

The Transformation of Traditional Islamic Education: Model of Modernization of Islamic Boarding Schools in Ogan Ilir

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the transformation of traditional Islamic education in Islamic boarding schools through the modernization model applied in Ogan Ilir Regency. The main problem raised is how the concept, characteristics, models, and modernization strategies are applied to Islamic boarding schools that were previously salafiyah and how these Islamic boarding schools respond to the challenges of the times in the field of education. The background of this research is based on the increasingly complex demands of the public on Islamic educational institutions to be able to adapt to the development of science, technology, and socio-cultural dynamics. The method used in this study is qualitative-descriptive with a case study approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies of three Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir: Al Ittifaqiah, Albasya, and Darul Funun. The findings of the study show that the modernization of pesantren education in Ogan Ilir includes curriculum reform, the adoption of classical systems, the strengthening of general education, and the use of information and communication technology. The strategy implemented involves integrating relevant old values with new, more adaptive innovations. The hybrid model between salaf and khalaf education is the dominant pattern in this transformation. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that modernization does not eliminate the identity of Islamic boarding schools, but rather strengthens their competitiveness in the midst of social change. Islamic boarding schools are able to become Islamic educational institutions that are responsive, adaptive, and relevant in the modern era.

Keywords: Traditional Islamic Education, Islamic Education, Educational Transformation

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that play a strategic role in shaping the character, morality, and spiritual intelligence of the people. Historically, pesantren functioned as a center for the transmission of classical Islamic science as well as a basis for socio-religious development of the local community (Khamid et al. 2023). Salafi Islamic boarding schools, in particular, are the main bulwark in maintaining the authenticity of Islamic teachings based on the yellow book and the scientific tradition of turats (Martin. 1990).

However, in the last two decades, pesantren have been faced with complex social dynamics. Globalization, advances in information technology, and modernization of the education system have encouraged a paradigm shift in society (Sustainable 2018). On the one hand, pesantren are required to maintain the traditional values that are the

foundation; On the other hand, it is also encouraged to adapt to the demands of the times in order to maintain its relevance (Basyit 2017).

The main problem in this study is how salafiyah Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir Regency respond to the challenge of modernizing education substantively. The transformation that occurred was not solely in the form of administrative changes or the addition of facilities, but touched on fundamental aspects such as curriculum reconstruction, changes in leadership patterns, learning models, and institutional adaptation strategies (Karataş 2022).

Studies on pesantren in general have been widely conducted, but the majority of previous studies tend to frame pesantren in the salaf-khalaf dichotomy historically, structurally, or typologically (Musaddad 2023; Pasi, Rasyidin, and Harahap 2020). There have not been many studies that have examined in depth how the integration of the two is realized practically and philosophically in education management. Some studies such as Roqib focus more on the social mobility aspect of students, while the integrative aspects of the curriculum and institutional governance are still neglected (Roqib 2021).

This study aims to explore the modernization strategies adopted by salafiyah Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir Regency with an emphasis on the integration between traditional Islamic values and contemporary educational innovations. In particular, this study analyzes the reinterpretation of educational philosophy, curriculum reconstruction, and the implementation of adaptive leadership in the context of social change and globalization.

This research offers a hybrid Islamic education model that combines the advantages of the salafiyah approach with khalafiyah innovations in the form of curriculum, institutional management, and learning methodology. This model is not only conceptual, but departs from real practices that have been successfully implemented in the field.

The findings of this study provide an applicative guide for Islamic boarding school managers and Islamic education policy makers to formulate a transformation strategy that is contextual, progressive, but still rooted in authentic Islamic values. In the context of the national education system, pesantren has the potential to be a superior alternative in the midst of the spiritual crisis and pragmatism of public educational institutions.

By positioning pesantren as dynamic and adaptive entities, this study confirms that modernization does not have to be synonymous with westernization. In fact, the modernization of pesantren education is an effort to recontextualize Islamic values in answering the challenges of the times through tradition-based innovation. Therefore, the integration of salafiyah and khalafiyah education is not only possible, but urgent to be carried out for the sustainability of pesantren as a motor of social and intellectual change for Muslims in the global era.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative-descriptive approach (Lahiri 2023), which allows researchers to explore and understand the phenomenon of educational transformation in depth and holistically in complex social and cultural contexts. This approach was chosen because it is relevant to examine social and institutional changes that cannot be quantitatively measured, but rather need to be revealed through the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of the actors directly involved. This research is focused on case studies as the main strategy, which provides

space for researchers to conduct a contextual analysis of the process of modernizing education in the Islamic boarding school environment by exploring the internal dynamics of each institution intensively.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews (*in-depth interview*), and documentation studies (Klingebiel et al. 2024). Observation was carried out by directly observing educational activities, social interaction between kyai, ustadz, and students, as well as the educational infrastructure used. Interviews were conducted with caregivers, educators, and pesantren managers to explore their perceptions of the concept and modernization strategy implemented. Meanwhile, documentation is used to study the official documents of the Islamic boarding school, such as the curriculum, organizational structure, and educational programs that have been implemented. This study took three Islamic boarding schools as the main analysis unit, namely the Al Ittifaqiah, Albasya, and Darul Funun Islamic Boarding Schools, all of which are located in Ogan Ilir Regency. The three were chosen because they have different characteristics and approaches to modernization, so that rich, varied, and representative data can be obtained to develop a contextual model of Islamic education transformation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Educational Modernization at the Ogan Ilir Islamic Boarding School

The modernization of Islamic boarding school education is not just a technical choice, but an epistemological inevitability based on historical and social awareness (Hening Puwati Parlan, Andriyani, and Nurmalia Lusida 2024b), & (Saefuddin, Rosidin, and Djumhur 2024). In the midst of rapid changes in times, Islamic boarding schools, which for centuries have been known for their tradition of teaching the yellow book, the sorogan system, and their distinctive scientific culture, are now faced with the challenge of remaining existing and relevant. Ogan Ilir, a district in South Sumatra Province, is a witness to the dialectical process between tradition and modernity experienced by Islamic boarding schools in the region.

Conceptually, modernization in pesantren education is defined as a process of renewal that does not remove the core values of pesantren but adapts them to the demands of the times (Saefuddin, Rosidin, and Djumhur 2024). Modernization does not mean creating new norms that are completely disconnected from the past, but rather reformulating the system by taking the best values from the past to use in the structure of the present (Assunção dkk. 2024). In the context of pesantren, this means changing methods, institutional systems, and curriculum without eliminating the spirit of Islam that has shaped the character of pesantren so far.

The basis of this modernization thinking cannot be separated from the objective needs of pesantren to answer socio-cultural challenges and the needs of today's students. One of the strong triggers for modernization is the insistence of the community—especially the guardians of students and alumni of the Islamic boarding school—who demand that the pesantren not only become a center of religious science, but also be able to equip students with general knowledge and practical skills. This is as conveyed by the caretaker of the pesantren in an interview: "*The old teaching system (salafy) if maintained tends to be left behind... People now want students who can da'wah, but can also work in the professional world*" (Interview, Basa 2024).

The basic philosophy of educational modernization at the Ogan Ilir Islamic boarding school is also strongly influenced by the typical principles of the Islamic boarding school that have been embedded for a long time: *Al-Muhāfazah 'ala al-qadīm*

al-ṣāliḥ wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadīd al-aṣlah, That is, keeping good old traditions and taking new and better things. This principle is not just jargon, but has become a real foothold in educational strategic decision-making. As revealed by the leader of the Al Ittifaqiah Islamic boarding school, the transformed pesantren still maintains the sorogan and bandongan methods, but complements them with a classical system and an integrated curriculum as a form of adaptation (Interview, Eko 2024).

This thought about modernization is also based on the understanding that Islamic education should not be alienated from the development of science and technology (Ghina Rahmah Maulida 2024). As conveyed by Umar, the Principal of Aliyah Al Ittifaziah, the modernization of Islamic education is indeed inevitable, because the system and institutions of Islamic boarding schools are difficult to survive without a touch of renewal (Interview, Umar 2024). In contemporary reality, new technologies, modern management, and pedagogical approaches are no longer accessories, but rather structural needs in any educational system (Usman 2013).

Another philosophical foundation comes from internal criticism of the old system that tends to be exclusive, unstructured, and dependent on kyai figures (Sutikno 2023). As stated by Munir, pesantren require the formulation of visions and missions that are not only determined personally by kyai, but through a collective, participatory, and data-based management system (Geh, Bahrūn, and Niswanto 2024). This idea is in line with the spirit of modernization that places accountability and efficiency as the principles of education governance.

In practice, the concept of modernization at the Ogan Ilir Islamic boarding school does not move in a vacuum. It is present as a response to the need for more adaptive and competitive education. This can be seen from the emergence of various innovations, such as the integration of general education into the pesantren curriculum, the use of information technology in the learning process, and the formation of productive business units as a means of entrepreneurship training for students. *"In the past, the Spaniards were quite respectful. Now you have to be able to make presentations, write papers, and even be able to code,"* said one of the teachers at the Darul Funun Islamic Boarding School (Interview, Marwah 2024).

This concept of modernization ultimately requires an inclusive understanding, not just a change in form, but also a transformation of values. Not all traditional values should be abandoned, and not all novelties should be accepted. This is where the role of kyai as a guardian of values as well as an agent of change is important. In many cases, the kyai at the Ogan Ilir Islamic boarding school have actually become pioneers in the modernization process, not because of external pressure, but because of their vision for the future of the people and their institutions.

Therefore, modernization in the Ogan Ilir pesantren is the result of a combination of internal needs, external pressures, and strong ideological awareness. This is not an imitation project of the Western education system, but rather a creative process in formulating a contextual, sustainable, and progressive form of Islamic education. In other words, the modernization that occurs is a form of institutional *ijtihad* carried out by Islamic boarding schools in order to answer the challenges of the times.

With such a foundation of thought and philosophical foundations, the modernization of pesantren education does not need to be seen as a threat to traditional Islamic values. Rather, it is a middle ground that allows pesantren to remain an institution that is spiritually authentic, but also intellectually and practically relevant. The Islamic boarding school in Ogan Ilir has provided a real example of how

the concept of modernization can be actualized intelligently and wisely, without having to lose its deep roots of identity.

Characteristics of Modernization in Islamic Boarding School Education Institutions

Modernization in Islamic boarding school educational institutions is not just a big discourse, but has manifested as a reality that can be observed from its institutional characteristics. In Ogan Ilir Regency, this change took place gradually but systematically, reflecting the collective awareness that pesantren is no longer enough to function as a center for religious teaching. Modernization is not here to replace traditions, but to rearrange the foundation to be more adaptive to the dynamics of the times.

The first striking characteristic is in the institutional aspect. Islamic boarding schools, which were once synonymous with centralistic leadership in the hands of one kyai figure, are now starting to shift towards structured collective management. According to Latifah, one of the important characteristics of modern Islamic boarding schools is the legal entity of a foundation that has a more open organizational system and development planning (Ghina Rahmah Maulida 2024). This can be seen in the Al Ittifaqiah and Darul Funun Islamic Boarding Schools, where strategic decisions are no longer absolutely dependent on kyai, but through a deliberative forum between managers, teachers, and local community leaders.

In terms of curriculum, Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir have shown the courage to integrate general sciences into their traditional curriculum. The curriculum that was previously dominated by classical salaf books, is now balanced with exact lessons, English, information technology, and entrepreneurship. This can be seen in the learning process that the Albasya Islamic boarding school has used the syllabus and lesson plan like a formal school, and included subjects such as science and mathematics in its learning structure (Interview, Nabila 2024).

Modernization also touches the parenting pattern and kyai-santri relationship. If previously the relationship between students and kyai tended to be paternalistic and one-way, now a more dialogical and participatory approach has emerged. The students were given space to express their opinions, participate in student organizations, and be involved in decision-making activities. One of the teachers at Al Ittifaqiah said, "*In the past, students were afraid to speak in front of kyai, now they are asked to make presentations, create discussion forums, and even become the leader of the student council of the boarding school*" (Interview, Umar 2024).

Another significant change is in the pedagogical approach. Classical teaching methods such as sorogan and bandongan are still used, but they have been juxtaposed with classical methods, open discussions, practicums, and even blended learning. These Islamic boarding schools have utilized technology in the teaching and learning process, including the use of projectors, computers, and internet access in the classroom. According to Jufri, the use of this double method is not a form of rejection of tradition, but a reflection of the principle *Al-Akhdzu bi al-Jadid al-Ashlah*, taking on new and better things (Interview, Basa 2024).

Another feature that is no less important is the presence of educational support units that are practical and professional. Islamic boarding schools are now forming many skills institutions, student cooperatives, and entrepreneurship training. The Darul Funun Islamic Boarding School, for example, has established a printing and agricultural business unit as a learning medium as well as a source of income for students and institutions (Interview, Malik 2024). This step shows that pesantren is no

longer exclusive as a place to learn religion, but also as a center for economic empowerment of the people.

The openness of pesantren to accreditation and standardization of national education is also a characteristic of modernization. Islamic boarding schools that used to be anti to state interference are now starting to open themselves to accreditation from the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education. In fact, most of the teachers at the Ogan Ilir Islamic boarding school are now college graduates and have participated in formal pedagogic training. This shows an increase in the professionalism and quality of educators.

Meanwhile, the characteristics of modernization are also seen in the use of foreign languages in learning. Arabic is no longer used only for reading books, but also becomes the language of instruction in discussions. English began to be taught systematically to open up students' access to international literature. As expressed by one of the teachers at Al Ittifaqiah "*Now the students are used to active Arabic and some have started practicing TOEFL*" (Interview, Eko 2024).

However, this modernization process still contains dynamics and tensions between continuity and change. Not all modern elements are taken for granted. The cultural selection process is carried out carefully, so as not to damage the identity of the Islamic boarding school. As said by Suradi, modernization will only be successful if pesantren still have a strong value filter, so that changes take place in the corridor of Islamic values (Suradi 2021).

Another interesting characteristic is the shift in graduate orientation. If in the past the main orientation of students was to become a scholar or religious teacher, now many students aspire to become professionals in other fields—accountants, engineers, entrepreneurs, and even content creators. Pesantren no longer monopolize the career direction of students, but rather become facilitators who open various paths of kindness. This is a new form of *Tafaqquh fi al-din* The Contextual: Understanding Religion with the World Horizon (Ngimadudin et al. 2024).

Thus, the characteristics of Islamic boarding school modernization in Ogan Ilir are not only cosmetic, but also substantive and multidimensional. Changes occur in almost all aspects: from institutions, curriculum, nurturing, to pedagogy. This shows that pesantren are not static entities, but social organisms that continue to grow and adapt, without losing their roots of values and identities (Lailiyah and Wahid 2024). In the world of Islamic education, such a transformation is not only inspiring, but also proof that tradition and modernity are not two poles that must be opposed, but two pillars that can reinforce each other.

Educational Transformation Model from Salafi to Khalafiyah

The model of educational transformation from salafiyah to khalafiyah in Islamic boarding schools is an important phenomenon in the Islamic education landscape in Indonesia. This change is not just an evolution of form, but also reflects a reconceptualization of the meaning of Islamic education itself—from the exclusivity of religious understanding to openness to multidisciplinary knowledge and skills. In Ogan Ilir Regency, this process seems lively and dynamic, especially in the three large Islamic boarding schools that are the object of research: Al Ittifaqiah, Albasya, and Darul Funun.

Historically, Salafi Islamic boarding schools are known for their traditional educational model centered on the teaching of the yellow book, the sorogan and bandongan methods, as well as absolute authority on kyai figures. This system is very

personal and based on teacher-student relationships in an atmosphere full of spirituality (Sofwah, Jamal, and Santoso 2024). However, in recent decades, there has been pressure from within and outside to open up to a more structured formal education system that is compatible with the national system. This is the starting point for the emergence of a transformation model towards the khalafiyah system.

According to Marwah, the leader of the Darul Funun Islamic Boarding School, this transformation started from the internal needs of the institution to increase the competitiveness of students in the public space. Islamic boarding schools can no longer only produce graduates who are fluent in reading books, but must also be able to produce cadres who can take part in various sectors of modern life. Thus, the Salafi education model began to be expanded with elements of khalafiyah, such as the application of the classical curriculum, the recognition of formal education levels, and the integration of general education (Interview, Marwah 2024).

The concrete form of this transformation can be seen in the institutional structure that accommodates formal education units within the pesantren environment. Al Ittiqaziah, for example, has developed a tiered system ranging from Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Aliyah, to nationally accredited Islamic universities. Meanwhile, Darul Funun develops a madrasah diniyah system that is integrated with the national curriculum. *"We do not delete the reading of the book, but we arrange it to be in line with the national system, so that children can continue to PTN as well,"* (Interview, Ichromsyah 2024).

In terms of methodology, this transformation model combines the sorogan and bandongan methods with a classical approach. This means that halaqah book activities continue to take place, but given a time structure, syllabus, and evaluation system as in formal classes. At the Albasya Islamic Boarding School, for example, tafsir and fiqh lessons are taught with a dialogical approach and written in the form of papers presented in the student forum. *"Students are now required to be able to think critically and write academically. Not just memorization,"* (Interview, Nabila 2024).

This model also shows the integration of a national standard-based evaluation system. In these Islamic boarding schools, students are not only judged by their ability to read books, but also by formal academic achievements, foreign language skills, technological skills, and even personality aspects. This indicates a total reconstruction of the indicators of the success of pesantren education, which were previously more informal and subjective.

In addition, the transformation from salafiyah to khalafiyah is also seen in a more inclusive and technology-based pedagogical approach. At Darul Funun, teaching and learning activities have utilized digital devices such as projectors, e-learning platforms, and learning videos. However, interestingly, the use of this technology is still framed in strong Islamic values. *"We can use LCD, but it still starts with tahlil. Modernity does not mean the loss of barakah,"* (Interview, Malik 2024).

This model also touches on the leadership aspect. Transformation does not only target students and the learning system, but also institutional management. Kyai as the central figure is still retained, but the managerial function is left to special teams such as the teacher council, principal, and foundation manager (Choeroni, Mch, and Sauri 2019). This is a characteristic of the khalafiyah model that is based on modern institutional governance but still respects the authority structure of the Islamic boarding school.

Interestingly, in this model, there is also a fusion of values between *tafaqquh fi al-din and tafaqquh fi al-hayah*—that is, religious understanding and life understanding.

These Islamic boarding schools no longer consider general lessons as a threat to the Islam of students, but as a complementary instrument to produce complete Muslim cadres. This is reflected in the enthusiasm of pesantren caregivers who call modernization part of today's da'wah.

With all its complexity, the model of transformation of education from salafiyah to khalafiyah in Ogan Ilir proves that pesantren is a highly adaptive institution, not static. This process demonstrates intelligent social and cultural engineering – taking on new elements without breaking the chain of tradition. Pesantren do not become passive institutions that simply accept change, but become active actors in configuring the future of Islamic education.

The model born from the womb of transformation is not only worthy of emulation by other Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, but can also be an alternative Islamic education model that combines spiritual, intellectual, and practical strengths in a balanced manner. With this model, pesantren are no longer seen as underdeveloped institutions, but as centers for value-based Islamic education innovation that are able to answer the challenges of the times with a strong identity.

Adaptation Strategies for Islamic Boarding Schools to the Challenges of the Times

In the midst of globalization, technological disruption, and increasingly complex social changes, pesantren as Islamic educational institutions can no longer survive with rigid conventional models. The sustainability of pesantren is highly determined by its ability to develop adaptation strategies that are contextual, intelligent, and firmly rooted in Islamic values. This can be proven by several Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir Regency that have formulated visionary strategic steps in responding to the challenges of the times.

The first adaptation strategy that is evident is the integration of the formal education system into the pesantren curriculum. This step is carried out by opening formal education levels such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Aliyah, and even universities, without removing the traditional curriculum. Al Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School, for example, already has an educational structure from elementary level to accredited universities, allowing students to obtain a formal diploma recognized by the state without losing access to the study of the yellow book (Interview, Eko 2024).

Another tactical step is the digitization of the learning system and educational administration. At the Darul Funun Islamic Boarding School, it is stated that they have utilized the Learning Management System (LMS) to prepare schedules, monitor student attendance, and archive grades and assignments. It is a concrete form of technological adaptation that is systemic in nature, not just the adoption of tools, but the transformation of the way it works (Interview, Marwah 2024).

The next strategy that is very crucial is to update the curriculum based on the needs of the community. Pesantren no longer only teach fiqh, monotheism, and tafsir, but also open lessons in entrepreneurship, foreign languages, digital skills, and even job training. This was conveyed by the caretaker of the Albasya Islamic boarding school "*We want students to be ready to preach and be ready to live economically independently,*" (Interview, Basa 2024). This reflects a shift in orientation from purely religious to productive religious.

Adaptation also occurs in the pattern of communication and social relations between kyai and students. If in the past kyai was the only center of authority that could not be challenged, now participatory leadership has emerged that involves teachers, foundation administrators, and even senior students in the policy-making

process. This is part of the strategy to build a more open and democratic institutional climate, as seen at the Al Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School (Interview, Umar 2024).

An adaptation strategy that is no less important is strengthening external networks and collaboration. The Islamic boarding school in Ogan Ilir actively collaborates with local governments, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, educational NGOs, and foreign institutions. This collaboration allows pesantren to access training, funding, and relevant new technologies. Islamic boarding schools no longer operate in an isolated space, but rather become part of the national and global education ecosystem.

In the context of cultural globalization, pesantren also respond by selectively filtering outside cultures. They do not reject modernity, but choose elements that are in accordance with Islamic values. Television is timed, internet access is filtered, and social media content is taught within the framework of da'wah ethics. This approach reflects a value-based adaptation strategy, where pesantren maintains its identity while opening itself up to progress.

The adaptation of pesantren also touches on the aspect of human resource management. Teachers are now required not only to be proficient in the yellow book, but also to master technology, modern pedagogy, and administrative skills. Many teachers at the Darul Funun and Albasya Islamic Boarding Schools have participated in competency training from professional institutions and universities (Interview, Marwah 2024) and Interview, Nabila 2024). This indicates a paradigm shift that pesantren teachers are professional educators, not just heirs of tradition.

Another strategy is to strengthen the pesantren economy through productive business units. Islamic boarding schools no longer only rely on funds from the community, but have started to manage independent businesses such as cooperative shops, integrated agriculture, printing, and tutoring. These units are not only a source of funding, but also an entrepreneurial training medium for students. Al Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School even has a digital marketing training program for final students (Interview, Ichromsyah 2024).

However, not all strategies go smoothly. Internal challenges such as the resistance of some caregivers to change, limited infrastructure, and a lack of professionals are still obstacles. However, the spirit of adaptation shown by these Islamic boarding schools is a strong indicator that these Islamic educational institutions are not static. Pesantren is an institution that is able to learn, change, and move.

Thus, the adaptation strategy implemented by Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir shows that the transformation of Islamic education is not empty rhetoric, but a praxis that lives in policies, programs, and institutional culture. Pesantren do not imitate formal schools, but adjust to their own identity. This kind of adaptation is proof that pesantren can become the axis of progressive Islamic education, firmly rooted in tradition, but towering in civilization.

Implications of Islamic Boarding School Transformation on the Direction of Contemporary Islamic Education

The transformation of the education system in Ogan Ilir Islamic boarding schools, from a salafiyah form to a hybrid model that combines tradition with innovation, has far-reaching implications for the orientation and structure of Islamic education in Indonesia. The transformation process carried out is not only internal, but contains strategic messages that can be transformed into the broader framework of Islamic education policies. The finding that pesantren is able to combine the

curriculum of the yellow book with general lessons, as well as the function of digital technology in the learning process, shows that pesantren are not backward institutions, but have high resilience to adapt productively to the times.

The first implication is that pesantren can act as *Social Laboratory* in formulating Islamic education that is responsive, contextual, and value-based. Islamic boarding schools such as Al Ittifaqiah and Darul Funun are proof that tradition-based institutions can carry out substantial reforms without sacrificing their spiritual and scientific identity. In other words, this transformation breaks the long-held assumption that modernization can only be done by shedding tradition (Sumanti, Nunzairina, and Salminawati 2024). On the contrary, traditional values are the main foundation in building deep-rooted educational innovations (Thoha, 2022)).

The second implication is related to the position of pesantren in the national education system. When public educational institutions tend to be dragged into curriculum pragmatism and lose their value orientation, pesantren emerge as an educational alternative that integrates life skills with moral and spiritual coaching (Kurniawati, et al. 2022). This makes pesantren not only a complementary institution, but has the potential to become the mainstream in Indonesia's Islamic education reform that is more humane and socially conscious.

The third implication is the urgency of reorienting government policies towards Islamic boarding schools. These findings show that top-down Islamic education policies often fail to capture the internal dynamics of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, a more participatory, flexible, and local context-based policy approach is urgently needed. The government needs to recognize the uniqueness of pesantren as a value- and culture-based institution, not merely a formal academic institution. Support for the transformation of Islamic boarding schools must be provided in the form of human resource training, the provision of digital infrastructure, curriculum quality recognition, and the facilitation of international cooperation.

Furthermore, theoretically, the transformation of the pesantren in Ogan Ilir challenges the dichotomous framework of thinking in the study of Islamic education, which tends to place salafiyah as a representation of conservatism and khalafiyah as a symbol of progress. This study shows that the integration of salaf values and khalaf innovation is not only possible, but is actually the main strategy in developing a future Islamic education model. Thus, an inclusive, progressive, and contextual approach to education can rely on the rich local heritage of Islamic boarding schools.

Finally, this transformation suggests that the future of Islamic education cannot be built by imitating the Western system raw or by maintaining the old form in a frozen way. Epistemological and institutional courage is needed to formulate a living, dynamic, and competitive Islamic education, as has been shown by the Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir. Thus, the transformation that has occurred in this region not only has an impact on the locality, but offers a new conceptual framework that is relevant nationally and even globally in the development of an authentic and transformative Islamic education system.

Empirical findings show that the success of the modernization of Islamic boarding schools depends largely on their ability to manage the dialectic between the preservation of basic values and the renewal of their forms of delivery. Thus, the dichotomous debate between salaf and khalaf becomes obsolete and unproductive. What is needed is not binary choices, but dialectical integration that allows pesantren to become a social space where values, knowledge, and innovation are dynamically intertwined. Thus, the future of Islamic education does not lie in the worship of the

past or in the blind adoption of modernity, but in the intellectual and institutional courage to continue to negotiate the meaning of Islam in an ever-changing reality. Islamic boarding schools that are able to do this will not only survive, but will lead change.

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that pesantren managers formulate a long-term institutional vision that integrates salafiyah values with adaptive modernization strategies, including curriculum innovation, strengthening economic independence, and leadership regeneration that is responsive to global challenges. The government and policymakers need to provide affirmation through regulations that support the uniqueness of Islamic boarding schools, as well as provide facilities for capacity building, funding, and cross-border cooperation. For academics, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study across Islamic boarding schools to build a new theoretical framework on contextual and transformative Islamic education. In addition, the world of Islamic education in general can make the transformation of Islamic boarding schools a model of education system reform that harmonizes classical scientific traditions with the demands of 21st century competencies in a creative and sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of traditional Islamic education in Islamic boarding schools in Ogan Ilir Regency indicates that modernization does not necessarily become the antithesis of tradition, but rather becomes a strategic instrument to maintain the vitality of Islamic values in the vortex of changing times. Islamic boarding schools such as Al Ittifaqiah, Albasya, and Darul Funun represent how the salafiyah system – which has been considered rigid and closed – can be reconstructed into a more adaptive model of khalafiyah, without experiencing the degradation of its Islamic identity. Modernization in this context does not stop at institutional technical aspects such as curriculum updates, technology utilization, or improvement of education management, but penetrates to the epistemological and ideological domains. Pesantren no longer functions merely as an institution for the reproduction of classical texts, but has metamorphosed into a center for the articulation of contextual and transformative Islamic values. They adopted a hybrid approach, blending traditional spirituality with intellectual and social competencies relevant to contemporary demands. More than that, the response of Islamic boarding schools to globalization and technological disruption reflects reflective and resilient institutional capacity. Adaptation is not done in the form of passive accommodation, but through critical negotiation between local norms and global challenges. In this process, pesantren actually affirm their strategic position as an alternative education actor that not only survives, but also appears progressive, independent, and competitive.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

MMM was responsible for the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. FI and K contributed as academic supervisors by providing critical feedback, methodological guidance, and content refinement throughout the writing process.

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