NAVIGATING TRADITION AND INNOVATION: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EAST JAVA'S ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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Abstract: This research explores the transformative journey of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, the oldest Islamic educational institutions, emphasizing their crucial role in intellectual, spiritual, and character development. The study underscores the need for a comprehensive transformation of Kyai (Islamic leaders) to modernize educational institutions while preserving traditional Islamic teachings. The research classifies Islamic boarding schools into three types: traditional, modern, and a combination. Each type follows a distinct organizational development model. Traditional schools focus on defending heritage values, intervening when necessary, taking natural actions, and incorporating uncontroversial changes. Modern schools adopt a process involving diagnosis, revitalization, envisioning, identification, and stabilization. Combined model schools integrate heritage preservation, diagnosis, intervention, balance, and stabilization. The methodology employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, utilizing interviews and triangulation for data validation. The findings highlight the leadership roles specific to each type. Traditional schools maintain a natural progression rooted in tradition, while modern schools and combined model schools follow distinct stages in organizational development to adapt to changing educational landscapes. This research contributes valuable insights to the ongoing dialogue on harmonizing traditional Islamic values with modern educational needs in the context of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools serve as educational institutions with the aim of educating and fortifying students' morality while preserving the ancient values of the Islamic religion (Siswanto, 2015). These organizations exhibit unique management characteristics, offering various options for the community based on their styles and characteristics, allowing individuals to make choices aligned with their needs and desired competencies (Yasid, 2017).

In their Development, Islamic boarding schools embody several models with distinct characteristics. Some schools undergo transformation and collaboration with the classical education system, incorporating governance and contemporary methods to create a combination boarding school. Islamic boarding schools committed to incorporating modern systems while retaining traditional elements are particularly
noteworthy. However, others remain steadfast, maintaining traditional educational values, exemplified by the yellow book of traditional Islamic boarding schools (Suharto, 2018).

Islamic boarding schools do not remain stagnant in traditional patterns; they innovate in their development. Educational modernization in Indonesia, often characterized as development, follows a complex multidimensional process, with institutions still reflecting the Dutch colonial system rather than traditional Islamic education (Baharun & Dini, 2019). Leadership theories introduce various typologies, including autocratic, paternalistic, transformational, and transactional leadership types (Siagian, 2021).

Transformational leadership, characterized by the leader's ability to change the work environment, motivation, patterns, and values for optimal performance and goal achievement, is instrumental. This leadership style can transform followers' expectations, fostering an institutional culture that surpasses anticipated performance (Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2018). McKinley (2015) identifies four characteristics of transformational leaders: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individual concern, and inspirational motivation.

Kyai, as a leader, plays a pivotal role in initiating changes and developing modern Islamic boarding schools. Providing vision and direction, the leader aims to transform the mentality of inhabitants and establish a modern educational institution, even when faced with scepticisms. Many Islamic boarding schools, including Al-Rifa’ie-2 Gondanglegi Islamic boarding school Malang, have adapted their leadership and management systems. However, traditional Islamic boarding schools, such as Raudlatul Mukhsinin Al-Maqbul Islamic boarding school in Malang, continue to thrive while adhering to traditional concepts.

The evolution of Islamic boarding school management underscores the necessity for adaptation to changing community education needs. Kyai's role as a leader is crucial in driving change and preserving the institutional character of the education system within Islamic boarding schools. Despite the limited studies on their ability to make changes and develop education management, existing research, such as Pramitha (2020) and Yakin (2014), reveals various approaches and models adopted by Islamic boarding schools to maintain their existence and develop organizational systems. These models encompass a multi-management system, combining official and special curricula and adopting open and modern management practices in student affairs, infrastructure, and financial resources.

Leaders of boarding schools with a traditional outlook prioritize traditional communication patterns in shaping social relations among students. It is evident that the Kyai, serving as the leader of the Islamic boarding school, plays a pivotal role in determining the organization's success or failure. Despite limited research on traditional
and modern Islamic boarding schools, there is a need for more comprehensive exploration. Our study aims to address this gap by focusing on the distinctions between traditional and modern Islamic education management within boarding schools. Currently, Islamic boarding schools employ three educational management concepts: the conventional model, the modern approach, and a combined model. To delve deeper, our research poses two key questions (RQ): RQ1 examines the leadership concept in traditional Islamic boarding schools, modern schools, and those combining both, while the second question explores differences in the patterns of traditional, modern, and combined organizational Development in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in the context of advancing Islamic education.

Method

Research Methods and Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design, aligning with Moleong's (2017) assertion that qualitative research aims to comprehend phenomena holistically by describing them in a natural context through words and language. Additionally, Creswell & Poth (2016) define a case study as an examination of events based on time and limited activity.

Research Sample

The research is conducted in three distinct places: Raudlatul Mukhsinin Al-Maqbul Malang, representing a traditional Islamic boarding school (salafiah) with an enduring old concept of leadership management; Al-Rifa’ie-2 Gondanglegi Malang, embodying a modern boarding school model (khalafiyah); and Islamic boarding school Syaichona Moch Khalil Bangkalan, serving as a combination boarding school amalgamating traditional and modern leadership concepts in developing Islamic education organizations.

Procedure and Data Analysis

Data collection involves observation, interviews, and documentation. A systematic process is employed for data analysis, determining interrelationships within collected data to generate a classification or typology (Miles et al., 2014).

Several stages of data collection procedures include qualitative data gathering through semi-structured interviews and documentation. A script is developed to address research objectives regarding leadership concepts and organizational development patterns. Interviews with Islamic boarding school leaders are conducted, recorded, and transcribed for analysis. Triangulated evaluators ensure validity, and a low interference level in descriptive category analysis enhances reliability. The study involves two data collectors for balanced analysis.

The second stage encompasses selecting and processing data obtained during the
research process. This involves transcription, coding, and interpretation to fit desired categorizations, utilizing thematic analysis focusing on clerical leadership collaboration with teachers, parents, and society.

The third stage involves presenting data through brief descriptions, charts, and relationships between categories. This systematic approach, encompassing classification, interpretation, verification, and conclusion drawing, adheres to the qualitative approach and aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings. Initial conclusions are provisional and subject to change based on firm evidence in subsequent stages of data collection and analysis.

![Interactive Model Data Analysis](source: Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014))

## Result

In our investigation of traditional leadership at Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul Islamic Boarding School in Malang, modern leadership at Al Rifa'e-2 Malang, and combined leadership at Syaichona Moh Khalil Islamic Boarding School Bangkalan, several key findings emerged. Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul operates as a non-profit Islamic educational foundation grounded in traditional leadership practices, particularly the Uswatun Hashanah model. As articulated by one interviewed teacher, the school prioritizes instilling religious knowledge, spreading Islam, and building morality among students, embodying traditional leadership through the exemplary teaching method.

The *Uswatun Hashanah* leadership model, characterized by charisma and exemplariness, is integral to Kyai’s role as a patron. Kyai’s influence, both in words and actions, serves as a guiding force for students, instilling Islamic values and shaping moral conduct. This leadership style is effective in giving orders, with students obediently carrying them out without questioning their complexity. The senior teacher highlighted the emphasis on instilling Islamic values and fostering good behaviour through direct examples in moral lessons.

The management of Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul places significant importance on charismatic leadership, where Kyai’s charisma plays a pivotal role in achieving
educational goals. Collaboration with stakeholders is emphasized to strengthen organizational management across various fields, such as agriculture, plantations, trade, and carpentry. This holistic approach aims to make students independent and resilient in facing the challenges of the complex outside world, aligning with the broader goal of instilling religious values and soft skills essential for their future.

The positive objectives, processes, and orientations of Islamic boarding school management underscore its commitment to developing students' Islamic education personality and elementary abilities. The educational approach prioritizes the human element, emphasizing the educative nature of the process and focusing on religious teaching orientation. Interviews with the head of the cottage learning curriculum reveal a dedication to cultivating faith and imparting Quranic values, particularly in teaching fiqh to students. Overall, these findings highlight the multifaceted and integrated nature of Islamic boarding school management, with a strong emphasis on traditional leadership, religious teachings, and holistic development.

In responding to change, our approach at Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul Islamic Boarding School aligns with the Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU) concept, using it as a foundation for decision-making while preserving enduring values. This commitment is rooted in the guiding principles of the Quran, particularly emphasizing the importance of honest behavior in leadership. The school management consistently reinforces the traditional education system, employing the yellow book for studying science, Islamic law, and monotheism.

The research findings illuminate the educational management concept at Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul Islamic Boarding School, emphasizing the preservation of heritage values while adapting to the evolving educational curriculum. Leadership intervention plays a crucial role in aligning teacher and community perspectives with the traditional teaching model, fostering a shared commitment to maintaining these values.

Following the interaction between leaders, teachers, and the community, a policy is established as a comprehensive work program. Subsequently, all levels of the Islamic boarding school are required to adhere to and implement this program as a natural action, reflecting the educational culture based on updated traditional values and learning models. The organizational development model employed by Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul, Islamic Boarding School, encompasses five processes: first, the preservation of heritage values; second, leadership intervention to address internal changes involving community members, senior students, and alumni; third, natural action through heartfelt activities and routines garnering support; fourth, making changes that align with caregiver values; and fifth, freezing or patenting concepts and programs that have been successfully implemented. In summary, the organizational development model of Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul Islamic Boarding School is illustrated in the following figure:
In the context of the modern boarding school model, exemplified by Al-Rifa’i-2, organizational development is tailored to the needs of a contemporary learning curriculum. Al-Rifa’i-2 adopts a charismatic leadership approach under the guidance of Kyai, emphasizing a team-building strategy to mobilize the entire institutional community, including teachers and students. This leadership style strives to balance interactions between the Kyai and the boarding school community, fostering physical, mindset, and spirit interactions for holistic Organizational Development.

The modernization efforts at Al-Rifa’i-2 are evident in the implementation of a new managerial system, ensuring that organizational processes meet the standards of an effectively organized institution. This involves defining the vision, mission, and goals of the Islamic boarding school, creating an organizational structure, conducting a systematic recruitment process for human resources, and allocating tasks based on expertise. The procedural, systematic, and administrative execution of each step is a key focus throughout these processes.

Kyai actively engages with both internal and external communities under the principles of modern leadership. This interaction aligns with theories such as contingency theory by Fiedler and the expectancy-reinforcement theory by Stogdill (Bass & Bass, 2009), emphasizing that frequent interactions and joint activities foster mutual understanding and unity within the group. Interviews with teachers and parents underscore the importance of involvement in various learning management interactions.

Gus Ahmad, the leader of Al-Rifa’i-2, is praised for his brilliance, transformative leadership, and innovative approach. Despite formulating a vision aligned with the times, he encourages creativity among personnel, allowing every individual to actualize ideas that contribute to the noble goals of the Islamic boarding school.

Physical interactions at the structural level involve leaders, teachers, and students, fostering a humble attitude towards Kyai and emphasizing obedience to their instructions. This compliance is driven by the hope for blessings in the knowledge imparted within the Islamic boarding school. Mindset interactions enhance the spirit of
high obedience and loyalty from subordinates to Kyai, aligning with traditional leadership styles.

The development of modern organizational management at Al-Rifa’ie-2 integrates Islamic education, employing a five-step process: diagnosis, revitalization, creating a new vision, intervention, and establishment of policies. The diagnosis involves self-evaluation to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Revitalization recognizes necessary changes, and a new vision is created accordingly. Intervention engages internal and external consultants. The final stages involve the implementation of development steps and the establishment of Islamic boarding school policies, referred to as "freezing" and "locking." The organizational development process of the modern boarding school, as exemplified by Al-Rifa’ie-2, is summarized in the presented figure, encapsulating the inner stage as the culmination of the institutional development process.

![Organization Development Model of Modern Boarding School of Al-Rifa’ie-2](image)

The organizational development process at Syaichona Moh Khalil, Islamic Boarding School, represents a unique model that combines traditional and modern organizational changes. This mixed model involves blending two distinct systems, incorporating both traditional Islamic education management and modern concepts to meet the evolving needs of education. The interviews conducted shed light on the dynamic nature of the organizational processes at Syaichona Moh Khalil Islamic Boarding School, with changes occurring based on the leadership and caregivers of each era.

During the early phase under Mbah Kholil’s guidance, the organizational management model aimed at revitalizing the vision, mission, and goals of the Islamic boarding school while preserving the relevance of traditional Islamic education management. Changes were implemented in various learning concepts, aligning with the demands of the contemporary world of work.

Leadership in building Islamic education management actively involves teachers and the community, emphasizing the cultivation of Islamic heritage values that contribute to today's civilization progress. The developmental stage involves evaluating...
the current curriculum and conducting a diagnosis to identify organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The subsequent intervention stage actively invites input from all structural levels, fostering positive contributions to the progress of Islamic education.

Combination and balancing activities follow, strengthening the developed concept of Islamic education through collaboration with stakeholders in various educational fields. The leader, often the Kyai, instils religious values and imparts general education, technology skills, communication, and entrepreneurial skills. Beyond imparting general knowledge, Islamic boarding schools emphasize life skills, including strengthening religious values, general education, technology, communication, and entrepreneurship.

Leadership at the structural level formulates policies and strategic plans for organizational development, respecting the decisions of charismatic leaders and establishing democratic processes. The policy formation process is a crucial step in preparing strategic plans, and the resulting guidebook, known as "freezing," standardizes policies and strategic plans for future development.

The comprehensive development stages include intellectual and spiritual heritage, diagnosing and perfecting these inherited values, intervention involving historical actors to choose suitable actions, combining and balancing old and new values with contemporary needs, and finally, freezing to preserve old values as a guiding force while incorporating new values that align with current requirements. The illustrated model encapsulates the distinctive Development of Syaichona Moh Khalil Islamic Boarding School.

![Organizational Development Model of Islamic Boarding School of Syaichona Moh. Khalil](image)

**Discussion**

**The Role of Leadership in the Organizational Development of Islamic Boarding Schools**

Organizational development is a comprehensive system that applies and transfers knowledge from behavioural science to strategically plan the development,
enhancement, and fortification of an organization's strategies, structures, and processes, ultimately leading to organizational effectiveness (Laschinger et al., 2014). This definition underscores the primary goal of organizational development, which is to achieve organizational effectiveness. The significance of organizational development lies in its capacity to guide organizations toward increased effectiveness and performance aligned with their goals. Change, in this context, is a mechanism for improving the organization's ability to adapt to environmental shifts and changes in the behavior of its members (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

Management changes encompassing the entire system, structure, culture, group dynamics, and human resource quality are integral efforts by leadership to propel the Islamic boarding school forward. The aim is to create an advanced and competitive educational institution that offers not only religious education but also imparts general knowledge and life skills essential for students. The leadership qualities of Kyai and teachers, encompassing both religious and general knowledge, are crucial for the advancement of the educational institution. Leaders of Islamic boarding schools must possess visionary ideas to enhance their teaching capabilities and ensure the holistic development of their students.

The development of leaders' creative ideas is instrumental in shaping the future concept of Islamic boarding school education. This development is geared towards realizing a commitment to consistent religious learning while adhering to Islamic heritage values. Key aspects include instilling the knowledge of monotheism, mastering the Qur'an, strengthening memorization of the Qur'an, and understanding contemporary jurisprudence—elements crucial for meeting the needs of today's society. Furthermore, leaders and teachers collaboratively implement the concept of teaching by good leadership example, serving as role models for students in behaviour and character.

The leadership of Islamic boarding schools must balance the preservation of Islamic religious heritage values with a commitment to continuous evaluation and the pursuit of necessary changes. When contemplating the transformation of educational management within the organization, leaders should adhere to established strategic plans and concepts. The development of educational management involves various interventions both within the organization's internal environment and externally, engaging with the community as a vital component.

The organizational management strategies employed by the three Islamic boarding schools under study revealed a commitment to leadership by example. These institutions embraced the development of charismatic leadership based on the principle of setting an exemplary model for leaders to their subordinates, teachers to students, and students to the community. Additionally, the implementation of reward systems for outstanding members, including high-achieving students, was identified as a key strategy contributing to effective organizational management and performance.
While Kyai emerged as the primary charismatic leader in all three observed boarding schools, this did not translate into a singular authoritarian leadership style toward subordinates. The leadership approach in Islamic boarding schools remained rooted in democratic principles, emphasizing deliberation. This democratic concept facilitated the delegation of tasks and authority to all members, stimulating subordinates to freely develop their potential in alignment with the vision and mission of the Islamic boarding school.

The advancing Islamic boarding schools all prioritized Team Building as an essential organizational strengthening activity. This formal process aimed to enhance the performance and function of work teams involved in development. Differentiating between a group and a team, the schools focused on clarifying roles and fostering a collaborative environment to achieve higher performance collectively.

Leadership and management in Islamic boarding schools engaged in various forms of interaction to build effective teams within their organizations. This included interactions with students, where Kyai and teachers assumed roles not only as educators but also as father figures and role models. Physical and educative-democratic interactions occurred consistently, creating emotional bonds between leaders, teachers, and students.

Furthermore, interactions extended beyond the internal community of the Islamic boarding schools to involve the broader external community, emphasizing the importance of spiritual activities and religious events. This interaction with user communities played a crucial role in bringing about social change and influencing the broader society.

The leadership mindset in Islamic boarding schools underwent a change towards innovative behavior to advance the institutions at the management level. Innovative behavior, encompassing the introduction and application of new and beneficial ideas, was recognized as a factor influencing performance. This approach required commitment, involvement, and leadership engagement to support creative thinking processes and ensure the effective implementation of ideas within the work context.

In conclusion, leadership in Islamic boarding schools is characterized by a charismatic democratic foundation, providing ample opportunities for subordinates to contribute to institutional development. The application of an innovative behavioral approach fosters a cohesive internal community united under a shared vision and mission. Additionally, the formulation of regulations and policies involves the active participation of several subordinates, promoting a collaborative and inclusive organizational management approach.

Differences in the Organizational Development Model of Islamic Boarding Schools

Differences in the Organizational Development Model of Salafiyyah, Modern and Combination Islamic Boarding Schools represented through the Raudlotul Muhsinin Al
Maqbul Islamic Boarding School Malang, Al Rifa’ie-2 Modern Islamic Boarding School Malang, and Syaichona Moh Khalil:

Table 1. Differences in the Organizational Development Model of the Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School, Modern and Combination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raudlotul Muhsinin Al Maqbul Islamic Boarding School (Traditional)</th>
<th>Pondok Modern Al Rifa’ie 2 (Modern)</th>
<th>Syaichona Moh. Kholil (Combination)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Making the <em>muassis</em> (founder) message the basis for policy making</td>
<td>1. Carry out the diagnostic process</td>
<td>1. Maintaining intellectual and spiritual heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Involving the community and alumni in the intervention process</td>
<td>2. Revitalization, namely introducing the changes that will be made</td>
<td>2. Diagnosing existing needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Choose to make changes that are natural, but still there is feedback</td>
<td>3. Create a new mission</td>
<td>3. Deciding on an action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The changes made must not contradict the <em>muassis’</em> messages</td>
<td>4. Intervention Process (internal and External)</td>
<td>4. Intervention Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Freezing</td>
<td>5. Then, combine and balance old and new values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Freezing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presented table illustrates that the three leadership models employed by Islamic boarding schools in managing organizational change share notable similarities. Commonalities include the emphasis on preserving heritage values, particularly those foundational to monotheism in Islamic education. The intervention process involves active participation from various stakeholders, ranging from leadership and teachers to parents, students, and the broader community as beneficiaries. Although the three leadership concepts differ in their approach to developing organizational management for Islamic boarding schools, the core distinction lies in the preservation of heritage values, encompassing monotheism, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and exemplary education.

In the context of the modern boarding school, educational enhancements are implemented by reinforcing Islamic knowledge, aligning with contemporary needs, and incorporating general knowledge. Notably, this change occurs organically through adaptation. On the other hand, the concept of modern organizational change involves a revitalization process, introducing change through a collectively built vision and mission with a more open and adaptive approach.

Organizational management changes in Islamic boarding schools that integrate both traditional and modern concepts manifest as a more intricate process. This involves the preservation of heritage values, focusing on monotheism, jurisprudence, and morality in learning. The evolution of these changes begins with a diagnosis of the community’s needs in Islamic education, followed by a comprehensive evaluation. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are assessed to plan a conceptual
strategy for managing development. All internal and external stakeholders actively contribute to this process. Subsequently, a harmonious combination and balance between the enduring old values and the imperative new values are achieved, culminating in the creation of a standardized guidebook (freezing).

**Conclusion**

Based on the elucidation provided, we can draw conclusions regarding the organizational development models of the Raudlotul Muhsinin Islamic Boarding School, Pondok Modern Al Rifa’ie-2, and the Syaichona Moh Khalil Islamic Boarding School. Each institution employs distinct stages in its development process.

Raudlotul Muhsinin Islamic Boarding School adheres to a model that involves defending heritage values, intervention, natural action, incorporating uncontradicted changes, and freezing. Pondok Modern Al Rifa’ie-2's development model encompasses stages such as diagnosis, action determination, intervention, and freezing. In the case of the Syaichona Moh Khalil Islamic Boarding School, the educational development model centre’s on imparting heritage values within the management of changes in its Islamic educational organization.

The disparities among the three types of Islamic boarding schools—traditional, modern, and those employing a combined approach—reside in their approaches to addressing evolving community needs. Traditional Islamic boarding schools maintain a natural progression while upholding conventional values. Modern Islamic boarding schools, in contrast, exhibit a more open-minded and innovative stance toward change. Islamic boarding schools employ a combined management strategy, incorporating both traditional and modern elements, to prioritize the preservation of old values while remaining receptive to new, relevant values that do not conflict with established principles.

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