow researchers to avoid interpretation bias.

Findings and Discussion

The Phenomenon of Unemployment in Indonesia and the Greater Malang Area

Unemployment remains one of the major social and economic problems that continues to pose a significant challenge in Indonesia. This issue is experienced not only by the general public but also by young people, including graduates of Islamic boarding schools. This is evident in the fact that, as recorded by Statistics Indonesia (BPS), approximately 7.46 million people remained unemployed in August 2025—with an Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) of 4.85%—indicating that millions of working-age individuals have not yet been optimally absorbed into the labor market. The high unemployment rate among the productive-age population indicates that labor force growth has not been balanced by the availability of employment opportunities. In addition, technological developments, changes in industrial demands, and limited job-related skills have contributed to the difficulty many educational graduates face in obtaining decent employment.

Nationally, data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2025 show that the number of unemployed people in Indonesia reached approximately 7.46 million, with the Open Unemployment Rate ranging from 4.17% to 4.85%. The age group of 15–24 years recorded the highest unemployment rate compared to other age groups. This condition indicates that young people are the most vulnerable group to unemployment because most of them are entering the labor market for the first time and have not yet acquired experience or skills that match the demands of modern industries. Furthermore, the increasing number of school and university graduates each year has intensified job competition. Many companies today require not only formal educational qualifications but also technological skills, communication abilities, creativity, and entrepreneurial competence. Meanwhile, some educational graduates are still unable to meet these demands, making them more vulnerable to unemployment.

The phenomenon of youth unemployment is also evident in East Java Province. Based on data from the East Java Central Statistics Agency in 2025, the Open Unemployment Rate reached 3.61%. Although this figure is lower than the national average, the number of unemployed young people in East Java remains relatively high because the province has a very large productive-age population. In addition, unemployment is predominantly found among vocational high school and university graduates. This condition demonstrates that formal education has not fully guaranteed graduates' absorption into the labor market. Many graduates possess educational certificates but still lack practical skills and work competencies required by companies and independent business sectors. Therefore, the unemployment problem in East Java is not only related to the limited availability of jobs but also to the quality of human resources (BPS, 2025). This situation indicates that unemployment is influenced not only by limited job opportunities but also by the quality of human resources—specifically, the alignment of the workforce's competencies, skills, and readiness with labor market demands. Therefore, enhancing human resource quality through education, training, and skills development is a crucial factor in boosting workforce competitiveness and reducing unemployment rates.

This condition is also reflected in the Greater Malang area, which includes Malang City, Malang Regency, and Batu City. Malang is widely recognized as one of the largest educational centers in East Java because it is home to numerous universities, schools, and Islamic boarding schools. Every year, thousands of new graduates enter the labor market from both formal educational institutions and Islamic boarding schools. However, the increase in the number of graduates has not been accompanied by sufficient growth in employment opportunities. Data from the Central Statistics Agency of Malang City in 2025 indicate that the Open Unemployment Rate reached approximately 4.85% (BPS, 2025). Meanwhile, in Malang Regency, the unemployment rate was around 4.2% (BPS, 2025). These figures indicate that many people of productive age still do not have permanent employment.

The high unemployment rate in the Greater Malang area is influenced by several factors, including the increasing number of job seekers each year, limited formal employment opportunities, and the mismatch between graduates' competencies and industrial needs. As an educational region, Greater Malang hosts numerous universities, schools, and Islamic boarding schools that produce thousands of graduates annually. However, the growth in the number of graduates has not been matched by adequate job creation, resulting in increasingly intense job competition. Furthermore, the development of digitalization and technology has made the labor market more competitive because companies now prioritize workers who possess information technology skills, digital communication abilities, creativity, and practical work experience. Consequently, many young people in Malang face difficulties obtaining employment after completing their education. This phenomenon is supported

by research conducted by (Sari, 2020), which explains that the high rate of youth unemployment in urban areas is influenced by limited job skills and the mismatch between graduates' competencies and labor market demands. The study revealed that many graduates possess theoretical knowledge but lack the practical skills required in modern industries, making it difficult for them to compete in the contemporary labor market.

Within the context of Islamic boarding schools, students also constitute a group of young people vulnerable to unemployment. Most students in the Greater Malang area receive religion-based education focusing on Islamic sciences such as Islamic jurisprudence, Qur'anic exegesis, prophetic traditions, and Arabic language studies. Although this education plays an essential role in shaping morality and character, in some cases it has not been adequately balanced with practical work skills relevant to modern industrial and economic needs. As a result, some graduates of Islamic boarding schools experience difficulties entering the formal labor market due to limited technical competencies, work experience, and entrepreneurial skills. This condition has been expressed by several alumni of Islamic boarding schools in the Greater Malang area. The situation is reinforced by research (Komara et al., 2020), which explains that graduates of Islamic boarding schools still face challenges in the labor market because of limited entrepreneurial skills and productive economic competencies. The study emphasizes that Islamic boarding school education focusing solely on religious aspects without strengthening life skills leaves many students insufficiently prepared to face modern labor market competition.

In addition, some members of society still perceive graduates of Islamic boarding schools as only suitable for religious occupations such as Qur'anic teachers, mosque leaders, or administrators of religious institutions. This perception limits employment opportunities for Islamic boarding school graduates compared to graduates of general educational institutions. In fact, the number of Islamic boarding schools and students in East Java, particularly in the Greater Malang area, is quite substantial. According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, East Java is the province with the highest number of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia (Kemenag RI, 2024). If this large number of students is not accompanied by economic empowerment and employment skills development, it may contribute to increasing youth unemployment within Islamic boarding school communities.

Considering these conditions, Islamic boarding schools in the Greater Malang area have begun implementing various strategies to address student unemployment. Several Islamic boarding schools have developed vocational training programs such as sewing, agriculture, livestock farming, graphic design, multimedia, culinary arts, and digital marketing. In addition, some Islamic boarding schools have established institution-based business units, including cooperatives, culinary enterprises, printing businesses, retail stores, and online businesses involving students directly. These strategies aim to ensure that students possess not only religious competencies but also productive skills and entrepreneurial abilities, enabling them to create independent employment opportunities after graduating from Islamic boarding schools.

Table 1.

Unemployment Data at the National Level, East Java, and the Greater Malang Area in 2025

Region	Open Unemployment Rate	Description
Indonesia	4.17%–4.85%	Approximately 7.46 million unemployed people
East Java	3.61%	Unemployment dominated by young people
Malang City	4.85%	High job competition among young graduates
Malang Regency	±4.2%	Large number of productive-age job seekers

Source: Central Statistics Agency of Indonesia and East Java, 2025.

Based on the table above, unemployment remains a serious issue at both national and regional levels. Indonesia has a significant number of unemployed individuals, predominantly among the productive young population. Although East Java records a lower unemployment rate than the national average, the province still faces challenges due to the large number of young job seekers. Meanwhile, Malang City and Malang Regency, as educational regions, encounter similar problems because the large number of new graduates each year is not proportional to the availability of employment opportunities.

Table 2.

Factors Causing Unemployment among Young People and Islamic Boarding School Students in the Greater Malang Area

Contributing Factors	Explanation
Skill mismatch	Many graduates do not possess skills aligned with industrial needs
Lack of work experience	Young people and Islamic boarding school students have limited practical work experience
Intense job competition	Numerous university and general school graduates compete for employment
Limited digital competence	The modern labor market requires technological capabilities
Lack of entrepreneurial spirit	Some graduates remain oriented toward seeking jobs rather than creating them
Limited employment access for Islamic boarding school graduates	Graduates are often directed only toward religious occupations

Source: Research Analysis Results

The table above demonstrates that unemployment among young people and Islamic boarding school students in the Greater Malang area is influenced by various factors related to both education and the development of the modern labor market. Limited practical skills and inadequate digital competence are major factors preventing graduates from competing effectively in the labor market. Furthermore, Islamic boarding school students also face restricted employment access because Islamic boarding school education is still predominantly oriented toward religious studies. In line with this, research (Rizal, 2021) explains that the primary challenge faced by graduates of Islamic boarding schools in the modern era is limited technological mastery and practical job skills. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools need to implement student empowerment strategies through vocational education, entrepreneurship training, and the development of productive business enterprises so that students can become independent, productive workers capable of creating employment opportunities within society.

Islamic Boarding Schools' Strategies For Addressing Student Unemployment (A Study Of Islamic Boarding Schools In Greater Malang)

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia play a strategic role in shaping a young generation that not only understands religious knowledge but also possesses life skills relevant to the needs of the times. In the context of unemployment, Islamic boarding schools have great potential to produce graduates who are highly competitive in the workforce. According to research (Rizkian, 2020), Islamic boarding schools that implement vocational education have successfully reduced alumni unemployment rates by 35% compared to those that focus solely on religious education. In Greater Malang, the phenomenon of student unemployment has become a serious concern, prompting a number of Islamic boarding schools to implement curriculum breakthroughs and vocational activities. These efforts align with perspective (Dewi & Sasdar, 2024) which emphasizes the importance of students being able to face socio-economic realities after graduation. Therefore, transforming Islamic boarding schools into centers for skills development is inevitable. This strategy includes job training, collaboration with industry, and strengthening entrepreneurship. Furthermore, adapting digital technology is a crucial asset for increasing students' competitiveness in the global market (Fahrurrozi et al., 2025).

One important strategy implemented by Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang is, firstly, the integration of a vocational curriculum into the students' learning activities. This curriculum focuses on skills training such as agriculture, animal husbandry, workshops, culinary arts, information technology, and entrepreneurship as an integral part of the curriculum. Based on observations at Islamic boarding schools An-Nur Bululawang, Sabilurrosyad Gasek, Anwarul Huda Malang, Miftahul Huda Malang, Luhur Malang, and Darul Ulum Batu, it was found that the training was accompanied by field practice. Training was conducted at least

once a year, but some others were conducted every semester as a mandatory program.

The result of these various training programs was the formation of Islamic Boarding School-Owned Business Units (*BUMPES*). Each Islamic boarding school has a unique business unit, selected based on its capabilities and the agreement of the boarding school. *BUMPES* is another strategic step taken by Islamic boarding schools to train students and create internal jobs. Business units such as shops, printing shops, drinking water production, and screen printing are jointly managed by students and boarding school administrators. According to research (Alifa et al., 2021 ; Saputra, 2024), The involvement of students in managing business units improves their managerial skills, especially since the business units are staffed by students, which will have a greater impact. For example, at the Miftahul Huda Islamic Boarding School, the drinking water and shop businesses provide direct learning opportunities for students. Meanwhile, at the Luhur Islamic Boarding School, the clothing and shop businesses provide real-life business experience. Revenue from these businesses not only supports the school's finances but also provides a source of income for students, including providing direct training for future students. Through *BUMPES*, Islamic boarding schools create a sustainable internal economic ecosystem. This strategy demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools can become centers of a community-based creative economy (Noviyanti, 2017). The following are several types of Islamic boarding school business units in Greater Malang:

Table 3.
Types of Islamic Boarding School Business Units in Greater Malang

Name of Islamic Boarding School	Type of Business	Benefits for Students
Anwarul Huda	Drinking water, chips, books, screen printing	Production, marketing, digital training
Miftahul Huda	Drinking water, shop	Managerial skills, service
Luhur	Shop	Stock management, selling skills
An-Nur Bululawang	Shops, gas stations, books	Business and logistics training
Darul Ulum Batu	Agriculture, animal husbandry	Agribusiness skills

Source: Research Analysis Results

Based on the data in table 3, we can see that Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang have developed various business units that are not only oriented towards economic profit but also provide direct benefits for the development of students' skills. Anwarul Huda Islamic Boarding School, for example, runs businesses in drinking water, chips, books, and screen printing, equipping students with production, marketing, and digital skills. Similarly, Miftahul Huda, Luhur, An-Nur Bululawang, and Darul Ulum Batu Islamic Boarding Schools operate in the same way.

In developing this unit, the Islamic boarding school also carries out various collaborations with several well-known or successful parties in this field (Prayoga & Jahari, 2020). This collaboration can take the form of collaboration with other Islamic boarding schools or official institutions with knowledge and experience, such as Vocational Training Centers (BLK), industry, and private institutions, providing opportunities for students to participate in certified training. According to research (Permatasari, 2021), Internship programs facilitated by Islamic boarding schools can improve students' work skills compared to conventional learning methods. This is because students can develop their talents and interests in relevant fields, such as internships at MSMEs or companies within the Islamic boarding school's established units. These activities also foster a sense of independence that can serve as a foundation for creating new jobs. This cross-sector collaboration has a dual impact: increasing students' competitiveness while expanding their professional networks. Thus, Islamic boarding schools not only equip students with religious knowledge but also provide them with strong social capital. This step aligns with the government's program to improve the quality of human resources through linking and matching education and industry (Precalya & Darwan, 2021).

In addition, Islamic boarding schools also provide digital technology for developing units within *BUMPES*. The use of digital technology is a modern strategy applied in various areas (Nasoha et al., 2025). Therefore, Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang are also implementing similar initiatives, as they align with the needs of Islamic boarding schools in the modern world. This includes training in digital marketing, content creation, and e-commerce, which are provided to expand the market for students' products and develop Islamic boarding school units. According to Sunani's research, students trained in digital marketing were able to

increase sales of Islamic boarding school unit products and improve production volume within six months, as was the case at Islamic Boarding School Jabal Noer Sidoarjo (Sunani et al., 2025). For example, an Islamic boarding school in Malang Raya, namely Islamic Boarding School Anwarul Huda, has also proven the success of this strategy through the sale of drinking water, chips, and books on platforms such as *Shopee*, *Lazada*, and social media, as stated by the head of *BUMPES*, namely Bustomi, who stated:

“Since the first *BUMPES* training in several units in 2020, the Islamic boarding school has continued to develop online businesses. Online businesses typically use *Shopee*, *Lazada*, and other platforms. The results have been increasingly effective, as the Islamic boarding school's units reach not only the surrounding area but also beyond. The monthly net turnover is around 200,000-500,000 Rupiah from water, books, and chips businesses”. He revealed

Another example is the Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, which focuses on agriculture and animal husbandry. Students are taught how to farm and raise livestock, including how to manage and sell the produce both online and offline. This is expected to equip students with agricultural and animal husbandry knowledge, enabling them to graduate and be ready to work and create new jobs.

“At Darul Ulum, the focus is on agriculture and animal husbandry. All students are taught from the beginning, and eventually, they can sell both online and offline. The proceeds are used for future needs and are also given to students who choose to do so”. Ahmad revealed

This makes it clear that the use of e-commerce not only increases the Islamic boarding school's income but also trains students to face global market competition. These skills enable students to work as digital marketers or open their own online stores after graduation. With technological support, students' skills become more relevant to today's job market demands. The digital transformation at this Islamic boarding school demonstrates that religious education and technology can coexist, thus providing a foundation for reducing unemployment in Malang.

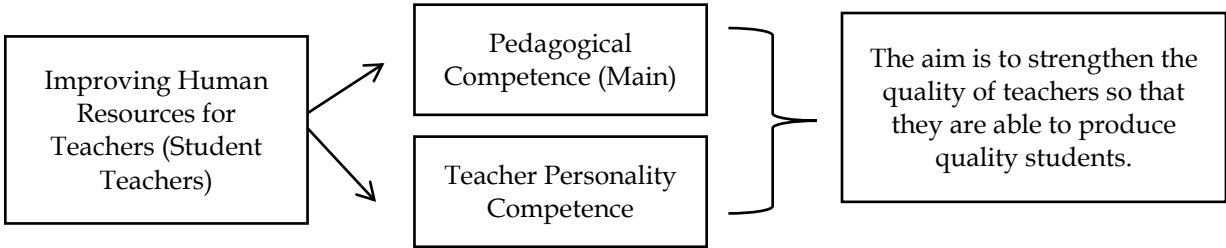
Beyond that, strengthening Islamic values remains a priority in Islamic boarding school education. The values of discipline, responsibility, and hard work are instilled through the students' daily activities. Research (Putri & Ratnaningsih, 2024), This study demonstrates that the work ethic fostered through character education in Islamic boarding schools makes alumni more resilient in facing workplace challenges. Discipline in Islamic boarding schools, such as strict study hours and a ban on leaving without permission, fosters a strong work ethic. The emphasis on integrity instills in students a sense of honesty and trustworthiness in their work. This combination of technical skills and moral values creates graduates who are mentally and spiritually prepared. This provides a competitive advantage for students compared to graduates from other institutions. Character education in Islamic boarding schools has proven to be a crucial foundation in developing a quality generation, producing graduates who are ready to work (Amin, 2019).

Another effort to address unemployment is strengthening alumni networks. This is a long-term strategy for addressing student unemployment. Successful alumni can serve as mentors or create job opportunities for newly graduated students. According to research (Syaoqi & Wijiharta, 2023), An active alumni network can increase the employment rate of Islamic boarding school graduates by up to 50%. Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang utilize regular alumni meetings to share information about job openings and business opportunities. Some alumni even provide skills training or business capital to their juniors. This strategy creates a mutually supportive ecosystem among Islamic boarding school graduates. The close relationship between students and alumni strengthens a sense of solidarity and mutual assistance. The existence of an alumni network is proof that Islamic boarding schools do not abandon their graduates after graduation, but continue to support them until they become independent.

And finally, the quality of human resources (HR) teaching staff is improved. This is due to the success of the Islamic boarding school program in addressing student unemployment. Teachers who are competent in vocational and personal development fields are able to provide more effective learning. Research (Sulastris et al., 2020), emphasizes that teacher competence is directly proportional to the quality of graduates. Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang implement strict selection procedures for teachers, both in religious studies and technical skills. Teacher training, such as workshops on modern learning methods or skills courses, is routinely conducted. Teachers are also equipped with digital literacy skills to integrate technology into the learning process. With qualified teaching staff, Islamic boarding schools can optimally guide their students. Investing in teacher development is one of the sustainable strategies implemented by Islamic boarding schools, which must be continuously implemented to advance (Jazuli et al., 2023).

In developing teacher human resources, pedagogical competence is the primary focus. Teachers are equipped with learning methods suited to the characteristics of their students, including a combination of traditional methods like *sorogan* and *badongan* with modern technology. Research (Malik Ibrahim & Mukhsin, 2025), The results show that this combination of methods increases learning effectiveness. Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang also implement an interactive discussion approach between teachers and students. This encourages students to be more active and critical in absorbing the material. The use of technology, such as projectors or online learning platforms, further enriches the learning process. The following table illustrates this (Klaassen, 2002):

Table 4.
Overview of Teacher Human Resource Improvement



Source: Research Analysis Results

With this adaptation, Islamic boarding schools are able to maintain traditions while innovating to keep up with the times. Strong pedagogical competence also makes it easier for teachers to guide students in non-academic skills.

In addition to pedagogical competence, teacher personality competence is also a focus in improving the quality of Islamic boarding school human resources. Teachers serve as role models of morality, discipline, and integrity for students. In research (Gumilang & Nurcholis, 2018), shows that teacher role models significantly influence the character development of students, particularly in terms of discipline. Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang implement moral development for teachers through regular religious study, spiritual guidance, and a code of ethics. Students are required to demonstrate humility, such as standing or stopping when a teacher passes by, as a form of respect (Marsakha et al., 2021). Discipline is enforced through warnings, sanctions, and even summoning parents if serious violations occur (Revell & Arthur, 2007). This step aims to foster students' awareness and responsibility for the rules. Consistent teacher role models make education at Islamic boarding schools more effective in shaping character.

Teachers' professional competence is also a crucial factor in the success of vocational education in Islamic boarding schools. Teachers in Greater Malang are equipped with mastery of both religious and general teaching materials, as well as an understanding of both the national curriculum and the Islamic Boarding School specific curriculum. In book (Azra, 2020; Syam, 2019) emphasized that teachers who master two curricula simultaneously are able to increase learning flexibility, thus better preparing students to face various challenges. In some Islamic boarding schools, discussions and seminars on socio-religious issues are held regularly to hone students' critical thinking. Teachers are also required to possess analytical skills to guide students in solving real-world problems. This ensures that education is not limited to theory but also applied in a social context. With strong professional competencies, teachers are able to bridge the academic, religious, and professional worlds. This combination provides students with broad and relevant insights.

However, implementing these various strategies is not without challenges and obstacles. Limited funding is a major issue, particularly for investment in modern equipment and teacher training. A shortage of teaching staff with technical skills is also a barrier. Furthermore, some students still hold a traditional mindset, considering non-religious skills less important. Inadequate internet infrastructure in some areas also hampers digitalization programs. This aligns with research (Azizah, 2024 ; Kurdi, 2024) stated that many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia still face limited infrastructure for vocational education, including those related to digitalization. Therefore, support from the government, donor agencies, and the community is essential. Without such support, efforts by Islamic boarding schools to reduce unemployment will be slower. Synergy between all parties is needed to overcome this obstacle so that all issues related to the institution, the students, and other issues can be resolved, and Islamic boarding schools can produce a golden generation of students (Romadloni, 2024).

Despite challenges, the educational strategy of Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang has proven to have a positive impact. The combination of Islamic values, life skills, and the use of technology better prepares students for the world of work. This demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools are capable of transforming into

agents of economic empowerment. This success has also motivated other Islamic boarding schools to adopt a similar model. The innovations implemented do not diminish the Islamic boarding school's identity as a religious educational institution. Instead, they enrich it with skills relevant to the times. This model can serve as a reference for Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia in addressing challenges, particularly reducing youth unemployment.

Based on the above, the general findings of Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang have proven their ability to become centers for developing superior, work-ready human resources. The strategies implemented include vocational skills training, entrepreneurship, digitalization, the formation of business units, character building, alumni networks, and improving teacher quality. Previous research supports the effectiveness of these measures in reducing student unemployment. The success of Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang has inspired the development of skills-based Islamic boarding schools in other regions as an effort to alleviate employment and unemployment issues. The integration of religious values, practical skills, and technology creates graduates who are both religious and economically independent. With this strategy, Islamic boarding schools produce not only religious scholars but also entrepreneurs and professionals who contribute to the nation. This research contributes to the development of knowledge on the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia, particularly in the context of addressing student unemployment. The findings confirm that Islamic boarding schools no longer function solely as religious educational institutions, but also as centers for economic empowerment and skills development relevant to the demands of the digital era. This research also strengthens previous studies on the effectiveness of vocational integration within religious institutions and offers a comprehensive overview of best practices implemented by Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang. Furthermore, this research provides practical contributions for policymakers, Islamic boarding school managers, and industry in building sustainable synergies to improve the quality of Islamic boarding school human resources. The resulting collaborative model can serve as a reference for other Islamic boarding schools in developing innovative strategies to reduce unemployment, strengthen economic independence, and produce graduates who are not only religious but also competent and ready to compete in the job market.

Congclusions

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that unemployment remains a serious social and economic challenge in Indonesia, particularly among young people and graduates of Islamic boarding schools in the Greater Malang area. The high unemployment rate is influenced not only by the limited availability of employment opportunities but also by the mismatch between graduates' competencies and the demands of the modern lab market. Rapid technological advancement, digitalization, intense job competition, limited practical skills, lack of work experience, and weak entrepreneurial orientation have become major obstacles for young people in obtaining decent employment. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, graduates often face additional challenges because their education is predominantly focused on religious studies and has not been fully integrated with vocational skills and economic empowerment. As a result, many graduates experience difficulties competing in formal employment sectors and are frequently limited to religious occupations. Nevertheless, Islamic boarding schools in the Greater Malang area have begun implementing various strategic efforts such as vocational training, entrepreneurship education, digital skills development, and the establishment of productive business units involving students directly. These initiatives demonstrate that Islamic boarding schools have significant potential to contribute to reducing youth unemployment by producing graduates who are not only morally and spiritually competent but also economically productive, independent, adaptive to technological changes, and capable of creating employment opportunities within society.

Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang have demonstrated significant transformation in addressing the issue of student unemployment through various innovative and sustainable educational strategies. The integration of vocational curricula, the establishment of Islamic boarding school business units (*BUMPES*), collaboration with industry and training institutions, the use of digital technology, the strengthening of Islamic values, alumni networks, and improving teacher quality provide a strong foundation for producing highly competitive graduates. The implementation of these strategies not only produces students with technical and managerial skills but also strengthens the work ethic, independence, and professional mentality needed in the modern workplace. For example, many of their graduates have proven successful careers in government and private institutions, and some have even created new jobs or employment opportunities that benefit others by providing daily employment. Despite facing various challenges such as limited funding, digital infrastructure, and human resource capacity, Islamic boarding schools have successfully demonstrated that education based on a combination of religion and skills can have a real impact on reducing unemployment. Thus, the development

model of Islamic boarding schools in Greater Malang serves as concrete evidence that Islamic educational institutions can play a strategic role in economic empowerment and the development of superior human resources.

Further research is recommended to expand the scope of the study area beyond Greater Malang to include other areas in East Java or even the national level, so that a more comprehensive picture of Islamic boarding school strategies can be obtained. Furthermore, research can use a quantitative approach or mixed methods to measure the effectiveness of each empowerment program implemented by Islamic boarding schools in reducing post-graduation unemployment among students. Research can also focus on analyzing internal and external factors that influence program success, such as government support, collaboration with the industrial sector, and the readiness of Islamic boarding school human resources. Further studies are also important to examine the differences in strategies between *Salafiyah* and modern Islamic boarding schools, so that an effective and adaptive model of student empowerment can be found to meet current developments and job market needs.

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