

Mental Education of Student Candidate's Guardian During Pandemic Covid-19 (Gontor Submission Exam Case Studies)

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Abstract

Coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 becomes a pandemic in most countries in the world. This pandemic outbreak harms the physical and psychological health of individuals and society. It also affects educational institutions and boarding schools. This study aims to gain understanding, mental readiness, and awareness of the guardian of student candidates who want to register their children to boarding school without their accompaniment. This research uses a phenomenological approach analysis of the mental readiness of highly motivated guardian candidates to put their children in boarding school, especially in Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor, during the pandemic. In general, the understanding of boarding school, the mental readiness of parents in registering their children to Gontor, and the preparation of the admission committee for new students of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor are highly influencing the succession of registration in this pandemic condition. The study results that the totality of parents' belief in boarding school is the key to their mental readiness in releasing their children to study in the boarding school without any companion. Besides, the performance of the Gontor new student admission committee is agile in implementing health protocols following COVID-19 health procedures to welcome student candidates coming from all over the region.

Keywords: *Mental Education, Student Guardian, Covid-19, Gontor Student, Boarding Schools.*

Introduction

Family is the first and foremost education center in society, where a man is born and grows with them to be an adult.¹ Family plays an urgent role in the education of a child. Parents are responsible for their family life and give their children the right direction by instilling religious principles and good morals.

Education in the family is the main pillar of the character building of a child. Education is a must-have for all social lines. Family, as a miniature of complex society and the smallest social component, is the first place where children learn to socialize, understand, live, and feel all aspects of life in the culture. The family has an important role in individual character building. Through family, a child's life is developed.

Having a child with a good deed and character is the dream of every parent. The child is the one where all hopes from parents and the nation in the future lies within them. Therefore, parents should not abandon their children without education, especially in religiosity.

Imam Al Ghazali said:

"Ought to know that the way to train children is among the most important and must be prioritized more than others. The child is a trust in the hands of both parents, and his clean heart is a precious gem. If he had been used to doing good, he would have grown to be a happy man in this world and the Hereafter. On the contrary, if accustomed to evil and delivered like cattle, he will be wretched and perish".²

Education for children should be more emphasized. Thus, sending the child to school is closely related to the issue of education, which is the obligation and responsibility of parents to their children, or is the right of the child that must be fulfilled by the parents.

Moreover, the impact of the globalization era as what we see in

¹ Fuad Ihsan, *Dasar-dasar Kependidikan*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta., 2010), p. 57.

² Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, *Tarbiyah al-Aulād fī al-Islām*, (Kairo: Dar al-Salam., 1981), p.156.

the condition and situation nowadays affects not only on the positive side but also on the negative side. One of the positive impacts given is the open access to information from various media that can widen the thoughts and viewpoints of society. But in some cases, globalization can harm society. Some of the negative effects of the globalization era include: (Zulaiha, 2017:85)

1. Uncontrolled information allows negative information to be easily obtained by all ages through the media.³
2. Westernization, people are more proud to use western culture than to use local Indonesian culture. (Agustin, 2011:178–179)
3. High individualism.⁴
4. Social disparities are getting bigger.⁵
5. Consumptive lifestyle.

The negative impacts above make many parents are worried that their children may be affected by the negative cultures and behaviors such as free sex, narcotics, liquor, pornography, and others.

Although those impacts cannot be prevented, smart efforts should be made to overcome them. One of those efforts is through education. Parents bring a great responsibility to develop a good education in their family and outside them. They are also obliged to choose the right educational institution to build a better character for their children. The best choice and the most alternative way for parents for a good education to their children is putting their child in Islamic Boarding School. In the boarding school, children are equipped with strong religious sciences, so they will be expected to be able to face the challenges of this modern era.

With this pandemic situation, the family becomes an important role in controlling the mental health of all their members, until they are free of suffering from serious anxiety. According to Sadock et al. (2010), anxiety is a response to certain threatening situations and is normal.

³ Anabarja, S. *Peran Televisi Lokal dalam Mempertahankan Identitas Lokal di Era Globalisasi Informasi Global & Strategis Edisi Khusus*, (n.p: 2011), p.269.

⁴ Nurhaidah, & Musa, M. I. *Dampak Pengaruh Globalisasi Bagi Kehidupan Bangsa Indonesia. Jurnal Pesona Dasar.*, 2015, p.8.

⁵ Nurhaidah, & Musa, M. I. *Dampak Pengaruh Globalisasi*, p.14

Anxiety needs to be controlled appropriately until it keeps us aware without causing excessive panic or worse mental health disorders. Anxiety begins with the threatening situation that happens as a dangerous stimulus (stressor). At some levels, anxiety can make a person more aware of a harmful threat that comes to him, so he will defend himself to prevent the effects of the threat.

During this pandemic, choosing Islamic Boarding School Gontor to be a place of further study for their children will be an extraordinary consideration, regardless of the current pandemic conditions and the information from Gontor that prohibit students to come accompanied by their parents, but must come along with their regional group.

After this information appears, many parents might cancel their consideration to register their children to Gontor, but many others of them have also 100% solidified their steps to do so.

Mental Education

Each child is born with their potential. According to the convergence theory, the potential can grow and develop not only based on the natural factor, but the environment that surrounds the children also affects their potential development, either the family environment, school, and the community where the children live.⁶

The term *mental education* consisted of both words 'education' and 'mental'. The word 'education' in Latin is *Paedagogie*, which means 'to lead or guide a child. (Ramayulis, 2015:111). Meanwhile, the word 'mental' in Latin is *men's* or *mentis*, which means soul, life, and spirit.⁷ In short, mental education is guiding the soul, life, soul, and spirit.

The definition of education, according to The Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language (KBBI), is the process of changing the attitudes and behaviors of a person or group of people for the sake of human maturing through teaching and training efforts (Kemendikbud, accessed at 15 Nov

⁶ Ngalim Purwanto, *Ilmu Pendidikan Teoretis dan Praktis*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2014), p.60.

⁷ Kartini Kartono dan Jenny Andari, *Hygiene Mental dan Kesehatan Mental dalam Islam*, (Bandung: Mandar Maju., 1989), p.3.

2020). In the educational encyclopedia cited by *Teguh Wangsa*, education is all the deeds and efforts of the older generation to transform their knowledge, experience, skills, and talent to the newest generation, as an attempt to prepare them to fulfill their life functions, both in physical and psychological.

All definitions above can be concluded that education is a process or effort to make a better person. The process or effort is carried out by teaching, training, knowledge, experience, skills, guidance, selecting appropriate actions and words, and developing personality.

The mental education of children is one of the education forms that emphasize their souls. The soul is the spirit that enliven all emotions within a human, so he can be excited, always happy, and able to carry out their responsibilities and obligations as a servant of God almighty. Therefore, education is the pivotal thing to be done by educators, parents, teachers, and the community.

The scope of mental education discussion is all about mental disorder symptoms, mental illness, self-adjusting, potential, skill, self-control, and soul harmony. So it can be concluded that mental education is a process or effort to make the soul of a person harmonious. The efforts that can be attempted are to help a person free from the symptoms of mental disorders, try to help solve problems in life, develop potentials, talents, and interests, and help someone to have a noble personality.

Specifically, mental education in this study is about the efforts or processes carried out to release the child from the inferiority complex, cowardly, jealousy, and grumpiness, and to create the children with courage, honesty, mighty, feeling complete, love to do good to others, ability to control emotions, and having all the virtues of the soul and morals.

The basis of inferiority complex, cowardly, jealousy, and grumpiness are included in the mental discussion according to the statement of Kartini Kartono and Jenny Andari who said that 'mental illness is also characterized by the phenomenon of fear, bitterness,

emptiness, apathy, jealousy, spite, explosive anger, chronic inner tension, and others' (Kartini et al., 1989:5).

Parents Roles in Student Submission To Islamic Boarding School Gontor

Pondok pesantren (Islamic boarding school) is the oldest educational institution in Indonesia. The term *Pondok* means a place used for eating and resting. In the context of pesantren (Islamic boarding school), *Pondok* comes from the definition of dormitories for students. The term *pesantren* is adopted from the word *santri*, with the additional two characters *pe* in the beginning and *an* at the end of the word, which means the residence of the santri/students.⁸ So Pondok Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) is the dormitory where students (or santri) live.

Pondok pesantren is established with a vision and mission to educate children to be religiously mature, and to make it a place to study, develop their morals, ability, and dedication to society.

Having children studying in pesantren is such a good expectation. One of the roles of parents to succeed in the education of their children is to support them, especially in their learning activities in the boarding school. Parental support has a great psychological impact on their learning activities. With the support of parents, the children will be more enterprising and more passionate about learning because they know that it is not only themselves who wants to progress but their parents as well. Because their achievement quality will influence the development of their further education.

Parental support is essential in supporting children to be able to get a good learning achievement as they expect until they can pursue their dreams. Children will feel appreciated and cared for by their parents, and that will motivate them more to learn and achieve optimal learning achievement.

⁸ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), p; 9

Parental support refers to the definition of social support. Sarason (1983) states that social support is usually defined as the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who express their affection and love.

The kinds of parental support for children studying in boarding schools are listed below :

1. ***Emotional support***, this support can be formed as attention to children. Sometimes children feel uncomfortable in their boarding school or have personal problems or other problems (social, educational, and others). Then parents can visit to see them in their early days in the boarding school.
2. ***Appreciation support***, parents support their children by respecting their choices, giving gifts or praise as motivation for them, and appreciate even their smallest achievements to make them feel more optimistic and confident during learning in boarding school.
3. ***Instrumental support***, parents give this support to their children through preparing and funding their monthly tuition fee (shahriyah), allowance, and other fundings to meet their necessity.
4. ***Support facilities***, this support is given by providing all the needs of children in boarding schools such as stationery, books, as well as daily necessities (toiletries, clothes, and others).
5. ***Informative support***, by advising the children, giving them suggestions, and feedback for their learning activities.

The role of parents is an essential component in a child's education. This requires direct contact between parents and the children that pursued parental support for their children. (in Abdullah bin Abbas, 2007) This role is urgently needed, especially during this pandemic condition, which makes their position as parents determine more to the educational process for their children. Their significant role can affect the process of registering their children to Darussalam

Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor, although without their companion during the process.

Strategy of Gontor Admission Committee Responding The Pandemic COVID-19

The phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic this year almost reached in worldwide level, including Indonesia, that requires Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor to respond wisely and appreciate all policies managed by the government. Meanwhile, the Gontor new student admission program that has been implemented during Ramadan to Syawwal should keep running even though with adjusting the official government policy, as long as this pandemic has not been declared safe.

The registration mechanism for student candidates of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor in 2020 is different from the previous years. This year, Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor set up the new student online admission. This policy is implemented as a response to the situation and conditions related to the massive spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia.

Registration in 2020 is held online, but it may change in the next year. Then the registration fee is paid through a virtual account. All information is centered on the official website pages of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor, included the official one for registration provided by the admission examination committee. All registration procedures such as registration form and payment proceeded through the official website <https://capel.gontor.ac.id>.

All registration mechanisms went as well, although there were errors that occur due to the number of guardian of student candidates who accessed the website. But *alhamdulillah*, the implementation of online student registration system run efficiently from 25 Ramadan 1441/18 May 2020 at 08.00 WIB to 25 Syawwal 1441/17 June 2020 at 24.00 WIB.

To facilitate the student candidates and their guardians in filling out the registration form, the Admission Examination

Committee team has prepared an Online Registration System Guide to simplify the process of filling the attached columns and uploading the files. The complete guidebook can be downloaded directly by the guardian of the student candidates, so they can use it as a reference in facilitating the registration process of Gontor student candidates in 2020.

The mechanism policy of new student admission registration has a positive effect on the movement of the management of the Darussalam Family Association (IKPM) throughout Indonesia. Until June 22, 2020, about 87 IKPM groups through Bimago and PRIMAGO tutoring from all over Indonesia were coming by 92 big busses, 4 minibusses, 10 Elf cars, and several private cars. The number of supervisors from IKPM throughout Indonesia is 418 people.

The registration of new student admission of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School significantly increased every year. From 2018 to 2019, the number of participants increased to 731 participants. In 2020, there was also a significant increase to 954 student candidates, as the data attached in the table below.

NUMBER OF GONTOR STUDENT CANDIDATES	THE YEAR 1439-1440/2018- 2019			THE YEAR 1439-1440/2019- 2020		
	CANDI- DATES	PASSED	FAILED	CANDI- DATES	PASSED	FAILED
MALE	3241	1993	1248	3714	2824	890
FEMALE	3149	2405	2405	3407	2664	743
TOTAL	6390	4398	3653	7121	5488	1633

a. Comparative Table of Student Candidates in 2018 & 2019

NUMBER OF GONTOR STUDENT CANDIDATES	NUMBER OF ONLINE REGISTRATION	THE YEAR 1440-1441/2020-2021		
		OFFLINE ATTENDANCE	PASSED	FAILED
MALE	4405	3505	3206	299
FEMALE	3670	3211	2896	315
TOTAL	8075	6713	6102	614

b. Table of Student Candidates in 2020

According to the table of student candidates in 2020, a significant improvement occurs in the amount of online registration, but due to various information issued by the Head of Boarding School who disallows parents to escort the students, causes few candidates withdrew from the Gontor admission examination.

Almost 1362 student candidates of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School withdrew from their registration because of the pandemic conditions and information from the Head of Boarding School that disallows students accompaniment by their parents to directly coming to the boarding school but must be along with their regional groups.

It should be realized how difficult this condition for the parents, as explained by Mr. Gunawan from Tangerang. He canceled his child's registration to the boarding school because he could not bear it if his child leaves alone without being accompanied by his parents. He was clueless about how to meet the needs of his child during the exam, how the psychological condition of his child would be without a guardian beside him. On the other hand, many parents are not ready with the existing conditions and the newest registration mechanisms.

Whereas the system implemented by the admission examination committee in Gontor is well established and high totality, with the rapid adaptation in facing the situation changes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Gontor was quickly able to adjust. Here are some of the mechanism changes for the new student admission :

1. Efficient online registration system. Students no longer need to bring a large number of documents for registration but only bring the results of online registration.
2. The student candidates come without the accompaniment of their parents but along with the local IKPM.
3. The requirement for the students candidates to bring a statement of self-isolation for 14 days and a health certificate from the local health office.

Independence of Gontor Student Candidates

This year is a historic year for the big family of Gontor, student candidates, students, and the student guardians. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the boarding school to carry out a different policy. The boarding school was reopened, with the exception that the students and the student candidates should not come back to boarding school accompanied by their parents. They had to go to Gontor by an accompaniment of the Gontor Family Association (IKPM) in their regional groups.

For students, this policy might not be worrisome because they are used to being independent in the boarding school. But the student candidates are worried about this policy. They cannot imagine how to survive in the admission examination without their parents being there.

This policy did not recede the intentions of Gontor students and student candidates. It noted that this year, the number of student candidates who registered online in Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor is about 8,075 people. With almost 7 years accompanying the admission process of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor, the researcher saw that the admission process this year looks effective and has tremendous positive impacts from this policy.

Those impacts are:

First, the environmental conditions of the Gontor 2 area, where student candidates study, become more conducive, as well as in Gontor 2 for Girls. This policy decreases the crowd of parents who come from various regions. Student candidates are no longer preoccupied with meeting parents who are often too worried about them. Student candidates can focus more on studying and preparing for exams.

Second, this policy can mobilize Gontor Family Association (IKPM) throughout Indonesia simultaneously. It shows their extraordinary movement, builds the concern of alumni to dedicate

to maintaining the mandate from the boarding school by being a companion for student candidates.

Third, student candidates become more independent and more prepared to be Gontor students. They do all the obligations by themselves, although some candidates seem to be crying about their inabilities to handle the burden. It is natural because they need adjustment to the independent life of boarding school. But their motivation will be live again after seeing their friends are still happy.

Perhaps the online registration process of the Gontor Admission Exam is the first in Indonesia and even in the world. With the fact that all students and student candidates come to the boarding school without being accompanied by their parents, may it foster a spirit of independence and responsibility to each student, teach them the meaning of struggle in their studies.

The author greatly hopes that this mechanism can be continued in the following years. The policy that prohibits the parents to escort the student candidates directly to come to the boarding school, but allows them to come at the graduation announcement, can enliven the spirit of the candidates to study hard to pass the examination.

Student Candidate's Guardian Effort in Facing Gontor Submission Exam During Pandemic COVID-19

The guardian in this research is the parent, consisted of a father or a mother⁹ while *santri* is a student of boarding school (*pesantren*) or prospective Islamic clergy¹⁰ Then, the student guardian could be the parents or their representatives of Islamic boarding school students or Islamic clergy. Based on the description above, the guardian mentioned in this research is the parents of students of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor.

The mental health condition of each individual cannot be generalized. This condition increasingly creates the urgency of mental health discussions that lead to how to empower individuals,

⁹ M.Dahlan al-Barry, Kamus Ilmiah Populer (Surabaya : Arkola, 1994), p; 782

¹⁰ Ibid, M.Dahlan al-Barry, p; 693

families, and communities until they can find, maintain, and optimize their mental health in the face of daily life.¹¹

The over concerns of parents will affects the failure of the education of their children in the boarding school. The children who had used to live and study in the boarding school for a long time know how to keep in touch with their parents by establishing intense and regular communication, either through phone or their parents visit, so they will not lose their figure as parents.

The success of the children's education in the boarding school will not be separated from the role and participation of both parents in all aspects. Here are 5 principles that should be held by parents to be a great guardian and able to accompany their children in the boarding school until the completion of their education :

1. Resilience

Parents should be able to leave their children in the boarding school. Usually, the soft heart of the mothers makes them worry about leaving the children alone. Therefore, parents should convince themselves that boarding school is not the place for exiling their children. It is a place where children are educated to be good people. They have to be resilient because boarding school is a field of education and struggle.

They should believe that the condition of their children is much better than the condition of The Prophet Ibrahim AS who left his son in the barren desert with no single tree or shelter, as declared in the verse below,

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ

"Our Lord, I have placed some of my descendants in a valley that has no crops... (Abraham (14): 37)

2. Sincerity

As we realize, our children are educated and taught well in boarding school. Then, we must also be brave to let them go through

¹¹ Goddess, et.al *Introduction to Psychology*. Second Edition, Tokyo: McGraw-Hill International Book Company,, 2012, p;6

the process of education, to be trained, forged, taken care of, assigned, told to memorize, have a limited sleep time, and so on.

If you feel that your child has to live comfortably in the rush life of boarding school, please take the child right now. Boarding school is not a hotel that always provides instant orders.

3. **Tawakkal**

The next thing to do is to submit all our efforts to God. This action is called *tawakkal*. Praying is a must because boarding school is not a magic place where students can change instantly. After all prayers and struggles, Allah is The One who requites them. The good thing to know is the prayers of parents to their children are equitable. Parents also should ask the children to pray diligently because their praying is approved.

4. **Initiative/Ikhtiar**

The main point to be considered in parents' *ikhtiar* is about the school fund. Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor does not provide scholarships or any charitable funding. Imam Shafi'i said about the condition of studying is the *dirham* (read: money/rupiah). *Inshaallah*, everything that is paid will return 100% to the children.

5. **Believe**

Parents should believe that the children in the boarding school are educated as well as they do. All they get in the boarding school is pure education. If you see your children being treated in any way—even in a way you cannot understand—you should believe that all the treatment given is in the form of education. Do not misunderstand, misbehave nor misperceive.

Do not get the boarding school wrong if later you visit your children and you are happened to see them carrying a bunch of trashes, then you easily judge the boarding school's policy like 'how dare they treat my kid like a servant' Parents should also believe that their children study in the boarding school to come back to their parents as dutiful children to them. You should not put your

children's paces in your sorrows. Be sincere, let them go and study, may Allah bless them on their way.

The 5 things above are tips and principles that must be held by parents because most parents who put their children to study in the boarding schools hope that the children grow with good religious knowledge as well as obtaining general knowledge, noble character, and understanding of Islamic law. Therefore, ought parents to believe that the boarding school is an educational institution that can develop the personality of children to be better, as well as an educational institution that can balance the harmony between parents and children.

The success of the boarding school in maintaining the success of children in modern times is supported by a learning system that has been examined for many years, also their implementation to the system of exemplary education, advice, orders, and prohibitions, as well as a respected guardian figure (Kyai).

The Role of Tutoring Institute In Giving Mental Education to Student Candidates and Their Guardians

Since 2013, the education system of KMI Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor 2 referred to the system of KMI Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor, as well as in its educational attainments, curriculum, activities, and programs. It was usually a gathering center for the candidates of Gontor students who are willing to study in Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor.

Therefore, in 2014, some of Gontor's alumni gathered and opened a tutoring institute on how to succeed to be Gontor students (Bimbel Masuk Gontor). This is purposed because there is plenty of society who put their interest in Gontor. Besides, there was always a crash between the deadline of Gontor admission and the date of the final examination in formal schools. It causes some of them who want to study in Gontor to have to let go of their opportunity to apply to Gontor directly after they graduated from their late schools and have to wait for admission in the next year. This tutoring institute is built

for those who are delayed in applying to Gontor due to the deadline crash with their late school issues.

Based on the facts above, it no wonders that many alumni, individually or gather in a group, intended to open a tutoring institute to succeed in the Gontor admission examination, although at that time the participants were not as much as today in 2020-2021. With the explosive spread of Gontor admission tutoring institute, head of Center of The Family Association of Pondok Modern released The Procedure of Operational Standard that has been declared in 27 Rajab 1441/22 Maret 2020, which consisted of 13 clauses.

The purposes of Gontor admission tutoring institute are according to what has been written in The Procedure of Operational Standard, that is:¹²

1. To help Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor to prepare the qualified candidates of student in attending Gontor admission examination.
2. To introduce to the candidates Gontor activities and disciplines.
3. To be the information center and a good friendship medium between the alumni, the candidates, and their guardians.

Citing the utterance of Abu Ahmadi and Ahmad Rohani, a tutoring institute is a set of aid for students in taking their decision, adjusting, and solving their education problems or learning problems they are facing. It means that the tutoring institute is an effort of the teacher in helping students to overcome various problems of studying during the learning process.¹³

Haris Mudjiman stated that tutoring institute is one of the ministration techniques done individually and directly by face-to-face communication through an interview between the counselor and the case.¹⁴ Therefore, it can be concluded that the Gontor admission

¹² Dokumen PP IKPM Pusat Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor tentang Standar Operasional Prosedur (SOP) Bimbingan Belajar Masuk Gontor.

¹³ Abu Ahmadi dan Ahmad Rohani, *Bimbingan dan Konseling Sekolah*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1991), p. 108.

¹⁴ Haris Mudjiman, *Manajemen Pelatihan Berbasis Belajar Mandiri*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka belajar, 2006), p.1.

tutoring institute is a learning institute that provides its participants the materials about Gontor admission examination and information about Gontor activities, disciplines, and educational details.

The variety of activities in Gontor admission tutoring institute, as much as in PRIMAGO and BIMAGO, are directed to facilitate and inform the student candidates about Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School, from its activities, curriculum, school fee, official state, educational output, certificate, attainments, and its alumni progress.

The purpose of Gontor admission tutoring institute that has been built by the alumni is not limited only to transfer their knowledge, but it is also to transfer the moral and religious values in Islamic boarding school, build their mentals, mindsets, and their broad-mindedness in accepting every kind of examination result they get. So the role of the tutoring institute is very significant in building the mental of Gontor student candidates and their guardians.

Adapting the term *"Sebelum Anak ke pesantren, orang tua harus dipesantrenkan terlebih dahulu"*, it suggests the guardians of student candidates know first about the boarding school they want their children to study in. What model of boarding school? How is the curriculum performed there? To whom does the boarding school belong? How is its condition? How much the school and accommodation fee? How qualified is the certificate of the boarding school?

If they already held and knew the basic knowledge of a good Islamic Boarding school, they will completely sure and believe in the boarding school. This is the mental provision of guardians in preparing their children to study in boarding school.

Some tasks and responsibilities should be done by the Gontor admission tutoring institute, in building the mental education to the candidates and their guardians:

1. Creating WhatsApp group for consultation and information about Gontor admission preparation. The members of this group are spread from all over Indonesia and the world. This group is created as a medium of consultation between parents

and the officials of Gontor admission tutoring institute, and an information center about Gontor admission.

2. Holding Seminar Program about Islamic Boarding School. This is carried out online or offline, to educate student candidates and their guardians about the life of Islamic Boarding School.
3. Holding Assessment Program. It is an act of counseling and discussion + personal motivation to identify and map how far the willing of the candidates and their readiness to surpass the life of Islamic Boarding School. So the tutoring institute can take more anticipation for their better preparation.
4. Classical Tutoring and Private Tutoring (home-visit by the tutor). The tutoring materials include the examination preparation. The tutoring is done with good guidance from the tutors, in a well-evaluated way, during 3-6 months of tutoring. So the student candidates can learn from the given materials intensively, and they can be more ready to compete with thousand others of other student candidates.
5. Holding Simulation of Admission Examination Exercise, as an evaluation for the candidates, act of improving their preparation and mastery of admission examination materials after completing all programs. So that the student candidates can prepare for the next stage of examination they will go through.
6. Holding Weekend Pesantren (Learning How to be Santri). This is an Islamic weekend camp program that spends about 3 days and 2 nights (Friday-Sunday, evening). In this camp, the candidates are supplied the admission examination materials and trained to build their character, mental and mindset to be more ready to go through the life of Islamic boarding school.
7. Directly Visiting Gontor. The tutors with the student candidates visit all branches of Gontor as a direct strategy to strengthen the will of the candidates to study in Gontor. With this visit, the candidates can witness and feel the dynamic life and education of Gontor students, so that they can get

their ideas about the world of Islamic boarding school and be motivated more to reach it.

Although the role of the Gontor admission tutoring institute has been formed significantly, it does not fully guarantee that the participant of this institute can be successfully passed the Gontor admission examination. The tutoring institute is nothing except a facilitator for its participants to attend the Gontor admission examination. The result of the examination, whether it would be a success or fail, is determined by their effort and the final decision of the Head of Gontor Islamic Boarding School.

Conclusion

The conclusion is the parental support for children studying in boarding schools is essential from the beginning until the completion of the educational process, and it greatly affects their learning activities and academic achievements during their studying in boarding schools.

Moreover, related to the current pandemic conditions, parental support holds great importance for children. It can be encompassed in moral support such as attention, motivation, and passion. In spiritual support, parents always pray that their children can reach a remarkable achievement in their studying in the boarding schools. While the material supports, which concerns the economic side, can be formed through the ability of the parents in funding the tuition fees as well as in providing the educational necessities.

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