

NAVIGATING THE PARADOX

Integrating Tradition and Educational Innovation in Indonesian Pesantren¹

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Abstract: This article explores the dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation in Indonesian *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), emphasizing their adaptability in the face of modern educational demands. Qualitative case studies of three well-established Islamic boarding schools of Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang in East Java, Darunnajah Jakarta, and Mathali'ul Falah Pati in Central Java is conducted. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including *kiai*, teachers, students, and alumni. The research identifies three typologies of innovation: Modern-Progressive, Integration-Multiformat, and Traditional-Intensive. The study highlights the strategies *pesantren* employ to overcome challenges such as resource constraints, technological resistance, and socio-cultural barriers in order to maintain relevance amidst ever changing Muslim society in Indonesia. By integrating traditional Islamic education with modern pedagogical practices, these three *pesantren* enhance academic performance, foster character development, and equip students with 21st-century skills in their own way and method with different results and outcomes. This research contributes to the discourse on faith-based education by offering insights into how *pesantren* preserve their Islamic identity while innovating to meet contemporary societal needs.

Keywords: *Pesantren*, Educational Innovation, Tradition, Modernity, Indonesia.

Introduction

Pesantren, as Indonesia's oldest educational institution, occupies a unique position in in shaping the nation's religious and social

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framework². Pesantren have been pivotal in producing *ulama* (Islamic scholars) who serve as moral and spiritual authorities³. Beyond education, pesantren influence local politics and socio-cultural practices, with *kiai* (religious leaders) often holding significant power within their communities⁴. The role of pesantren has gone beyond its traditional roles namely in peace building⁵ and entrepreneurship⁶ as suggested by several studies. While pesantren have traditionally preserved their role as custodians of Islamic heritage, they now face mounting pressure to modernize in response to globalization and societal shifts⁷. This role has been successfully conducted by *kiai* of

² Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Ciputat: Logos Wacana Ilmu dan Pemikiran, 2003); Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Traditional Islamic Education in the Malay Archipelago: Its Contribution to the Integration of the Malay World," Indonesia Circle. School of Oriental & African Studies. Newsletter 19, no. 53 (1990): 19–34; Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011); Clifford, Geertz, *Agama Jawa: Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Kebudayaan Jawa*, trans. Aswab Mahasin and Bur Rasuanto (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2013); M. Falikul Isbah, "Pesantren in the Changing Indonesian Context: History and Current Developments," *QIJIS Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2020): 65.

³ Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning; Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde/ Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 146, no. 2 (1990): 226–69; Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and Its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 4 (1978): 485–516; Martin Van Bruinessen, "Muslim Fundamentalism: Something to Be Understood or to Be Explained Away?," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 6, no. 2 (1995): 157–71.

⁴ Robert W. Hefner, *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009); Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim, Zaman (eds.), *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁵ A. Rozaki & A. Izudin, "Peacebuilding Pesantren: The Study of Madurese Diaspora in Reinforcing Social Resilience in Post-ethnic Conflicts West Kalimantan, Indonesia," *Ulumuna* 29, no. 1 (2025), 155-187. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v29i1-1432>.

⁶ Samsul Ma'arif, Ahmadi, Dzirkulloh, and Nailly El Muna, "Pesantren Entrepreneurship: Harmonization of the Theories of Kasb Asy'ariyah and Locus of Control on Strengthening Santripreneur," *QIJIS Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 1 (2023).

⁷ Muh Barid Nizarudin, Wajdi, Maya Puspita Dewi, and Muhammad Irfanudin, "The Future of Pesantren as Islamic Education Discourse Analysis of Pesantren Law," *Journal of Education* 7, no. 2 (2022).

pesantren in Java who are not only educator, but also Muslim jurists as well as *sufi* (mystic).⁸

Balancing tradition and modernity presents a paradox for *pesantren*. On one hand, they are expected to preserve religious and cultural identity; on the other, they must innovate to remain relevant in a fast-changing world.⁹ Key challenges include resources constraints, resistance to change, and limited access to information.¹⁰ To address these issues, many *pesantren* have adopted hybrid systems that integrate religious curricula with general education to meet contemporary demands. Recent studies show that *pesantren* no longer function solely as bastions of traditional learning, but as dynamic institutions that actively negotiate the tension between tradition and innovation. As highlighted by Pasi, Rasyidin, and Harahap, modern *pesantren* engage in selective adoption of modernization—preserving classical systems of Islamic pedagogy while integrating contemporary management and curriculum frameworks in a way that reaffirms their religious foundations in a postmodern context.¹¹

For example, Nurtawab and Wahyudi explain how legal formalization through the 2019 *Pesantren* Law has pushed *pesantren* to restructure their institutional identity—especially in reconciling the dual demands of religious legitimacy and administrative accountability. These formal shifts have often led to significant curriculum changes and the incorporation of state-aligned standards while attempting to

⁸ Nur Syam and Wahyu Ilaihi, "Institution of Islam Java: Coastal Islam, Local Culture, and the Role of Sufism" *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 17, no. 2 (2023): 189-213.

⁹ Ronald Lukens-Bull, "Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2001), 350-72; Muhammad Masud, Armando Salvatore, and Martin Van Bruinessen, *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Dodik Harnadi, Hotman Siahaan, and Masdar Hilmy, "Pesantren and the Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority in the Digital Age," *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik* 34, no. 3 (2021), 272; Ismail Suardi Wekke and Sanusi Hamid, "Technology on Language Teaching and Learning: A Research on Indonesian Pesantren," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 83 (2013): 585-89; Adnan Yılmaz and Sibel Söğüt, "Language Education for Social Justice: Reproductions or Disruptions through Technology," *Computers & Education* 187 (2022).

¹¹ Kamaluddin Mh Pasi, Rasyidin, and Radinal Mukhtar Harahap, "Education System of Modern Islamic Boarding School in The Postmodern Era," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (2020): 311-23, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v3i3.805>.

preserve the *pesantren's* autonomous and theological ethos¹². The adopting new ideas and tools, the classic instruction of *pesantren*, such as *bahtsul masail*¹³ and *musyawarah* is preserved.¹⁴

The rapid development of technology and information systems presents both opportunities and challenges for *pesantren*. To remain competitive in the globalized world, *pesantren* are increasingly required to innovate in teaching methodologies, management practices, and graduate competencies¹⁵. Innovations in curriculum design and pedagogy are crucial to addressing contemporary educational challenges and meeting societal expectations¹⁶. As global change accelerates, *pesantren* must continue to develop practices that preserve their relevance while navigating an unpredictable landscape.¹⁷ Muafiah¹⁸ contribute further by exploring how *pesantren* attempt to adopt child-friendly policies and learning environments as a form of educational innovation—particularly in response to public demands for safer, more psychologically nurturing, and equitable Islamic schooling. underline the necessity of emotional well-being, gender inclusivity, and safety as foundational elements in *pesantren* transformation. Such concerns have prompted institutions to redesign

¹² Ervan Nurtawab and Dedi Wahyudi, "Restructuring Traditional Islamic Education in Indonesia: Challenges for Pesantren Institution," *Studia Islamika* 29, no. 1 (2022): 55–81, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v29i1.17414>.

¹³ Teuku Zulkhairi, Ibnu Hajar Safriadi, Marzuki, and Saifullah, "Bahtsul Masāil at a Traditional Islamic Educational Institution in Aceh: Teungku Dayah's Contribution to the Development of Islamic Law," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2024), 579-601.

¹⁴ Nabielia Naili and Achmad Kemal Riza, "Swings And Roundabouts On Gender Issues: Lesson from Female Circumcision Fatwa of KUPI and FMPP," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 19, no. 1 (2025)

¹⁵ Ahmad Fauzi et al., "E-Learning in Pesantren: Learning Transformation Based on the Value of Pesantren," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 1114 (2018); Peter Serdyukov, "Innovation in Education: What Works, What Doesn't, and What to Do about It," *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning* 10, no. 1 (2017): 4–33.

¹⁶ Yusuf Hanafi et al., "The New Identity of Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools in the New Normal: The Education Leadership Response to COVID-19," *Helikon* 7, no. 3 (2021).

¹⁷ Moch Tolchah and Muhammad Arfan Mu'ammam, "Islamic Education in the Globalization Era; Challenges, Opportunities, and Contribution of Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews* 7, no. 4 (2019): 1031–37.

¹⁸ Evi Muafiah, Neng Eri Sofiana, and Uswatul Khasanah, "Pesantren Education in Indonesia: Efforts to Create Child-Friendly Pesantren," *Ulumuna* 26, no. 2 (2022): 447–71, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v26i2.558>.

dormitory layouts, introduce psychological counseling services, and implement gender-responsive teaching approaches. These innovations go beyond infrastructure, incorporating humanistic teaching methods and improved governance. Competition from rival Islamic education institutions, such as *Sekolah Islam Terpadu* (integrated Islamic Schools) is arguable among the drive.¹⁹

Recent innovations in *pesantren*, such as the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) and the adoption of student-centered learning approaches, have significantly enhanced teaching quality and broadened access to education²⁰. Although transformation processes vary across *pesantren*, these innovations collectively contribute to the evolution of Islamic education in Indonesia²¹. Research on innovation and transformation suggests that these processes are closely interconnected, with educational challenges,²² which drive the development of new methods to meet modern societal demands²³.

This study explores educational innovations within Indonesia's *pesantren* system, focusing on the processes, characteristics, and impacts of these changes. Adopting a leadership and policy innovation perspective, it examines the driving and inhibiting factors behind these transformations and highlights the roles of leaders,

¹⁹ Witriani, Zusiana Triantini, Muhrisun, and Emawati, "Negotiation Identity and Religious Expression in Early Childhood: A Case Study of SDITs in Lombok, Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 62, no. 2 (2024).

²⁰ Fauzi, *E-Learning in Pesantren*; Muhammad Zuhdi, "Modernization of Indonesian Islamic Schools, 1945–2003," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 10, no. 4–5 (2006), 415–27.

²¹ Marie Louise Blankesteijn, Jorick Houtkamp, and Bart Bossink, "Towards Transformative Experiential Learning in Science- and Technology-Based Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Technological Innovation," *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge* 9, no. 3 (2024); Peter Serdyukov, "Innovation in Education: What Works, What Doesn't, and What to Do about It," *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning* 10, no. 1 (2017): 4–33.

²² Suwendi, Cipta Bakti Gama, Muhammad Fawwaz Farhan Farabi, Farkhan Fuady, and Arman, "Roles And Challenges Of Pesantren Intellectual Networks," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 2 (2024).

²³ Bambang Budiwiranto, "Modernization and Pesantren Based Community Development in Indonesia," *Jami* 2, no. 1 (2019); Risa Palm, "The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration," *Political Geography Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1986), 288–89; Florian Pohl, "Islamic Education and Civil Society: Reflections on the Pesantren Tradition in Contemporary Indonesia," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (2006), 389–409.

teachers, *santri* (students), and broader communities in initiating and sustaining innovation. Furthermore, it assesses the impacts of these innovations on various aspects of *santri* development, including academic performance, religious understanding, non-religious skills, character building, and social participation.

The research is guided by three prominent innovation theories: Rogers' diffusion of innovation model, Schumpeter's theory of disruptive innovation, and Chesbrough's concept of open innovation. Rogers' model emphasizes the stages of innovation adoption—knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation—highlighting the roles of social groups, from innovators to followers²⁴. Schumpeter's perspective underscores the transformative potential of innovation to reshape societal and economic conditions, while Chesbrough's open innovation concept highlights the importance of external collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and external partners, in developing and testing new ideas²⁵.

Additionally, the concept of Education 4.0 is central to this research, promoting the integration of digital technologies and collaborative learning processes²⁶. Education 4.0 emphasizes the development of 21st-century skills—critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy—that align with the growing need for innovation in *pesantren*.²⁷ Social Systems Theory further enriches this

²⁴ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1983); DJ. Smith, "The Politics of Innovation: Why Innovations Need a Godfather," *Technovation* 27, no. 3 (2007): 95–104; Greg Yezersky, *General Theory of Innovation: An Overview, in Trends in Computer Aided Innovation*, ed. Noel León-Rovira, vol. 250 (Boston, MA: Springer US, 2007), 45–55.

²⁵ Henry Chesbrough, "The Logic of Open Innovation," *California Management Review* 45, no. 3 (2003); Elena Fleaca and Radu D. Stanciu, "Digital-Age Learning and Business Engineering Education – a Pilot Study on Students' E-Skills," *Procedia Manufacturing* 32 (2019), 1051–57..

²⁶ Muhammad Amin Abdullah, "Islamic Studies in Higher Education in Indonesia: Challenges, Impact and Prospects for the World Community," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017), 391-426; Lisa R. Bass, "Boarding Schools and Capital Benefits: Implications for Urban School Reform," *The Journal of Educational Research* 107, no. 1 (2014), 16-35; Hanafi, "The New Identity of Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools".

²⁷ Li Xiaohua, Chen Weibing, and Melfi Alrasheedi, "Challenges of the Collaborative Innovation System in Public Higher Education in the Era of Industry 4.0 Using an Integrated Framework," *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge* 8, no. 4 (2023); Mukul Esin and Büyüközkan Gülçin, "Digital Transformation in Education: A Systematic Review

study by examining the influence of social structures and habitus on interaction patterns, offering insights into how *pesantren* adopt innovations while accounting for their socio-cultural contexts²⁸. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how *pesantren* can adopt effective and inclusive innovations, balancing the demands of modernity with the preservation of their traditional values.

This article based on qualitative case study approach, examining three *pesantren* with distinct educational characteristics: Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang, Darunnajah Jakarta, and Mathali'ul Falah Pati. These pesantren were purposefully selected to represent a range of approaches to balancing tradition and innovation. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including *kiai*, teachers, students, and alumni. Institutional documents, such as curricula and government regulations (e.g., Law No. 18 of 2019 on *pesantren*), were analyzed to identify drivers and barriers to innovation. Participant observation provided additional insights into the daily practices and social dynamics within each *pesantren*. Thematic analysis was used to synthesize the data, focusing on five dimensions: curriculum design, teaching methods, leadership practices, community engagement, and technological integration. These dimensions informed the development of three typologies of educational innovation: Modern-Progressive, Integration-Multiformat, and Traditional-Intensive.

This article begins by exploring the rich diversity of Indonesia's *pesantren* education system, highlighting its historical, cultural, and educational variations. It then delves into the innovative approaches adopted by three observed *pesantren*, examining how they balance

of Education 4.0," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 194 (2023): 122664); Oliveira Selma Regina M and Marcela Alencar Saraiva, "Leader Skills Interpreted in the Lens of Education 4.0," *Procedia Computer Science* 217 (2023): 1296–1304.

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture, Second Edition, London; Newbury Park* (California: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1990); Tom R. Burns, Nora Machado, and Ugo Corte, "The Sociology of Creativity: Part I: Theory: The Social Mechanisms of Innovation and Creative Developments in Selectivity Environments," *Human Systems Management* 34, no. 3 (2015): 179–199; James Collins, "Social Reproduction in Classrooms and Schools," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38, no. 1 (2009): 33–48; Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Ludwig Huber, "Disciplinary Cultures and Social Reproduction," *European Journal of Education* 25, no. 3 (1990), 241.

modernization with the preservation of tradition. Finally, the discussion focuses on the impacts of these innovations and outlines strategies for ensuring the sustainability of the *pesantren* educational system in the face of evolving societal demands.

The Diversity of Indonesia's *Pesantren* Education System

The Indonesian *pesantren* education system reflects a remarkable diversity, deeply rooted in its historical, traditional, and socio-cultural dynamics²⁹. This diversity enriches the learning experiences of students while ensuring the preservation of indigenous values seamlessly integrated with local contexts³⁰. The diversity in *pesantren* education is most evident in their curriculum structures, teaching methodologies, organizational frameworks, and social interactions³¹. Analyzing these variations reveals the processes of innovation within *pesantren* and their societal impact. The diversity in *pesantren* education can be understood through the concept of the Layered Adaptive Curriculum. *Pesantren* curricula integrate religious and general knowledge while remaining adaptable to both internal institutional needs and external societal demands³². This adaptability allows *pesantren* to navigate the intersection of Islamic scholarly traditions and global educational demands without compromising their authenticity. Teaching methods further highlight this adaptability, with *pesantren* integrating traditional techniques such as *bandongan* and *sorogan* with modern strategies like collaborative and student-centered learning. This Complementary

²⁹ Harnadi, Siahaan, and Hilmy, "Pesantren and the Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority".

³⁰ Faridah Hanum, "Mengukuhkan Pesantren sebagai Basis Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning: PP. Salafiyah Al Falah Ploso Kediri Jawa Timur," *Al-Qalam* 19, no. 1 (2016), 97; Ronald Lukens-Bull, "Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2001), 350–72; Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand, and Martin van Bruinessen, *Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

³¹ James Albright and Allan Luke, *Pierre Bourdieu and Literacy Education* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Walter Feinberg, *For Goodness Sake: Religious Schools and Education for Democratic Citizenry. Social Theory, Education, and Cultural Change Series* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Hefner, and Zaman, "Schooling Islam"; Barry Sugarman and Richard Brown, "Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education," *Contemporary Sociology* 4, no. 4 (1975), 386.

³² Sofyan Sauri and Febby Cipta, "Establishing the Identity of *Insan Kamil* Generation through Music Learning Activities in Pesantren," *Helijon* 8, no. 7 (2022).

Flexible Pedagogy strengthens the connection between religion and everyday life in the modern era³³.

Beyond their educational frameworks, these *pesantren* play a significant role in strengthening the social and cultural values of their communities³⁴. Their various community service programs reveal their dual function as educational institutions and social entities that uphold and sustain indigenous values. The reciprocal relationship between *pesantren* and their local communities creates unique ecosystems that integrate education with local cultural needs and aspirations³⁵.

The social interactions facilitated by these *pesantren* illustrate their broader understanding of their societal roles. Bahrul Ulum bridges formal and informal education, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. Mathali'ul Falah emphasizes community relations, fostering a synergy between education and social service. Meanwhile, Darunnajah aligns its innovations with the needs of modern society, ensuring that its educational offerings benefit not only its students but also the wider community³⁶.

The phenomenon of *pesantren* as both traditional and adaptive institutions has been extensively explored in prior research. Dhofier³⁷ examined two prominent *pesantren*, Tebuireng Jombang and Tegalsari Salatiga, and demonstrated that while *kiai* (religious leaders) adhere to traditional Islamic values, they are not entirely resistant to modernization. This adaptability is reflected in the integration of formal education systems within these institutions. Dhofier's work highlighted the concept of "continuity in the midst of change," illustrating how *pesantren* navigate gradual transformations while

³³ Tom R. Burns, Nora Machado, and Ugo Corte, "The Sociology of Creativity," *Human Systems Management* 34, no. 3 (2015), 179–99; Wekke and Hamid, "Technology on Language Teaching and Learning," 585–89.

³⁴ Abdullah, "Islamic Studies in Higher Education in Indonesia", 391–426.

³⁵ Hasan Baharun, "Building Public Trust in Islamic School through Adaptive Curriculum," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2022), 1–14; Arif Rahman, "Dinamika Tradisi Pendidikan Salaf Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri di Tengah Arus Modernisasi," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2020), 48–60.

³⁶ Ammar Abulibdeh, Esmat Zaidan, and Rawan Abulibdeh, "Navigating the Confluence of Artificial Intelligence and Education for Sustainable Development in the Era of Industry 4.0: Challenges, Opportunities, and Ethical Dimensions," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 437 (2024); Chris. Bourdieu Julien, "Social Capital and Online Interaction," *Sociology* 49, no. 2 (2015), 356–73.

³⁷ Dhofier, "Traditional Islamic Education in the Malay Archipelago."

maintaining their foundational ethos. Similarly, Steenbrink traced the evolution of *pesantren* from the colonial period to post-independence Indonesia, revealing the persistence of traditional teaching methods such as *sorogan* and *bandongan*. These methods coexisted with selective adoption of Western-inspired formal education practices, encapsulated in the principle of “reject while following,” which describes the *pesantren*’s cautious approach to integrating foreign educational elements.

Further, Pohl studied Al Muayyad Solo and highlighted the *pesantren*’s pivotal role in fostering civil society through values of tolerance, pluralism, and social justice. Meanwhile, Isbah examined the impact of modernization, particularly in the 19th century, which aligned *pesantren* more closely with the national education system. Satria and colleagues³⁸ extended this discourse by emphasizing the adaptive strategies employed by *pesantren* during the globalization era. They noted how *pesantren* combined traditional methods with formal education to counter the stereotype of being overly conservative and outdated. In this context, Nibal offers an insightful analysis of *pesantren* as sites of alternative modernity, exemplified by Gontor’s model that successfully integrates modern curriculum design with *pesantren* discipline, positioning itself as an indigenous yet globally aware institution³⁹. Such hybridization affirms the *pesantren*’s capacity for innovation while maintaining authenticity.

Additionally, Makruf and Asrori underscore how *pesantren* have developed diverse ideological and organizational responses to contemporary demands, from literalist orientations to more inclusive and progressive strategies. Their work illustrates how *pesantren* innovation is not merely structural but also deeply connected to epistemological and sociological shifts, reflecting a broader reconfiguration of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Despite this wealth of research, gaps remain in understanding the nuanced innovation processes within *pesantren*, particularly how these processes differ across types of *pesantren*. Previous studies have largely

³⁸ Baharun, "Building Public Trust in Islamic School"; Fauzi, "E-Learning in Pesantren"; Muhammad Hifdil and Abd Aziz, "Transformation of Pesantren in Maintaining Good Character," *Humanistika: Jurnal Keislaman* 6, no. 1 (2020), 35–48.

³⁹ Jamhari Makruf and Saifudin Asrori, "In the Making of Salafi-Based Islamic Schools in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, no. 1 (2022), 227–64, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2022.601.227-264>.

focused on categorizing *pesantren* or describing their functions⁴⁰, without formulating systematic patterns of innovation and analyzing the outcomes in diverse *pesantren* contexts. Addressing this gap, the current study aims to conceptualize innovation patterns in the *pesantren* education system in Indonesia, exploring how these innovations unfold across different types of *pesantren* and their varied results.

This study expands on previous research by examining the social impact of innovations within the *pesantren* education system, particularly the ways in which curriculum and pedagogical changes influence educational quality and the broader societal roles of *santri* (students). It investigates how *pesantren* leaders, including *kiai*, use innovation to cultivate a generation of *santri* who are more engaged and active in contemporary society. By linking curriculum innovation to larger societal changes, the research highlights how modern *pesantren* maintain their traditional values while driving broader transformations in educational practices and social participation⁴¹.

The research also emphasizes the role of innovation in strengthening the character and social engagement of *santri*. These innovations contribute not only to educational improvements but also to the long-term development of Indonesian society and the broader landscape of Islamic education⁴². The study identifies the mechanisms through which *pesantren* navigate the dual challenges of modernization and tradition, contributing to a deeper understanding of their pivotal role in social and educational development.

In conclusion, the rich diversity of *pesantren* education in Indonesia reflects a spectrum of responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by modernity. Whether through progressive, integrative, or

⁴⁰ Budiwiranto, "Modernization and Pesantren Based Community Development"; Rahman, "Dinamika Tradisi Pendidikan Salaf Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri".

⁴¹ Muhammad Said, Nuryani Muhammad, and Kaviyarasu Elangkovan, "The Continuity and Change of Indonesia's Islamic Higher Educational Institutions in the amid of Educational Policy Change," *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 6 (2014), 71; Siti Nurul Wachidah, "Konstruksi Pendidikan Islam Di Era Global Menurut Azyumardi Azra," *Cendekia: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan* 1, no. 3 (2021), 177–86.

⁴² Goran Putnik, Djordje Karadžić, João V. Silva, Miguel Sousa, and Rui Cruz. "A Contribution to the Definition of Students Group Agility Measures within the Social Network Based Education in the Context of Evaluation of Students' Effective Learning of Industry 4.0 Skills," *Procedia CIRP* 118 (2023) 1050–55; Ahmad Agung Yuwono Putro, Suyanto, and Yoyon Suryono, "New Tradition of Pesantren in Character Education," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 1254, no. 1 (2019).

traditional approaches, these *pesantren* demonstrate the capacity of Islamic education to adapt while preserving its cultural and religious heritage. This adaptability underscores the enduring relevance of *pesantren* as dynamic institutions that contribute to both individual development and societal transformation.

Typologies of Educational Innovation in *Pesantren*

The study of three *pesantren*—Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas, Mathali'ul Falah Pati, and Darunnajah Jakarta—showcases the varied approaches these institutions take in education and community engagement. Each *pesantren*'s distinct organizational structure and pedagogical approach illustrate unique leadership dynamics and demonstrate how these institutions act not only as centers of learning but also as cultural and social pillars within their communities. By examining five critical aspects—curriculum structure, teaching methods, leadership, social interactions, and the interplay of actors, habitus, and arena—three typologies emerge: Modern-Progressive, Integration-Multiformat, and Traditional-Intensive. These typologies highlight how *pesantren* engage with modernity while preserving their traditional ethos. Empirical evidence from recent research on Salafi-based schools further supports the diversity of these models: Makruf & Asrori, document how such institutions combine rigorous Qur'ānic and ḥadīth instruction with the national madrasah curriculum, exemplifying a purist variant that coexists alongside the Modern-Progressive, Integration-Multiformat, and Traditional-Intensive approaches.⁴³

Pesantren Darunnajah Jakarta exemplifies the principles of modern-progressive education by seamlessly integrating contemporary pedagogical methods with traditional Islamic teachings. This approach aligns with findings by Hefner and Zaman, who highlight the ability of Islamic institutions to adapt to changing societal demands while maintaining their religious identity. Darunnajah's emphasis on project-based and problem-based learning echoes the call for educational practices that develop critical thinking and creativity⁴⁴. These innovations reflect the broader trend of integrating 21st-century skills into faith-based education⁴⁵.

⁴³ Makruf and Asrori, "In the Making of Salafi-Based Islamic Schools in Indonesia."

⁴⁴ Serdyukov, "Innovation in Education".

⁴⁵ Oliveira and Saraiva, "Leader Skills Interpreted in the Lens of Education 4.0".

The *pesantren*'s active international collaborations demonstrate its commitment to global engagement, a feature that resonates with Chesbrough's⁴⁶ concept of open innovation. By engaging in student exchange programs and global partnerships, Darunnajah not only broadens students' horizons but also fosters intercultural competencies, which are crucial in today's interconnected world. Furthermore, the *pesantren*'s focus on digital literacy aligns with the principles of Education 4.0, which emphasize the integration of technology into learning to enhance adaptability and global readiness.

Leadership at Darunnajah, characterized by a managerial approach, supports the effective implementation of these innovations. This separation of administrative and religious roles facilitates efficient governance, a concept supported by Burns who argue that leadership structures in educational institutions must evolve to meet contemporary challenges. Through its modern-progressive model, Darunnajah exemplifies how *pesantren* can remain relevant in a rapidly changing world while preserving their Islamic identity.

Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas illustrates an integration-multiformat approach by blending traditional Islamic education with formal academic systems. This dual focus aligns with Steenbrink's concept of "reject while following," wherein *pesantren* selectively adopt elements of modernization while preserving their religious foundations. The coexistence of *wetonan* and *sorogan* with formal classroom instruction reflects a nuanced approach to educational reform, ensuring that students are equipped to navigate diverse career paths.

The *pesantren*'s emphasis on life skills and entrepreneurship addresses the growing need for educational institutions to prepare students for real-world challenges⁴⁷. This aligns with Schumpeter's theory of innovation, which highlights the role of educational institutions in fostering economic and social development through the cultivation of practical skills. By integrating vocational training and business management programs, Bahrul Ulum responds to the demand for graduates who can contribute meaningfully to both religious and secular spheres.

⁴⁶ Chesbrough, "The Logic of Open Innovation".

⁴⁷ Muazza et al., "Education in Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools: Voices on Curriculum and Radicalism, Teacher, and Facilities," *The Islamic Quarterly* 62 (2018): 507–36.

Leadership at Bahrul Ulum is rooted in familial governance, which ensures adaptability while maintaining a cohesive vision. This approach mirrors findings by Lukens-Bull, who emphasize the importance of context-sensitive leadership in navigating the complexities of tradition and modernity. Bahrul Ulum's integration-multiformat model demonstrates how pesantren can cater to the diverse needs of their students, providing a template for balancing heritage with innovation.

Mathali'ul Falah Kajen represents a traditional-intensive model, prioritizing the preservation of classical Islamic scholarship. Its curriculum, centered on *kitab kuning* studies, aligns with Dhofier's assertion that pesantren serve as custodians of Islamic intellectual heritage. The reliance on *kiai* as role models reflects the *pesantren's* commitment to maintaining continuity in its educational methods, a principle emphasized by Azra in his exploration of the historical role of *pesantren* in Indonesia.

While Mathali'ul Falah remains deeply rooted in tradition, its selective integration of modern elements illustrates a cautious approach to innovation. The incorporation of digital tools and social engagement workshops demonstrates an understanding of the need to address contemporary challenges without compromising religious values. This approach is consistent with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which highlights the interplay between agency and structure in shaping institutional practices⁴⁸. The traditional-intensive model underscores the importance of preserving cultural and religious heritage while navigating modernity. Mathali'ul Falah's approach provides a valuable case study for understanding how *pesantren* can uphold their identity while responding to the evolving needs of society⁴⁹.

Despite the fact that each typology mentioned above reflects unique approaches to innovation, yet all encounter obstacles that illustrate the tension between tradition and modernization. This research finds key challenges, namely resources constraints, resistance to change, and limited access to information. Resource limitations pose significant challenges across all typologies of *pesantren*. As a traditional-

⁴⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated, 1986), 241–58.

⁴⁹ Florian Pohl, "Islamic Education and Civil Society: Reflections on the Pesantren Tradition in Contemporary Indonesia," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (2006): 389–409, <https://doi.org/10.1086/503882>.

intensive *pesantren*, Mathali'ul Falah stands out for its financial independence. Unlike many other traditional *pesantren* that rely on community donations, Mathali'ul Falah fully depends on managing educational fees from students and utilizing its owned assets. However, this approach also comes with limitations. Income from these internal sources is often sufficient only to cover operational needs and sustain existing educational programs. This leaves limited room for investments in developing new infrastructure or implementing modern educational innovations. Thus, while Mathali'ul Falah has successfully maintained its independence, funding constraints remain a challenge in supporting further innovation efforts, particularly in addressing modernization demands and evolving societal needs. Integration-Multiformat *pesantren* like Bahrul Ulum have developed creative strategies to address resource constraints, including entrepreneurship programs and partnerships with local businesses. These initiatives not only generate additional funding but also provide students with practical skills, demonstrating how resource limitations can be transformed into opportunities for innovation. Modern-Progressive *pesantren* such as Darunnajah benefit from international collaborations and alumni networks, which offer financial and infrastructural support. By engaging in public-private partnerships and leveraging external resources, Darunnajah exemplifies how *pesantren* can overcome resource constraints to implement comprehensive educational innovations.

Technological resistance is particularly prominent in *pesantren* that follow the Traditional-Intensive model, such as Mathali'ul Falah Kajen. Here, the emphasis on preserving classical Islamic scholarship often leads to scepticism about the benefits of technology. Leaders may view technology as a distraction that undermines students' focus on *kitab kuning* studies and moral integrity⁵⁰. This resistance manifests in strict controls over digital tools, limiting their use to essential educational purposes. Conversely, Modern-Progressive *pesantren* like Darunnajah Jakarta demonstrate how this challenge can be addressed. By integrating digital literacy programs into their curricula, Darunnajah prepares students for global challenges while maintaining ethical safeguards. Their use of technology aligns with Education 4.0 principles, fostering critical thinking and global awareness. The

⁵⁰ Robert W. Hefner, "Ritual and Cultural Reproduction in non-Islamic Java," *American Ethnologist* 10, no. 4 (1983), 665–83.

integration of ethical guidelines for technology use in Darunnajah exemplifies how *pesantren* can navigate resistance while leveraging digital tools for educational enhancement. In Integration-Multiformat *pesantren* like Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas, technological resistance is mitigated through a balanced approach. These *pesantren* use digital tools selectively, ensuring that their integration does not disrupt traditional teaching methods such as *wetonan* and *sorogan*. This model underscores the potential for *pesantren* to adopt technology incrementally, addressing concerns while gradually enhancing learning outcomes.

The challenge of limited access to information disproportionately affects *pesantren* in rural areas or those with a strong emphasis on tradition, such as Mathali'ul Falah. The insular nature of Traditional-Intensive *pesantren* often limits their exposure to modern knowledge systems and global networks⁵¹. This isolation hampers their ability to update curricula or adopt contemporary pedagogical practices. Integration-Multiformat *pesantren* like Bahrul Ulum address this challenge by bridging traditional and modern knowledge systems. These *pesantren* engage with academic institutions and government initiatives, providing access to updated educational resources while preserving their Islamic heritage. For example, Bahrul Ulum's incorporation of vocational training alongside religious studies reflects an effort to connect with broader knowledge systems without compromising core values. In Modern-Progressive *pesantren* like Darunnajah, digital libraries and online learning platforms enable students and teachers to access global knowledge resources. By prioritizing digital literacy and fostering international partnerships, Darunnajah demonstrates how *pesantren* can overcome information barriers to enrich their educational offerings.

Another is related to socio-cultural barriers that present a complex challenge for all *pesantren*, as they navigate community expectations and external influences. In Traditional-Intensive *pesantren* such as Mathali'ul Falah, the emphasis on preserving religious traditions often leads to resistance from parents and community members who perceive innovation as a threat to cultural identity. This resistance necessitates a cautious approach, where only incremental changes are introduced. Integration-Multiformat *pesantren* like Bahrul Ulum navigate these

⁵¹ Harnadi, Siahaan, and Hilmy, "Pesantren and the Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority".

barriers by involving community stakeholders in the decision-making process. Their emphasis on life skills and entrepreneurship aligns with community needs, creating a shared vision for educational innovation. This participatory approach ensures that changes are culturally sensitive and widely accepted. Modern-Progressive *pesantren* such as Darunnajah face unique socio-cultural challenges due to their global orientation. Community members may express concerns about the influence of international collaborations on Islamic values. However, Darunnajah mitigates these concerns through transparency and dialogue, demonstrating how modern practices align with their religious ethos. This approach highlights the importance of community engagement in fostering acceptance for innovation.

Impact of Educational Innovation and Strategies for Sustainability

Educational innovations in *pesantren* have substantially impacted student outcomes, reshaping the traditional landscape of Islamic education. These impacts span academic performance, character development, technological adaptation, and broader societal contributions. The integration of religious and general education in *pesantren* reflects a balanced approach to meeting contemporary educational demands. As noted by Steenbrink, *pesantren* historically focused on classical Islamic studies, often resisting Western educational frameworks. However, modern *pesantren*, such as Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas, have successfully bridged this gap by incorporating science and technology into their curricula. This aligns with findings by Fauzi, who emphasize that integrated curricula foster improved academic outcomes by engaging students in interdisciplinary learning. Darunnajah Jakarta's use of project-based learning strategies demonstrates how innovative pedagogical practices can enhance student engagement and academic achievement. According to Bass, such methods promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, preparing students to navigate complex real-world challenges. Similarly, Bahrul Ulum's initiatives in science and technology reflect the growing relevance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in faith-based institutions, as highlighted by Hanafi. These innovations not only enhance academic performance but also equip students with skills vital for a competitive global environment.

Character development remains a cornerstone of *pesantren* education, with innovations amplifying this focus. Mathali'ul Falah's emphasis on local economic activities resonates with Lukens-Bull's assertion that *pesantren* function as moral and social anchors in their communities. By involving students in community service and leadership programs, *pesantren* instill values of civic responsibility, empathy, and ethical conduct. Social Systems Theory, as discussed by Al-karasneh and Saleh, underscores the significance of interaction between institutional structures and individual agency in shaping socially responsible individuals. Bahrul Ulum's practice of engaging students in administrative roles exemplifies this interplay. Students develop leadership skills and a sense of accountability, aligning with Muhaimin's⁵² argument that pesantren foster holistic development by integrating spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. Darunnajah's *kebidmah* (service) programs offer another compelling example of character-building initiatives. These programs align with Hefner and Zaman's observation that *pesantren* contribute to social justice and community well-being. Through such activities, students apply Islamic teachings to real-world contexts, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Technological adaptation in pesantren marks a significant shift from traditional resistance to embracing digital tools for education. As Wekke and Hamid highlight, technology serves as a powerful enabler of modern pedagogical practices, especially in faith-based institutions. Darunnajah Jakarta exemplifies this shift through its integration of digital literacy programs, online learning platforms, and global collaborations.⁵³

Bahrul Ulum's balanced approach to technology reflects Chesbrough's concept of open innovation, which emphasizes collaboration and adaptation.⁵⁴ By blending traditional methods like *wetonan* and *sorogan* with digital platforms, Bahrul Ulum ensures that technology complements rather than replaces classical learning frameworks. This approach aligns with findings by Burns et al., who

⁵² Muhaimin Abdul Ghofur, *The Transmission of Religious Traditions*, in *The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon; Ibadat and Adat Among Javanese Muslims* (Sidney: ANU Press, 2006).

⁵³ Wekke and Hamid, "Technology on Language Teaching and Learning".

⁵⁴ Henry Chesbrough, *Open Innovation: The New Imperative for Creating and Profiting from Technology* (Harvard: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2003); Henry W. Chesbrough, "The Era of Open Innovation," *Research Development* (2003).

argue that technology, when used ethically, can enhance rather than undermine cultural and educational values. Mathali'ul Falah's selective adoption of digital tools highlights the *pesantren's* cautious yet progressive stance on technological integration. As Sabic-El-Rayess⁵⁵ notes, selective adaptation allows institutions to maintain their identity while addressing modern demands. By focusing on research and communication tools, Mathali'ul Falah ensures that technological innovations serve practical and pedagogical purposes.

Sustaining innovation in *pesantren* requires a strategic and multifaceted approach, emphasizing collaborative leadership, capacity building, community engagement, and the integration of modern tools and practices. Effective leadership in *pesantren* involves collective decision-making processes where leaders, educators, alumni, and community members play pivotal roles. This approach ensures a shared vision for modernization while retaining the *pesantren's* core values. For instance, at Pesantren Darunnajah, leadership extends beyond the traditional *kiai* authority to include a professional managerial team that oversees administrative and educational reforms⁵⁶. Alumni involvement further enhances the leadership framework by bringing external perspectives and resources. At Bahrul Ulum, alumni networks actively contribute to *pesantren* development through initiatives like Ikatan Alumni Bahrul Ulum (IKABU), which supports infrastructure and curriculum development. This practice aligns with Chesbrough's open innovation model, which underscores the value of engaging external stakeholders to foster transformative educational practices. Importantly, Nurtawab and Wahyudi emphasize that internal structural reform is crucial in ensuring that *pesantren* are institutionally prepared to sustain and scale such innovations while avoiding inertia rooted in overly traditional governance models⁵⁷.

Capacity building among educators is another critical strategy for sustaining innovation. Training programs tailored to equip teachers with modern pedagogical skills have been widely implemented. These

⁵⁵ Sabic-El-Rayess, "Epistemological Shifts in Knowledge and Education in Islam: A New Perspective on the Emergence of Radicalization amongst Muslims," *International Journal of Educational Development* 73 (2020).

⁵⁶ Melanie C. Brooks, Saad Al-Degheishem, Ayesha Siddiqua, and Peter Milley, "Principals as Socio-Religious Curators: Progressive and Conservative Approaches in Islamic Schools," *Journal of Educational Administration* 58, no. 6 (2020).

⁵⁷ Nurtawab and Wahyudi, "Restructuring Traditional Islamic Education".

programs often focus on integrating technology into teaching, adopting student-centered learning approaches, and aligning curricula with Education 4.0 principles⁵⁸. At Pesantren Bahrul Ulum, teacher training initiatives emphasize the use of digital tools and interactive teaching methods to enhance both religious and general education. The implementation of such training aligns with Schumpeter's theory of innovation, which views human capital as a key driver of institutional transformation. Teachers at Mathali'ul Falah are also encouraged to pursue advanced degrees and participate in professional development programs. This practice not only improves teaching quality but also helps bridge the gap between traditional *pesantren* methods and modern educational demands⁵⁹.

Strengthening ties with local and international communities is fundamental to sustaining innovation in *pesantren*. Community engagement involves fostering partnerships that provide financial support, expertise, and exposure to global educational trends. At Pesantren Darunnajah, collaborations with international organizations and institutions have facilitated student exchange programs and the adoption of global best practices in education. This aligns with Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory, which highlights the role of social networks in accelerating the adoption of new practices. Locally, *pesantren* like Mathali'ul Falah engage communities through service-oriented programs that align educational outcomes with societal needs. For example, PIM's focus on local entrepreneurship and economic empowerment initiatives exemplifies how *pesantren* integrate community engagement into their innovation strategies. These programs not only enhance the *pesantren*'s relevance but also strengthen its role as a socio-religious pillar⁶⁰.

Technology plays a dual role in sustaining innovation: it enhances learning experiences and streamlines administrative processes. At Bahrul Ulum, digital platforms are used to deliver blended learning models that combine traditional *kitab kuning* studies with interactive online content. This approach reflects the principles of Education 4.0,

⁵⁸ Fleaca and Stanciu, "Digital-Age Learning and Business Engineering Education".

⁵⁹ Hanum, "Mengukuhkan Pesantren sebagai Basis Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning", 97.

⁶⁰ Himawan Bayu Patriadi, Mohd. Zaini Abu Bakar, and Zahri Hamat, "Human Security in Local Wisdom Perspective: Pesantren and Its Responsibility to Protect People," *Procedia Environmental Sciences* 28 (2015): 100–105, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proenv.2015.07.015>.

which emphasize the integration of digital technologies to foster collaboration, critical thinking, and lifelong learning⁶¹. Similarly, Pesantren Darunnajah employs technology to support administrative functions, such as digital attendance systems and resource management platforms. These innovations not only improve operational efficiency but also create an environment conducive to continuous learning and adaptation⁶².

Sustaining innovation requires overcoming resource constraints that often hinder the adoption of new practices. Collaborative funding models, such as waqf-based initiatives, have proven effective in addressing financial challenges. At Mathali'ul Falah, the Keluarga Mathali'ul Falah (KMF) alumni network has launched the Waqf Movement, which supports infrastructure development and scholarships for students. Additionally, partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations provide supplemental funding and technical assistance. For instance, the Indonesian government's *Kurikulum Merdeka* initiative has enabled *pesantren* to modernize their curricula while retaining their religious identity. These collaborative efforts reflect the principles of resource dependency theory, which posits that organizations can mitigate resource constraints through strategic alliances and partnerships.

Inclusivity and diversity are essential for fostering sustainable innovation in *pesantren*. At Darunnajah, efforts to include female students in leadership roles and academic competitions exemplify this commitment. By promoting gender inclusivity, *pesantren* not only expand opportunities for students but also challenge traditional norms that may hinder progress. Efforts to create child-friendly and inclusive *pesantren* environments are increasingly visible, emphasize the importance of emotional well-being, gender sensitivity, and safe learning spaces as part of sustainable *pesantren* transformation.

These inclusive and value-based innovations are not merely administrative reforms, but are deeply rooted in the Islamic educational identity shaped by *pesantren* culture. As demonstrated by Kawakip & Sulanam, the practice of shared values within *pesantren* in East Java serves as a moral compass that sustains their Islamic

⁶¹ Mukul and Büyüközkan, "Digital Transformation in Education".

⁶² Tal Eitan and Tali Gazit, "Explaining Transformational Leadership in the Digital Age: The Example of Facebook Group Leaders," *Technology in Society* 78 (2024).

educational ethos.⁶³ These shared values—such as *ikhlas*, *tawadhu'*, and *ukhrawah*—form the bedrock of *pesantren* identity and play a crucial role in guiding their adaptive strategies amidst educational modernization. Rather than eroding their traditions, innovation in these contexts is filtered through a strong internal value system, ensuring that change reinforces rather than undermines the *pesantren's* mission. This synergy between innovation and identity enables *pesantren* to remain resilient and authentic while navigating the pressures of contemporary education systems. Inclusivity also extends to accommodating students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Scholarships and financial aid programs, such as those offered at Bahrul Ulum, ensure that education remains accessible to all, thereby enhancing the *pesantren's* social impact and sustainability.

Conclusion

This study reveals that Indonesian *pesantren* navigate the delicate balance between tradition and innovation through diverse typologies and adaptive strategies. The modern-progressive model, exemplified by Darunnajah Jakarta, demonstrates how *pesantren* can integrate advanced pedagogical practices and global collaborations to produce graduates equipped for contemporary challenges while preserving Islamic values. The integration-multiformat approach, as seen in Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas, underscores the importance of blending traditional methods with formal education systems to cater to diverse career paths and societal roles. Finally, the traditional-intensive model, represented by Mathali'ul Falah Kajen, highlights the ongoing relevance of preserving classical Islamic scholarship while selectively incorporating modern elements.

Despite these achievements, *pesantren* face significant challenges, including technological resistance, resource constraints, limited access to information, and socio-cultural barriers. These obstacles illustrate the complexities of aligning historical and religious identities with the demands of modernization. However, innovative strategies such as collaborative leadership, capacity building, and community engagement have enabled *pesantren* to address these challenges effectively. By leveraging their cultural and historical strengths, *pesantren* have not only

⁶³ Akhmad Nurul Kawakip and Sulanam, "The Practice of Shared Values and Islamic Educational Identity: Evidence From A Pesantren in East Java, Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 17, no. 1 (2023): 27, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2023.17.1.27-53>.

preserved their Islamic identity but also positioned themselves as dynamic institutions capable of contributing to broader societal transformations.

The impacts of these innovations are profound, encompassing enhanced academic performance, character development, technological adaptation, and strengthened societal engagement. The *pesantren*'s ability to integrate tradition with modernity offers valuable lessons for faith-based education systems worldwide. By adopting context-sensitive strategies and fostering inclusive educational practices, *pesantren* demonstrate that innovation and preservation are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary processes that can drive sustainable progress.

This study emphasizes the need for ongoing research to explore the evolving dynamics of *pesantren* education and its broader implications for educational innovation in diverse cultural and religious contexts. As global challenges continue to reshape educational landscapes, the *pesantren*'s journey provides a compelling blueprint for balancing heritage and progress in the pursuit of transformative and inclusive education. []

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