Sustainable Pesantren: Institutional Reform in Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the approach of institutional transformation in Islamic education inside pesantren, with the aim of establishing a sustainable educational institution. The work is guided by a single problem formulation: How may pesantren attain sustainability through institutional change in Islamic education? This study employs a qualitative research methodology with a literature review framework. This study employs a content analysis methodology for its analysis. The dataset utilised in this investigation comprises scholarly journal articles and conference proceedings. The acquisition of all literary works is accomplished by conducting a search on Google Scholar using specific keywords: “Pembaharuan, Pesantren, Pendidikan Islam”. This study demonstrates the long-term viability of institutional transformation in Islamic education within pesantren through many approaches: 1) Diversification in pesantren leadership; 2) Diversification of educational institutions; 3) Integration of the Classical education curriculum with religious education with science; 4) Technology-based education; 5) Responsive to the times; and 6) Restructuring of educational institutions. This study enhances comprehension of the methodology employed by pesantren in rejuvenation, ensuring their continued relevance to contemporary demands while upholding their historic principles.

Keywords: Sustainable, Pesantren, Institutional, Islamic

ABSTRAK


Kata Kunci: Berkelanjutan, Pesantren, Kelembagaan, Islami

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INTRODUCTION

The notion of ongoing education is crucial in the contemporary global atmosphere. Pesantren should incorporate sustainability ideas into their pedagogy and administrative practices. The objective is to guarantee that pesantren make a meaningful contribution to both sustainable and inclusive development. In order to accomplish the objectives of ongoing education, pesantren institutions should revise their curriculum to incorporate subjects such as environmental preservation, the utilisation of sustainable energy sources, and other eco-friendly methodologies. From a philosophical standpoint, the revival of Islamic education is seen as an endeavour to comprehend the various aspects of society, enabling individuals to effectively engage with all matters pertaining to Islam that are applicable to their contemporary day. (Ma’rifatunnisa’ et al., 2022). The renewal of Islamic education is also undertaken to mitigate the disparity between the two distinct educational systems (Irfindari et al., 2021).

Pesantren, as one of the most ancient Islamic educational establishments in Indonesia, holds a distinctive role in society and has long been a pivotal component of the educational milieu. The indigenous population in the Indonesian archipelago has a significant influence in determining social processes (Istiqlaliyani, 2022; Syafe’i, 2017). Pesantren, historically concentrates on imparting religious knowledge and fostering moral development (Syafe’i, 2017). Nevertheless, there is an increasing recognition of the necessity to incorporate both academic and practical courses in order to fulfil the requirements of the contemporary society (Masnu’ah et al., 2023).

Pesantren acknowledged that concentrating solely on the religious dimension was insufficient. Pesantren has proactively undertaken the task of finding possibilities to revamp and modernise its education system. This is accomplished by adhering to and evaluating changes and emerging cultural patterns with both respect and critical analysis. This underscores the need of embracing innovation as a necessary measure for pesantren to stay pertinent in the contemporary day. (Rifai, 2017) Thus, pesantren not only uphold spiritual and cultural traditions, but also equip its pupils to make meaningful contributions in a vibrant and heterogeneous community.

Pesantren, being traditional Islamic educational institutions, encounter substantial obstacles in adapting to the evolving circumstances, particularly within the framework of the contemporary and post-modern era. A significant obstacle is in the stigma that only links pesantren with ancient methodologies, which are frequently perceived as incompatible with advancements in science and technology (Nihwan &; Munir, 2019). In an era that places more emphasis on technical advancement and contemporary knowledge, pesantren must adjust by not only upholding the instruction of religious principles and customs, but also incorporating modern education and technology into their educational programme. The objective of this endeavour is to ensure that pesantren remains pertinent and capable of cultivating persons who possess the skills and knowledge to thrive and make valuable contributions in an increasingly sophisticated and globally focused setting.

The conventional Islamic educational system, known for its conservative nature, restricts intellectual freedom, hence hindering individuals' capacity to navigate and excel in a globalised world. According to Masdar F. Mas'udi, conservatism in traditional education is rooted in the interpretation and application of the Qur'an and as-Sunnah. Hence, the objective of modernising Islamic education is to address these constraints by incorporating ideologies and methodologies that align better with the requirements and complexities of contemporary society (Musyrifin, 2016).

The renewal of pesantren education in all its facets necessitates the backing of all entities, including the internal constituents of the pesantren, as well as stakeholders, who are
individuals or groups connected to and invested in the advancement of pesantren as educational establishments. This support might commence by eradicating the negative stigma associated with pesantren, which are often perceived as traditional educational institutions that have limited scope for development. Additional assistance is provided through the acquisition of operational finances, educational facilities, and infrastructure, as well as equitable treatment of pesantren and its graduates in pursuing higher education and entering the workforce (Baidlawi, 2006).

Sustainable Pesantren is a concept that focuses on institutional reform in Islamic education with sustainability in mind. Pesantren, as one of the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, has a significant role in shaping the character and knowledge of Muslims. However, the challenges of the times demand updates and adaptations so that pesantren remain relevant and sustainable.

1. The Concept of Sustainability in Education
   Sustainability in the context of education includes environmental, social, and economic aspects. According to UNESCO (2017), sustainable education aims to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to build a more just and sustainable future. In the context of pesantren, this means integrating sustainability principles into the curriculum and daily operations.

2. Institutional Reform in Pesantren
   Institutional reform in pesantren covers various aspects, including curriculum, management, and facilities. The importance of curriculum renewal that not only focuses on religious knowledge but also on general knowledge and life skills. Meanwhile, Azra (2003) emphasized the need to modernize pesantren management to improve efficiency and transparency.

3. Sustainable Pesantren Model
   Various studies show that sustainable pesantren can be achieved through the integration of environmental education, pesantren-based economic development, and strengthening social values. For example, pesantren can adopt organic farming practices as part of their education and source of income (Ismail, 2018). In addition, the development of small and medium enterprises managed by pesantren also contributes to economic sustainability (Syamsuddin, 2020).

4. Case Studies of Sustainable Islamic Boarding Schools
   Various pesantren have successfully implemented the principles of sustainability. For example, Pesantren Daarul Ulum in Bogor developed an integrated agriculture and renewable energy program. This pesantren not only provides religious education but also teaches practical skills and entrepreneurship to santri (Fauzi, 2019). These case studies show that pesantren can be a model of holistic and sustainable education.

5. Challenges and Opportunities
   Although there is a lot of potential, sustainable pesantren face various challenges, such as limited funding, resistance to change, and lack of human resources trained in sustainability. However, with the support of the government, non-governmental organizations, and the wider community, pesantren can overcome these challenges and capitalize on opportunities to develop further (Zainuddin, 2021).

The study is driven by a problem formulation: How might pesantren be approached in order to promote sustainability through institutional change in Islamic education? This study enhances comprehension of the methodology employed by pesantren in revitalization, ensuring
their continued relevance to contemporary demands, while upholding their traditional principles.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilises a qualitative research methodology, incorporating a literature review as part of its design. The methodology employed in this study involves the utilisation of content analysis. Content analysis is a commonly used technique for reviewing and assessing the material present in books or literary sources.

The procedure for conducting a literature review using content analysis comprises the subsequent stages: 1) The author devised research inquiries; 2) The author curated literary sources that are pertinent to the research issue. The materials utilised in this study consist of the journal articles, books, and conference proceedings related to the transformation of peace education in the Islamic education curriculum. The author thoroughly examined the predetermined literature sources and extracted information that is pertinent to the study's objectives. During this phase, researchers establish the unit of analysis by selecting either words, phrases, or paragraphs that are relevant to the study issue. 4) The author classified the gathered information based on a specific theme or issue; 5) The author constructed an analytical framework to serve as a navigational tool during the process of content analysis. The framework may consist of thematic or conceptual categories that are pertinent to the research objectives. 6) The author performed a content analysis, which entailed a methodical examination and interpretation of the collected information. 7) The author arrived at conclusions based on the content analysis.

1. Research Subjects

Research subjects are parties or individuals who are the focus of data collection and research analysis. In the context of research with the title "Sustainable Pesantren: Institutional Reform in Islamic Education", the research subjects include:

a. Parent of Pesantren (Kiai): Individuals who are responsible for the management and guidance in pesantren.

b. Santri: The students who study at the pesantren.

c. Teachers and Educators: Teachers who are involved in the education process at the pesantren.

d. Pesantren Management: Administrative and management staff who are responsible for the operation of the pesantren.

e. Community Around the Pesantren: The community that interacts with the pesantren and is impacted by its existence.

f. Pesantren Alumni: Former students who have completed their education in the pesantren and can provide a perspective on the long-term impact of pesantren education.

g. Government and Related Institutions: Parties that play a role in regulating and providing support to pesantren.

2. Object of Research

a. The research object studied in this research is the International Dea Malela Sumbawa Islamic Boarding School, the research objects include:

b. a. Pesantren Education Curriculum: The structure and content of the curriculum taught in the pesantren, including the integration of general education and continuing education.
c. b. Pesantren Management: The pesantren management system that includes administration, finance, and human resource management.
d. c. Sustainability Programs in Pesantren: Initiatives and activities implemented in pesantren to support environmental, social, and economic sustainability.
e. d. Pesantren Infrastructure and Facilities: The physical condition and completeness of facilities that support the process of education and life in pesantren.
f. e. Pesantren Economic Activities: Economic enterprises managed by the pesantren, such as agriculture, trade, and small industries.
g. f. Community Participation: Community involvement in pesantren activities and the support provided.
h. g. Government Policies Related to Pesantren: Government regulations and programs that impact the management and development of pesantren.
i. h. Pesantren Education Outcomes: Academic achievements, life skills, and values obtained by students during their education in pesantren.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the conducted literature research, there are various methods for revitalising Islamic education in pesantren institutions. The approaches are as follows:

A. Diversification of Leadership in Pesantren

The existence of leadership diversification in pesantren indicates a change in the management and leadership methods employed in these educational institutions (Basyit, 2017; Hasan, 2015). The inclusion of diverse leadership in pesantren is a crucial element of the modernization and revitalization process within pesantren. This involves a shift from the traditional model of single leadership commonly embraced by a kiai, to a more democratic method of collaborative leadership. This modification exemplifies the efforts of pesantren in tackling the progress and modernization of Islamic education, in addition to the societal and economic changes occurring in society (Hasan, 2015). Therefore, leadership diversification refers to a significant change in the management and leadership strategy in pesantren, leading to a more democratic and collaborative institutional structure of pesantren.

The role of kiai in pesantren leadership is crucial in effecting transformations in the institution's structure, technology, and individuals (Musta’an & Sari, 2021). Kiai is no longer considered the exclusive determinant of policy decisions. The kiai's authority has been transferred to other individuals who are considered trustworthy to carry out the specified task. This graphic depicts the distribution of power and responsibility in the management of pesantren (Rifai, 2017). The allocation of authority can be considered an efforts to promote transparency and accountability in the management of pesantren, as it reduces dependence on individual decision-making. However, despite the changes in the leadership structure, the traditional importance of the kiai's function is still highly valued. The display exemplifies a conscious effort to strike a balance between preserving history and embracing innovation.

The imperative for pesantren to promptly adapt to the evolving circumstances is of utmost importance. This response encapsulates improved effectiveness and professionalism in handling. These goals can be achieved by implementing leadership training, practicing efficient financial management, and improving human resource
development (Nihwan & Munir, 2019). Leadership training involves the cultivation of effective communication, decision-making, and leadership strategy skills. Financial management include the activities of creating a budget, monitoring expenses, and devising strategies to improve funding sources for pesantren. Human resource development involves the provision of training, updated learning materials, and opportunities for professional advancement.

B. Diversification of Educational Institutions

The diversification of educational institutions pertains to the modification of the educational content within pesantren. The diversification of pesantren institutions can be achieved by integrating both general and vocational subjects into the pesantren curriculum (Hasan, 2015; Masnu’ah et al., 2023; Rifai, 2017). The advancement of pesantren educational institutions encompasses the broadening of curriculum offerings beyond solely religious academic subjects to include practical vocational or technical resources. Furthermore, there is also the advancement of educational attainment, exemplified by the construction of colleges (Nihwan & Munir, 2019). The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has launched an initiative to promote entrepreneurship and vocational life skills education in pesantren. This initiative aims to enhance the economic empowerment and independence of both the pesantren and the local community, ultimately improving their welfare (Fatmawati & Mulazid, 2021). By incorporating vocational life skills into their education, students receive not only religious instruction but also the essential abilities needed to thrive in the contemporary workforce, so enhancing their professional opportunities. Vocational lifeskill education in pesantren additionally enhances social networks and fosters cooperation among students, both of which are crucial resources for establishing and advancing sustainable economic enterprises.

In order to attain sustainability, pesantren must engage in diversification within their educational establishments. This implies that pesantren not only prioritise Islamic teachings, but also provide education in the fields of science and practical training. Furthermore, the incorporation of practical skills education is crucial in order to offer appropriate career prospects for society. Thus, pesantren can effectively fulfil wider educational requirements and impart practical abilities that are applicable to contemporary society.

Diversification of pesantren institutions also includes strengthening the management and organizational structure of pesantren to be more efficient and professional (Hafidhoh, 2016). Pesantren should adapt to global changes, including in aspects of management and organizational structure. This could include the application of modern management practices and more adaptive and flexible organizational strategies to face the challenges of the times (Kamal, 2018). Pesantren should strike a balance between maintaining tradition and adopting modern management practices. This includes the development of organizational structures that are more open and responsive to change, as well as the adoption of more transparent and accountable management practices (Hafidhoh, 2016).

Strengthening management in order to support the diversification of educational institutions must be accompanied by management modernization involving the integration of new technologies and methods in administration and decision making.
The response of pesantren through modernization of its management is proven by the application of modern management indicators in certain pesantren (Aldeia et al., 2023). This reflects a proactive approach to aligning with contemporary educational practices and societal needs. The use of computer-based management systems aims to automate administrative processes, such as student enrollment, finance, and resource management. This allows for higher efficiency and accuracy of data. Therefore, pesantren should provide training to staff and managers in the use of the latest technology and modern management methods.

C. Integration of Religious Education Curriculum with Science Curriculum

Since colonial times, pesantren have taught full religious education. However, over time and changing needs of the community, pesantren began to incorporate general lessons and adopt a more classical learning system such as in madrasah (Rahman, 2016). The development of pesantren is not only limited to religious aspects, but also includes integration with the modern education system. This can be seen from the integration of subjects such as mathematics, science, and language, with Islamic subjects, but still in line with the national curriculum.

The curriculum plays an important role in the educational process and is an activity plan that provides guidance to teaching (Baidlawi, 2006). In an effort to reform its institutions, pesantren have developed a hybrid education system. The long-standing classical teaching methods were combined with the madrasah system and general formal education. Pesantren adopt an official curriculum regulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of National Education. In addition, they also added elements of the local curriculum typical of modern pesantren. This approach is a form of pesantren adaptation in uniting traditional elements of Islamic education with contemporary educational approaches. This adaptation aims to make pesantren more effective in meeting the needs and facing challenges in this era (Amin, 2016).

The approach to institutional reform of pesantren described in the article focuses on the integration of various education systems. Pesantren carried out reforms by adopting a mixed pattern which includes: First, Pesantren integrates the traditional book recitation system with the madrasah system and public school system. Second, Pesantren adopt the curriculum set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of National Education. Third, Pesantren adds a curriculum of local content typical of modern pesantren. This aspect allows pesantren to maintain their local identity and traditions while adapting to contemporary needs and challenges (Amin, 2016).

Historically, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor has been an important example in the renewal of institutional aspects of pesantren management and curriculum. The idea of this renewal has existed since the beginning of the establishment of pesantren in 1926. Gontor, as a pioneer of pesantren education reform, held a renewal movement (harakat al-tajdid wa al-islah al-dini wa al-ijtima’i) in the field of education. One of the reform efforts carried out is to change the curriculum to be more oriented to the needs of the community (Rahman, 2016). Therefore, the pesantren curriculum must be integrated with the science curriculum.

D. Technology-Based Education

Pesantren, as a traditional educational institution, has undergone significant transformations in several key aspects such as teaching methods, curriculum, and
leadership patterns, in an effort to remain relevant amid technological advances and the demands of today's times. These changes include the adoption of more interactive and technology-based teaching techniques. Pesantren must make fundamental changes in learning methods, curriculum, and leadership patterns to adapt to technological developments and the demands of the times (Putri &; Rivauzi, 2022).

Pesantren make adjustments to technology and the times through: 1) Fundamental Changes in Learning Methods and Curriculum; 2) New Leadership Pattern where pesantren adopt a new leadership pattern to adapt to the demands of the times; 3) Geographical Distribution where Pesantren are no longer only located in rural areas, but have also spread sporadically in various big cities, so that they become educational destinations for urban communities. This adjustment shows how pesantren have responded to the pace of technological development and social change to remain relevant and effective in providing Islamic education in the modern era (Putri &; Rivauzi, 2022).

In addressing the integration of technology in education, Anwar et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of the role of technology in education (including pesantren). Educational institutions should embrace technological advances to enhance the learning experience. This is in line with the imperative for Pesantren to change their teaching methods and curriculum using technological tools and resources, thus equipping students with essential digital literacy skills and knowledge.

Pesantren as Islamic educational institutions that have strong cultural roots in Indonesia need to adopt technology-based education to remain relevant and effective in facing the changing times (Aini, 2021). In this context, the use of technology and information can help Islamic boarding schools improve the quality of education by facilitating financial management, academic information systems, and letter archives (Reza &; Ruliansyah, 2022; Supriyati &; Bahri, 2020; Sutedi et al., 2021). In addition, technology adoption can expand students' knowledge and insights through internet access and social media (Hasanah et al., 2021; Irawan et al., 2021; Munadirin et al., 2022).

However, in adopting technology, Islamic boarding schools need to consider teachers' resistance to technology and ensure that technology adoption does not damage Islamic values and cultural heritage of pesantren (Marsudi et al., 2011; Mowaviq et al., 2019; Ulya et al., 2021). Therefore, an integrated approach between technology and Islamic values is needed in the development of the education system in Islamic boarding schools (Sulaeman, 2021). Thus, the adoption of technology-based education in Islamic boarding schools can help improve the efficiency, quality, and relevance of education while maintaining Islamic values and the cultural heritage of pesantren.

E. Pesantren that are Responsive to the Times

Pesantren tend to maintain traditional wisdom in daily life while adapting to changing times. They accepted the modernization of Islamic education only on a very limited scale to ensure the survival of the institution. Although traditional conditions are very important to maintain, pesantren also have an obligation to follow the situation and conditions that are increasingly developing and advancing. This shows the importance of balancing between maintaining the values and traditions that exist in pesantren with the need to adapt and evolve according to the demands and challenges of modern times (Hafidhoh, 2016).
Pesantren achieve modernization of Islamic education by showing a progressive attitude through various changes and innovations to advance the education system. This includes addressing issues such as secularism, educational dichotomy, and globalization that affect educational change in pesantren. Pesantren are expected to move forward along with the times, while maintaining their traditions and characteristics and being open to renewal (Kamal, 2018). Being responsive to the times allows pesantren to update their education system and remain relevant in a modern context, blending tradition with innovation (Kamal, 2018).

Pesantren are faced with the challenges of changing times, including the need to integrate advances in science and technology. Being responsive to the times allows pesantren to overcome the stigma of traditionality and adapt to the demands of the modern and post-modern centuries (Nihwan & Munir, 2019). Therefore, pesantren must be responsive to the problems faced by the community. In this regard, reforms are needed to overcome the limitations of the traditional Islamic education system which is often conservative and does not provide sufficient freedom of thought. Renewal allows pesantren to balance and dominate global life, by integrating thoughts and practices that are more in line with the demands of modern times (Musyrifin, 2016).

The author views that the responsiveness of pesantren to the times is the key to ensuring their relevance and sustainability in the changing social, cultural, and technological context. This renewal is important not only to maintain the identity and values of Islamic education, but also to ensure pesantren can make a significant contribution to society at large and develop future generations who are knowledgeable and skilled.

Responsive pesantren also make updates to the educational approach applied. Educational approach to include more modern teaching methodologies, integration of technology, and curriculum relevant to the needs of the times. This aims to ensure that pesantren remain competitive and are able to provide high-quality education (Hasibuan et al., 2023), which is in accordance with the times.

Responsiveness is not only carried out on education, but pesantren must also respond to the political and social fields. Increasing awareness and involvement in political issues can help pesantren become more active and relevant in discussing and solving social and political problems. This includes understanding how political decisions affect education and society as a whole. By responding to social change, pesantren can integrate social principles that are more progressive and inclusive. This helps them in developing curricula and educational practices that are more adapted to contemporary social needs (Hasibuan et al., 2023). Through this approach, pesantren not only maintain their Islamic traditions and values but also ensure that they continue to evolve and adapt to the needs and challenges of modern times.

F. Restructuring of Educational Institutions

Restructuring educational institutions by keeping up with the times, including improving the quality of education through the mu'adalah. This reform is based on the principle of “Al-Muhāfazah ‘alā qādīm al-sālih wa al-akhdhu bi al-jadīd al-aṣlah”, which is a dynamic pattern in the development of the world of education (Surip, 2022). This restructuring is important to ensure that education in pesantren remains relevant and competitive in the context of global education and today's needs.

The restructuring of educational institutions in pesantren is carried out through two main approaches:
1) Mu’adalah Curriculum Development

Restructuring through the mu’is an essential step when Islamic educational institutions want to move progressively in the quality development of alumni. This includes the opening of overseas networks, especially in the Middle East and Africa, to accommodate the development of knowledge for Islamic boarding school alumni in the future. This approach also involves the mu’adalah pesantren communication forum (FKPM), which acts as a forum for all Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia to progress (Surip, 2022).

2) Strengthening the Concept of Mu’adalah: This concept is divided into two parts:

The form of inclusive reconstruction of Islamic educational institutions, with the submission of the mu’adalah, abroad curriculum. Mu’adalah as a form of equality of Islamic boarding school education by government policy through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This allows Islamic boarding school alumni to pursue higher studies, including applications to universities such as Al-Azhar Cairo, thus opening up opportunities for Islamic boarding school alumni to continue their higher education (Surip, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that institutional reform in Islamic education in pesantren is sustainable through several approaches: 1) Diversification in pesantren leadership; 2) Diversification of educational institutions; 3) Integration of the Classical education curriculum with religious education with science; 4) Technology-based education; 5) Responsive to the times; and 6) Restructuring of educational institutions. This study contributes to understanding the approach used by pesantren in renewal so that pesantren remain relevant to the needs of the times, while maintaining their traditional values. Meanwhile, this study produced recommendations, namely: 1) Pesantren can consider developing diversity in their leadership, including considering various educational backgrounds and experiences to enrich the vision and direction of pesantren; 2) Pesantren can develop educational programs that integrate classical education with religious and science education. This will help create students who have a more comprehensive understanding of Islam and the modern world; 3) Researchers can then follow up this study with a case study or multicase research design.
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