

Managing Change in Islamic Boarding Schools: Curriculum, Institutional Forms, and Business Strategies for Long-term Sustainability

Zaini Hafidh¹, Nurdin², Suryadi³

*zainihafidh.13@upi.edu, nurdin_adpend@upi.edu, suryadi@upi.edu

Educational Administration Study Program, Faculty of Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia¹²³

Abstract. Globalization poses significant challenges to the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, necessitating comprehensive change-management strategies. This qualitative case study explores how curriculum development, institutional restructuring, and entrepreneurial initiatives converge to enhance an Islamic boarding school's adaptability and long-term viability. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with the Kiai, teachers, students, and parents, complemented by participatory observation and document analysis. Findings reveal that formalizing management under a waqf foundation strengthens governance and deepens community engagement, while integrating religious and national curricula establishes a unified framework for holistic student development. Additionally, self-sustaining business ventures in agriculture, fisheries, and waste management have secured financial autonomy, facilitating targeted investments in educational quality and local empowerment. These insights yield a practical model for Islamic boarding schools aiming to balance traditional values with modern educational and economic imperatives.

Keywords: change management; curriculum integration; institutional sustainability; Islamic boarding school.

1 Introduction

Change management is critical in organization [1–3], ensuring a smooth and efficient transition when implementing changes [4,5]. It helps reduce employee resistance, increase engagement and well-being [6]. Through effective change management, organizations can plan and manage the risks associated with such changes [7,8]. It also increases the organization's adaptability to an ever-changing environment and allows it to remain competitive [9,10]. Additionally, change management fosters a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, essential for long-term growth and success.

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia [11,12]. The consistency of Islamic boarding schools as indigenous institutions has been tested over time; as proven from the beginning of the Islamic boarding school's establishment until today, its existence has remained and is an important part of Islamic educational institutions. The flexibility of Islamic boarding schools in accommodating changes and developments over time,

as well as educational trends, has made Islamic boarding schools survive to this day [13,14]; this is what differentiates Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia from typical educational institutions in other countries.

Change management in Islamic boarding schools is critical because Islamic boarding schools function as centers of religious and social education [2,15]. With effective change management, Islamic boarding schools can adapt to developments with the times, technology, and community needs [16,17]. That allows Islamic boarding schools to remain relevant and effective in spreading religious values and developing students' potential holistically. In addition, change management helps Islamic boarding schools improve the quality of teaching, infrastructure, and governance, thereby providing a sustainable positive impact on the Islamic boarding school community and broader society [18]

Islamic boarding schools changes cover various aspects, from teaching methodology and curriculum to administrative management [19–21]. That could include using technology in religious learning, increasing the accessibility of facilities, modernizing infrastructure, and opening new programs to adapt to the needs of students and the demands of the times. Changes may also occur in the leadership structure, organizational policies [22], and culture of Islamic boarding schools to promote inclusivity, openness, and progress [23]. Islamic boarding schools can also transform their da'wah approach, fundraising strategies, and partnerships with other institutions to increase their social and educational impact.

Research trends on change management in educational institutions include: 1) technology for curriculum innovation and distance learning [24]; 2) Research effective leadership strategies for managing change [15]; 3) Analysis of the influence of organizational culture on adaptation to change [25]; 4) Increased understanding of the psychological and social factors that influence the acceptance of change by stakeholders [26]; 5) Research on conflict management and resolution in the context of educational change [27]; 6) Focus on education policy and the role of institutions in supporting positive transformation in educational institutions [28]; 7) Development of the form and style of educational institutions in response to changes and community needs [29].

There is a lack of research that holistically investigates how Islamic boarding schools integrate curriculum changes with their institutional forms to achieve sustainability. Existing research often focuses on curriculum or institutional aspects separately without considering the complex interactions between the two. Additionally, little research has explored how traditional religious values can be maintained while introducing educational innovations. A more in-depth study of effective change management strategies for integrating curriculum changes with Islamic boarding school institutional structures is needed, as is a better understanding of how Islamic boarding schools can maintain their identity while adopting more modern educational practices. This kind of research will provide valuable insight to ensure the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in an era that continues to develop.

The single challenge of Islamic boarding schools in the modern era is the friction of globalization, or what could be called the complex challenges of modernization. In facing the challenges of the times, Islamic boarding schools must also always uphold the principles of reform, namely: wisdom according to Islamic teachings, guided freedom, the ability to self-regulate, a high sense of togetherness, respecting parents and teachers, love of knowledge, independence, and simplicity.

Research on change management in Islamic boarding schools has gained attention as these institutions balance traditional and modern educational demands. Key trends in this field include integrating contemporary educational practices with Islamic teachings, such as adopting technology and new teaching methods [30]. Studies also focus on institutional adaptation, particularly the shift to more formalized structures like waqf foundations to ensure sustainability [31]. Leadership plays a central role in driving change, with Kiai's leadership being crucial in maintaining community trust while modernizing practices [32]. Additionally, research highlights the importance of business strategies for economic sustainability, including developing micro-enterprises and agricultural projects [33]. However, challenges like resistance to change, limited resources, and the need for cultural sensitivity persist [34], requiring careful management to align reforms with community needs.

In the era of globalization, Islamic boarding schools must be flexible without losing their main characteristics, namely their abilities in the field of religious sciences. Several critical points need to be observed in the growth and development of Islamic boarding schools because, directly or indirectly, they will affect the growth and development of the boarding school itself.

2 Method

As a systematic approach to exploring Managing Change in Islamic Boarding Schools: Curriculum, Institutional Forms, and Business Strategies for Long-term Sustainability, the researcher will adopt a qualitative research design. A case study approach will be employed naturally without manipulation or numerical measurements. Instead, the focus will be on interpreting the data based on what is discovered through direct engagement with the subjects. The data collected will be descriptive and verbal, seeking to understand the emic perspectives, or insider views, of the participants. This research will involve in-depth interviews with key informants, including the Kiai (head of the Islamic Boarding School), teachers, students, and parents. The aim is to understand their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding curriculum changes and institutional forms and identify and explore potential businesses developed to support the economic independence of the Islamic boarding school.

Additionally, focus group discussions will be conducted to facilitate collective insights and exchanges among participants. The informants will be selected to ensure diverse perspectives within the Islamic boarding school community. Data analysis will involve thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, themes, and nuances in participants' narratives. Trustworthiness will be ensured through member checking and triangulation with existing literature [35]. Findings will offer rich insights into the complexities of change management in Islamic boarding schools, informing strategies for effectively managing curriculum adjustments and institutional adaptations to advance Islamic education.

3 Result

As leaders of Islamic boarding schools, Kiai must be able to bring the organization they lead to continuous movement and progress to continue responding to the challenges of the times. General changes that usually accompany Islamic boarding schools include changes in the form

of Islamic boarding schools from Salafiyyah to Khalafiyyah, from individual kiai leadership to collective leadership, and from contemporary learning to method-based learning.

Asep Saefulmillah, the leader of the Islamic boarding school, certainly wants progress in his institution; he must continue to maintain his and the Islamic boarding school's grand vision, and one of how his vision continues to be maintained is that Kiai must be able to manage changes in the Islamic boarding school environment. The change process he carried out started with socialization, providing the organization with the changes to be made and preparing the people involved in the changes. He then started to implement these changes by continuing to monitor them.

1.1 Changes in institutional status

Institutional status is significant for the development of Islamic boarding schools because it provides legitimacy, access to resources, legal protection, and the development of professionalism. Official legitimacy from the government and society strengthens Islamic boarding schools' ability to obtain financial support and other assistance. Institutional status also provides easier access to funds and donations from various institutions and individuals. The legal protection afforded by institutional status helps safeguard religious freedom, property rights, and other rights necessary for the safe conduct of educational and religious activities. In addition, institutional status allows Islamic boarding schools to develop more professional management and administration systems, improve the quality of teaching, and collaborate with other institutions more effectively. Thus, institutional status becomes a solid foundation for the growth and development of Islamic boarding schools towards continuity.

When it was first established in 1997, the Ar-Risalah Islamic boarding school was in the form of an Islamic Education Foundation, which is generally the case with most schools. However, in 2013, with the approval number (Number: 1158, 22 October 2013) and the Decree of the Ministry of Law and Security (AHU-511. AH.01.04, 24 January 2014), Ar-Risalah officially changed its institutional status to the Ar-Risalah Waqf Foundation. The Kiai entirely initiated this change in status. Asep Saefulmillah as the head of the school stated as below:

The change in the status of the Islamic boarding school to a Waqf Foundation is a form of change. I did this to continue maintaining the grand vision and open myself to involving the community in developing this school. This change process took a long time until the form of this Islamic boarding school changed.

Maintaining Kiai's great vision at the Islamic boarding school and involving the community in its future development were the biggest reasons for him to change its institutional status. Of course, this change process involved an extended analysis considering various things, including the impacts and consequences of the Islamic boarding school's status change to a waqf foundation.

Kiai has hope that what he is fighting for today must be sustainable, and this cannot be realized if he does not hand over ownership to the public. Both often reflect on the conflicts of most Islamic boarding schools; not a few large ones have fallen on the next generation. Some have fallen because institutions have disappeared, while others have experienced severe decline. When the Islamic boarding school had the character of a dynasty, even though ownership was not shared between family members, it could invite serious family conflict with several motives.

The Kiai did not want the Islamic boarding school to fall into conflict, so he changed this foundation to a waqf foundation.

Kiai's grand vision as the spiritual and intellectual leader of the Islamic boarding school greatly influences its style. This vision includes the long-term goals, values, and mission of education. The style of an Islamic boarding school, namely its characteristics and identity, is reflected in implementing this vision in various aspects of Islamic boarding school life. For example, if the kiai's vision emphasizes strong religious education, then the Islamic boarding school style will emphasize the teaching of holy books, religious teachings, and religious practices. Likewise, if the Kiai's vision involves community empowerment, the Islamic boarding school style will include community service programs, such as skills training or health programs. In this way, the kiai's big vision becomes a guide in forming the Islamic boarding school's style, ensuring that the Islamic boarding school is consistent with the educational goals and values held firmly by the kiai and the Islamic boarding school community.

Then the reason why Islamic boarding school leaders choose waqf foundations as a forum for institutional transformation is because, according to the law, ordinary foundations are under the control of the law and place the government as the regulator. He saw a weak point: Ordinary foundation assets could be donated, bought and sold, and acquired, but this was different from waqf assets. Waqf assets whose status cannot be canceled through legislation because their status is tied to eternal religious doctrine cannot be sold; this is not found in waqf foundations. The Waqf Foundation is under the guidance of an independent body, namely the Indonesian Waqf Foundation, so that one day there is an unprofessional or low-level conflict, the Waqf Foundation will directly supervise it.

Islamic boarding schools, in the form of waqf foundations, have several advantages. First, the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools is more guaranteed because the main assets of Islamic boarding schools, such as land and buildings, are donated for religious education activities. Second, Islamic boarding schools can obtain financial support from the results of managing waqf assets, such as rent or other business results. It helps Islamic boarding schools finance their operations without relying entirely on donations or external funds. Third, foundation status provides strong legal and institutional protection, making accessing various resources and support from the government, financial institutions, and the community easier. Fourth, Islamic boarding schools can have more freedom in developing educational and social programs that suit the needs and vision of the founders. In this way, Islamic boarding schools in waqf foundations can develop sustainably and provide wider benefits to the surrounding community.

1.2 Curriculum Changes in Islamic Boarding Schools

The Islamic boarding school education curriculum has an important role in forming students' character, knowledge, and religious values. This curriculum not only focuses on teaching holy books and religious teachings but also includes lessons such as Arabic, tafsir, hadith, fiqh, morals, and other sciences. Islamic boarding schools can provide holistic education through a structured curriculum that includes scientific, moral, and spiritual aspects. The curriculum also allows Islamic boarding schools to adapt and develop effective teaching methods according to current developments and the needs of students. The curriculum provides direction and guidance in the Islamic boarding school's learning process, evaluation, and development. In this way, the curriculum becomes a solid foundation for maintaining the quality of Islamic boarding school

education, maintaining the continuity of Islamic scientific traditions, and equipping students with relevant knowledge and skills to face the challenges of the modern era.

The synergy built by Kiai's relationship between Islamic boarding school education and formal education was illustrated when he and the heads of School sat together to form a curriculum that combined the Islamic boarding school and school curriculum. This merger is part of achieving Kiai's grand vision to produce students who master religious and general knowledge.

The formal education curriculum is synergized with Islamic boarding school education, meaning that Islamic boarding school learning is included in the Islamic boarding school curriculum structure. So, in the educational process, there is no dichotomy between Islamic boarding school science and general knowledge; now, the curriculum is included in the school curriculum, which is different from the previous year, which was still partial. It is done to create a good synergy between schools and Islamic boarding schools so that there is no longer a dichotomy in knowledge and that all teachers are united. There is no longer a teacher dichotomy, and this process can, in the future, produce quality graduates.

The merger of the Islamic boarding school and school curriculum has had a very positive impact because all students can focus on studying school and Islamic boarding school science, and there is no longer a dichotomy in science. This process establishes a harmonious synergy between school and Islamic boarding schools, and there is no longer any separation between school and school science. Islamic boarding schools, school and Islamic boarding school teachers, and school and Islamic boarding school obligations are combined.

Kiai tries synergizing Islamic boarding school education with schools to produce the best graduates and high-quality educational institutions. Therefore, this school is called an integrated school because there is integration between Islamic boarding schools and formal institutions. Integration of Islamic boarding school learning into the formal school curriculum so that school learning is integrated with Islamic boarding school education.

The synergy between the Islamic boarding school curriculum and formal education is important to provide holistic and integrated education for students. First, integrating the Islamic boarding school curriculum with formal education allows students to acquire comprehensive knowledge and skills. Islamic boarding schools provide a strong religious and moral education, while formal education provides an understanding of science, technology, and practical skills necessary in modern life. Second, this synergy helps students develop a balanced understanding of religion and everyday life. They can integrate the religious values they learn at Islamic boarding schools into their lives in society and the world of work.

Third, the synergy between these two types of education prepares students to become quality individuals, both spiritually and intellectually, ready to face the changes and challenges of the times. Fourth, collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and formal educational institutions also helps increase the recognition and legitimacy of Islamic boarding school education in the eyes of the general public and government institutions. Thus, the synergy between the Islamic boarding school curriculum and formal education is beneficial for individual students and important in strengthening the role of Islamic boarding schools as relevant and competitive educational institutions in modern education.

1.3 Changes in Institutional Financial Management

The School has successfully managed a self-developed business enterprise that is a substantial source of internal income. This business initiative aims to foster financial independence for the institution, reducing reliance on external donations or funding. They allocate income from these ventures through a well-organized business strategy to meet its operational needs. These needs include financing educational activities, maintaining facilities, and advancing various development programs within the boarding school. This financial independence enables the school to concentrate on creating positive impacts across its programs for students, faculty, and the surrounding community.

The income generated from the boarding school's independent business activities is allocated not only for internal requirements but also to enhance educational programs. For example, they can implement curriculum innovations that meet modern needs, create more engaging learning materials, and recruit highly qualified educators. The boarding school can also offer extracurricular activities to nurture students' talents in languages, sciences, and technology. This financial autonomy allows them to cultivate an optimal learning environment, unburdened by external financial constraints or influences, which often impact more traditional institutions.

In addition to focusing on education and curriculum, the income from the boarding school's business supports the development of infrastructure and facilities. A steady revenue stream enables the institution to improve or expand facilities that support teaching and learning activities, such as comfortable classrooms, well-equipped laboratories, a resourceful library, sports amenities, and better housing facilities. Access to high-quality infrastructure significantly contributes to creating a conducive learning atmosphere for students. Improved facilities also benefit teachers and staff, enabling them to work more efficiently and comfortably. It ensures that every member of the boarding school can contribute effectively to achieving the institution's vision and mission.

Beyond its internal growth, they also implement community empowerment programs funded by its business ventures. These initiatives aim to support the local community in becoming more economically self-sufficient, generating a positive social impact on the surrounding environment. One of the key initiatives supported by the school is the provision of scholarships for underprivileged students who demonstrate a strong desire to learn. Through this scholarship program, they open doors for students from diverse backgrounds to receive high-quality education. Financial self-sufficiency allows the boarding school to create an inclusive and impactful environment that benefits its students and the surrounding community, fostering a harmonious synergy between the school and society.

The business ventures developed by the school play a significant role in supporting its economic independence and empowering the local community around the school. These ventures include:

1. **Mining:** This sector generates a substantial income of approximately Rp. 1,500,000,000 annually, employs around 60 community members, contributing notably to the region's economic landscape.
2. **Fisheries:** With an annual profit of around Rp. 425,000,000, the fisheries sector also supports the local economy by involving 30 community members in its operations.

3. Agriculture: The agricultural activities yield a profit of about Rp. 500,000,000 each year and involve approximately 400 people, creating ample job opportunities and fostering agricultural knowledge and skills among locals.
4. Plastic Waste Processing: This initiative produces a profit of Rp. 125,000,000 annually. It generates income and helps manage environmental waste, creating a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

These business activities contribute to the boarding school's financial sustainability while empowering the surrounding community through employment and economic development opportunities.

4 Discussion

Islamic boarding schools, or mixed schools, have played an important role in shaping Islamic education and culture in many parts of the world, especially in Southeast Asia. However, these institutions face unprecedented challenges in an era of rapid globalization and technological advancement. To ensure relevance and sustainability, children must embrace change and adapt to the evolving needs of their students and their communities. Therefore, effective change management is essential for the survival and success of these organizations. The Islamic world is at a crossroads. He faces many challenges. The survival of Islam as a powerful and meaningful force in the world depends on its ability to adapt to changing times [33], emphasizing the importance of managing change in Islamic education by encouraging the need to create a balance between tradition and modernity [34]. That includes integrating technology into the curriculum, developing relationships with external organizations, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. Emphasizes the importance of change management by discussing the impact of globalization on people. He says the influx of foreign ideas and influences will present opportunities and challenges for these institutions. Boys must be able to adapt to different world situations and develop strategies to interact with different communities to remain competitive and relevant[35]

Changes have greatly influenced the development of Islamic Boarding Schools in the social environment. Boys' survival depends on their ability to adapt to the modern world. Modernity, globalization, and technological advancements require changes in the nature and character of these institutions. For example, introducing technology has allowed children to offer different and accessible learning programs. Emphasizes the importance of digital literacy in preparing students for the 21st century [36]. In addition, the increased focus on equality has created more women for women. The power of women is important to the development of Islamic societies. These changes ensure children's relevance and contribute to their growth and sustainability. By adapting to the changing needs of society, students can play an important role in shaping the future of Islamic education.

The curriculum plays an important role in forming Islamic boarding school students' intellectual and spiritual growth [37]; a curriculum is a plan for studying the soul. A well-designed curriculum ensures students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to become productive and responsible citizens. Curriculum integration is important in producing good candidates. Islamic boarding schools can provide a comprehensive learning experience by

combining different subjects and curricula. An inclusive curriculum helps students to see the connection between knowledge and its relevance to their lives [38]. This approach promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings. In addition, curricular integration can strengthen a sense of unity and cohesion within the school community. An inclusive curriculum can help create a shared vision and purpose among students, teachers, and staff." This sense of belonging is essential to the success and sustainability of Islamic boarding schools. Finally, the curriculum is an important part of Islamic boarding schools, and the integrity of the curriculum is a key requirement for issuing diplomas. By designing a comprehensive and integrated curriculum, these institutions can equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to survive in the 21st century.

Islamic boarding schools should consider transitioning to independent, business-based financial management to foster long-term institutional growth and financial self-sufficiency [39,40]. Traditionally, many boarding schools rely on external donations or support, often leading to budget constraints and uncertainty in funding critical programs and facilities. Schools can secure a reliable income stream by establishing self-sustaining business ventures, enabling more flexible budgeting and long-term planning without worrying about inconsistent financial backing.

Furthermore, adopting independent financial management through profitable business activities empowers these institutions to concentrate on enhancing the quality of education and supporting the surrounding community [41]. A steady income allows the boarding school to invest in curriculum improvements, facility upgrades, and scholarships for underprivileged students. This financial autonomy strengthens the school's educational mission and positively impacts local community welfare [42]. Through this approach, boarding schools can actively contribute to social and economic development, extending their role beyond education to become a vital resource for the community.

5 Conclusion

Effective change management is crucial for Islamic boarding schools to stay relevant and thrive amidst the evolving demands of education and society. By effectively managing curriculum development, organizational restructuring, and financial sustainability, these schools can establish a dynamic learning environment that blends modern educational approaches with traditional Islamic values. The research underscores the importance of responding to external challenges, such as demographic shifts and exploring alternative funding sources, while integrating technology and promoting critical thinking skills among students.

Furthermore, sound business management practices, such as establishing sustainable income streams and ensuring prudent financial management, are essential for the long-term viability of these institutions. The findings highlight that Islamic boarding schools can achieve financial stability by embracing these strategies and providing their students with a secure and supportive learning environment.

For future research, it would be valuable to examine Islamic boarding schools' specific challenges in implementing change management, such as overcoming resistance to change or addressing leadership-related obstacles. Additionally, investigating the effectiveness of various

strategies in managing curriculum reform and institutional restructuring could offer practical insights. Such studies will contribute to Islamic education's ongoing development, providing theoretical and practical guidance for future educational practices.

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