



Management of Salaf Islamic Boarding School in Improving the Quality of Students

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ABSTRACT

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Salaf-based Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia face increasing pressure to modernize their management systems while maintaining their traditional religious identity. This research aims to describe the implementation of management at the Salaf-based Islamic boarding school in improving the quality of students at Pondok Pesantren Zainul Hasanain Genggong. The approach used is qualitative with a descriptive case study design, where data were obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques following the Miles and Huberman model to explore key themes in the application of traditional values in education. The research findings reveal that the management system in this Islamic boarding school is rooted in classical Islamic traditions, such as deliberative leadership (deliberation), moral exemplification by the kyai, and the yellow book learning model. These components collectively contribute to the development of students with strong religious character, self-discipline, and social awareness. However, challenges were found in the areas of limited professional management practices and infrastructure gaps. Despite this, the Islamic boarding school successfully fosters academic and non-academic excellence through structured guidance rooted in cultural-religious values. The implications of this research highlight the importance of value-based educational management that remains adaptive while preserving its identity within modern educational challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are Islamic educational institutions that have played an important role in the development of scientific civilization in Indonesia, especially in the field of religious education. Although dominated by traditional learning methods, Islamic boarding schools remain relevant and in demand today because they are able to maintain spiritual and moral values amidst the increasingly rapid flow of modernization (Ghawail et al., 2019; Idris et al., 2019; Wahyudin et al., 2019). Salaf Islamic boarding schools, as a form of Islamic boarding school that emphasizes the study of classical books (turats), have unique characteristics in educational management and place more emphasis on character building, mastery of Islamic knowledge, and the

cultivation of morals (Ritonga et al., 2020; Yeon et al., 2019). However, limitations in modern management systems often become challenges in improving the quality of students as a whole.

In the context of Islamic education, Islamic boarding school management plays an important role in ensuring the continuity of educational functions, whether religious, social or academic (Rozanda et al., 2019; Saharani et al., 2024). Salaf Islamic boarding schools often run their management in a simple and traditional way, with centralization on the role of the kiai as the main leader. This has an impact on the diversity of management quality between Islamic boarding schools (Keswara & Wijayanti, 2021; Mohammad, 2020; Tanzeh et al., 2020). Some modern Islamic boarding schools have implemented management principles such as planning, organizing, directing, supervising, and budgeting, but traditional Islamic boarding schools have not fully integrated these approaches into their management systems. In fact, management effectiveness has a close correlation with the quality of educational output, including the quality of graduates (students).

Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School is one of the salaf Islamic boarding schools that still maintains a classical educational approach but has begun to respond to the need for more systematic management. In facing the challenges of the times and the expectations of society, management is needed that is able to bridge the traditional values of Islamic boarding schools with a modern managerial approach so that the quality of students can improve, not only from a spiritual perspective, but also intellectually and socially (Jaelani et al., 2019; Purwati et al., 2020; Sedayu, 2019). Aspects such as curriculum management, arrangement of learning activities, and character development of students need to be organized in a planned and professional manner, without eliminating the spirit of piety that is the identity of Islamic boarding schools.

Research on the management of traditional Islamic boarding schools is still relatively limited, especially those that specifically examine how the management impacts the quality of students. Therefore, this study is here to fill the gap by exploring the management model applied at Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School. This study also aims to understand the extent to which management is effective in supporting the formation of quality students as a whole. The main question to be answered through this study is: How is the management of traditional Islamic boarding schools applied at Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School in order to improve the quality of students? In addition, this study also seeks to identify factors that support and hinder the implementation of traditional Islamic boarding school management in this context.

This study offers an original contribution to the study of Islamic education management, especially in traditional Islamic boarding schools that are often overlooked in a systematic managerial analysis approach. Unlike previous studies that have highlighted the transformation of education in modern Islamic boarding schools, this study focuses on the dynamics of managing traditional Islamic boarding schools that maintain traditional values but are still required to be adaptive to developments. Through a qualitative approach, this study presents a new perspective on how a simple yet functional management system can be implemented to improve the quality of students, while strengthening the identity of traditional Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions based on classical Islamic values, character, and knowledge.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method that involved the process of collecting data from various written sources, oral interviews, and observation and documentation. This study focuses on strategies for improving teacher quality through teacher professional education. In this study, the researcher used 2 data sources, namely primary data and secondary data (Scharp, 2021; Tasci et al., 2020). The goal is to make the information related to the research object more accurate. Primary data obtained from observations, interviews, and focused discussions. While secondary data is obtained through documents in the form of Islamic boarding school archives, such as financial reports, student data, Islamic boarding school regulations, Islamic boarding school history and the organizational structure board of the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic boarding school.

Meanwhile, data collection techniques were carried out using 3 main methods, namely; interviews, observation and documentation (Campbell et al., 2021; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The interview was conducted with Ustadzah Putri Rahayu as the Head of the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School to obtain information related to how the management of the Salaf Islamic boarding school improves the quality of students at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic boarding school. Observations were made by observing several activities implemented by the administrators of the boarding school/ustadzah to improve the quality of students. In addition, documentation is an instrument of evidence used to support and complement data obtained through observation and interviews regarding the management of the Salaf Islamic boarding school in improving the quality of students at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic boarding school.

Data analysis in this study used a thematic analysis approach consisting of three main stages (Saura, 2021; Yang et al., 2020). The first stage is data

reduction, which is the process of filtering and simplifying the data that has been collected to be more focused on the focus of the research problem. The second stage is increasing perseverance, by increasing perseverance, the researcher is able to recheck the data, so that the researcher is able to provide an accurate and systematic data description of the object being studied. The third stage is drawing conclusions, where the findings are interpreted based on relevant theories. Through this approach, the study aims to present a comprehensive picture of the management of the Salaf Islamic boarding school in improving the quality of students at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic boarding school.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the main findings of the study on the dynamics of management of salaf Islamic boarding schools in the context of modernization. Through field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School, it was found that this institution developed a distinctive managerial pattern: rooted in traditional values but starting to selectively adapt to the demands of the times. The three main focuses of the findings presented reflect how Islamic boarding schools maintain the sustainability of salaf values, build the quality of students through emotional relationships, and face the challenges of modernization with a contextual and value-based approach.

Implementation of Structured Traditional Management: Adaptation of Salaf Values in Managerial Functions

In recent decades, Islamic boarding schools have undergone major changes in various fields, from learning systems to governance. These changes are a form of response to the dynamics of the times and the increasing complexity of community needs. As traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools are not only places for religious learning, but also act as centers for community empowerment. With a long historical background, Islamic boarding schools have an important contribution to the education process and the dissemination of Islamic values. However, with the flow of modernization, Islamic boarding schools are faced with various challenges that require adjustments and updates, both in management and curriculum (Rangga Hasibuan et al., 2024).

The results of in-depth interviews with the caretakers of the pesantren, senior students, and daily administrators show that the management system at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School is carried out in a traditional but structured framework, based on the principles of service, kiai

leadership, and santri etiquette. One of the daily administrators stated, "All the activities of the pesantren are not written down, but everyone knows their respective duties because they have been passed down verbally and are routinely discussed." This shows that managerial functions such as planning, directing, and coordinating are carried out through daily deliberation mechanisms and supervision based on informal roles, with the caretaker as the center of spiritual and organizational authority.

Furthermore, interviews with several senior students and teachers (asatidz) revealed that the teaching system of yellow books and halaqah became the main space for implementing direction and control of educational quality. Each halaqah has an internal supervision structure involving mudabbir (organizer) and musyrif (mentor) who are directly responsible to the tutor. One student said, "We not only learn the book, but also learn discipline and responsibility from how the tutor manages time and gives examples." This shows that the direction process in Islamic boarding schools is not carried out administratively, but through direct role models that are emotionally and spiritually binding.

In addition, the security and order system for students is also managed structurally through the student security unit and moral development. Even without digital evaluation tools or modern forms, this structure works functionally because each position has responsibilities that are understood and carried out based on manners and loyalty to the Islamic boarding school. One of the instructors said, "We organize students with a shift system and daily verbal reports. Everything works because this has become a culture here." This strengthens the argument that traditional Islamic boarding schools are able to build effective internal management through communal culture and institutionalized traditional values.

Overall, the implementation of traditional management at Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School proves that institutions based on salaf values are still able to carry out core managerial functions without relying on modern management tools. By prioritizing exemplary leadership, deliberation, and informal role-based organization, the Islamic boarding school is able to form a systematic, adaptive, and contextual work system. This finding provides an original contribution in understanding the typical management model of salaf Islamic boarding schools as a form of value-based management that has its own logic and relevance in the context of traditional Islamic education.

The Role of Traditional Values and Emotional Relations in the Formation of the Quality of Santri

Documentation and observation conducted at Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School show that improving the quality of students does not solely depend on the formal curriculum or academic management, but is greatly influenced by the strength of traditional values and emotional relationships that bind the kiai, asatidz, and students. The culture of service, manners, and exemplary behavior are the main pillars in the process of forming the character of students. The managerial system in Islamic boarding schools is more relational, where the moral authority of the kiai and the intensity of daily interactions are the main media for monitoring and transforming values. This pattern can be seen in various documentation of daily activities such as the halaqah schedule, moral development, and unwritten rules that are consistently adhered to by the students.

Observations show that the formation of quality does not occur formally through a reward-punishment system, but rather through a strong mechanism of affection and role model. Activities such as visiting kiai, togetherness in eating together, and the ritual of reading books become a means of internalizing values. Emotional relationships with caregivers create a sense of respect and high moral responsibility in the students, thus forming discipline and manners without the need for a coercive approach. In this context, the management of Islamic boarding schools is based on a system of values and social relations that have been established culturally.

Table 1. Application of Traditional Values and Emotional Relations in the Management of Student Development

Managerial Aspects	Implementation of Traditional Values	Impact on Students
Daily Discipline	Informal supervision by musyrif and seniors through a family approach	Internal discipline based on awareness is created
Moral Development	Learning manners through direct role models from kiai and ustadz	Internalized values of politeness, humility, and patience
Emotional Relationship	Intensive interaction between kiai and santri in religious and personal forums	Build respect and loyalty without coercion
Reward System	There is no formal award, but moral recognition from the kiai is considered most valuable.	Increasing intrinsic motivation

Table 1 explains how Islamic boarding schools build a value-based and relationship-based coaching management system, which is different from the formal administrative approach in other educational institutions. Discipline is not applied through written instruments or strict sanctions, but through emotional attachment and deeply rooted collective habits. Likewise, in moral

coaching, students are not only taught moral theory, but also see and experience firsthand the exemplary practices of caregivers and ustadz daily. This model makes social and spiritual relations the main instruments for character formation.

Thus, from the results of documentation and observation, it can be concluded that the management model based on emotional relations and traditional values at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School has proven to be able to form students who excel morally, spiritually, and socially. This approach provides a conceptual contribution to the development of Islamic education management theory based on culture and local context, which also shows the effectiveness of alternatives to modern management based on administrative and technocratic systems.

Barriers to Managerial Modernization: Tensions between Salafist Values and Adaptive Demands

The results of observations and documentation at the Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School show a real tension between managerial modernization efforts and commitment to the values of salih that are the identity of the Islamic boarding school. Efforts such as digitalization of administration, archiving of coaching programs, and the use of data-based evaluation systems began to be introduced through the formation of internal administrative units. However, this process did not go smoothly. Many administrators and caretakers of Islamic boarding schools showed high caution towards the modern approach, worried that bureaucratic efficiency would actually weaken the values of spirituality, manners, and service that have been the foundation of Islamic boarding school management.

Further observations found that digital infrastructure, such as computerization of student data and the use of learning evaluation applications, is still limited and has not been fully integrated. One administrator said, "We want to record coaching data neatly, but we also have to be careful not to lose the spirit of the pesantren." This situation reflects the dilemma faced by many traditional pesantren: the need to adapt to the demands of modern administrative efficiency clashes with the commitment to maintaining the authenticity of traditional values and methods. Several efforts such as manual archiving, recording daily activities, and documentation of religious activities are carried out semi-digitally, as a form of compromise between the two managerial poles.

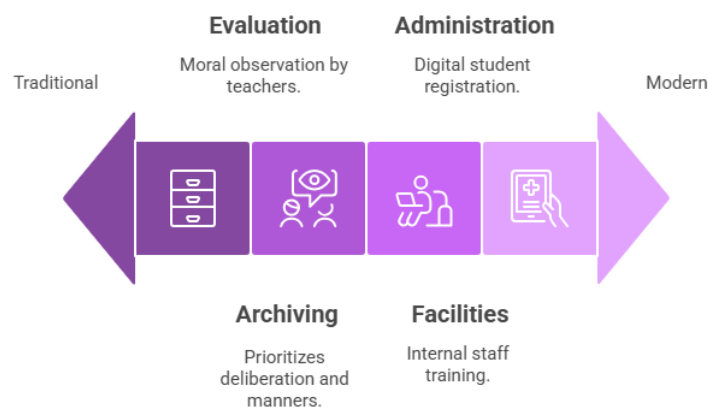


Figure 1. Barriers to Managerial Modernization: Tensions between Salafist Values and Adaptive Demands

Figure 1 above illustrates how the process of management modernization in Islamic boarding schools experiences various forms of significant cultural resistance. Not because Islamic boarding schools are anti-development, but because the modernization has not been fully understood as part of the value of *maslahat* in the framework of institutional *fiqh*. This shows that Islamic boarding schools are in a transitional phase, where adaptation must be carried out slowly, contextually, and dialogically.

Overall, these results indicate that the barriers to modernization in traditional Islamic boarding schools such as Zainul Hasanain are not a form of total rejection of change, but rather an effort to maintain the integrity of values while considering the relevance of efficiency. These findings indicate the need for a design of a traditional Islamic boarding school management model that is able to bridge classical values and contemporary managerial instruments synergistically. The conceptual contribution of these findings is the need for a value-based management approach ('value-based pesantren management') that is not only adaptive to the times, but also faithful to the spirit and heritage of classical Islamic education.

Discussion

The findings in this study describe the dynamics of salafiyah Islamic boarding school management in facing the challenges of modernization, while maintaining the traditional character that is the core of its institutional strength. In general, the three findings show that Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School adopts a unique managerial approach, namely value-based management that is informally structured and culturally strong. This approach provides an alternative to the dominant technocratic management model in modern educational institutions, by relying on emotional relations, role models,

and social mechanisms based on *adab*.

The first finding indicates that the traditional management system in Islamic boarding schools can function effectively through a non-bureaucratic approach, where planning and organizing are carried out through deliberation and inherited informal role structures. This is in line with the theory of participatory management in the context of Islamic education by Mulyasa et al. (2020), which emphasizes the importance of deliberation, collectivity, and moral-based leadership. The exemplary role of the *kiai* as the center of spiritual and organizational authority replaces formal administrative functions. Thus, the role of the *kiai* is not only symbolic, but also substantive in directing, controlling, and evaluating the process of fostering students (Katmon et al., 2020; Miiro & Othman, 2019; Faiz et al., 2023; Sanjani, 2024; Purwanto et al., 2023). This model shows that traditional structures can form a systematic work system even though they are not supported by modern formal instruments.

Furthermore, the formation of character and quality of students in the second finding strengthens the premise that managerial effectiveness does not always depend on a procedural approach or formal reward system. The system that is implemented is more relational, where the values of service, manners, and emotional closeness become sources of motivation and behavioral control. This is in line with the theory of spiritual leadership by Maxwell (2019), which explains that spiritual connectedness and noble values can create loyalty and high performance. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the *kiai* becomes the main role model, while the emotional relationship between the students and the *ustadz* forms a strong internal social structure (Ibrahim, 2021; Toshmali et al., 2020; Maulidia, 2023). This model contributes to the development of educational management theory based on local affection and culture, which has so far received less attention in contemporary educational discourse.

However, as shown in the third finding, efforts to adopt modern management such as digitalization and data-based evaluation encounter serious obstacles. There is tension between the need for efficiency and concerns about the loss of false values. This can be understood through the theory of the dualism of modernity and tradition by Tanzeh et al. (2021), where traditional institutions must negotiate carefully to maintain their identity in the face of the current of change. Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School appears to take a middle path through a semi-digital approach and selective in adopting technology. Internal initiatives such as the formation of administrative units show an awareness of the importance of adaptation, but still within the corridor of values and spirituality.

These three findings holistically illustrate the position of the Salaf Islamic boarding school in the spectrum of educational management: between the

preservation of values and the need for adaptation. The Islamic boarding school does not reject modern management, but adapts it contextually so as not to damage the basic values that are the heart of the institution (Bunyamin et al., 2020; Sahid et al., 2021). Thus, the management model of salaf Islamic boarding schools can be developed as a value-based hybrid management, which integrates traditional structures and modern principles within the framework of maqashid sharia and local culture.

Conceptually, this discussion enriches the literature on Islamic education management by showing that effectiveness is not always identical to bureaucratization and digitalization. In fact, the strength of values, social relations, and institutionalized spirituality are the main foundations of the sustainability and quality of institutions. Therefore, the theoretical recommendation of this study is the need to formulate a "Value-Based Islamic Education Management" model that combines the principles of khidmah, adab, spiritual leadership, and contemporary managerial adaptation proportionally and contextually.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the management of Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School plays a significant role in improving the quality of students, both in terms of spirituality, intellectuality, and social skills. Through a traditional approach that emphasizes the values of sincerity, exemplary behavior, and deliberation, the Islamic boarding school is able to shape the character of students who are noble and independent. Yellow book-based learning combined with training and discipline attitudes are the main characteristics in producing graduates who have a strong Islamic foundation. However, challenges are still faced in terms of management professionalism, limited human resources, and the need for integration between the traditional education system and the demands of modern competence. Therefore, innovation in the management of Islamic boarding schools is very much needed, especially in terms of curriculum development, improving the competence of managers, and strengthening the administration system. With more adaptive and structured management, Zainul Hasanain Genggong Islamic Boarding School has the potential to become an Islamic educational institution that is not only superior in religious aspects, but also able to produce students who are ready to contribute to the wider community and answer the challenges of the times in a more relevant and competitive manner.

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