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Female Santri to Achieve Perfection and Meaning of Life

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Blessings in *Khidmah* as the Entrepreneurial Ethic of Female Santri to Achieve Perfection and Meaning of Life

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe the motivation to hope for blessings in serving (*khidmah*) by female students (*santriwati*) who encourage the ethos of entrepreneurship. This paper focuses on the experience (related to integrity and competence) and the meaning of entrepreneurship for women in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) who are devoted to the business sector of pesantren. The research method uses a phenomenological approach. The research subjects were 20 female students who were selected by key informants and purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis, among others: the stage of describing the phenomenon, the stage of horizontalization, the stage of the cluster of meaning, the stage of essence description, and the stage of report writing. The results showed that the *khidmah* carried out by female students in pesantren who were considered to bring blessings in life was that there was a balance between *shalahiyyah* and *shalih*. *Salahiyyah*, namely having knowledge and skills; such as building networks, friendly and polite, and active. *Shalih*, namely having moral integrity; such as sincerity, honesty, *qonaah* and pleasure (*ridha*), patience, and trust. The female students interpret the experience of *khidmah* with: the meaning and perfection of life. By way of *khidmah*, their lives become meaningful for worship and hope for blessings (*tabarruk*). With *khidmah*, they feel they have achieved the perfection of life for the pesantren and society. The meaning and perfection of life are to achieve prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter. This research is useful for developing career counseling and the psychology of entrepreneurship in the context of Indonesian culture, which is relatively rare.

Keywords

blessing, *khidmah*, career counseling, entrepreneurship

1 Introduction

Studies on career counseling and the psychology of entrepreneurship in the context of Indonesian culture are rare. Moreover, the policy is based on the two scientific fields. In addition, several books and modules on career guidance and counseling in senior high schools and universities have so far been derived from theories from the West (Internasional, 2011, p. 3; Suuyana & Suryadi, 2012, p. 89). Of course, these counseling theories reflect the individualistic-materialistic Western culture (McLeod, 2003, p. 137). Meanwhile, the culture of Indonesian society tends to be collectivistic-spiritualistic (Arifin, 2020a, p. 145; Arifin, Baharun, & Saputra, 2021, p. 27; Samsul Arifin, Hadori, & Yohandi, 2021, p. 9) and the principle of counseling in Indonesia must emphasize the harmony of services with the norms prevailing in society (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 111 Tahun 2014 Tentang Bimbingan dan Konseling Pada Pendidikan Dasar dan Pendidikan Menengah, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to explore career theory from local wisdom.

There are many interesting study materials for career counseling and psychology of entrepreneurship, especially related to local wisdom of Indonesian entrepreneurship that is well-being oriented towards mutual harmony in improving welfare and happiness. For example, entrepreneurship is carried out by students of Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo. In their view, working in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) is to serve or serve fellow students and the community (*khidmah lil ma'had wal ummah*). They are entrepreneurs with the intention of worship and the motivation to hope for blessings (*tabarruk*). The motivational factor is an important antecedent of entrepreneurial action. High motivation for entrepreneurship is the key to success in the entrepreneurial process (Frese & Gielnik, 2014, p. 232; León et al., 2008, p. 27).

In the view of students from the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo who adhere to the will of K.H. R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin, a student's life will be meaningful or achieve perfection if he is active in educational institutions, da'wah through NU, or the economy of the people. Kiai As'ad gave the key to successful entrepreneurship for students, namely being honest, active, and sincere. Even in the economic field, Kiai As'ad wrote the book *Ekonomi Islam* (Islamic Economics) which became a guide for the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah students (Arifin, 2014a, p. 17, 2014b, p. 54; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2018, p. 175).

The Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo not only has an idea about the people's economy, but has established several economic businesses under the Pesantren-Owned Business Sector (Bidang Usaha Milik Pesantren/BUMP), namely 48 business units. These include: (1) Musa'adah Islamic Boarding School Cooperative, Umana Cooperative, and BMT Salafiyah. This cooperative is engaged in stationery, supermarkets, building materials, electricity, printing, and the like. (2) Trading Business (UD) which consists of 17 trading businesses engaged in canteens, supermarkets, shops, livestock, and others. (3) Commissariat of PT, CV, and UD which is engaged in FM Radio, gas stations, contractors, and others. (4) partnerships engaged in health (clinics), fisheries, agriculture, and others (Syafi'iyah, 2019, p. 7). Pesantren Sukorejo won several awards in the economic field, including being the 3rd Winner of the Best Islamic Boarding School at the 2019 Indonesian Sharia Economic Festival (Hasan, 2019, p. 3).

About 85% of the 650 employees of the Pesantren-Owned Business Sector are students who come from pre-prosperous families. The pesantren prioritizes them, to help them in the pesantren. This will lighten the burden on parents at home. The employees of the Pesantren Business Sector, in addition to fulfilling the necessities of life, also have the motivation to *khidmah* (serve) in the pesantren in the hope of getting the blessing (*baraka*) of the pesantren. With the hope of obtaining the blessings of life, they become pumped to work hard. Even though their honorarium is below the district minimum wage. They have their satisfaction in serving (*khidmah*).

Life satisfaction in achieving this blessing is the key to the mental health of students. From a counseling perspective, these blessed values can be used as a technique to change someone for the better. Because counseling is a service that helps people to overcome the problems of life and jump-start their potential to grow and develop for the better. Career counseling, counseling related to a person's life journey that is related to the effort to make a living to fulfill his daily life (Arifin, 2020a, p. 64; 2020b, p. 78; 2020d, p. 71).

Some students who are devoted to the pesantren Business Sector, after returning to society, continue their work in the economic field. They pioneered the community's economic business. For example, Mashudi succeeded in pioneering the establishment of the BMT NU in Sumenep. He was named a hero for Indonesia in the category of the economic driver for the poor in 2013 by MNCTV. At Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah, Mashudi was the manager of a pesantren cooperative. Likewise, Hariyono, after returning to his hometown, became the driver of the UKM Kampong Kopi Lerek Gombengsari (Arifin & Zaini, 2019). There is also Doni Ekasaputra- Nur Hasanah Mahnan; husband and wife, who founded the Adeeva Group which is engaged in the snack business (Hasan, 2020, p. 156). They won 1st place in the 2020 National Santripreneur Award and 1st place in the Breaktrhu MSME Survival Strategy Competition 2020 East Java.

This study will describe and interpret the entrepreneurship experience of the students who are devoted to the pesantren business sector, especially those related to a blessing phenomenon from the perspective of career counseling and the psychology of entrepreneurship. The experience leads to something they experience and feel about integrity and competence in *khidmah*. The research formulation, among others:

1. How is the experience of the students of the Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo in *khidmah* in entrepreneurship which is considered a blessing?
2. What is the meaning of *khidmah* in entrepreneurship in the career development of students, especially from the perspective of self-concept theory of career development and indigenization of career theories?

Literature Review

Several studies on the economy of the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah in Situbondo so far have been more about its management. For example, regarding dynamic governance or the ability of pesantren to adapt their economic policies to rapid global changes. Likewise, the management of pesantren economic development (Wisri, 2017, p. 332; Zubairi, 2020, p. 61). Another research is about how to develop the self-concept of female students with the character of *khaira ummah* in facing the era of society 5.0 (Arifin, 2020c, p. 175; Minhaji & Arifin, 2021, p. 7). From the research results, there is no link between economics and psychology and counseling. This research will look at it from the perspective of career counseling and the psychology of entrepreneurship.

Several studies in Indonesia that relate to careers are mostly research on cultural values. For example, Istiqomah examines work values in Serat Wedhatama. According to Istiqomah, the work values in the fiber (among others, being religious, careful, humble, and responsible) can be used as character building for the counselee to have a Java-based positive work culture that can be integrated into career counseling services. Muslihah from the State University of Malang studied the cultural values of Minang and Madura regarding psychological well-being. According to Muslihah's research, in the view of the two cultures, people will achieve a prosperous condition if they can manage relationships with God and others. People will be seen as prosperous if they can meet basic needs, have financial independence, and have health (Istiqomah et al., 2017, p. 809).

Another research was conducted by Anshori. They conducted an ethnographic study of the courtiers of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Yogyakarta Palace on the meaning of work in the context of Javanese culture. From this research, the meaning of work for the courtiers working is an activity that aims to find peace, tranquility, and happiness. Work to seek the blessings of life. Work must be introspective (Anshori, 2013, p. 93). There is also research-based community service that links empowerment da'wah with the economy and career development (Arifin & Zaini, 2019, p. 220; Samsul Arifin, Zaini, & Wibawa, 2021, p. 55; Zaini & Arifin, 2016, p. 3).

Research on well-being related to *barakah* includes the linguistic meaning of blessing and the sociological dynamics of "ngalap" *barakah* in pesantren (Azlan, 2018, p. 49; Lutfin, 2019, p. 75). Likewise, "ngalap" *barakah* in places that are considered sacred; for example Mount Kemukus, the tomb of Mbah Priok, and the tomb of Mbah Mutamakkin (Chaer, 2014, p. 50; Chiron, 2017, p. 39; Setiawati et al., 2015, p. 77). There is no research on *barakah* from the perspective of career counseling or entrepreneurial psychology.

From several studies, there is a relationship between self-concept, behavior, and culture. People will do what they conceptualize as a characteristic of the self into everyday behavior. Self-concept has similarities with the quality of individual behavior (Susetyo et al., 2014, p. 50). Research conducted by Laila shows a correlation between the use of Javanese Krama language in Muslim youth and their personality. Adolescents who have a positive self-concept are easier to adapt to and accept their environment (Laila et al., 2016). Other research shows that the higher the attitude and behavior of adolescents by their cultural values, the better their behavior will be (Arifin, 2021, p. 20; Rachim & Nashori, 2007, p. 35).

Some research abroad is also the same. Research on Muslim adolescent girls in the UK shows that religion affects the way they think and act and shows their identity as Muslim women. Research on East African youth shows: their identity is built on the dimensions of age, nationality, faith, and family. Social and institutional contexts are important factors in shaping identities, values, and norms (Awiti et al., 2019, p. 431). In addition, peer influence also affects adolescent identity. Peers can contribute to minority students' cultural identity, life satisfaction, and school values (Vietze et al., 2019).

Thus, so far there has been no research on the pesantren tradition associated with career counseling and entrepreneurial psychology. Even though the problem regarding this career is a very worrying global problem (Alvin & Athanasou, 2008, p. 39). In the Indonesian context, the main problem for millennials is the problem of limited work (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2017, p. 15). On the other hand, career development theories have always been dominated by Western theories. Therefore, research is needed that develops career development theories based on local wisdom (Arifin, 2021, p. 34; Arifin & Baharun, 2022, p. 6; Arifin & Zaini, 2020, 2021, p. 56; Arifin et al., 2022, p. 67; Arifin, Baharun, & Saputra, 2021, p. 35).

This research includes interdisciplinary research; namely counseling, psychology, sociology, entrepreneurship, and the like. This research is also a development of the career counseling and guidance courses in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling study program or Islamic Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Da'wah and Psychology of Entrepreneurship courses, Faculty of Psychology. The relevance of the study is in the perspective of counseling and psychology because entrepreneurship is personal (entrepreneurial motivation) and organizational (entrepreneurship orientation) (da Silva Veiga, Demo, & N.E., 2017, p. 45). From the perspective of career counseling and the psychology of entrepreneurship, there are at least two theories relevant to this research; namely self-concept theory of career development and indigenization of career theories.

This Career Development Self-Concept Theory emphasizes that a person's career develops along with how the individual understands and shapes their identity in the social and professional environment. In the context of the research Blessings in *Khidmah* as the Entrepreneurial Ethic of Female Santri to Achieve Perfection and Meaning of Life, the self-concept of female santri in entrepreneurship is influenced by Islamic values, experiences in *khidmah* (devotion), and the social roles they carry out. *Khidmah* is part of the internalization process of identity that shapes their entrepreneurial motivation and orientation.

Career Indigenization Theory highlights how cultural factors and local values influence individual career choices and development. In this study, career indigenization is seen in how female santri develop entrepreneurship based on Islamic ethics, making *khidmah* the main principle in their business. This shows that entrepreneurship is not only about profit, but also about blessings and the broader meaning of life in the context of Islamic boarding school culture and Islamic values.

The correlation between the two theories with this study is that this study attempts to uncover how *khidmah*, as the ethics of female students' entrepreneurship, not only helps them in economic aspects but also provides meaning to life and perfection in their career journey. By using the theory of self-concept of career development, this study explains how students form their entrepreneurial identity through Islamic values. Meanwhile, the theory of career indigenization shows that the career development of female students cannot be separated from the context of Islamic boarding school culture and Islamic teachings which are the basis of their values and motivations in entrepreneurship.

According to self-concept theory of career development, a person's selection and self-development is a process of developing and implementing his self-concept. This theory was put forward by Donald E. Super under the name "career development theory" (1963), then developed into "developmental self-concept theory" (1963), and refined into "life-span, life-scape theory" (1990). According to Super, self-concept is the result of a complex interaction among several factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, individual characteristics, and environmental influences. Self-concept is always dynamic and continues to grow, along with life experiences, work experiences, and other life roles (Super, 1963, 1990, p. 57).

According to Super, career is a series of events that make up a life, a series of occupations and other life roles that are combined and show a person's commitment to his work in the pattern of his development. Thus career development is a lifelong process that involves psychological, sociological, educational, economic, physical, and opportunity factors, which interact to influence one's career (Brown Duane., 2006, p. 78). Career development is a continuous process of a person using all his potential to always develop in the world of work (Perry & VanZandt, 2006, p. 345). Work is a central activity in human life that is fundamental to survival. Work naturally intersects with the diverse roles people occupy in their social and economic lives. In addition, work is very important for psychological health and the strength and structure of a community (Blustein, 2017, p. 151).

The notion of self-concept is multifaceted and shaped significantly by cultural influences. Broadly, self-concepts can be categorized into two distinct types. The first is the *independent self*, characterized by a perception of the self as autonomous, stable, and distinct from its social environment. This conceptualization is predominantly found in Western cultures. The second is the *interdependent self*, which views the self as dynamic, adaptable, and inherently connected to social contexts—an understanding more prevalent in Eastern cultural settings. From the interdependent perspective, an individual's career gains greater significance when it is embedded within meaningful social relationships. Consequently, behavior is evaluated in terms of how well the individual comprehends and responds to the thoughts, emotions, and actions of others within relational frameworks (Arifin, 2019b, p. 45; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 9; Shelley E. Taylor et al., 2003, p. 235).

The second theoretical framework in this study is the indigenization of career theories. The researcher uses this theory because pesantren entrepreneurship includes local wisdom, which the researcher then relates to the theory of career development. Leung suggested that researchers should be careful in examining career theories from the West. He must adapt or modify culture or "indigenization" (Alvin & Athanasou, 2008, p. 70).

From the results of Leung's study, very few career development theories have emerged from outside the United States. Therefore, to advance the scientific discipline of career counseling, there must be a "genuine" effort to develop theories and practices that will meet the special needs of an area that is following the local wisdom of the local community. Indigenization of career theory and practice aims to identify things that are universal but contain experiences, constructions, practices that are unique and specific to certain cultural groups.

Indigenization of career theories is similar to the approach of emancipatory communitarianism, which is a construct that focuses on career development practices both on individuals and the prevailing system. This approach respects the values of social justice and human diversity. Blustein suggests using emancipatory communitarianism and then combining it with existing theories so that it will produce an approach that is able to prepare individuals to make the right career choices (Blustein et al., 2005, p. 70).

The concept of indigenous careers is a scientific study that examines the knowledge, skills, and beliefs of a community from the perspective of the community itself (Kim, 2006, p. 321). Researchers use independent counseling with the at-Tawazun Counseling theory approach (Arifin, 2020a, 2012, p. 45). At-

tawazun counseling refers to Islamic values (fiqh and tasawuf) as well as the local wisdom of pesantren. This pesantren counseling approach has the characteristics of harmony and balance (at-tawazun) from various elements and potentials within the counselor, counselee, and the environment and refers to the benefit of the people (Arifin & Munfaridah, 2018, p. 115; Arifin & Zaini, 2014, p. 18, 2019, p. 87; Arifin, 2021, p. 36, 2018, p. 8)

2 Methods

This paper uses a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach examines socio-cultural phenomena starting from the awareness of people who underlie their behavior as something meaningful. The phenomenological approach explores personal life experiences in detail to describe how people understand their personal and social world from their point of view (Frost, 2011, p. 120; Hanurawan, 2012, p. 130).

The main purpose of phenomenological research in this study is to find answers about the meaning of the phenomenon of the blessing of entrepreneurship in serving in pesantren. Researchers will describe and understand the students who are devoted to the Business Sector of the Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah in Situbondo about their life experiences from the phenomenon of *khidmah* in seeking blessings. From the counseling side, the phenomenological approach is associated with self-theory, situation definition theory, and person-centered therapy or in the context of pesantren, counseling at-tawazun (Arifin, 2020a, p. 79; Hanurawan, 2012, p. 130; Mappiare, 2013, p. 79).

The research location is in the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Syafi'iyah in Situbondo. This location was chosen because Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah is a large pesantren with 14,350 students. The students come from remote parts of the archipelago and some even come from Thailand and Malaysia. Salafiyah Syafi'iyah has 650 employees (55% from students) from 48 business units (Syafi'iyah, 2019, p. 3).

The research subjects were 20 students female students who were selected using the key informant technique and the purposive sampling technique. The criteria for the research subjects were female students who served for at least 2 years in the pesantren sector and came from underprivileged families. The selection of research subjects also considers their education and regional background. Their age range is 17-30 years, high school education-university, and comes from ethnic Javanese, Madurese, Lombok, and Malay. In addition, the researcher also interviewed several pesantren administrators. The data collection method uses observation, interviews, and document searches

Data analysis, among others: First, the stage of describing the phenomena experienced by students. Second, the horizontalization stage is an inventory of several important statements related to research. Third, the cluster of the meaning stage is to classify some of these important statements into several themes. Researchers conducted a textural description, namely what was experienced by students who were *khidmah* and a structural description, namely how the phenomenon was and what it meant for students. Fourth, is the essence description stage, where the researcher builds a comprehensive description of the meaning and substance experienced by the students. Fifth, is the report writing stage.

3 Result and Discussion

For the pesantren community, *khidmah* is a means and a path that must be taken by students in obtaining useful and blessing knowledge. *Khidmah* or "ngabdi (serving)", in Salafiyah Syafi'iyah is known by the motto, "*Mondhuk entar ngabdi dan ngaji* (studying at the pesantren to serve and learn)". Santri studies in pesantren to serve kiai, teachers, fellow students, and others as well as to study religious knowledge (Arifin, 2020a, p. 127; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2018, p. 67, 2019, p. 80). The pesantren also hopes that the santri before returning to the community practice their knowledge in the pesantren; for example by teaching or serving in pesantren. First, so that students gain knowledge that is blessed. Second, when he returns home, he has strong provisions to educate the children. If he serves in the pesantren business field, he has practical provisions and skills in entrepreneurship.

One of the *khidmah* carried out by the students is *khidmah* in the field of pesantren business. In their view, *khidmah* in the economic field, including the advice of the late Kiai As'ad. Kiai As'ad advised his students to participate in thinking about the people's economy.

3.1 *Khidmah* in Entrepreneurs Who are Considered a Blessing

For the students, *khidmah* in entrepreneurship that is considered to bring blessings in their lives include:

First, be sincere (*ikhlas*). Sincerity occupies the highest *khidmah* character which is considered to be a blessing for students who are *khidmah* in the pesantren business field. Sincerity is also a character that is the main emphasis in serving in the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah environment. Sincerity is a sincere attitude wholeheartedly and accompanied by good motivation (*qashdun shahih*) in *khidmah*. Sincerity in *khidmah* or serving must be done with good intentions. He should always feel happy and sincere, even if sometimes the salary is small or received late. Serving must also withstand being scolded by others (*Interview* with Nuraini, Oct 5, 2023).

Second, be honest. Honesty is the second rank of something that is considered to bring blessings in *khidmah*. According to the students, honesty is very necessary for entrepreneurship. Honesty is a match between thoughts, words, and actions. Honest means right, namely not committing fraudulent acts and always being transparent or open. Honesty in all things is a requirement of life. When someone is caught being dishonest, other people will find it hard to trust him again even if what he says is true. Honesty in every service is very important. When someone in service is dishonest, worrying about every move does not increase the reward but instead increases the sin (*Interview*, Umi Fariyah, Oct 3, 2023).

Third, be active and disciplined. Enterprising belongs to the third rank, something that is considered to bring blessings in *khidmah*. According to the students, being active in entrepreneurship is a prerequisite for successful entrepreneurship. Enterprising and diligent with passion and earnestness with high ideals (*raf'ul himmah*) and determination (*nufudzul 'azimah*). Being active must be accompanied by high ideals (*raf'ul himmah*) and determination (*nufudzul 'azimah*). Students must be determined, must not break in the middle of the road, must not turn directions, and must not hesitate in carrying out their duties. After we are diligent in trying, we must surrender everything to Allah (*tawakkal*).

Fourth, harmonious and in tune. Students who are *khidmah* must be able to maintain harmony between tasks and other obligations. Other obligations, for example, because he is a student he must learn in the dormitory and study at the madrasa. Don't let him carry out his duties in the business field of the pesantren, he should neglect his duties as a student. Therefore, he must be able to manage time, between serving (*khidmah*) and learning. Students must also be able to maintain harmony between the body and the spirit; between physical health and mental health so that he can look good when serving others. In addition, students who serve must also be able to maintain harmony with fellow employees and superiors. This harmony is important to create a conducive work environment (*Interview* Siti, Oct 20, 2023).

Fifth, *qona'ah* and *ridha*. *Qona'ah* and *ridha* are internal dispositions believed to invite blessings, particularly among students engaged in business-oriented *khidmah* (dedicated service). *Qona'ah* refers to an inner openness and contentment in accepting one's current circumstances. It reflects an attitude of gratitude and sufficiency, where individuals refrain from unrealistic desires and regard what they possess as adequate. A person with *qona'ah* maintains a sense of abundance even in conditions of material scarcity. Such individuals are generous despite limited resources, demonstrating a wealth of spirit rather than material affluence. Their inner peace protects them from dissatisfaction and the burden of unattainable expectations.

In contrast, *ridha* is defined as a deep sense of tranquility in the heart when accepting divine will. Those who embody *ridha* do not lament misfortunes or adverse situations. Instead, they wholeheartedly accept reality as a manifestation of divine wisdom and grace (*nrima ing pandum*), embracing both hardships and blessings with a calm and receptive heart. *Ridha* means eliminating hatred for provisions that will or have occurred (*qadha* and *qadr Allah*) and always living a pleasant life even though there is a dark disaster. He did this after trying his best and surrendering himself completely to God (*tawakkal*). *Ridha* does not mean leaving the laws of nature (*sunnatullah*) but he must try his best and always pray to Allah (*Interview* with Rahma, Nop 25, 2023). With these two characters, they are satisfied with the existing salary and accept it happily. Both characters are the embodiment of a simple and unpretentious life.

Sixth, be patient. Patience is a character in *khidmah* which is considered to bring blessings in life. According to the students, patience is an attitude of steadfastness, tenacity, resistance to testing, and feeling calm in dealing with problems in entrepreneurship. The essence of patience is an open-minded attitude and courage to face difficulties. He always shows a rich attitude by hiding poverty in his life and still behaves well. With patience, we will reach maturity, we have the endurance to suffer without complaining and we show human qualities that can tame anger and lust.

Seventh, *amanah* (trust). *Amanah* can mean trying to carry out tasks as optimally as possible with full responsibility. *Amanah* is faithful, committed, and trustworthy in keeping promises. Trust is something that is considered to bring blessings in *khidmah*. According to the students, a trustworthy person is a person

who can let go of his interests to be *khidmah* in the business sector. They adhere to the principle: "*lakoneh lakonah, kenangeh kenangenah*" which means doing their job and sitting in their position. We must do our job with full responsibility and we must fill or carry out our position with full of trust (Interview Ani, Oct 15, 2023).

Eighth, friendly and polite. According to the students, in serving their business in their field of service, they are required to be responsive to serving students with a friendly attitude and good speech. In addition, you must be respectful and respectful (*ta'dhim*). These communication skills are important for entrepreneurial students.

For the students, being friendly and polite is viewed as an expression of *tawadhu'*, or humility. *Tawadhu'* encompasses a modest attitude reflected in one's appearance, speech, and inner disposition when engaging with others. This includes maintaining a simple yet clean, neat, and pure physical appearance. The demeanor is calm, marked by a gentle smile and a pleasant manner of speaking. In terms of speech, *tawadhu'* involves avoiding vulgar or offensive language, speaking with refinement and kindness, and demonstrating the ability to discern between coarse and refined expressions—tailoring communication appropriately to different audiences.

Ninth, networking. The ability to have extensive networking is a skill in *khidmah* in the field of business that is considered to be a blessing. A student engaged in entrepreneurship is expected to have the ability to network.

The students interpreted the concept of networking, as envisioned by Kiai As'ad, through the metaphor of a "good tree" found in Surah Ibrahim, verses 24–25. In this context, Kiai As'ad provided a contextual interpretation of the verse to illustrate three key elements of effective networking. First, the tree's "firm roots" symbolize a solid grassroots foundation, indicating a deeply rooted support base. Second, its "branches reaching the sky" represent an expansive and far-reaching network, signifying strong connections and influence among high-level actors such as political elites, community leaders, and senior officials. Third, the tree's "fruit borne in every season" reflects the consistent and tangible contributions of these cadres, who are expected to generate ongoing benefits for both the organization and the wider community. (Arifin & Zaini, 2018. p. 37; Arifin, 2014a, p. 45; Hasan, 2003, p. 167).

Based on this framework, behaviors that are regarded as sources of blessing in the business sector can be classified into two dimensions. The first is *shalahiyyah*, which refers to intellectual competence and practical skills—such as the ability to build networks, demonstrate politeness and sociability, engage proactively, and uphold balance and social harmony. The second is *shalih*, which represents moral and spiritual integrity—embodied in traits such as sincerity, honesty, contentment (*qona'ah*) and acceptance (*ridha*), patience, and trustworthiness. To attain holistic well-being and success in both worldly and spiritual realms, these two aspects—*shalahiyyah* and *shalih*—must be integrated and harmonized. Proficiency in skills must be guided by strong ethical character to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

3.2 Meaning of *Khidmah* for the Meaning and Perfection of Life

The students interpret the meaning of *khidmah* in the field of entrepreneurship in their career development, can be classified into two parts. First, the students interpret it as the meaning of life through *khidmah* for worship and hoping for blessings (*tabarruk*). They feel that life is very meaningful if they can worship and hope for blessings (*tabarruk*) for a better life. In *khidmah*, there is a balance between hoping for the pleasure of God and the pleasure of the kiai or between worship and hoping for the blessing of the kiai.

The students feel that their lives are meaningful and life feels better in achieving prosperity and happiness, although they are more oriented to quality, not just the quantity of salary received. The students in their careers in the pesantren business sector are not oriented to how much salary they receive, but rather emphasize the hope of obtaining the blessings of life. This is also reflected in the term salary received every month as "money blessing". Barokah according to them can mean to achieve continuous good; not only for happiness in this world but also in the hereafter. Thus there is a balance between welfare (material) and happiness (non-material) and a balance between happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Second, the students interpret it as the perfection of life through *khidmah* for pesantren and society (*khidmah lil ma'had wal ummah*). For the students, his life feels perfect if he can be *khidmah* and be useful for the pesantren and others. They will achieve the perfection of life, if their life is also used to serve and benefit others, especially for the pesantren. This is to practice the hadith, "The best of humans are those who are beneficial to humans (*Khair an-nas man yanfa'u an-nas*)".

In addition, serving in the business sector as a vehicle for establishing relationships (*asambung*) with *kiai* and *pesantren*. Having a relationship, especially maintaining a spiritual relationship at any time with a teacher, includes values that are important for a students to pay attention to. Therefore, in the era of *Kiai Fawaid*, *Sukorejo* alumni agreed to attend the *Haul Almarhumain* event every year at *Pesantren Sukorejo*. *Kiai Fawaid* also really hopes that alumni will attend the event, to strengthen spiritual ties with the *Sukorejo kiai*. "Like the diesel lamp, *Pesantren Sukorejo* is the engine. While the students are lights that illuminate society from the darkness. Therefore, the lights must always be connected to the engine," said *Kiai Fawaid* (Arifin & Wisri, 2019, p. 9; Arifin, 2014b, p. 7; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2018, p. 321).

According to *Kiai Azaim*, there are two aspects of communication and interaction between *pesantren* and alumni, namely physical and spiritual aspects. Physical's connection can be defined as the intensity of the ongoing bilateral relationship with the *pesantren* (present at every event celebrating major holidays at the *pesantren*), or continuing the tradition of *santri* by placing their sons and daughters in *pesantren*. While the spiritual connection is the continuity of scientific (*ilmiah*), *amaliyah* and *wasilah* which is practiced consistently (practicing the knowledge that is related, reciting *ratibul haddad*, *dhikr aqaidd saeket*, *qasidah istighasah*, *qasidah munfarijah*, *tawassul* etc.), and can be a transmission link in the chain (Arifin, 2020b, p. 77; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2019, p. 342).

According to *Kiai Azaim*, the relationship between a student and their *kiai* (Islamic teacher) can be categorized into four distinct types. First, *asanding-asambung*, which refers to a relationship where both physical proximity and spiritual connection are present, allowing for active and meaningful interaction. Second, *asanding, tak asambung*, where physical closeness exists but there is a lack of spiritual engagement or inner connection. Third, *tak asanding, asambung*, which describes a condition in which the student and *kiai* are physically distant, yet maintain a strong and continuous spiritual bond. Lastly, *tak asanding, tak asambung*, a relationship marked by both physical distance and spiritual disconnection, indicating a complete absence of interaction on both levels (Arifin, Hadori, et al., 2021, p. 12; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2019, p. 121).

From this explanation, the *khidmah* which is considered to bring blessings in life by the students in the business sector can be categorized into two parts. First, *shalahiyyah* shows scientific prowess and skills; namely being able to build networks, friendly and polite, active, and able to maintain balance and harmony. Second, *shalih* shows the strength of moral integrity; namely sincere, honest, qonaah and pleased, patient, and trustworthy. Between *shalahiyyah* and *shalih* there must be integration and harmony (*at-tawazun*).

The students interpret the experience of *khidmah* in the *Pesantren Business Sector* can also be categorized into two parts. First, the meaning of life using worship and hoping for blessings (*tabarruk*). Second, the perfection of life through *khidmah* for *pesantren* and society. The meaning and perfection of life are to achieve prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter. There is a harmony (*at-tawazun*) between welfare (material) and happiness (non-material) and a balance between happiness in this world and the hereafter. Thus, the behavior that is considered to bring blessings and the meaning of *khidmah* contains the values of *at-tawazun*: balance and harmony.

The self-concept of the students which contains harmony, and balance (*at-tawazun*) is following the values that grow and develop at the *Pesantren Sukorejo*. At the *pesantren*, the values of harmony and moderation are always developed. This study shows that the values of harmony are also evident in the field of entrepreneurship. Before that, research has been carried out in the field of counseling that produces harmony values (*at-tawazun*) and in the field of *fiqh* which contains moderate values (Arifin & Baharun, 2021, p. 64; Arifin & Munfaridah, 2018, p. 126; Arifin, 2019a, p. 55; 2020a, p. 45; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2018, p. 34, 2019, p. 67; Muhajir, 2017, p. 97).

From several studies on the psychology of entrepreneurship, cultural values and cultural practices influence the level of entrepreneurship. A person is part of a group of people who have certain values. These values are important elements of a person who will also influence him in entrepreneurship (León et al., 2008). Likewise in the study of career counseling. Someone who holds collectivity values and comes from a community that holds social values, these values greatly influence them in the decision-making process. These values are also included in important variables in career development and work behavior as well as career success.

Values are beliefs that are based on the experience experienced by individuals as a standard about how they should function. These standards are cognitive structures, but they have both behavioral and affective dimensions. Values are developed so that individuals can meet their needs in a socially acceptable manner. Thus, the behavioral aspects of these values can be shaped by the cultural context in which they develop. Individual values are the basis for self-evaluation and evaluation of others, and they play a major role in the formation of personal goals (Brown Duane., 2006, p. 78). Cultural values and work values are the main

variables that influence the process of making job choices, the work chosen, and the resulting satisfaction (Brown & Lent, 2005, p. 67).

The self-concept of the students about the meaning and perfection of life in an entrepreneurial career is also influenced by the culture of the pesantren, especially from the advice of the kiai. A person's career cannot be understood outside of their social context. To fully understand a person's career, it is important to explore the entire web of his or her life roles. The constellation of role interactions can shape careers (Super, 1990, p. 141).

For the students, the meaning and perfection of his life will be achieved if he can *khidmah* and serve others. They are devoted to entrepreneurship to achieve prosperity and happiness in life for themselves, their fellow human beings, and the surrounding environment. The advantages of entrepreneurship are not only measured by welfare but also happiness that is oriented to the world and the hereafter.

This finding, from the perspective of career counseling, a person's job satisfaction (*khidmah*) and life satisfaction depend on the extent to which he can find a way for his abilities, desires, values, interests, personality attitudes, and self-concept. It all depends on shaping the type of work, work situation, and way of life that can play several growing roles and seeking experiences that lead to pleasant and appropriate understanding. A person's level of satisfaction with his job is proportional to the degree to which he implements his self-concept. The relationship between work situations and individual roles must be considered in a broad sense. According to Super, career adjustment under the right conditions may identify an individual's ability to cope with, pursue, or accept changes in career roles (Brown Duane, 2006, p. 76; Super, 1990, p. 321).

From other career counseling research, people who have meaningful jobs will reduce stress and depression levels during their work. However, they are financially, not necessarily prosperous. Especially if they do not fully use their skills and abilities (Allan, Rolniak, & Bouchard, 2020, p. 120).

From the perspective of the psychology of entrepreneurship, future entrepreneurship studies and behaviors must contribute to the well-being of themselves, their stakeholders, and the people around them. Successful entrepreneurs must have higher competence and social awareness. Even well-being is the main standard in entrepreneurial success (Gielnik, Cardon, & Frese, 2021, p. 32; Minhaji & Arifin, 2021, p. 15; Robert A Baron, 2000, p. 65). Likewise, it is important to integrate well-being theories from psychology into entrepreneurship research. This is to understand the impact of entrepreneurship on individual mental health, improve quality of life, understand the motivations underlying entrepreneurial behavior, and to better understand how entrepreneurs change, the environment they are in, discover opportunities, and advance society in innovative ways (Arifin & Zaini, 2021, p. 7; Østergaard, Santos, & C.S.F 2018, p. 38).

4 Conclusions

Pesantren, as well as educational institutions (*tafaqquh fiddin*), are also institutions for social da'wah services (including entrepreneurship). This portrait of pesantren as the printer of the birth of entrepreneurs is rarely studied, let alone research in the perspective of career counseling and psychology of entrepreneurship. This paper describes the experience and meaning of entrepreneurship for students who *khidmah* in the field of pesantren business with the motivation to hope for the blessings of life in the perspective of self-concept theory of career development and indigenization of career theories.

The *khidmah* activities in the pesantren business sector which are considered to bring blessings in life can be classified into two parts. First, *shalahiyyah* shows scientific prowess and skills; namely being able to build networks, friendly and polite, active, and able to maintain balance and harmony. Second, *shalih* shows the strength of moral integrity; namely sincere, honest, qonaah and pleased, patient, and trustworthy. *Salahiyyah* and *shalih* there must be integration and harmony (*at-tawazun*).

The students interpret the experience of *khidmah* in the field of pesantren business also in two categories. First, the meaning of life employing worship and hoping for blessings (*tabarruk*). Second, the perfection of life through *khidmah* for pesantren and society. The meaning and perfection of life are to achieve prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter. There is a harmony (*at-tawazun*) between welfare (material) and happiness (non-material) and a balance between happiness in this world and the hereafter.

The self-concept of the students which contains harmony, and balance (*at-tawazun*) is by the values that grow and develop at the Sukorejo Islamic Boarding School. At the pesantren, the values of harmony and moderation are always developed. This study shows that the values of harmony are also evident in the field of entrepreneurship.

Some students who are devoted to the pesantren business sector, after returning to society they continue their work in the economic field. They pioneered the community's economic business. Thus, pesantren have carried out good practices in conducting cadre in the economic field by instilling the values of blessing in entrepreneurship to serve the people.

Research suggestions, among others: First, an understanding of the local wisdom of the entrepreneurial experience of students who are devoted to the field of pesantren business, it is important to be used as inspiration and integrated into Career Guidance and Counseling materials by counselors senior high schools or education-based institutions pesantren. Because career exploration in adolescence is an important element in adolescent self-concept. If teenagers are invited to understand their culture and try to reflect on that culture, they will not be uprooted in developing their careers from their cultural roots. Collective and religious culture; a career culture that instills the values of blessing in entrepreneurship to serve the people. Moreover, future entrepreneurship studies must contribute to the well-being and benefit humanity and the environment. It is also important to develop in research and development, to produce Career Guidance and Counseling modules.

Second, research on entrepreneurship and careers in the context of Indonesian culture needs to be developed in the subjects of "Psychology of Entrepreneurship" and "Career Counseling" and other research studies. Social and economic policies related to increasing entrepreneurship in Indonesia require psychology and counseling, but research related to these two fields is still relatively rare. Therefore, several research institutions should give a larger portion to the theme of entrepreneurship in the context of Indonesian culture.

Third, the era of society 5.0, which is oriented to human values in the use of technology 4.0 to solve social problems and economic growth, is very relevant to study with psychological and counseling approaches. In addition, there is also a strengthening of the mastery of information technology for students. Then develop their identity through digital media. Because it will contribute to a better understanding of the changes that are taking place in the world of the media industry and society at large. So that the goal of holding Islamic boarding schools will be achieved.

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