

An In-depth Look at the Challenges in Managing Portrait Islamic Boarding Schools and Future Prospects

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Abstract. *This research aims to compare education in Salafi and modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Salafi Islamic boarding schools tend to maintain the teaching of the Yellow Book and traditional methods, while modern Islamic boarding schools integrate religious education with general education and technology. The library study method is used to collect and analyze data from various sources such as books, journals and related articles. The research results show that Salafi Islamic boarding schools remain focused on teaching the classical books of the Islamic religion without adopting a modern curriculum, while modern Islamic boarding schools offer more integrated education by combining religious and general curricula, as well as modern technology. These differences are reflected in the teaching methods, curriculum structures, and leadership approaches in both types of Islamic boarding schools, which is important for understanding their contribution to developing the character and knowledge of young people and supporting the formation of more inclusive education policies in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Islamic Boarding School Education, Salafi Islamic Boarding School, Modern Islamic Boarding School, Educational Integration, Religious Curriculum.*

BACKGROUND

Pesantren as an Islamic educational institution shows various variations because its founders have the freedom to emphasize certain fields within it. However, the current era brings its own complexities to Islamic boarding schools. They have to compete with more modern public education institutions. The number of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia continues to increase rapidly, but this increase is not always accompanied by improvements in quality and standards. In fact, there has been a significant decline in the quality of education provided by Islamic boarding schools.

This decline is caused by many Islamic boarding schools, especially the more modern ones, prioritizing formal education over religious education. Therefore, it is not surprising if there are students who stay in Islamic boarding schools for three to six years but are unable to understand reading religious books. However, not all Islamic boarding schools ignore their religious education. Currently, it is difficult to find Islamic boarding schools that are truly productive in educating their students.

One of the weaknesses of education in Islamic boarding schools is that the learning atmosphere tends to be passive, often caused by a lack of creativity and innovation from teachers in developing active learning methods. As a result, students' critical thinking abilities become limited. To improve critical thinking skills in Islamic boarding schools, educators need to adopt modern learning methodologies. There are many challenges in managing Islamic boarding schools which can be described one by one. Therefore, effective Islamic boarding school management must pay attention to a strong organizational structure, including human resources, finance, facilities, education and curriculum. (Qiyadah Rabbaniyah & Roidah Lina. 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is the library research method. Library research involves collecting data from various library sources, such as books, journals, and other printed media. Literature study includes a series of activities related to reading, writing, and summarizing the information obtained. According to Sari & Asmendri (2020), library research is a research activity carried out by collecting information and data using various materials available in the library, such as reference books, relevant previous research results, articles, notes, and journals related to the problem. that you want to resolve. The following is a graphic description of carrying out library research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Definition of Islamic boarding school

As a center for Islamic religious education, Islamic boarding schools play an important role in producing ulama and preparing a generation of devout Muslims. The term pesantren in Indonesia comes from the word "santri," which refers to students who study at Islamic boarding schools. Some experts argue that this term comes from the Tamil word "sastri," which means teacher of the Koran, as well as "shastri" in Indian which means someone who has knowledge of Hinduism. Another opinion states that the word pesantren comes from the Tamil word "sattiri," which refers to people living in poor houses or buildings in general.

Even though there are different interpretations regarding the origins and meaning of the word santri, there are similarities in the meaning they have. The first opinion states that santri are Koran teachers, reflecting the activities of santri who study religion and then teach it to the surrounding community. The second opinion states that students are people who have religious knowledge from holy books or religious books, which is related to the activities of students

studying religious teachings from Islamic holy books or religious texts written by previous scholars. The third opinion, which states that santri are people who live in poor houses, is also relevant to the lives of santri who live in simple dormitories and are far from luxury.

In his writing, Nurcholish Majid expressed two opinions about the origin of the word santri. First, he states that santri comes from the word "sastri" in Sanskrit which means literate, indicating that santri is a literacy class for Javanese people because their knowledge of religion is obtained through books written in Arabic. Second, the word santri probably comes from the Javanese word "cantrik," which means someone who always follows a teacher wherever the teacher goes.

Islamic boarding schools are traditional Islamic educational institutions where students live together under the guidance of one or more teachers known as kyai. According to Abdurrahman Wahid, Islamic boarding schools are places where students live. Mastuhu defines Islamic boarding schools as traditional Islamic educational institutions that study, understand, appreciate and practice the teachings of the Islamic religion by emphasizing the importance of religious morals as a guide to daily behavior. Zamakhsyari Dhofier described Islamic boarding schools as traditional Islamic educational institutions that focus on studying, understanding, appreciating and practicing religious teachings with an emphasis on religious morals as a guide to daily behavior.

Islamic boarding schools are an important part of the development of the national education system. Sudjoko Prasodjo provides another definition that Islamic boarding schools are religious education institutions that generally use non-classical methods where a kyai or ustadz teaches Islamic religious knowledge to students based on books. Nurcholish Madjid added that these books were written in Arabic by medieval scholars. Santri generally live in Islamic boarding school dormitories. Thus, Islamic boarding schools can be described as traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia where the teaching and learning process about the Islamic religion between kyai and santri takes place, while the dormitory (pondok) functions as a place to live, and the yellow book written by Salaf clerics is the focus of learning. (Shaddiq, 2015)

B. Differences between Salafi and Modern Islamic Boarding Schools

Salafi Islamic boarding school

This Islamic boarding school applies the salaf system, which refers to the original form of Islamic boarding school. Since its inception, Salaf Islamic boarding schools have focused on teaching religious knowledge only, both through Diniyah Madrasahs and Sorogan and Bandongan recitations. Salaf Islamic boarding schools still prioritize teaching

classical Islamic books as the core of education in traditional Islamic boarding schools. At Salaf Islamic boarding schools, no formal education is provided. The term "salaf" in the context of Islamic boarding schools only applies in Indonesia. Salaf Islamic boarding schools refer to Islamic educational institutions that do not implement a modern curriculum, whether set by the government or initiated by contemporary ulama. Salaf Islamic boarding schools generally do not provide formal education such as madrasas or schools. Teaching at Salaf Islamic boarding schools focuses more on classical Islamic books using traditional methods, ignoring general education. Curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is planning regarding objectives, content and learning materials for learning activities, which reflects the educational ideals and plans implemented by teachers at school.

Salafi Islamic boarding schools, as the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, are characterized by teaching classical books (Kitab Kuning) as the main part of their curriculum. The yellow book is important because it reflects the values of Islamic boarding schools and differentiates them from other Islamic educational institutions. Although over time Islamic boarding schools have included general knowledge other than classical books, teaching the yellow book remains the main focus. Salafi Islamic boarding schools have various levels of yellow books that are taught, and the quality of the Islamic boarding school can be seen from these books. Salafi Islamic boarding schools maintain the tradition of teaching through the *wetonan* and *bandongan* methods, where the students surround the *kiai* who explains the lesson.

There are variations in the curriculum at Salafi Islamic boarding schools based on the knowledge and abilities of the *kiai* who teach it. Although Salafi Islamic boarding schools maintain teaching traditions, many Islamic boarding schools now also teach general knowledge. Despite changes in the Islamic boarding school education system, Salafi Islamic boarding schools still maintain traditional teaching patterns. (Dr. Kholis Tohir et al., 2020)

In conclusion, until now, the Salafi Islamic boarding school model still maintains the *sorogan*, *wetonan* and *bandongan* teaching methods. The main aim of education at this Islamic boarding school is to instill awareness that learning is an obligation and a form of devotion to God, not solely for worldly purposes. This teaching approach means that the level of education in Islamic boarding schools is not limited to just studying the Yellow Book one by one. The depth of a student's knowledge is not measured by how long they have stayed at the Islamic boarding school, but rather by the scientific value they obtain,

which reflects the differences in the level of knowledge of each student. (Hialludin, H., & Althof, G. 2024)

Modern Islamic Boarding School

Islamic boarding school education that was already well established at that time began to be considered no longer in line with current developments. During the colonial period, Dutch ethical politics introduced a new education system which was considered better able to prepare graduates who were skilled and ready to work in government agencies. Modern Islamic boarding schools face various reactions. Some parties reject government intervention so that traditional Islamic boarding school education is maintained. However, there are also those who adapt to the formal education system. This results in a variation of modern Islamic boarding school that combines traditionality and modernity in education.

Modern Islamic boarding schools try to combine formal teaching methods with an integrated curriculum that has been adapted. They continue to teach religious and general knowledge, with an emphasis on religious education. Several modern Islamic boarding schools adopt the Mu'allimin system. Modern Islamic boarding schools like Gontor manage management and administration in an orderly manner. They emphasize religious and general education, and teach Arabic and English. Formal education even extends to higher education.

Modern Islamic boarding schools have experienced significant transformation, from the teaching system to the institutional structure. Some people see this transformation as an answer to criticism which resulted in major changes, including the use of the classical system in teaching. Modern Islamic boarding schools have also emerged with creative programs that combine science and technology with Islamic values. A change in leadership paradigm occurred, from charismatic to rationalistic, and modern scientific approaches were increasingly applied. Although there are variations in modern pesantren education, there are several distinctive features that can be identified, such as the emphasis on conversation in Arabic, the use of contemporary Arabic literature, and the adoption of a formal school system. However, some modern Islamic boarding schools still maintain classical teaching methods.

This transformation aims to produce a generation that is intelligent and has good morals, and is able to adapt to the demands of the times. Guidance and coaching programs are also important in shaping the character of students. Modern Islamic boarding schools have a responsibility to combine religious teachings with developments in science and

technology. Overall, modern Islamic boarding schools strive to become quality community development centers that are ready to face the challenges of the times. (Tolib, A. 2015)

Modern Islamic boarding schools have integrated general subjects from madrasas into the Islamic boarding school environment, some of which even no longer teach the classical yellow book. However, many Islamic boarding schools still apply both approaches, namely Salafi and modern.

According to Law no. 2 of 1989, there are two types of education: school education and out-of-school education. School education takes place through learning activities at school with a tiered and continuous structure. Meanwhile, out-of-school education is carried out through learning that does not follow a tiered and continuous structure. In the Khalafi Islamic boarding school model, this institution not only teaches general subjects, but also follows curriculum developments, both local and national. This is because the curriculum not only determines what must be studied to increase knowledge or develop talents, but also plays a role in improving the quality of life for individuals and society, both now and in the future.

Education in modern Islamic boarding schools is in accordance with the National Education System, including two pathways, namely school education and out-of-school education, in accordance with the provisions of UUSPN Article 10 which states that:

1. Education is carried out through two channels, namely the school education route and the out-of-school education route.
2. The school education pathway refers to education that occurs within school institutions through a structured and tiered teaching and learning process.
3. Out-of-school education refers to education carried out outside the school environment through a teaching and learning process that does not always follow a tiered and continuous structure. (Yasir, M. 2023)

C. Role and Function of Islamic Boarding Schools

As a subculture, Islamic boarding schools emerge and develop along with changes in global society. Sooner or later, these changes will affect the Islamic boarding school community. A. Sahal Mahfudz stated that Islamic boarding schools have two great potentials: potential in community development and potential in the field of education. Regarding these two potentials, Islamic boarding schools have the following roles:

1. In the midst of the collapse of moral values, Islamic boarding schools exist to respond to the situation and conditions of society by offering value transformation through the teachings of amar ma'ruf and nahy munkar. Islamic boarding schools

act as agents of social change that free society from all moral evils (Fauzi, 2018). The success of Islamic boarding schools in this regard makes them an entity that was born out of the will and needs of the community.

2. The initial mission of the Islamic boarding school was to spread Islamic teachings universally to all corners of the archipelago which is pluralist in terms of beliefs, culture and social conditions of society. Through Islamic boarding schools developed by the guardians, Islamic teachings spread more quickly throughout the archipelago (Wahid, 1999). In this way, Islamic boarding school institutions have succeeded in internalizing Islamic values in society. The role of this Islamic boarding school is more oriented as an Islamic educational institution.

In terms of function, Islamic boarding schools have two ideal functions, namely:

1. Social mobility and preservation of ethical values. This function places Islamic boarding school education as a means and instrument for the socialization and transformation of values, so that society is able to carry out social mobilization in accordance with religious values.
2. Development of intellectual traditions. This second function is more active and progressive, where Islamic boarding schools act as a means of developing values and teachings that demand interdependence, autonomy and liberation from every shackles, both structural and cultural. Intellectual development can occur if humans are independent and not bound physically or mentally (PS Bagus Kurnia, 2019).

D. Problems of Salaf and Modern Islamic Boarding School Education

Problematic Definition

The word "problematics" comes from the English word "problem," which means problem, problem, or puzzle. Also comes from the word "problematic," which means uncertainty. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, "problem" means a problem or problem, while "problematic" means something that still causes problems, cannot be solved, and is a problem. Therefore, the meaning of "problem" or "problematic" is any problem or issue that needs to find its roots to find a solution so as not to cause problems in the future . (Sahidin, 2022)

Educational problems refer to various problems or problems faced in the world of education. In reality, Islamic education is not the majority in the national education system and is in second or marginal position. In fact, in principle, all types of education aim to develop human dignity so that they are able to become caliphs (Mastuhu, 2003).

Problems of Islamic Boarding School Education

Islamic boarding schools experience various problems as times become increasingly complex. Some of the main problems faced are:

1. Weak vision and goals of Islamic boarding school education

Many Islamic boarding schools are unable to keep up with current developments because their vision and goals are often left to the kyai. This causes many Islamic boarding schools to reflect the personality of their founders. Zamakhsyari Dhofier also revealed that the majority of kyai in Java consider that power and authority in Islamic boarding schools are completely in the hands of the founding kyai (Yahya, 2015).

2. Learning methods

The learning atmosphere in Islamic boarding schools tends to be passive, due to a lack of creativity and innovation in teaching methods. This weakens the critical power of students. Supposedly, teachers in Islamic boarding schools need to adopt modern methodologies to improve students' critical reasoning (Qomar, 2007).

3. Low quality of facilities and infrastructure

Facilities in Islamic boarding schools are often inadequate and urban planning arrangements are sporadic. Some facilities do not match the number of students there. Islamic boarding schools need to adjust the number of students to the facilities available.

4. Administration

Islamic boarding schools often use an "all-mono" pattern and "all-informal" management, where policies are only centered on the kyai. This causes formal mechanisms to not apply, because the kyai's decisions are deterministic. Islamic boarding schools need to apply good management principles to optimize administration (Yahya, 2015).

5. Human Resources (HR)

The quality of teaching staff in Islamic boarding schools is often low because they do not match the fields they master. This causes a decline in the quality of education. Islamic boarding schools need to recruit qualified teaching staff who have good educational standards. Apart from that, it is also important to hold training such as micro teaching to improve teachers' abilities in delivering material (Sahidin, 2022).

6. Curriculum

The Islamic boarding school curriculum needs to be flexible, dynamic, and can be developed according to Islamic boarding school conditions and the needs of the times. Many Islamic boarding schools only focus on religious lessons with minimal general lessons, so that students feel left behind (Yahya, 2015). Islamic boarding schools need to provide general lessons that are relevant to the needs of the times.

7. Financial management

Many Islamic boarding schools experience financial difficulties, such as student guardians who are late in paying their monthly fees. Islamic boarding schools need to manage their finances well and provide sanctions for guardians of students who do not pay on time.

8. Understanding Radicalism

Some Islamic boarding schools are involved in acts of radicalism due to errors in religious understanding and dissatisfaction with the political order. To overcome this, Islamic boarding schools need to update the curriculum, develop learning models, and foster an attitude of tolerance (Salik & Mas'ud, 2020).

9. Paradigm Shift

Initially, Islamic boarding schools were able to answer society's sociocultural problems, but over time, the paradigm used was no longer appropriate. Islamic boarding schools need to adapt to societal developments and shift old paradigms to more relevant ones (Salik & Mas'ud, 2020).

Problems and Challenges of Salaf Islamic Boarding School Education

Salaf Islamic boarding schools face various main challenges, including human resources (HR), funding, facilities and infrastructure, communication access to the outside world, and the kiai-centered Islamic boarding school tradition.

1. Human resources problems

This problem arises because Salaf Islamic boarding schools are generally located in rural areas, where people lack information and do not have adequate formal education.

2. Funding problems

Salaf Islamic boarding schools experience limited funds because their funding sources only come from support from the local community and the kiai's personal assets. They do not have a stable source of funds, and the slow circulation of money and economic growth in rural areas are also causes of this limitation.

3. Problems with facilities and infrastructure

Limited funds also cause Salaf Islamic boarding schools to be unable to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure for the education and learning of the students. As a result, the available facilities are not sufficient for the needs of students.

4. The problem of communication access to the outside world

Salaf Islamic boarding schools are not yet accessible by telephone lines and public transportation. Apart from that, the kiai's attitude of not accepting communication and information media such as television, radio and telephone exacerbates this situation. This hampers the development of Islamic boarding schools.

5. The problem of the kiai-centric Islamic boarding school tradition

The Islamic boarding school tradition which is centered on the kiai means that the kiai is the main determinant in all matters relating to the Islamic boarding school. Management of Islamic boarding schools is not based on good management with a clear distribution of tasks to staff. If kiai are not adaptive to change, Islamic boarding schools will find it difficult to adapt to developments in science and technology. (Iriana, w., 2015)

6. Curriculum problems

Salaf Islamic boarding school curricula tend not to keep up with the times, because the learning material taught only focuses on Islamic religious teachings from classical books. This curriculum is not oriented towards the future, so that Salaf Islamic boarding school graduates are less able to face the challenges of modern life (Shofiyyah, 2019).

7. Institutional management problems

Good management is very important in managing educational institutions. Salaf Islamic boarding schools are currently managed traditionally with limitations in mastering information and communication technology. This can be seen from the unstructured documentation of student and alumni data.

Another challenge faced by Salaf Islamic boarding schools is competition with modern Islamic boarding schools and public schools, as well as being perceived as a place for the cadre formation of radical Islam. Modern Islamic boarding schools that offer formal education are more popular and sought after by parents because they are considered to be able to provide knowledge, modern technological skills and work skills needed in the future. Apart from that, modern Islamic boarding schools also promise good religious teaching. Therefore, Salaf Islamic boarding schools have become less attractive. Another challenge is the stigma of being

a place for radical Islamic cadres, because several people with an understanding of radical Islam have received their education at Salaf Islamic boarding schools.

Problems and Challenges of Modern Islamic Boarding School Education

Modern Islamic boarding schools face various problems and challenges that are different from Salaf Islamic boarding schools. One of the main problems is the erosion of the values of simplicity and independence among students. In modern Islamic boarding schools, there are economic institutions such as laundry centers, which mean that students no longer wash and iron their own clothes. This slowly erodes the values of simplicity and independence that should be instilled in students.

Apart from problems, modern Islamic boarding schools are also faced with a number of challenges. The main challenge is to protect students from the negative influence of information and communication technology, such as pornography which is easily accessible on the internet (Indah, 2018). Pornography can be the beginning of promiscuity and free sexual behavior.

Siswati (2018) revealed that the challenge of globalization faced by modern Islamic boarding schools is the entry of non-Islamic values into the lives of students through internet technology. Because students in modern Islamic boarding schools are accustomed to the use of science and technology, they are more susceptible to being influenced by these values.

The development of science and technology is also a significant challenge for modern Islamic boarding schools (Indah, 2018). This development requires all elements in Islamic boarding schools to be able to adapt, including teachers who must continue to improve their competence so they can use information and communication technology-based learning media and design more interesting learning. The era of industrial revolution 4.0 also presents very tight competition. In this era, modern Islamic boarding schools as centers of community empowerment must be able to produce a generation that is competent and can compete at the global level (Wiranata, 2019).

Improving the quality of education is also a big challenge for modern Islamic boarding schools (Wiranata, 2019). There are more and more schools outside modern Islamic boarding schools and their quality is increasing, making them more attractive to parents and prospective students. This challenges schools or madrasas in modern Islamic boarding school environments to continue to improve the quality of their education.

Apart from being a challenge, the quality of education is also a problem for modern Islamic boarding schools. The number of modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia continues to increase, but this increase in number is not accompanied by an increase in the

quality of education. Many modern Islamic boarding schools focus more on formal education than early education, so there are still students who study at Islamic boarding schools for three to six years but do not have the ability to read books.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, consisting of Salafi Islamic boarding schools and modern Islamic boarding schools, play an important role in Islamic education. Salafi Islamic boarding schools focus on teaching classical books using traditional methods, while modern Islamic boarding schools combine religious and formal education. Salafi Islamic boarding schools face the challenges of limited resources, funds, infrastructure and outdated curriculum. Modern Islamic boarding schools, although more adaptive, struggle to maintain the value of simplicity and face the negative influence of technology. Both types of Islamic boarding schools need to continue to adapt to remain relevant and effective in educating the younger generation according to current developments.

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