

# Business Survival Strategy during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Kopontren

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically affected conditions and activities, including at the boarding school kopontren in West Java Province, Indonesia. Business activities carried out to meet daily needs had to be stopped.

This study aims to **determine the kopontren survival strategy used to survive during the pandemic**. The case studies were conducted through indepth interviews with the heads of the Kopontren business units, business actors, and academics who were directly or indirectly involved in the Kopontren business. This study refers to the **theory of survival strategies** in the context of Islamic boarding schools called kopontren during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results showed that the efforts made by Kopontren in surviving the pandemic were **reducing production capacity, changing business models, exploiting natural resources, and being strengthened by working together**.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Survival Strategy, Kopontren, Business Unit

## Literature Review

In answering the main research question, this study synthesizes some theoretical concepts from the literature on **the survival of retail services** (Pantano et al., 2020), **a form of the cooperative** (Marsudi, 2011), **a business unit leader concept** from Sulaiman et al. (2018) and **an excellent response to COVID-19** (Mazzucato & Kattel, 2020).



## Methodology

The research approach used is **inductive** (Creswell, 2014) with **case studies** as a research strategy. The inductive method was chosen because of the lack of literature on business survival strategies in boarding schools, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research began by conducting initial data collection, categorizing the content based on the stage of business, tuition fees, number of students, and kind of product sold.

Qualitative data collection was carried out by conducting in-depth interviews with the following guidelines:

1. Interviews were conducted **face-to-face and via teleconference** due to limited distance and road access due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. This interview uses a **semi-structured interview format**, which allows us to dig deeper into the information needed by using a conversational style (Creswell, 2014)
3. Informants **aged between 35 - 59 years**.
4. Informant education from **undergraduate to doctoral level**.
5. The locations of participants are spread across **several cities in West Java Province**.

## Triangulation

We triangulation process of **academics, communities, government, and business actors** in Kopontren. They have succeeded in running their business to find out essential strategies and business activities carried out during the pandemic for survival. We also find out the framework of the crucial factors influencing businesses in kopontren to survive during the pandemic and identify the elements that made the business unsustainable.

## Result

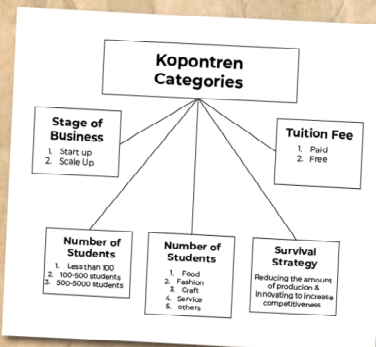
### 4.1 Initial Data Collection

In the initial data collection, the researcher mapped and categorizes the kopontren based on: 1. Stage of business: emerging or surviving; 2. Tuition fees: free or paid; 3. Number of students; 4. Kind of product. The result is that the stage of business is divided into two stages, namely the emerging stage and the surviving stage. Based on tuition fees, Islamic boarding schools are divided into paid and free ones. The number of students is categorized as less than 100 students, 100-500 students, 500-5000 students, and more than 5000 students, while the product categories consist of food, fashion, craft, service, and others.

**4.2 Business Activities during the Pandemic**  
From the interviews, we got data on business activity during the pandemic, namely reducing business capacity, changing business models, exploiting natural resources, and collaborating.

### 4.3 Survival Strategy during a Pandemic

We conducted in-depth interviews with the opontren in the start-up category who carry out business activities in their kopontren. This Kopontren represents a kopontren that has free and paid school tuition, has less than 100 students up to 500 people, has a business in the fields of processed food (vegetables and animals), drinks, fashion, and service. This interview produces data, namely the survival strategy carried out by this kopontrens is to reduce production capacity, add new products, exploit natural resources, and collaborate. Only one kopontren who participated in this research decided to stop its business activities.



**Survival Strategy during a Pandemic**  
1. Reducing Production Capacity  
2. Changing Business Model  
3. Exploiting Natural Resource  
4. Collaboration

