

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PESANTREN PATTERNS IN SIDOSERMO SURABAYA: INTEGRATING TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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### Abstract

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have undergone significant transformations in recent decades. Adopting a modern curriculum is important to ensure that pesantren students have skills that are relevant to the times. By integrating religious and general sciences, pesantren can produce graduates who not only have a strong Islamic understanding, but are also competitive in the world of work. While existing studies have explored the integration of modern subjects into pesantren curricula in several regions, there remains a research gap concerning how this integration unfolds in East Java, where distinct cultural and regional dynamics influence educational practices. Therefore, this research aims at analysing the development patterns of pesantren in Indonesia in a case study of the Sidoarjo Pesantren Area in Surabaya by highlighting how they integrate deeply rooted traditions with the demands of modernity. Using a qualitative approach, this study collected data through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and literature study. The results revealed that the pesantren managed to maintain traditional values, such as the teaching of the yellow book and grave pilgrimage, while adopting modern

elements that include formal curriculum, digital technology, and professional-based management. This integration process not only strengthens the role of pesantren as centers of religious education, but also places them as agents of social change that are responsive to the challenges of the times. Nevertheless, pesantren are faced with a great challenge in maintaining a balance between maintaining tradition and innovating. This study demonstrates that the success of pesantren in facing modernity depends on their ability to hold on to fundamental Islamic values, open to global developments and information technology today. The recommendations include developing a hybrid curriculum combining religion, science, and technology; integrating e-learning tools; promoting pesantren-based economic initiatives; and strengthening alumni networks to support institutional growth and student careers.

Pondok pesantren di Indonesia, sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam tradisional, telah mengalami transformasi yang signifikan dalam beberapa dekade terakhir. Penerapan kurikulum modern menjadi penting untuk memastikan bahwa para santri memiliki keterampilan yang relevan dengan perkembangan zaman. Dengan mengintegrasikan ilmu agama dan ilmu umum, pesantren dapat menghasilkan lulusan yang tidak hanya memiliki pemahaman Islam yang kuat, tetapi juga mampu bersaing di dunia kerja. Meskipun studi sebelumnya telah meneliti integrasi mata pelajaran modern dalam kurikulum pesantren di beberapa daerah, masih terdapat kesenjangan penelitian mengenai bagaimana integrasi tersebut berlangsung di Jawa Timur, di mana dinamika budaya dan regional yang khas memengaruhi praktik pendidikan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pola pengembangan pesantren di Indonesia melalui studi kasus di Kawasan Pesantren Sidosermo Surabaya, dengan menyoroti bagaimana mereka mengintegrasikan tradisi yang mengakar kuat dengan tuntutan modernitas. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi pustaka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pesantren berhasil mempertahankan nilai-nilai tradisional, seperti pengajaran kitab kuning dan ziarah makam, sekaligus mengadopsi elemen-elemen modern yang mencakup kurikulum formal, teknologi digital, dan manajemen berbasis profesional. Proses integrasi ini tidak hanya memperkuat peran pesantren sebagai pusat pendidikan agama, tetapi juga menempatkan mereka sebagai agen perubahan sosial yang responsif terhadap tantangan zaman. Namun demikian, pesantren dihadapkan pada tantangan besar dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara pelestarian tradisi dan inovasi. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan pesantren dalam menghadapi modernitas bergantung pada kemampuan mereka untuk berpegang pada nilai-nilai dasar Islam, terbuka terhadap perkembangan global dan teknologi informasi saat ini. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini mencakup pengembangan kurikulum hibrida yang menggabungkan agama, sains, dan teknologi; integrasi perangkat e-learning; penguatan inisiatif ekonomi berbasis pesantren; serta penguatan jaringan alumni untuk mendukung pertumbuhan

*kelembagaan dan karier santri.*

**Keywords:** *hybrid curriculum, pesantren modernization, tradition-modernity integration*

## Introduction

Pesantren are among the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, playing a vital role in character building and the teaching of Islamic religious knowledge. Since their inception, pesantren have served as centers for the dissemination of Islamic teachings and education for Muslim communities across the archipelago. Historically, pesantren developed in a traditional format (Isbah, 2020), focusing on the study of the yellow book and classical teaching methods based on halaqah (group study) led directly by a kiai.

However, as time progresses and social changes occur within society, pesantren have begun to face increasingly complex challenges, particularly in responding to modernity and the demands of globalization (Chairudin, 2020). In the modern era, pesantren must adapt to changes in education, technology, and socio-economic expectations. This has led to the emergence of new management patterns that aim to integrate classical pesantren traditions with modern educational approaches.

Modern pesantren have begun to introduce formal curricula that include general subjects, incorporate information technology, and foster life skills development. These efforts aim to prepare santri to meet the challenges of the modern world while preserving the essence of religious teachings (Kholish et al., 2022). This transformation reflects the dynamic role of pesantren in bridging tradition and modernity within Indonesia's evolving educational landscape.

The Sidosermo Pesantren area in Surabaya is a compelling example of a pesantren that merits further study, particularly regarding the preservation of local traditions and the implementation of modern educational practices and environmental management. It is important to explore how effectively this pesantren combines classical traditions with modern elements in its curriculum and institutional management. This pesantren is known for maintaining traditional values—such as the teaching of kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts) and the close kiai-santri relationship—while adopting a more structured, modern educational system. The study of the development of the Sidosermo Pesantren area illustrates how pesantren in Indonesia can integrate two key dimensions, tradition and modernity, to create a sustainable education

system (Maduningtyas, 2022).

Current studies concern the dynamics of pesantren in Indonesia by integrating non-religious subjects into their curricula (Isbah, 2020; Kawakip, 2020). Applying a dual approach—Islamic studies and modern subjects—helps their santri gain a comprehensive education that prepares them for various societal roles. This includes practices in pesantren in West Sumatra (Zulmuqim et al., 2020) and Bone, Sulawesi (Nurdin & Samad, 2018). However, more exploration is needed in the context of East Java, where the integration of modern subjects and religious education faces unique cultural and regional challenges.

This research aims to examine the development patterns of pesantren in Indonesia, with a particular focus on the Sidosermo Pesantren area in Surabaya, East Java. It explores how the integration of tradition and modernity is implemented in educational practices, institutional governance, and environmental management. Furthermore, it investigates how local cultural activities continue to be preserved by the surrounding community, despite the pressures of a modern era. Additionally, this research seeks to address the extent to which traditional pesantren can adapt to the demands of modernity without compromising their Islamic identity. The findings are expected to contribute to academic discourse on the future of pesantren education in Indonesia amidst ongoing social and global transformations (Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024). Pesantren such as those in Sidosermo demonstrate how local traditions can be maintained in the context of modern education and life, integrating local wisdom with contemporary developments to shape a generation that is both morally grounded and intellectually capable.

## **Methods**

This research is qualitative, with an interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm posits that reality, truth, or real life has multiple facets and is not singular; it can be studied from various points of view (Sugiyono, 2015). Interpretive research views a fact as something unique, with a special context and meaning. In this study, the interpretive paradigm is used to understand the dynamics of pesantren moderation and local culture in depth, allowing researchers to explore the meaning behind actions, symbols, and interactions in the Sidosermo Surabaya pesantren area. This approach provides the flexibility to understand the experiences of research subjects and involves the active participation of the community as resource persons who

possess local wisdom. In this way, researchers can gain a more contextual and in-depth perspective on how religious moderation is integrated into the life of Sidosermo pesantren (Maulana, 2022).

The data for this research was collected through literature study, observation, and interviews. Literature studies include books and related previous research, which serve as secondary data. Primary data were gathered through direct observation at the Sidosermo Surabaya pesantren area, followed by semi-structured interviews with local cultural figures. The combination of these three data sources enabled a holistic and in-depth investigation of the integration of traditional pesantren and modernization (Jailani, 2022).

This study employs content analysis and triangulation as data analysis methods. The combination of these two methods provides a strong foundation for understanding and interpreting the data more deeply, especially in the context of integrating traditional pesantren with modernity. The content analysis approach is used to explore the meaning and thematic patterns in the data. Qualitative data generated from literature studies, observations, and interviews were sorted, classified, and interpreted systematically. Triangulation was conducted to ensure the credibility of the data and achieve accurate and reliable results (Jayadi, 2024).

## Findings and Discussion

This section presents the key findings and interpretations from the case study of Pesantren in the Sidosermo area, Surabaya, focusing on how traditional Islamic educational institutions adapt to the demands of modernity while preserving their foundational values. By examining the educational structure, pedagogical practices, and socio-cultural environment of pesantren, the discussion highlights how integration between classical Islamic learning and contemporary educational innovations is negotiated in the East Java context.

## The Concept and Educational Structure of Pesantren in the Indonesian Context

The term *pesantren area* refers to an environment where an Islamic boarding school functions as a center for Islamic education. In this context, the *pesantren area* encompasses more than just the residences of *santri* (students) and *kiai* (religious leaders); it also includes the social, cultural, and physical spaces that support all *pesantren* activities. These typically consist of

dormitories, study halls, mosques, libraries, kitchens, and communal spaces used for daily life (Kholish, 2022; Kamal, 2020). According to Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, *pesantren* are community-based institutions established by individuals, foundations, Islamic organizations, and/or communities with the mission of cultivating faith and piety in Allah SWT, fostering noble character, and upholding the values of *Islam rahmatan lil'alam*. These values are reflected in attitudes of humility, tolerance, balance, moderation, and other moral principles rooted in Indonesian national identity. The values are promoted through education, preaching (*da'wah*), exemplary behavior, and community empowerment, all within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Setyawan, 2019; Jayadi et al., 2024).

*Pesantren* education takes place within the *pesantren* environment and is shaped by curricula unique to each institution. It is often centered around the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) and *dirasah islamiyah* following the *mu'allimin* model—a structured and systematic approach to Islamic learning (Habib & Nur Romdlon, 2022; Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024). *Mu'adalah* education refers to *pesantren*-based formal education that develops curricula consistent with *pesantren* traditions, grounded in *kitab kuning* and *dirasah islamiyah*, and delivered through a tiered and organized *mu'allimin* system (Maduningtias, 2022). Similarly, *diniyah* formal education refers to formal Islamic boarding school education that emphasizes classical Islamic texts in a structured educational format (Cibro et al., 2023). At the higher education level, *Ma'had Aly* represents advanced Islamic education managed by *pesantren*, focusing on deepening Islamic sciences within the classical scholarly tradition (Anugrah et al., 2022). *Santri* are students who live within the *pesantren* and are committed to studying and embodying Islamic knowledge, ethics, and practice (Chairudin, 2022; Rusli & Sugiarto, 2022).

### **Traditional and Modern Pesantren: Educational Models and Implementation in Sidosermo**

Traditional *pesantren* are Islamic educational institutions that have strong roots in Indonesian culture and history, especially in rural communities. The *pesantren* in Sidosermo is known for its five souls: sincerity, simplicity, independence, brotherhood, and freedom in employment. This *pesantren* focuses on teaching Islamic religious sciences, such as the Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, Sufism, and Arabic, with an education system that is distinctive and

different from modern formal schools (Kamal, 2020).

Some of the key characteristics of traditional *pesantren* in Sidosermo reflect deep-rooted values and practices unique to this educational model. At the heart of the *pesantren* is the **kiai**, who serves as both the central figure and the main educator. The teaching and moral development of the *santri* (students) heavily depend on the guidance of the *kiai*, who is not only respected as a religious teacher but also revered as a spiritual leader within the broader community. Two traditional learning methods, *sorogan* and *bandongan*, are commonly used. In the *sorogan* method, students study individually by reading and interpreting religious texts in front of the *kiai*, while the *bandongan* system involves the *kiai* teaching a group of students collectively.

A central element of instruction is the use of the *kitab kuning*, or classical Islamic texts in Arabic, which serve as the core references for religious studies. These texts, covering a wide range of Islamic sciences, are rarely translated, requiring *santri* to learn Arabic to fully engage with the material. Traditional *pesantren* also include dormitories (*pondok*) that house students, where daily life becomes a continuation of their moral and character education, emphasizing values such as discipline, independence, and communal living. The lifestyle in these *pesantren* tends to be simple and self-sufficient, with students engaging in daily tasks like cooking and cleaning, thereby learning life skills alongside their religious education. Finally, education in traditional *pesantren* is not strictly bound by a formal curriculum as seen in public schools. Instead, teaching is often flexible, tailored to the abilities and needs of the students, allowing for a more personalized learning experience.

The primary objectives of traditional *pesantren* center on deepening Islamic religious knowledge, shaping character, and fostering the moral and spiritual development of *santri* (students). These institutions aim to cultivate mastery of key Islamic sciences such as the Qur'an, Hadith, *fiqh*, *tafsir*, Sufism, and Arabic, primarily through the study of *kitab kuning*—classical Islamic texts (Habib & Nur Romdlon, 2022; Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024). Equally important is character formation, as *pesantren* emphasize values such as honesty, simplicity, responsibility, and patience through both instruction and the personal example of the *kiai* (Kamal, 2020; Chairudin, 2022). Another central goal is to produce *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and community leaders who are not only knowledgeable in religion but also capable of guiding the Muslim community (Kholish, 2022; Rusli & Sugiarto, 2022).

Additionally, *pesantren* cultivate student independence by fostering

self-sufficiency, discipline, and a simple lifestyle within a communal setting (Jayadi et al., 2024). They also preserve the Islamic tradition of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja), which advocates for moderation, balance, and tolerance in religious life (Setyawan, 2019). Spiritual development is further supported through Sufi practices such as *dhikr*, recitation, and reflection, all aimed at purifying the heart and strengthening the student's relationship with God (Anugrah et al., 2022). Moreover, *pesantren* serve as religious and cultural hubs, promoting social harmony by maintaining strong ties with the surrounding community through religious gatherings and shared traditions (Cibro et al., 2023).

In contrast, modern *pesantren* are Islamic educational institutions that integrate traditional religious instruction with general, state-recognized formal education. Unlike their traditional counterparts, modern *pesantren* implement a dual curriculum that includes both religious subjects (e.g., *fiqh*, Qur'an, and Hadith) and general subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, technology, and foreign languages), aligning with national education standards (Hardianti et al., 2023; Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024). This approach reflects a broader trend of religious modernization, whereby Islamic education adapts to the needs of contemporary society while upholding core spiritual values (Maduningtias, 2022). A defining feature of modern *pesantren* is their enhanced infrastructure, which often includes science laboratories, digital libraries, and internet facilities to support academic learning (Kholish, 2022).

Furthermore, diplomas awarded by modern *pesantren* are officially recognized by the state and are often equivalent to those from public schools, thereby enabling graduates to pursue higher education or careers in various sectors (Jayadi et al., 2024). In addition to religious and academic instruction, modern *pesantren* emphasize life skills, entrepreneurship, and vocational training to equip *santri* with the competencies needed to contribute meaningfully to society (Cibro et al., 2023; Chairudin, 2022). Through this integrated approach, modern *pesantren* play a vital role in shaping well-rounded individuals who are spiritually grounded and professionally prepared for contemporary life.

Modern *pesantren* aim to integrate Islamic religious education with general, state-recognized curricula to prepare *santri* for the complexities of contemporary life (Khamid, 2023; Hardianti et al., 2023). They combine classical religious subjects—such as the Qur'an, *fiqh*, and *hadith*—with general education in science, mathematics, technology, and foreign languages, fostering balanced development in both religious and secular knowledge (Kusumawati

& Nurfuadi, 2024). This dual-curriculum approach equips *santri* to meet global challenges, including technological advancement and economic change, by providing them with relevant life skills and entrepreneurial competencies (Chairudin, 2022; Cibro et al., 2023).

Character building remains a core objective, with an emphasis on instilling Islamic values such as discipline, responsibility, and ethical behavior (Setyawan, 2019). Furthermore, modern *pesantren* are committed to nurturing future leaders who are both spiritually grounded and equipped with critical thinking, management, and global awareness (Jayadi et al., 2024). Diplomas awarded by modern *pesantren* are officially recognized by the government, enabling graduates to pursue higher education or enter diverse professional fields (Kholish, 2022).

In addition, modern *pesantren* foster tolerance, open-mindedness, and appreciation for cultural diversity—qualities essential in today's interconnected world (Maduningtias, 2022). Their use of advanced educational facilities, including IT and science laboratories, enhances technological literacy and supports innovation (Anugrah et al., 2022). By aligning Islamic teachings with contemporary societal developments, modern *pesantren* empower *santri* to uphold core religious values while engaging meaningfully with modern economic, political, and social dynamics (Habib & Nur Romdlon, 2022). Ultimately, they strive to cultivate a globally competitive generation of Muslims capable of contributing to national development and the broader *ummah* (Rusli & Sugiarto, 2022).

In the context of the implementation of modern *pesantren* in the Sidosermo *pesantren* area, this is evident in the introduction of general education through four levels of madrasa. All of them are affiliated with At-Tauhid and An-Najiyah Islamic Boarding Schools, based on traditional *pesantren*. The details are as follows:

The educational structure at *At-Tauhid* and *An-Najiyah* follows a tiered system, starting with *Raudlatul Athfal* (RA) and progressing through various levels of formal education. *Raudlatul Athfal* (RA), equivalent to Kindergarten (TK), caters to children aged 4-6 years old. Its primary focus is on the basic development of young children, introducing them to Arabic letters, daily prayers, and fundamental Islamic values. *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI), which is equivalent to elementary school, serves children aged 6-12 years. The curriculum combines basic general education subjects, such as mathematics, Bahasa Indonesia, and science, with more in-depth Islamic religious studies,

including the Qur'an, *fiqh*, and *Akidah Akhlak*.

*Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs), corresponding to junior high school, is designed for students aged 12-15 years. This stage offers a general education curriculum for junior high school, supplemented by additional Islamic religious subjects. Finally, *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA), equivalent to senior high school and designed for students aged 15-18 years, provides upper secondary education. Students can choose from different majors, such as Science, Social Studies, and Religious Studies, while also deepening their Islamic knowledge and understanding.

### **Comparative Characteristics of Traditional and Modern Pesantren Models in Sidosermo**

Traditional and modern *pesantren* in Indonesia differ significantly in their educational systems, curricula, teaching methods, use of technology, student life, educational goals, and behavioral outcomes. These differences reflect the adaptation of Islamic boarding schools to the demands of contemporary society while preserving core religious values (Anugrah et al., 2022; Cibro et al., 2023). Together, these distinctions highlight the diverse pathways through which *pesantren* contribute to the moral, spiritual, and intellectual development of Indonesian Muslim youth in both traditional and modern contexts.

Traditional *pesantren* primarily focus on the mastery of Islamic religious sciences, with the *kitab kuning*—classical Arabic texts—serving as the foundation of the curriculum. Subjects such as *fiqh*, *tawhid*, *tafsir*, and *hadith* are emphasized, while general subjects like mathematics or science are minimally included (Habib & Nur Romdlon, 2022). In contrast, modern *pesantren* implement a dual-curriculum approach by integrating religious instruction with general education subjects such as mathematics, English, science, and social studies. This integration prepares students to compete in both religious and secular spheres and respond to the needs of a modern, globalized society (Cibro et al., 2023; Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024).

The teaching systems also differ considerably. Traditional *pesantren* use informal methods such as *sorogan*—where students individually recite texts before a teacher—and *bandongan*—where students listen to the teacher read and explain texts. There is no structured grading or schooling level, and learning is often personalized and flexible (Kamal, 2020). Modern *pesantren*, however, follow a formal educational framework with structured levels from kindergarten through senior high school and even tertiary education. Classes

are taught using modern pedagogical methods, structured lesson plans, and formal assessments (Jayadi et al., 2024; Kholish, 2022).

In terms of technology and infrastructure, traditional *pesantren* usually emphasize simplicity, with minimal technological resources. Their focus remains on fostering ascetic values and spiritual discipline (Kamal, 2020). Meanwhile, modern *pesantren* adopt contemporary educational tools such as computers, internet access, science labs, and multimedia classrooms. These facilities support both academic and vocational learning and enhance technological literacy (Anugrah et al., 2022; Kholish, 2022).

Student life in traditional *pesantren* is deeply rooted in simplicity and communal living. *Santri* follow strict routines that reinforce discipline, religious observance, and manners. The environment emphasizes traditional customs and the moral authority of the *kiai* (Chairudin, 2022). In modern *pesantren*, while discipline and simplicity are still valued, students are given more flexibility to participate in extracurricular activities, sports, and social engagement programs, which promote holistic development (Maduningtias, 2022; Jayadi et al., 2024).

The educational goals of traditional *pesantren* are centered on producing *ulama*—Islamic scholars who possess deep religious knowledge and are capable of guiding the Muslim community (Rusli & Sugiarto, 2022). Modern *pesantren*, while still cultivating religious scholars, also aim to produce well-rounded graduates who can contribute actively to various sectors of society, equipped with both religious values and practical skills (Chairudin, 2022; Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024). This shift in educational goals reflects a broader vision of *pesantren* as institutions that not only preserve Islamic tradition but also respond to contemporary societal needs and global challenges.

Lastly, in terms of clean and healthy living behavior, traditional *pesantren* often show lower performance due to limited infrastructure and a focus on modest living conditions (Anugrah et al., 2022). In contrast, modern *pesantren* emphasize personal hygiene, health education, and clean-living environments through structured programs and improved facilities (Cibro et al., 2023). This contrast highlights the evolving priorities of *pesantren* education, where modern institutions integrate health and hygiene as essential components of holistic student development.

In the context of *pesantren* settlements in Sidosermo, the difference between traditional and modern *pesantren* is evident in their physical structures, with clearly labeled and separate buildings for each type. Students may choose

to study exclusively in either the *pesantren* or *madrasah*, or to enroll in both simultaneously. Table 1 summarized the differences between traditional and modern *pesantren* in Sidosermo.

**Table 1.** Comparison between Traditional and Modern Pesantren in Sidosermo

Aspect	Traditional Pesantren (At-Tauhid, An-Najiyah)	Modern Pesantren (RA, MI, MTs At-Tauhid, MA An-Najiyah)
<b>L e a r n i n g Methods</b>	Using the sorogan method (students read their own books) and bandongan (kyai teaches, students listen).	Using a classical system like a formal school with a structured curriculum.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Focuses on the study of kitab kuning and religious sciences (fiqh, tafsir, hadith).	Combining religious and general sciences (science, maths, foreign languages).
<b>E d u c a t i o n System</b>	Non-formal, not following the national education system.	Formal, following the national education system such as MI, MTs, MA.
<b>Language of Instruction</b>	Using local languages and Arabic for kitab kuning.	Using Indonesian, Arabic and English as the language of daily communication.
<b>Student Pesantren Life</b>	Simple, emphasising simplicity and closeness to the kyai.	Highly disciplined, having strict rules in education and discipline.
<b>N u r t u r i n g Pattern</b>	The teacher-student relationship is very close, with students learning directly from the kyai.	More systematically, there are specialised teachers and lecturers for each subject.
<b>E d u c a t i o n Objectives</b>	Producing scholars and preachers who study religion.	Producing graduates who are prepared in the field of religion and professionals in the modern world.

Source: Field observation analysis, 2024

**The Integration of Local Cultural Values in Pesantren Education in Sidosermo**

The relationship between pesantren and local traditional values in Indonesia is deeply rooted and mutually reinforcing. Pesantren, as indigenous Islamic educational institutions, not only serve as centers for religious learning but also play a crucial role in preserving and promoting local cultural heritage. They are often regarded as institutions that are native to the socio-cultural

fabric of Indonesian society (Setyawan, 2019). In the context of **Sidosermo**, a region known for its blend of traditional Javanese-Islamic culture, this relationship is particularly evident. Pesantren in Sidosermo often integrate local cultural expressions into their religious activities, reflecting a dynamic interplay between tradition and religious practice.

One of the key manifestations of this relationship in Sidosermo is through cultural education and preservation. Pesantren in the area frequently incorporate local cultural practices into their daily routines and curriculum. Events such as Islamic holiday celebrations, public recitations (*pengajian*), and the practice of traditional arts like *hadrah*, *pencak silat* (Indonesian martial arts), and regional dances are regularly held. These activities not only sustain local cultural identity but also reinforce Islamic teachings among the *santri* (Setyawan, 2019; Chairudin, 2022).

Moreover, the pesantren in Sidosermo illustrate the synergy between religion and culture by embracing and teaching local traditions that align with Islamic principles. Practices such as *ziarah kubur* (grave pilgrimage) and *haul* (commemoration of the deceased) are commonly observed and serve to strengthen spiritual consciousness and social cohesion. These culturally embedded practices are viewed not as contradictions but as enrichments to religious life, fostering a holistic spiritual and cultural education (Chairudin, 2022; Kamal, 2020).

In addition to spiritual instruction, pesantren in Sidosermo contribute significantly to character and moral development. Many of the region's traditional values—such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), respect for elders, and community solidarity—are reinforced within the pesantren environment. Through communal living, collaborative learning, and social participation, *santri* are instilled with ethical values that align closely with Islamic moral teachings. This emphasis on both religious and cultural ethics reflects the pesantren's commitment to producing not only knowledgeable Islamic scholars but also socially responsible and culturally grounded individuals (Jayadi et al., 2024; Kusumawati & Nurfuadi, 2024). The integration of these values highlights the unique role of Sidosermo's pesantren in sustaining local identity while promoting Islamic morality in a modernizing society.

### **Structuring of the Existing Sidosermo Islamic Boarding School Area**

The structure of the existing Sidosermo *pesantren* area refers to the current condition, which can be observed through the image provided by



### **Distribution of Pesantren, Mosques, Schools, and Organizational Affiliation in Sidosermo**

Several factors influence the spread of pesantren across Indonesia, including: (a) The role of kiai and ulama: Renowned kiai have established pesantren in various regions, attracting students from all over to study religion; (b) Islamic Da'wah: Pesantren serve not only as educational institutions but also as centers of Islamic preaching, which has expanded their reach to areas previously underserved by formal religious education; (c) Adaptation to local conditions: Pesantren have developed in response to local culture and socio-economic conditions, making them more easily accepted by local communities.

Both modern and traditional pesantren are typically equipped with a range of public facilities that support educational, worship, and daily activities for students. Some of the key facilities found in pesantren include: (a) Kiai House: The residence of the kiai, the central leader and founder of the pesantren; (b) Santri Dormitory: A communal living space for the santri, symbolizing the simplicity of life in the pesantren; (c) Mosque: Every pesantren has a mosque, which serves as the center for worship activities, including congregational prayers and recitations; (d) Classrooms and Study Rooms: Formal classrooms where teaching and learning occur. In modern pesantren, these rooms are often equipped with blackboards, projectors, and computers; (e) Library: An essential facility for the study of Islamic classic texts and religious literature; (f) Kitchen and Canteen: Providing meals to students at affordable costs, while teaching independence in cooking and hygiene; (g) Health Facilities: Larger pesantren may have clinics or small health units to provide basic medical care for students; (h) Sports Facilities: Some modern pesantren offer sports fields and recreational areas to support physical health and balance in students' lives.

The Sidosermo Pesantren area consists of several Islamic boarding schools that are integrated with the surrounding community and supported by other environmental facilities, such as neighborhood roads and mosques, coexisting peacefully. The distribution of these facilities is also linked to Islamic organizations. Sidosermo Islamic boarding school is known as the oldest Islamic boarding school in Surabaya. The distribution of Islamic boarding schools and mosques within the research area is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Facilities and Affiliations of Islamic Organizations in Sidosermo

Facilities	Address	I s l a m i c Organizations
Pesantren At-Tauhid	Jalan Jagir Sidoresmo II	NU
Pesantren Yanabiul Ulum wal Hikam	Jalan Jagir Sidoresmo II	NU
Pesantren Al-Badar	Jalan Jagir Sidoresmo II	NU
Pesantren Al-Hakiki Al-Falahi	Jalan Sidosermo III	NU
Pesantren An-Najiyah	Jalan Sidosermo Dalam Gang II	NU
Ali Akbar Mosque	Jalan Sidosermo Dalam Gang II	NU
Baitul Mahfudz Mosque	Jalan Jagir Sidoresmo VI	NU
Nurul Huda Mosque	Jalan Jagir Sidoresmo III	(Salafi)
At-Taqwa Mosque	Jalan Sidosermo IV	LDII
Madrasah At-Tauhid	Jalan Jagir Sidoresmo II	NU
Madrasah An-Najiyah	Jalan Sidosermo Gang Kuburan	NU
Ndresmo Islamic cemetery	Jalan Sidosermo Gang Kuburan	Public
Settlements	Research area	Public

Source: Field analysis observation, 2024

Table 2 explains that the Sidosermo Pesantren area consists of five boarding schools or Pesantrens and four worship facilities or Mosques. The public education facilities include two madrasahs. The address of each facility indicates its location within the village areas of Sidosermo and Jagir, marked by Jalan Jagir, which identifies it as being in Jagir Village. The majority of Islamic organizations affiliated with these main facilities are Nahdatul Ulama (NU), except for the At-Taqwa Mosque, which is affiliated with the Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute (LDII), and the Nurul Huda Mosque, which is not affiliated with a particular organization but follows the Salafi manhaj. This mapping is intended to facilitate the analysis of the pesantren area using a socio-cultural approach.

### ***Sidosermo Pesantren Mandate in the Context of Environmental Preservation***

Sidosermo Pesantren plays an important role in maintaining and preserving the environment, in line with Islamic values that emphasize the balance of nature and human responsibility as khalifah on earth. Pesantren

plays a vital role in instilling environmental values among students by integrating Islamic ecological principles into their curriculum. This includes the interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to the environment, alongside studies of books that address ethics concerning nature and living things. Furthermore, environmental education programs are organized, such as those focused on recycling and waste management, which help students understand and engage in sustainable practices. Pesantren can also serve as models for implementing environmentally friendly lifestyles. For example, they practice waste management by adopting the 3R system (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), engage in greening and conservation efforts through tree planting and maintaining the surrounding ecosystem, and utilize renewable energy sources like solar power or biogas derived from organic waste.

In addition to these actions, pesantren play an essential role in social movements and environmental da'wah. They mobilize the community to become more environmentally conscious through various initiatives, such as organizing cleaning and mutual cooperation movements in and around the pesantren and local village areas. Ecological da'wah, or lectures and studies that emphasize the importance of protecting the environment as part of worship, further encourage this awareness. Pesantren also empower the community by offering training in areas such as organic farming or the conservation of natural resources. Moreover, pesantren can adopt sustainable resource management practices, such as ecology-based agriculture and animal husbandry, including agroforestry or hydroponic systems. Additionally, they implement water conservation methods, utilizing water-saving irrigation systems and rainwater harvesting technology to ensure efficient resource use.

### ***Relationship between pesantren, mosques, cemetery, and Islamic organizations in Sidosermo***

The relationship between pesantren, mosques, cemeteries, and Islamic community organizations—particularly Nahdlatul Ulama—is often very close, as mosques serve as centers of worship and social activity for Muslims, while Islamic organizations provide a platform for organizing da'wah, education, and various social initiatives (Rahmatullah, 2022). These four elements play a significant role in preserving local wisdom and traditions, such as *tahlilan*, *yasinan*, *haul*, *manaqib*, *hadrah* arts, *shalawatan*, *barzanji*, *maulid*, *nisfu Sya'ban*, *tirakat*, and *riyadhah*.

Mosques serve as vital centers for the activities of Islamic mass

organizations (Sholikatin, 2024). Organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII), and others often use mosques not only as places of worship but also as hubs for da'wah, education, and community engagement. These organizations routinely hold religious recitations (pengajian), including lectures, book studies, and discussions in mosques. Furthermore, mosques facilitate non-formal education through programs such as the Qur'anic Education Park (TPA) or madrasah diniyah, which are frequently managed by these organizations. In addition to spiritual functions, mosques serve as venues for distributing social assistance and organizing zakat, infaq, and sadaqah initiatives.

Islamic organizations also use mosques as platforms to propagate their particular religious teachings and methodologies. For instance, mosques affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) commonly promote the Aswaja (Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah) tradition, which emphasizes practices like tahlilan, shalawatan, and grave pilgrimage. In contrast, Muhammadiyah-affiliated mosques typically adopt a reformist approach that seeks to purify Islamic practice, emphasizing strict adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah while avoiding rituals not explicitly supported by these texts.

Ownership and management of mosques often fall under the jurisdiction of Islamic organizations, which incorporate these religious centers into their administrative structures. For example, Muhammadiyah mosques are known for their well-organized management systems, covering aspects such as da'wah programs, educational initiatives, and financial governance. Similarly, mosques associated with NU follow management practices aligned with the organization's traditional values and communal priorities.

The governance of mosques is frequently shaped by the doctrinal orientation of the managing organization. For example, Muhammadiyah mosques typically omit qunut during prayers and avoid celebrating events like the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, whereas NU mosques embrace such commemorations as important expressions of religious devotion and tradition. These differing practices highlight the rich diversity within Indonesian Islamic expression and the influential role of mass organizations in shaping religious life at the community level.

Beyond religious activities, mosques also function as centers for social and community services. Islamic organizations often conduct health outreach activities in mosques, including mass circumcisions, blood donation drives, and health education sessions. During significant times such as Ramadan or

Eid al-Fitr, mosques often act as key distribution points for social aid organized by these groups.

To ensure the mosque fulfills its role as a spiritual and communal center effectively, coordination between mosque administrators and Islamic organizations is essential. Harmonious collaboration allows for a balanced integration of religious, educational, and social functions. Conversely, misalignment in values or leadership between mosque authorities and organizational representatives can sometimes lead to conflict, especially when differing views on religious practices arise.

### ***Future challenges to integrate traditional pesantren with modernity in Sidosermo***

Future challenges in the development of integrated traditional and modern pesantren revolve around maintaining a balance between preserving Islamic traditions and embracing modernization. Key issues include harmonizing religious and general education curricula, adapting to digital technology without eroding traditional values, and ensuring that teaching staff are equipped with modern pedagogical and technological skills. Economic sustainability through santri-based entrepreneurship, navigating differing community perspectives on modernization, and aligning with government regulations while maintaining pesantren identity are also critical. Pesantren that can effectively address these challenges will be more resilient and relevant in the era of globalization.

The integration of traditional and modern development patterns presents several nuanced challenges that reflect both local dynamics and broader educational shifts. Balancing the classical Islamic curriculum (*kitab kuning*) with contemporary subjects such as science and technology remains essential to maintaining religious authenticity while preparing santri for modern realities. As Sidosermo lies in a densely populated and strategic urban area of Surabaya, the digitalisation of learning processes is both a necessity and a challenge, particularly in ensuring that the use of technology does not dilute traditional values. Moreover, the readiness of kiai and ustaz in Sidosermo to adopt modern teaching strategies is crucial for effective knowledge transmission. Economic independence is also a pressing concern; with strong community ties, Sidosermo pesantren has the potential to foster santri-based entrepreneurship to support its sustainability. Additionally, the pesantren must navigate varying community responses, especially between groups that favor traditional approaches and those advocating for modernization. Aligning

with national education policies while preserving the unique character of Sidosermo pesantren further underscores the need for adaptive and thoughtful governance. Successfully managing these challenges will position Sidosermo pesantren as a model for harmonizing Islamic tradition with contemporary demands in a rapidly changing urban environment.

In the context of Sidosermo pesantren, the integration of tradition and modernity faces both internal and external challenges that shape its educational and institutional development. Internally, some resistance persists among traditionalists who fear that modernization may erode the pesantren's core religious identity. Additionally, there is a shortage of educators and administrators who are equipped to bridge traditional Islamic teachings with modern pedagogical and technological methods. Curriculum adjustments also pose a challenge, as integrating general subjects and contemporary approaches must be done without compromising the pesantren's distinctive religious character. Furthermore, limited infrastructure in some Sidosermo pesantren makes it difficult to support digital and technology-based learning, hindering innovation.

Externally, Sidosermo pesantren must navigate a society divided between proponents of modernization and those committed to preserving pure tradition. The pressures of globalization also demand that pesantren adapt by incorporating technological tools and fostering innovation to remain competitive and relevant. Government regulations can present additional difficulties, as national policies may not always accommodate the unique needs of tradition-based educational institutions. Moreover, the growing influence of foreign cultures poses a risk of diluting local religious and cultural values. To address these challenges, Sidosermo pesantren must adopt a flexible, strategic approach—embracing innovation while preserving its Islamic identity—so that it continues to thrive as a vital religious and educational institution in Surabaya.

### **Adaptation strategies for sustainable pesantren development in Sidosermo**

Adaptation strategies for sustainable pesantren development involve several key approaches. First, curriculum integration is essential—combining traditional religious education (*kitab kuning*) with general science, technology, and entrepreneurship ensures a balanced and relevant learning experience. The digitalisation of learning is also vital, utilizing tools such as e-learning platforms, social media, and educational applications to enhance teaching

and accessibility.

Improving human resources is another priority, including training kiai, ustaz, and santri in modern teaching techniques and professional skills. Economic independence can be pursued through pesantren-run businesses, such as agribusiness, cooperatives, and santri-based MSMEs. Collaboration with external stakeholders—governments, universities, and industries—further strengthens the pesantren's competitiveness. Meanwhile, infrastructure modernisation must support better educational facilities while preserving the pesantren's traditional character. Most importantly, all innovations should be rooted in strong Islamic values and character building, ensuring that pesantren development remains sustainable and authentic.

### **Policy and Practical Recommendations for Pesantren Development in Sidosermo**

Policy recommendations for the sustainable development of pesantren emphasize the need for supportive and adaptive governance. Governments should provide flexible regulatory frameworks that allow pesantren to innovate without compromising their traditional identity. Financial support is essential for upgrading infrastructure, including the development of digital facilities and laboratories. Additionally, teacher training and curriculum certification programs should be implemented to equip educators with the skills needed for integrative teaching. Policies should also promote partnerships between pesantren and the private sector to enhance entrepreneurship and vocational training opportunities for students.

On the practical side, pesantren should develop hybrid curricula that integrate religious studies with science, technology, and digital literacy to prepare students for contemporary challenges. The adoption of technology—such as e-learning platforms, digital libraries, and customized applications—can enhance educational delivery. Economic independence can be pursued by establishing business units like agricultural enterprises, cooperatives, and creative industries run by santri. Furthermore, strengthening alumni networks can contribute significantly to pesantren development and open career pathways for graduates. With the right blend of policy and practical action, pesantren can evolve into adaptive, modern, and competitive educational institutions while maintaining their core Islamic values.

## **Conclusion**

This research found that the Sidosermo Islamic Boarding School is one of the oldest traditional pesantren in Surabaya, maintaining its classical learning system and daily activities. One of its key traditions is the periodic pilgrimage to the Ndresmo Tomb to honor Sayyid Ali Ashghor, the son of Sayyid Ali Akbar—whose name is memorialized in the Great Mosque of Ali Akbar. Sayyid Ali Ashghor is recognized as the pioneer of the Sidosermo area and the forerunner of its kyai (religious leaders). Over time, while remaining focused on religious instruction, the Sidosermo pesantren has begun to adapt to the developments in the general education curriculum. As a result, its administrators have established schools or madrasahs that retain traditional values while incorporating modern educational elements. Students at these institutions not only gain a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and local traditions but also receive knowledge in contemporary scientific fields.

This study, however, has a limitation in that it involved only one informant—KH. Muhammad Nur, the senior caretaker of the Al-Badar Islamic Boarding School—chosen because of the institution's historical significance in Sidosermo. Theoretically, this research contributes to academic discourse and offers insights for educators and scholars, while also laying a foundation for future studies. Practically, it aims to build public confidence in the value of pesantren, showing that even in a densely populated and complex urban environment like Sidosermo, pesantren still embody and promote the principles of multicultural religious moderation.

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