

OPTIMIZING *DAYAH* BUSINESS UNITS IN ACEH: AN ANP STUDY

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ABSTRACT – This study investigates the key factors influencing the success of business units within *Dayah* (Islamic boarding schools) in Aceh Province, Indonesia. Employing the Analytical Network Process (ANP), the research gathers expert opinions and insights from academics, government officials, and practitioners. The analysis reveals that both internal and external factors significantly impact the management of *Dayah* business units. Internal factors identified as crucial for success include public relations resources, leadership capabilities, business management practices, natural resources availability, and adequate business capital. Externally, technological advancements, demographic shifts, political/governmental support, socio-cultural influences, and economic conditions all play a role in determining success. This research highlights the importance for stakeholders to consider these diverse factors when optimizing *Dayah* business unit management. It further offers practical recommendations for managing such units within the context of Aceh, Indonesia.

Keywords: *Dayah* business units, success factors, ANP analysis, Islamic boarding schools, Aceh

ABSTRAK – *Optimalisasi Unit Bisnis Dayah di Aceh: Studi ANP.* Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor yang menjadi penentu kesuksesan dalam mengelola unit bisnis Dayah atau Pondok Pesantren yang ada di Provinsi Aceh, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan Analitical Network Process (ANP) untuk mengumpulkan opini dan pendapat dari akademisi, pejabat pemerintah dan praktisi. Analisis ANP menemukan bahwa kesuksesan dalam pengelolaan unit bisnis dayah di Aceh ditentukan oleh faktor internal dan faktor eksternal. Faktor internal yang teridentifikasi menjadi penentu keberhasilan adalah SDM, kepemimpinan yang kapabel, praktik manajemen bisnis, ketersediaan sumber daya alam, dan kecukupan modal usaha. Sementara dari sisi eksternal, faktor penentu kesuksesan adalah kemajuan teknologi, perubahan demografi, dukungan politik/pemerintah, pengaruh sosial budaya, dan kondisi ekonomi. Hasil ini berimplikasi bagi para pemangku kepentingan dalam optimalisasi pengelolaan unit bisnis pada dayah-dayah di Aceh untuk memperhatikan faktor-faktor kesuksesan tersebut. Penelitian ini juga memberikan rekomendasi praktis yang bisa dijadikan acuan dalam pengelolaan unit bisnis yang dikelola oleh Dayah/Pondok Pesantren di Aceh, Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Unit bisnis dayah, Faktor Kesuksesan, Analisis ANP, Dayah/pesantren, Aceh

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools, or *Pondok Pesantren*, or simply *Pesantren* have long been integral to Indonesia's development, contributing significantly not just in the realm of human capital but also in social and economic spheres. Over the past decade, the financial autonomy of these institutions has emerged as a critical issue. As centers of traditional Islamic learning, *Pondok Pesantren* is unique in that they provide a communal living and learning environment under the guidance of a central religious figure, the Kyai, with the mosque serving as the focal point for activities and instruction. The pursuit of independence within these *Pesantren* is multifaceted, involving efforts to secure donations, generate internal economic resources, and establish partnerships with external business entities (Saefullah, 2019). The significance of economic self-sufficiency is underscored by the benchmark set by Bank Indonesia, which posits that a *Pesantren's* ability to finance at least 30 percent of its operational costs through its own business ventures is indicative of financial independence (Bank Indonesia, 2023). This underscores the imperative for *Pesantren* to optimize their resources and foster economic development within their communities.

Despite the strategic importance of *Pesantren* in fostering socio-economic development within their communities (Sakdiyah, 2010), there exists a notable research gap in how these institutions can effectively cultivate and manage entrepreneurial ventures. The success of such enterprises hinges on the application of entrepreneurial values, leveraging institutional strengths for economic activity, and generating profits to further the institution's progress.

Aceh Province stands out in this context, where *Pesantren*, locally known as *Dayah*, is pivotal to the regional economy. Historically recognized as the oldest educational institution in Aceh (Hugronje, 1906), *Dayah* engages in various business activities to support its operations. However, the management and success rates of these ventures vary greatly, with only a handful of *Dayah*, such as *Dayah Raudhatul Ma'arif*, demonstrating effective business development (Safriadi, 2020). This variance underscores the importance of robust business management—a comprehensive approach encompassing strategic alignment, governance, methods, technology, people, and culture—to enhance organizational performance (Brocke & Rosemann, 2014).

Despite the strategic benefits of business units to the economic independence of *Dayah*, studies examining the critical success factors for these enterprises



are limited. While some research has touched upon the potential of *Dayah* in improving socio-economic welfare (Sabirin, 2018; Zuliani, Zulfahmi, & Hidayatullah, 2018), the management of education characterized by agricultural extracurricular activities (Afna, 2016), and the ideality of *Dayah's* independence (Suyanta, 2012), there is a lack of comprehensive analysis on the entrepreneurial aspect.

This study aims to bridge the research gap by investigating the critical success factors that contribute to the effective management of business units within *Pesantren* in Aceh. Given the importance placed on the economic independence of *Dayah* by entities such as Bank Indonesia, this research is not only significant but necessary for the formulation and execution of strategies for managing business units within *Dayah*, particularly in Aceh. The novelty lies in the use of the Analytical Network Process (ANP) approach, which has not been previously applied in this research domain. By harnessing the insights of experts and specialists, the findings of this study could provide a strategic framework for enhancing the national economy through the empowerment of these traditional educational institutions. The implications of this research extend beyond academic interest, offering practical insights for policymakers and *Pesantren* administrators to foster economic resilience and sustainability within their communities.

The structure of the study is organized in the following manner: The subsequent section, Section 2, offers a contextual overview of *Dayah* businesses in Aceh, providing a comprehensive understanding of their current state and significance. Following this, Section 3 introduces the ANP methodology. This section elucidates how the ANP methodology is applied to identify the critical success factors for *Dayah* businesses, thereby providing a robust framework for analysis. In Section 4, the research findings are presented. This section delves into an analysis of the key internal and external factors influencing the success of *Dayah* businesses, offering insightful observations and interpretations. Finally, Section 5 provides actionable recommendations for *Dayah* leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders. These recommendations aim to promote successful *Dayah* business models, thereby contributing to the overall growth and prosperity of *Dayah* businesses in Aceh.



LITERATURE REVIEW

The function of business within a society is critical, as it addresses fundamental human needs ranging from sustenance to apparel (Amstrong, 2020). Moreover, businesses contribute to the alleviation of poverty and the creation of employment opportunities (Toledo-López, Díaz-Pichardo, Jiménez-Castañeda, & Sánchez-Medina, 2012). The presence of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), along with larger corporations, is a cornerstone of a nation's economic development (Chittithaworn, Yusuf, & Islam, 2011), necessitating that these entities continually enhance their performance.

Factors Influencing Business Success

The examination of business success is deemed essential, with success being measurable through both financial and non-financial achievements (Low & Macmillan, 1988; Simpson, Padmore, & Newman, 2012). The establishment of small businesses is not always driven by the pursuit of economic power or substantial profits but may instead support a lifestyle or provide a means of survival (Toledo-López et al., 2012). Although various factors influencing business success have been discussed in the academic literature, there remains a lack of consensus regarding the most critical factors. Nevertheless, entrepreneurial success is widely recognized as being influenced by both internal and external factors (Sefiani, 2013; Akmal, Musa, & Ibrahim, 2020), with the environment playing a pivotal role in the development of entrepreneurship within religious educational institutions (Siswanto, Armanu, Setiawan, & Nimran, 2013; Kamri, Ramlan, & Ibrahim, 2014).

Internal Factors

Internal factors are vital to the success of both family and conventional businesses. Human capital, in particular, demands significant attention from entrepreneurs, as it contributes to financial, personal, social, and environmental outcomes (Jiang, Jamil, Zaman, & Fatima, 2023). Organizational performance is enhanced when entrepreneurs optimally utilize resources such as human capital and physical assets (Ramezan & Sanjaghi, 2013). The continuity of a company is also heavily reliant on human capital (Headd, 2003). From an Islamic perspective, the importance of appointing individuals based on competence is highlighted, as exemplified by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Abdurrahman, 2013; Umuri & Ibrahim, 2020).



Capital is another crucial internal factor, underpinning the establishment and operation of businesses. It finances various business needs, from initial costs to working capital (Sukirno, Husin, Indrianto, Sianturi, & Saefullah, 2006). Companies that secure financing are often able to enhance their performance (Habriyanto et al., 2022), and capital is instrumental in fostering sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems (Weerasekara & Bhanugopan, 2023). The possession of natural resources can also serve as a competitive advantage for companies. The resource-based theory posits that a company's resources and capabilities are fundamental to its competitive advantage (Hart & Dowell, 2011), while the natural resources-based value approach focuses on the contingent nature of these resources and capabilities (Nugroho, 2019).

Managerial capability is equally important, with successful companies typically having managers who are adept at understanding market fundamentals, adapting to global business strategies, and effectively communicating (Bjorksten & Hagglund, 2012). In small businesses, managerial capabilities such as leadership, strategic thinking, problem-solving, and relationship management are crucial for survival (Kearney, Harrington, & Kelliher, 2014). Leadership is a central process in managing a company and influencing groups to achieve shared goals (Northouse, 2013). Transformational leadership is particularly necessary in a rapidly changing global environment and is crucial for the success of business units in religious educational institutions (Ilyas, Zainuddin, Sibuea, & Zahrila, 2019).

External Factors

The development of a business is also subject to external factors, including government policies, natural disasters, financial crises, and socio-cultural changes, which can be difficult to control. Government policies are especially critical for the development of MSMEs (Chandra, Trianto, & Munthe, 2020). Additionally, businesses must be prepared to rapidly adopt technology to maintain a competitive edge (Ananda, 2013; Trianto, Azman, & Masrizal, 2023), with younger individuals often being more receptive to technological changes (Alagheband, 2006).

Demographic trends can significantly influence business success, as they affect population behavior and, consequently, socio-cultural values, norms, and consumption behavior (Adiotomo & Samosir, 2010). The economic condition



of a population is also a critical consideration for companies, as it is strongly correlated with consumption behavior (Taylor & Houthakker, 2010).

In summary, the success of a business is multifaceted and contingent upon a complex interplay of internal and external factors. A thorough understanding and adept management of these factors are indispensable for businesses to prosper in an ever-evolving economic landscape.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The data utilized within the ANP methodology is derived from primary sources, and a series of methodical steps are undertaken to gather it. The initial stage involves the construction of a decomposition model, which is facilitated by an extensive literature review and interviews with subject matter experts. Subsequently, the model is quantified through the administration of meticulously designed questionnaires. The third phase encompasses the synthesis and analysis of the data collected.

The selection of respondents is a critical process, where individuals who possess a profound understanding of business development are chosen (Ibrahim, 2023). These individuals range from established business practitioners and scholars to government officials. Dilshad and Latif (2013) suggest a recommendation for the number of respondents and ANP participants to be between 10 to 12 individuals. In the context of this research, a total of 11 participants/respondents were engaged, as delineated in Table 1.

Table 1. ANP Respondents

No	Initial	Institutions	Occupation
<i>Expert Respondent</i>			
1	FS.	National Forum of Pondok Pesantren Association	Chairman
2	HF.	Association of Indonesia Santri entrepreneurs	Chairman
3	HA	UIN Ar-Raniry	Lecturer
4	MN	Trading <i>Dayah</i> of MUDI MESRA	Chairman
5	MYA	Ulama <i>Dayah</i> Association of Aceh	Chairman
6	MU	Business Unit of <i>Dayah</i> Babul Maghfirah	Manager
7	MR	MPU Aceh	Chairman
8	MS.	Association of Indonesia Santri Entrepreneurs Regional Aceh	Treasurer
9	SB	UIN Ar-Raniry	Lecturer
10	SF.	Business Unit of Raudhatul Ma'arif	Supervisor



No	Initial	Institutions	Occupation
11	SH.	Dayah Education Department of Aceh Province	Head of subsections
12	SBH	Cooperative Department of Aceh Province	Head of Empowerment
13	TA.	Bank Indonesia	Head of MSMEs Development
14	YA.	Bank Indonesia	Head of Aceh Regional
<i>Expert Respondent for ANP Pairwise Comparison Questionnaire</i>			
1	HF	Association of Indonesia Santri entrepreneurs	Chairman
2	MN	Trading Dayah of MUDI MESRA	Chairman
3	MYA	Ulama Dayah Association of Aceh	Chairman
4	MU	Business Unit of Dayah Babul Maghfirah	Manager
5	MUR	MPU of Aceh	Head of Secretariat
6	SF.	Business Unit of Raudhatul Ma'arif	Supervisor
7	SB	UIN Ar-Raniry	Lecturer
8	SH.	Dayah Education Department of Aceh Province	Head of subsections
9	SBH	Cooperative Department of Aceh Province	Head of Empowerment
10	TA.	Bank Indonesia	Head of MSMEs Development
11	YA.	Bank Indonesia	Head of Aceh Regional

ANP Steps

The ANP approach's research process consists of three stages: model construction, model quantification, and result analysis (Ascarya, 2020). These steps are shown in Figure 1.

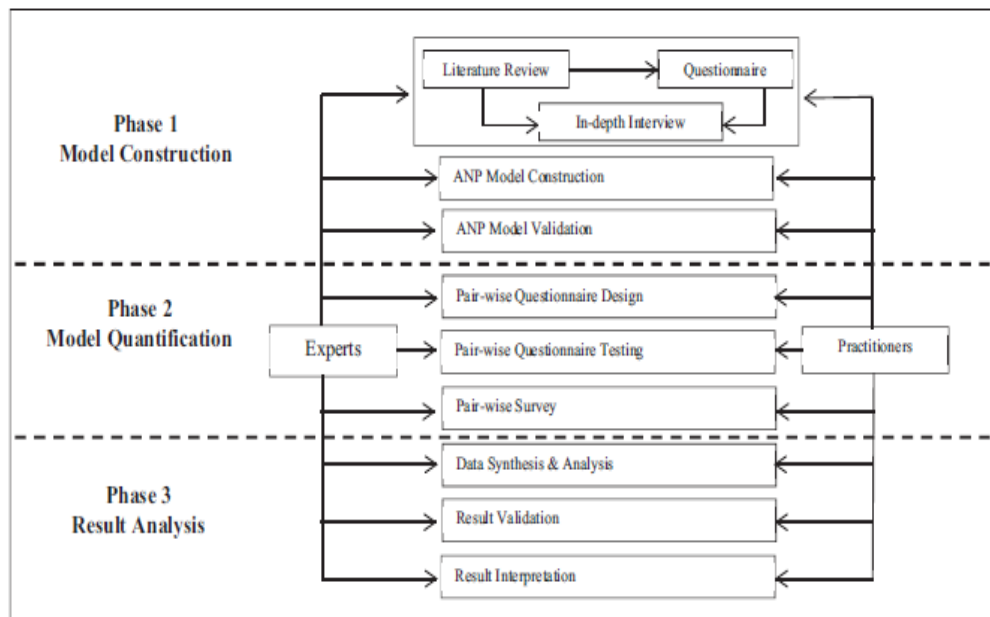


Figure 1. Step of ANP



During the model construction phase, experts conducted interviews with respondents to investigate the challenges associated with developing business units within religious educational institutions (*pesantren*). Utilizing the insights garnered from these expert interviews, an ANP framework was established to evaluate the success factors of *pesantren* in managing their business units, taking into account both internal and external factors.

Internally, the framework encompasses elements such as leadership, human resources, business management, natural resources, and business capital. Externally, the framework includes factors such as demography, socio-cultural influences, political environment, technological advancements, and economic conditions. The comprehensive ANP framework, which outlines these factors, is illustrated in Figure 2.

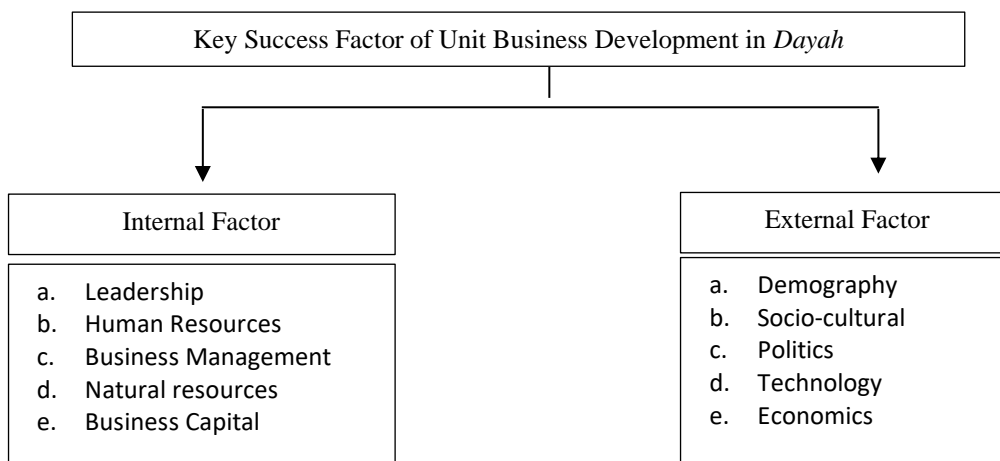


Figure 2. ANP Framework

Following the stage of model creation, the ANP network undergoes a process of quantification and measurement. During this phase, the Super Decisions Software is used to aid in the calculation of pairwise comparisons through questionnaires. To ensure a satisfactory level of consistency, experimental iterations of the questionnaire are carried out.

From a theoretical perspective, the ANP methodology employs supermatrix computations to yield eigenvector results. These eigenvectors, derived from matrices and supermatrices following the reciprocal theory, are scaled from one to nine (Tanjung & Devi, 2013). The outcomes of these calculations are presented in Table 2. The final stage involves interpreting these results.



Table 2. ANP Scale

Scale	Remarks
1	Equally important
3	Moderate importance of one over another
5	Strong or essential important
7	Very strong or demonstrated important
9	Extreme importance
2,4,6,8	Intermediate value

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The analysis conducted using Super Decisions software indicates that internal factors are pivotal for the success of business units in *pesantren*, with a significant value of 0.66. In comparison, external factors hold a value of 0.33. Consequently, it is imperative for *pesantren* managers to prioritize addressing internal challenges (Figure 3).

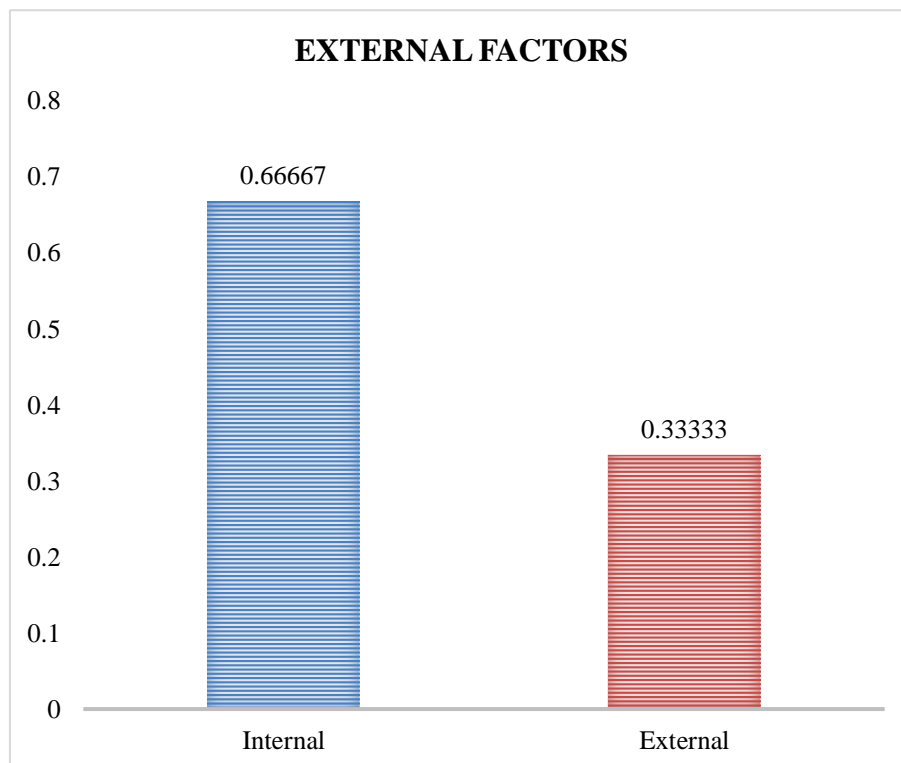


Figure 3. Critical Success Factor of Business Unit Development in *Dayah*



The ANP synthesis results are presented in Table 3, revealing a p-value of 0.06 and an inconsistency value of 0.00, suggesting a reliable model with consistent pairwise comparisons.

Table 3. Synthesis of *Dayah* Business Unit Factors

Factor	Synthesis
Internal	0.66667
External	0.33333
Inconsistency	0.00000
Kendall's W	0.52893
X ²	5.81818
P-Value	0.01600

(Source: Authors Finding, 2023)

The internal factors that warrant attention from *Dayah.s* business units are primarily human resources, as evidenced by a rater agreement value of 0.267. This is followed closely by business management, leadership, natural resources, and business capital (Figure 4).

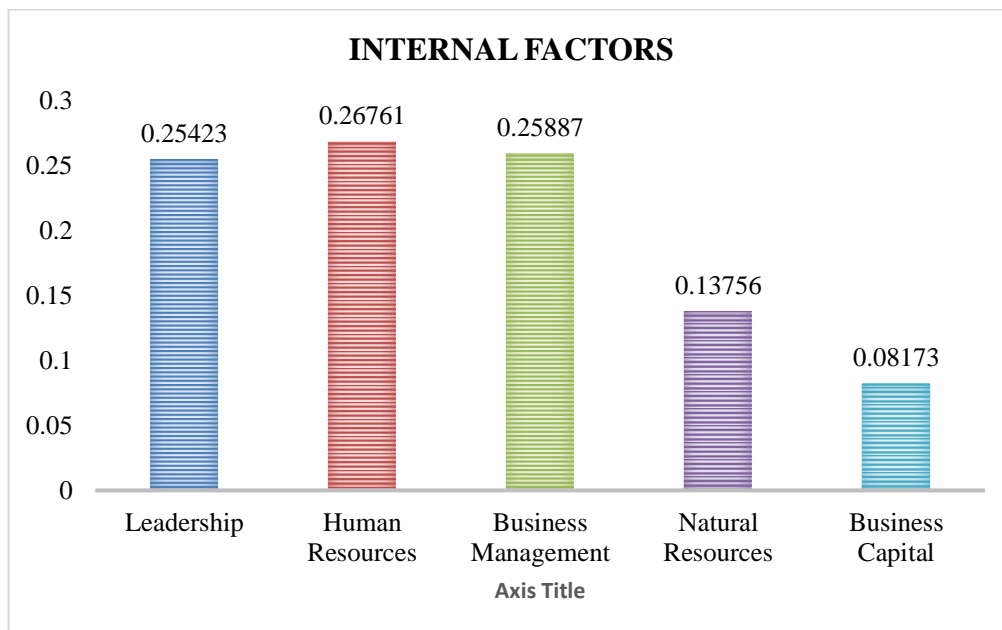


Figure 4. Key Success Factors of Internal Cluster

The internal factors exhibit an inconsistency value of 0.035 and a p-value of 0.00, indicating a strong agreement among raters and a statistically significant model (Table 4).



Table 4. Internal Factor Synthesis of *Dayah* Business Units

Internal Factors	Synthesis
Human resources	0.26761
Business Management	0.25887
Leadership	0.25423
Natural resources	0.13756
Business capital	0.08173
Inconsistency	0.03584
Kendall's W	0.46033
X^2	20.25455
<i>P</i> -Value	0.00000

(Source: Authors Finding, 2023)

From an external perspective, technology emerges as a critical success factor for the development of business units at *Dayah*, with a rater agreement value of 0.226. Other notable external factors include demographics, politics, socio-culture, and economics (Figure 5).

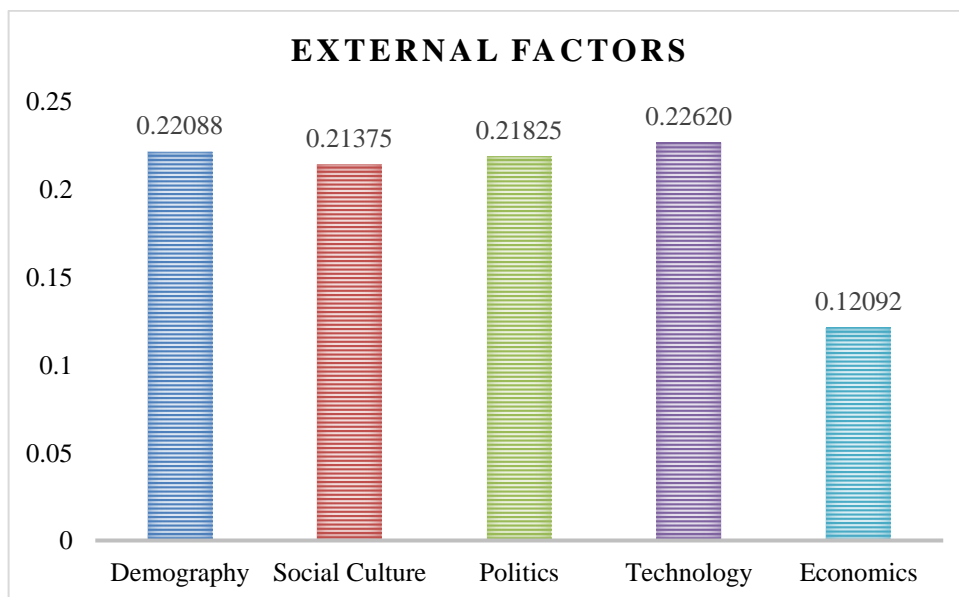


Figure 5. Critical Success Factor of External Cluster

Based on the synthesis results, external clusters have a p-value of 0.493 with an inconsistency value of 0.013. Table 5 indicates that technology is the primary external factor that managers should take into account. This is followed by demographics and politics. Furthermore, managers should also focus on socio-cultural and economic aspects.



Table 5. External Factors Synthesis of *Dayah* Business Units

External Factors	Synthesis
Technology	0.22620
Demography	0.22088
Politics	0.21825
Social culture	0.21375
Economics	0.12092
Inconsistency	0.01308
Kendall's W	0.07727
X ²	3.40000
P-Value	0.49300

(Source: Authors Finding, 2023)

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the influence of internal factors as key determinants in the success of *Dayah* business units in Aceh. Human resources emerge as the foremost priority, aligning with the notion that human resources are a central driver of growth and competitiveness. Effective human resource management is crucial for the success and competitive advantage of teams and individuals within an organization. As Price (2023) highlights, human resources are the fundamental drivers of growth and competitive advantage. Jotabá et al. (2022) further substantiate that effective team and individual performance, leading to competitive edge and success, hinges upon sound human resource management practices. Therefore, *Dayah* managers must enhance the business skills of their employees and engage various stakeholders to achieve organizational goals. Sukirno et al. (2006) state that human resources encompass not only experts and educators, but everyone contributing to organizational goals. Usman (2013) emphasizes the importance of improving human resources within both institutional management and community-related fields.

The emphasis of this progression ought to be on cultivating internal competencies rather than an exclusive dependence on external expertise. As underscored by Wahab, the Chairman of Acehese *Dayah* Scholar Association (*Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh-HUDA*), during an interview, the enhancement of internal human resources is of paramount importance, as capital will inevitably be attracted when human potential is fully harnessed. This concurs with the study conducted by Prasetyo in 2017, which ascertained that successful *pasantren* business units employ personnel who have been trained internally



and possess strong business acumen, thereby facilitating seamless communication with the leadership. A significant impediment identified is the inclination to assign the management of business units based on personal affiliations rather than expertise, as disclosed by Faisal, the Chairman of *Forum Santri Nasional (FSN) Aceh*, a forum for *Dayah/pesantren* students in Indonesia. This practice, as corroborated by the findings from the interviews, obstructs the development of the business. The findings suggest that by prioritizing internal factors, particularly human resources, *pesantren* can enhance their business units' success. This insight has the potential to shape the strategies of *pesantren* managers, influence policy decisions, guide future academic inquiries, and inform educational practices within and beyond the context of religious educational institutions.

The second priority for *Dayah* in fostering successful business units is the capability to manage a business. A notable weakness in *Dayah's* business development is the management of human resources. Superior human resources are essential for business development; capital will naturally follow. It is also observed that the management of business units is sometimes entrusted to individuals who may not possess the requisite expertise, which can impede business progress. Observations and interviews with business unit managers reveal that business administration, particularly financial management, is a critical area requiring improvement. Strengthening capabilities in business administration is necessary, and *Dayah* can achieve this by collaborating with business experts and academic institutions to establish better financial management systems. This transformation requires strong leadership with a clear vision for business development, as Zakki et al. (2016) emphasize, highlighting the need for entrepreneurial leadership within *Dayah* business units.

Externally, the adoption of technology is vital for the success of business units at *Dayah*. The digital transformation is crucial for improving performance and can be leveraged to enhance the production and marketing of agricultural products, among other business ventures. *Dayah* managers should seek collaborations with fintech startups and agricultural sector startups to facilitate the adoption of technology. Political factors also play a significant role in the success of business units. Government policies and regulations can profoundly impact business success. Government interventions, such as capital assistance programs and supportive policies, can aid in the development of *Dayah* business units. The findings are in line with previous research that highlights



the importance of technological adoption and digital transformation for improving business performance (Sari, Utomo, & Redjeki, 2014; Guo & Xu, 2021; Zomer, Neely, & Martinez, 2020). For *Dayah*, this means exploring opportunities to integrate technology into both production and marketing processes, which could significantly enhance the development of their business units.

The success of business enterprises, including *Dayah* business units, is intricately linked to the prevailing political environment. Governmental policies and regulations exert a substantial influence on these business units. Policies and regulations that are supportive can create conducive conditions for their growth and prosperity. The government can play a pivotal role in this regard through various means such as budget allocation, provision of operational and technical guidelines, and the implementation of business development assistance programs. Initiatives such as the capital assistance program offered by Bank Indonesia necessitate ongoing implementation and expansion to be effective. Chandra et al. (2020) underscore the positive repercussions of government intervention on the sustainability of businesses. Consequently, it is imperative to bolster government policies and programs, inclusive of those instituted by local government bodies, to facilitate the development of *Dayah* business units.

The implications of these findings are multifaceted. For *pesantren* managers, the results underscore the necessity of prioritizing internal issues, particularly those related to human resources. This involves not only enhancing the business skills of employees but also fostering a collaborative environment where various stakeholders contribute to achieving organizational objectives. The study's emphasis on human resources as a critical driver of success resonates with the broader discourse on the importance of effective human resource management in achieving competitive advantage and performance success. In terms of business management, the study suggests that *Dayah* needs to address potential weaknesses in this area. Therefore, improving business administration systems, especially in financial management, is imperative. Furthermore, the political environment, including government policies and regulations, has been identified as an influential external factor and the study suggests that continued and expanded support from local governments and institutions like Bank Indonesia is crucial for the development of *Dayah* business units.



CONCLUSION

The research undertaken provides valuable insights into the factors essential for the success of *Dayah* business units, highlighting the significant role they play in promoting economic independence. The study identifies critical internal factors such as human resources, business management, leadership, natural resources, and capital, with human resources being the most influential. On the external front, technology, demography, politics, socio-culture, and economy are noted as areas requiring prioritized attention.

To enhance the prosperity of *Dayah* business units, the research suggests several strategies. These include the improvement of human resources through educational programs, the strengthening of business management capabilities by engaging experienced mentors, the advancement of leadership skills to effectively mobilize and motivate employees, the exploration of diverse funding sources, and the adoption of technology in business practices. Furthermore, the integration of *Dayah* business unit development into government programs is recommended, alongside committed efforts from the Aceh government to develop this sector through targeted teams and policies. Engaging various stakeholders is crucial for the comprehensive development and success of *Dayah* business units.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by reinforcing the significance of internal factors, particularly human resources, in the success of *Dayah* business units. It also highlights the importance of technological and political factors as external influences. These findings have practical implications for *Dayah* managers and policymakers, suggesting a focus on internal capacity building and the strategic adoption of technology, supported by conducive government policies. Nonetheless, the study has its constraints, as the respondent pool was limited to a local or regional area. To expand upon this research, it is recommended that future studies consider a national respondent pool. This would offer a broader range of insights and viewpoints, potentially leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the economic sustainability of *Dayah* business units.



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