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Pesantren without Kiai: Transforming Leadership Traditions and Boarding School Ownership

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Abstrak

Munculnya pesantren tanpa kiai menandai diversifikasi model kepemimpinan dan kepemilikan pesantren di Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengkaji transformasi kepemimpinan dan kepemilikan pada dua pesantren di Pekalongan yang didirikan oleh non-kiai, yakni Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran dan International Muhammadiyah *Boarding School* (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum Pekajangan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-fenomenologis dengan analisis data situs tunggal dan lintas situs model Robert K Yin. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terjadi pergeseran dari model kepemimpinan tradisional yang berbasis keluarga menuju model yang lebih organisasional. Demikian pula, kepemilikan pesantren berada di tangan yayasan atau organisasi Islam. Pengasuh pesantren kini dipilih oleh lembaga atau organisasi, bukan lagi berdasarkan garis keturunan. Meski demikian, model kepemimpinan dan kepemilikan yang beragam tidak mengurangi minat masyarakat untuk menyekolahkan anak-anaknya di pesantren tersebut.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Pesantren, Kepemilikan Pesantren, Pesantren Tanpa Kiai*

Abstract

The emergence of pesantren without kiai signifies a diversification in the leadership and ownership models of pesantren in Indonesia. This study investigates the transformation of leadership and ownership in two pesantren located in Pekalongan, specifically Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran and International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum Pekajangan, both of which were established by non-kiai founders. Employing a qualitative-phenomenological approach, this research utilizes single-site and cross-site data

analysis as modeled by Robert K. Yin. The findings indicate a transition from a traditional family-based leadership model to a more organizational structure. Furthermore, the ownership of pesantren has shifted to foundations or Islamic organizations. Consequently, the selection of pesantren caregivers is now determined by the institution or organization rather than by lineage. Nevertheless, the diverse leadership and ownership models do not reduce the interest of the community sending their children to these pesantren.

Keywords: *Pesantren Leadership, Pesantren Ownership, Pesantren Without Kiai*

INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is an indigenous Indonesian educational institution that is very adaptive and accommodating to change. Since its first appearance during the Walisongo period (Bruinessen, 2012; Kohler, 2004) until the reform era today, pesantren have undergone various transformations ranging from institutional models, curriculum, learning orientation, teaching methods, the role and leadership of *kiai*, to ownership (Asrohah, 2011; Dhofier, 2011; Mastuhu, 1994; Qomar, 2005; Steenbrink, 1986; Sulaiman, 2010; Ziemek, 1986). The transformation occurs gradually over time, influenced by the interests and needs of both the pesantren and the surrounding society. However, it is important to note that the changes experienced by the pesantren remain deeply connected to its traditional roots.

Pesantren Tebu Ireng, for example. This pesantren, which was founded in 1899, from the beginning of its establishment seems to have been deliberately designed and prepared as a kind of "*pilot project*" to improve the condition of pesantren education in its time. This was realized by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari when building his pesantren, which was separate and different from those of his father and grandfather and other existing pesantren around Jombang, with a system that was more open to change (Atjeh, 1957). From 1950-1975, Tebuireng pesantren opened madrasahs, schools, and universities to adapt to new needs in the world of education (Atjeh, 1957). Modern Pesantren Gontor in Ponorogo has, since its inception, adopted a distinct approach compared to the traditional Salafiyah pesantren. Notably, its curriculum emphasizes the inclusion of Arabic and English language instruction as key components. The establishment of Pesantren Gontor has also served as an inspiration for the founding of other modern pesantren throughout Indonesia, particularly among its alumni.

In the pesantren tradition, there are at least three interrelated elements that constitute the life system of the pesantren. The first element is the *kiai* serves as the primary architect of the pesantren system. The *kiai* provides the foundational principles upon which the system is established. The second element is the *santri*, or students, who acquire Islamic knowledge from the *kiai*. The *santri* represent vital human resources that not only support the existence of the pesantren but also help sustain the *kiai's* influence within the broader community. The third element is the pondok, which refers to the dormitory system established by the *kiai* to provide accommodation for students during their studies at the pesantren. The other two are the mosque and the yellow book as the pesantren curriculum (Dhofier, 2011).

Pesantren is an important part of the life of *kiai* because it is a place where he develops his teachings and influence through teaching (Turmudi, 2004). *Kiai* serves as the central figure who shapes the character of the pesantren. This includes the application of the value system to the *santri*, the implementation of learning methodologies, the utilization of the curriculum (kitab kuning), and the establishment of institutional structures, among other aspects. So it is natural when some say that without *kiai*, pesantren cannot be established (Dhofier, 2011; Ilahi, 2014; Jannah et al., 2021) and it gives a reason that *kiai* is the leader of the pesantren and often the founder. Therefore, it is natural that the growth of a pesantren depends on the personal ability of the *kiai*. MT Ilahi (2014) gives the reason that *kiai* is not only a leader or a caregiver but also a full holder of the leadership relay in supporting the progress of Islamic educational institutions for the Muslim generation. Ahmad Faris (2015) points out that it is the *kiai* can control and determine everything in the pesantren because the progress of the pesantren depends on the leadership of the *kiai* (Mukri & Tamam, 2021).

In terms of leadership, there has been a transformation that the *kiai* is no longer the absolute leader of the pesantren, who with his power and authority is the only source of *santri* knowledge because of the patron-client relationship (Rachman, 2014; Ramli, 2017; Ahmad Ta'rifin, 2021). Ali Anwar's research (2011; Arifin, 2018; Mardiyah, 2013; Muhammad Arif Faizin, 2015) at Pesantren Lirboyo found the fact that certain matters such as student discipline, security, and others are decided through the leadership of *kiai* collectively in a body called the Lirboyo Islamic

Boarding School Welfare Board (BPK-P2L) which is led by the caregiver of the main pesantren and its members consist of several caregivers of pesantren units within the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School.

In terms of ownership, as the owner of the pesantren, *kiai* will be able to advance the pesantren and talk a lot in the realm of development to compete with modern educational institutions (Faris, 2015; Ramli, 2017; Ziemek, 1986) assesses pesantren as "self-employed" institutions owned by *kiai* in the religious education sector, whose characteristics are influenced and determined by the personalities of the founders and leaders. Therefore, some pesantren do not want to accept assistance from the state or outside parties because it is feared that it will affect pesantren activities.

The leadership and ownership of a pesantren, often regarded as the personal property of the *kiai* and frequently family-owned, can be transmitted to his descendants (Fakhrurrozi, 2021). The typical inheritance pattern follows a sequence from the founder to the son-in-law, then to the grandson, and subsequently to the senior santri. This indicates that the primary heir is the son of the pesantren's founder, who is deemed suitable by the community to assume the role of *kiai*, based on his piety and the depth of his religious knowledge (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 123), This succession resembles a monarchical system, wherein the *kiai* designates his son or brother as his successor (Raihani, 2013), Such practices can often result in leadership crises and divisions within the pesantren (Lukens-Bull, 2004, p. 85).

The assumption there is no pesantren without *kiai* (Abidin et al., 2020; Jannah et al., 2021); no pesantren survives and develops without the figure of *kiai* (Ilahi, 2014) the social, religious, educational, political, and economic dynamics of society significantly influence the pesantren tradition. Historically, pesantren were established and led exclusively by *kiai*; however, this tradition is currently undergoing a transformation. Pesantren are now recognized as entities that can be established and owned not only by *kiai* but also by any individual who possesses the requisite resources and capabilities to establish a pesantren.

Pesantren *Roudlotul Mutaallimin* Patrang Jember is a boarding school that has implemented a hydroponic farming system in collaboration with Bank Indonesia Jember. This initiative is notable for its high economic value and minimal land

requirements. The institution generates an income of 22 million Indonesian Rupiah monthly from hydroponic produce cultivated on an area of 120 square meters. The pesantren was established by Kustiono Musri, an activist associated with a non-governmental organization (NGO) (<https://santrinews.com>, accessed October 10, 2021). Currently, the pesantren has expanded its educational offerings by establishing both Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA).

At the base of Mount Tangkuban Perahu in Purwakarta, West Java, Hartono, a businessman specializing in industrial waste treatment, established a boarding school known as *Minhajul Haq* on an 8-hectare plot of land. This pesantren currently emphasizes the memorization of the Quran (Tahfidz Alqur'an) and is anticipated to develop formal educational institutions in the future to meet the growing interest of families wishing to enroll their children in the pesantren (<https://cowasjp.com>, accessed October 10, 2021).

In Kendal, Central Java, H. Slamet Soemadyo, a businessman engaged in the property, furniture, and tobacco sectors, founded Pondok Modern Selamat on March 27, 1992, in a designated area. 18 hectares and currently accommodates approximately 2,200 students hailing from various regions of the archipelago. Its educational facilities include PMS Junior High School, PMS Unggulan Junior High School, PMS Senior High School, PMS Unggulan Senior High School, and two universities, namely STIE Selamat Sri and Selamat Sri University (UNISS) (<https://ponpes.net>. Profile of Pondok Pesantren Modern Selamat Kendal, accessed October 15, 2021).

Modern Al-Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Buaran, Pekalongan, is situated on 4 hectares of land designated as a waqf was donated by H. Achmad Zaky Arslan Djunaid, the proprietor of Kospin Jasa Pekalongan. The Buaran Modern Al-Qur'an Islamic Boarding School represents an evolution of the Buaran Al-Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan, which was established in 1975 by cooperative entrepreneurs H.A. Djunaid, KH. Syafi'i Abdul Majid, KH. Ghofar Ismail, and KH. Akrom Hasani. The leadership of the pesantren is collectively managed by KH Zuhdi Khariri, KH Yaskur, KH Abdul Aziz Al-Hafiz, among others. Notably, these individuals do not share a familial relationship with the founder of the pesantren (Preliminary observation on October 12, 2021).

In contrast to the kiai within Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) who established pesantren independently, Muhammadiyah, recognized as the earliest religious organization to adopt the school education model (Sekolah Rakjat) as a consequence of the Colonial Ethical Policy between 1905 and 1925, has also contributed to the traditional pesantren education landscape in recent decades. In Pekalongan, for instance, Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Ulum Pekajangan was established by the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership Council (PDM) of Pekalongan. Similarly, in Wanasari, the PDM of Brebes founded Pondok Pesantren KH Mas Mansyur, which serves as a venue for the integrated study of both religious and general sciences for its students. This pesantren also operates a boarding school known as MBS Junior High School (Muhammadiyah Boarding School) (www.umm.ac.id, accessed October 10, 2021).

The phenomenon of many pesantren being established by outsiders (people who are not kiai) is interesting when considering that in the past decades, pesantren (especially salafiyah) generally did not want to be influenced by outsiders. They often refused assistance from the government and political organizations. Asep Zamzami Noor (2010) notably critiqued the trend of entrepreneurs seeking to establish pesantren without possessing the requisite religious knowledge and piety. According to him, after establishing a magnificent pesantren, kiai are appointed as managers or executors, receiving compensation from entrepreneurs. In this model of pesantren, the *kiai's* position remains under the control of the donor, which often results in a disconnect from the surrounding community.

In contrast to Asep, In'am Sulaiman (2010) based his interpretation of Weber on the premise that the presence of a *kiai* figure as the founder and leader of a pesantren is not a prerequisite for the community (santri guardians) when deciding to enroll their children in a pesantren. He argues that the evolving traditions of pesantren, particularly regarding kiai leadership and ownership, do not inherently diminish the public's interest in pesantren established by individuals who are not *kiai*. This paper specifically discusses how the long-standing tradition within the pesantren life system has recently undergone sporadic transformations. Many new pesantren have emerged that were not established by *kiai* or their families, but rather by individuals outside the pesantren community, such as businessmen, NGOs, religious

organizations, and government entities. These founders often lack a deep understanding of religious knowledge based on yellow classical texts, leading to the assumption that the establishment of these pesantren is not aimed at *tafaqquh fi al-din*. This highlights a significant distinction between traditional and contemporary pesantren.

METHODS

This research employs qualitative-phenomenological approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) to examine the transformation of pesantren traditions, specifically in relation to leadership and ownership at Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran and the International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Pekajangan.

Primary data were collected from caregivers and teachers at the two boarding schools, while secondary data were sourced from theoretical studies by experts on pesantren without *kiai*, as well as on leadership and ownership of pesantren, drawn from various books and scientific journals.

To obtain research data comprehensively, researchers employed three techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The data collected about pesantren without kiai were then cross-verified using triangulation techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The qualitative data analysis technique employed is based on single-site and cross-site data analysis as modeled by Robert K. Yin (2003). After collecting data from each boarding school, a cross-site data analysis was conducted. This involved juxtaposing and comparing the findings related to the transformation of leadership and ownership among the boarding schools studied, followed by the integration of data across the different institutions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Model of Transformation of Leadership Tradition and Ownership of Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran

During the formative period of the pesantren, Pondok Pesantren Al-Qur'an Buaran, which later evolved into Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran, was established by several prominent figures, including KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid and the cooperative leader H. A. Djunaed. Consequently, from its inception, a spirit of

collaboration characterized the ownership and leadership of the pesantren, with KH. Syafi'i and H. A. Djunaed serving as the founders and administrators under the auspices of the Buaran Batik Cooperative. In its early days, the boarding school was led by K. Sonhadji Abu Bakar, along with other notable figures such as KH. Sa'dullah Dahlan Al-Hafidz, K. Irfan Said Al-Hafidz, KH. Mudzakir Asyhuri, KH. Anwar Fathoni, Ustadz Yusuf Anggawi, KH. Ghufron Ahid, KH. Lukni Maulana, and others.

Currently, the Buaran Modern Al-Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Foundation (YPMAB) administers several educational programs, including the Tahfidzul Qur'an Education, directed by KH. Abdul Aziz al-Hafidz; the Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Ulumul Qur'an, led by KH. Abdul Kholiq Thoha; the Madrasah Tsanawiyah Azzaky, currently headed by H. Muhamad Muhlisin, Lc, M.Ag.; and the Study Group (Kejar) Package C, which is equivalent to high school and overseen by Agus Arwani, M.Ag. These four educational models operate under the leadership of the Islamic Boarding School, a position presently held by KH. Ahmad Rasyad (A. Ghoni, March, 2022).

The leadership of Buaran Qur'anic Boarding School is currently held by the Foundation, with KH. Abdul Aziz Al-Hafidz serving as the female caretaker and KH. Abdul Kholiq Thoha as the male caretaker. Under their guidance, the pesantren has experienced significant growth, supported by a team of competent educators, including KH. Muhammad Rofiq, who serves as the Head of Tahfidz, and Ustad Abdul Mun'in as Diniyah Ulumul Qur'an teacher and H. Ma'mur Al-Hafidz, who serves as the Head of the Mosque Takmir (A. Aziz, 2022; A. Ghoni, 2022).

Since its establishment, the ownership of the pesantren has been held by the Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran Foundation (YPMAB), which comprises a collective of religious leaders and entrepreneurs, including descendants of the founder and community leaders who serve as supporters. H. Achmad Alf Arslan, H. Afzan Arslan, and H. Andy Arslan are the grandchildren of H. A. Djunaed, a prominent batik entrepreneur and cooperative figure, and the son of H. Zaky Djunaed, the founder and owner of Konspin Jasa Pekalongan, the largest cooperative in Indonesia. Additionally, H. Abdul Hakim Kurniawan (Gus Aing) is the son of KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid, a charismatic scholar from Pekalongan who played a

pivotal role in the establishment of the Buaran Al-Qur'an Islamic Boarding School prior to its renaming as Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran. Conversely, the family of KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid, which possesses profound connections to the realm of religious education, offers spiritual guidance for the pesantren. The partnership between these two families has resulted in the establishment of an educational institution that harmoniously integrates religious values with the principles of the business sector.

Between 1975 and 2022, the foundation has experienced a succession of leadership, reflecting the ownership of the pesantren on at least six occasions. The leadership transitions occurred as follows: from KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid to H. A. Djunaid, then to H. Zaky Djunaid, followed by H. Achmad Alf Arslan Djunaid (Alex), subsequently to H. Afzan Arslan Djunaid, and finally to H. Abdul Hakim Kurniawan (Gus Aing, March 2022).

The leadership and custodianship of Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran have undergone several transitions, as previously noted. In its formative years, while still affiliated with YPI Bendo, the Buaran Al-Qur'an Boarding School was overseen by several prominent kiai, including K. Sonhadji Abu Bakar, KH. Sa'dullah Dahlan Al-Hafidz, K. Irfan Said Al-Hafidz, KH. Mudzakir Asyhuri, KH. Anwar Fathoni, Ustadz Yusuf Anggawi, KH. Ghufron Ahid, and KH. Lukni Maulana. In the subsequent period of Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran, the leadership of the pesantren has experienced two significant changes, beginning with KH. Ahmad Rasyad, who served as the primary caretaker overseeing various educational activities within the pesantren. This system eventually evolved into a division of responsibilities, resulting in the establishment of separate roles for female and male *murakkib*. The current structure of the Foundation is attributed to the responsibilities held by its caretakers. KH. Abdul Aziz serves as the caretaker of the female pesantren, while KH. Abdul Kholiq oversees the male pesantren (A. Aziz, March, 2022).

Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran, established by religious leaders and entrepreneurs, has evolved into a vibrant educational institution. The partnership between KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid and H. Achmad Dhunaid provided a strong foundation for the pesantren. To this day, their legacy is upheld by their descendants,

including the Djunaid family and the family of KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid, who actively participate in the management of the Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran Foundation (YPMAB). Under the auspices of this foundation, the pesantren continues to expand and has established various educational institutions, such as Madrasah Ulumul Qur'an and MTs. Az-Zaky.

The transformation of ownership and leadership of the pesantren kiai at Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran presents several intriguing aspects:

The leadership of the foundation is traditionally maintained by the descendants of the founder. In contrast, the pesantren does not have any descendants of its founder represented in its leadership or management structure. Instead, the leadership of the pesantren is entrusted to kiai who do not share familial or fraternal ties with the founder. Consequently, any individual may be appointed as a kiai leader at Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran, provided they meet the following criteria: (1) possess competence in religious studies and the memorization of the Al-Qur'an (tahfidz); (2) have the trust of the Foundation; (3) demonstrate proven moral character; and (4) be capable of supervising and educating students continuously, residing in accommodations provided by the Foundation. Individuals who do not fulfill these requirements are ineligible to serve as *kiai* caregivers of the pesantren.

The leadership transformation at Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran exhibits distinct characteristics when compared to the leadership transitions typically observed in traditional salafiyah pesantren. In conventional settings, the succession of leadership commences upon the death of the founder, who also serves as the owner and caretaker of the pesantren. The passing of a *kiai* signifies the end of a generational leadership era within the pesantren. According to Mastuhu (1994) the pattern of leadership succession in pesantren follows a specific hierarchy: from the founder to the son, then to the son-in-law, followed by the grandson, and ultimately to a senior *santri*. The initial heir is typically the founder's son, who is deemed suitable by the community to assume the role of kiai, based on his piety and the depth of his religious knowledge. Should the founder's sons be deemed incompetent, the responsibility of leadership may then be transferred to other designated successors to the relatives of the kiai (Dhofier, 2011). If none of them are able to assume leadership, there exists the possibility of succession by former senior

santri. Senior santri are selected in instances where the founder's direct lineage is deemed incompetent. They represent the final option for replacing the leadership of the pesantren kiai, a position that is traditionally linked by marriage (Ziemek, 1986, p. 144).

The succession of leadership within pesantren occurs independently of the death of the pesantren caregiver. This process is not uniform; some leaders are replaced following the death of the *kiai*, while others are replaced at the conclusion of a predetermined management period. Specifically, when the term of the Foundation's management expires, the kiai's leadership tenure at the pesantren also concludes. Should the *kiai* be re-elected by the Foundation, he will continue to lead the pesantren; otherwise, a new *kiai* will assume the role of caretaker.

This model of leadership contrasts with that of traditional Salafiyah pesantren, where the leadership is typically held for life. Given that the pesantren is considered the personal property of the kiai, the kiai will preside over the institution for the duration of his life. As an informal organization, the leadership style within pesantren is generally characterized by a natural approach, lacking a formalized and structured framework. This is evident in both the leadership process and the succession planning for prospective leaders who are expected to continue the leadership of the pesantren (Dhofier, 2011; Mastuhu, 1994; Ziemek, 1986).

In traditional Salafiyah pesantren, the kiai serves as the founder, owner, and caretaker, wielding authority over all aspects of pesantren life. The residents of the pesantren are expected to adhere to the rules established by the kiai, leading Mujamil Qomar (Raihani, 2013) to draw a parallel between the kiai and a king, thereby culturally positioning the kiai in a role akin to that of feudal nobility in Java, referred to as *kanjeng*. However, in Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran, the role of the kiai has evolved, such that the caretaker now implements the policies of the Foundation, which serves as the owner and leader of the pesantren. Consequently, the kiai's authority as a leader (caretaker) is now confined to the operational aspects of the academic curriculum. The kiai functions primarily as an executor in the process of teaching Islamic studies, based on the yellow book and the memorization of the Al-Qur'an, and does not possess extensive regulatory power as the sole stakeholder in the interests of the pesantren.

The leadership transformation that took place at Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran serves as a reflection of social dynamics and the development of contemporary society. The modernization of education, along with its impact on systems and values, has played a crucial role in facilitating this change (Hidayat, 1985; Suradi, 2017). Historically, the aspects of heredity and kinship were predominant in leadership structures. The dominant factors influencing the leadership of pesantren have undergone a significant transformation. Previously, traditional elements played a central role; however, the pressures of global competition and the increasing demand for higher quality education now compel pesantren to seek leaders with qualified academic credentials.

In the context of Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran, proficiency in religious knowledge, particularly in the mastery of the yellow book and the memorization of the Al-Qur'an (tahfidz), serves as the primary criterion for selecting leaders. This reflects a paradigm shift wherein leadership is no longer exclusively determined by social status or familial connections, but rather by an individual's capability to master religious knowledge. This pesantren acknowledges that in order to maintain relevance and effectively address contemporary challenges, it requires leaders who possess sufficient intellectual capacity.

The phenomenon observed at Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran exemplifies the efforts of pesantren to adapt to contemporary changes. Pesantren are no longer isolated from their social contexts; rather, they actively engage with the dynamics of the broader community. Consequently, pesantren are able to sustain their existence and remain pertinent amidst intensifying competition. The transformation in leadership that takes place is an integral aspect of this adaptation process, wherein pesantren endeavor to identify a more effective and efficient leadership model.

Model of Transformation of Leadership Tradition and Ownership of International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum

The establishment of the Muhammadiyah Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School was driven by two primary factors. First, the resolution passed at the 39th Muhammadiyah Congress in 1974, which advocated for the creation of educational institutions focused on clerical studies. Second, the concern expressed by the kyai of

Muhammadiyah Pekajangan regarding the insufficient number of preachers. In response to these factors, KH Sulkhan Mighrom and KH Ishom Cholil, two prominent figures within Muhammadiyah Pekajangan, took the initiative to spearhead the establishment of the pesantren on June 15, 1997 (<https://www.imbs-miftahululum.ponpes.id/profil-imbs-miftahul-ulum/>)

At the beginning of the institution, KH Syukron Madani Qahmad Ambari was appointed as the leader of the Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School. This appointment was formalized through a decree issued by the Muhammadiyah Pekajangan Branch Leadership, which was signed by H. Yusuf Yahya, the Chairman of the Pekajangan Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership for the term 1996-2001 (<https://www.imbs-miftahululum.ponpes.id/profil-imbs-miftahul-ulum/>).

In accordance with the resolution reached during the aforementioned plenary meeting, the academic year at Muhammadiyah Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School commenced in 1997/1998. At the beginning of this new academic year, the institution-initiated student registration, enrolling a total of 42 children across formal education levels, specifically Madrasah Aliyah and Madrasah Tsanawiyah. Additionally, non-formal educational programs were conducted in the afternoon, evening, and early morning, utilizing a classical instructional system overseen by kiai and ustadz.

In 2018, the Muhammadiyah Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School underwent institutional transformations, evolving into the International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum. This change was made in response to the demands and developments of contemporary society (Hamdan, May, 2022).

The IMBS Miftahul Ulum institution is affiliated with the Islamic Community Organization Muhammadiyah and operates under the direct supervision of the Pekajangan Branch Leadership. Following its transition to IMBS, the highest authority within the pesantren is vested in the *Mudir*, who is responsible for overseeing the various activities of the educational units. The current *Mudir* is Kiai Sumarno, M.Pd.I, with Ust. Hamdan serving as his deputy (Hamdan, May 2022).

The majority of educators at IMBS Miftahul Ulum are alumni of several esteemed institutions, including Pondok Pesantren Modern Darussalam Gontor, Pondok Modern Arrisalah Ponorogo, Pondok Pesantren Tebu Ireng in Jombang, East Java, Pondok Pesantren Modern Putri Al-Mawaddah, Pondok Pesantren Modern Putri Gontor Mantingan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, IKIP Semarang, UNDIP, IAIN Semarang, among others (<https://www.imbs-miftahululum.ponpes.id/profil-imbs-miftahul-ulum/>).

This was echoed by Ust. Hamdan:

The leader (caregiver) of the Islamic Boarding School of Miftahul Ulum (IMBS), along with the heads of educational units under IMBS and the teaching staff, represent the most exemplary cadres of Muhammadiyah. Following their internal education at the Muhammadiyah Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, they further enhance their academic qualifications across various disciplines, both in formal educational institutions and other educational settings. Upon graduation, they assume the role of *ustadz*, imparting knowledge in both general and religious sciences.

As the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah aims to establish pesantren educational institutions within a specific framework designed to cultivate cadres of ulama, zu'ama, mubaligh, and mu'alim who are devoted to Allah SWT. These individuals are expected to embody broad-mindedness, creativity, and independence, in alignment with the principles of Muhammadiyah.

Initially, the educational program at the Muhammadiyah Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School focused on the in-depth study and appreciation of Islam, referred to as *takhasus*. This program served as the foundational framework for the establishment of the Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School. Participation in this program was open to individuals of all ages and was provided at no cost. The *takhasus* education was conducted over a two-year period, from June 1995 to June 1997, at the Muhammadiyah Pekajangan Branch Office.

The objective of the IMBS Miftakhul Ulum is to ensure that its graduates are equipped to compete effectively in the external environment without encountering significant obstacles. To achieve this aim, the institution offers comprehensive

instruction in religious studies, as well as proficiency in Arabic and English languages, alongside other essential general knowledge.

The educational model established by IMBS Miftahul Ulum Muhammadiyah Pekajangan integrates both *salafi* and *khalafi* boarding school learning systems, exhibiting the following characteristics:

Teaching and learning activities are conducted in a traditional classroom setting, following a structured schedule that integrates the curriculum of Pondok Pesantren and Madrasah. In the context of teaching at IMBS Miftahul Ulum, the educators, referred to as kiai or ustadz, employ practical approaches. The evaluation of learning outcomes is performed through a semester classification system. The evaluation techniques encompass various dimensions, including cognitive aspects (knowledge), affective aspects (attitude), and psychomotor aspects (Hamdan, May, 2022).

The ownership and leadership structure of the pesantren kiai is distinctly established from the beginning of the establishment of the International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum. This institution is an Islamic educational establishment that was officially founded by the Pekajangan Muhammadiyah Branch Management, in accordance with the mandate of the 39th Muhammadiyah Congress held in Padang in 1974. Consequently, IMBS is collectively owned by the Muhammadiyah organization, with the leadership (caregiver) of the pesantren appointed by the Muhammadiyah board. As a result, the transformation of ownership and leadership within the pesantren occurs periodically, reflecting a systematic pattern of regeneration in the leadership transition at IMBS Miftahul Ulum Pekajangan.

This regeneration occurs through both informal and formal channels. Informally, students of IMBS Miftahul Ulum are guided, educated, and nurtured in alignment with the values and principles of Muhammadiyah. The educational approach fosters an integrative mindset among students, accommodating both yellow book of Islamic classical texts and general studies within a continuous 24-hour learning framework. The objective is to cultivate individuals who will serve as future cadres of pesantren and leaders within the Muhammadiyah organization (Hamdan, May, 2022).

In the context of informal regeneration, several indicators signify the interest in potential leaders who actively engage in leadership roles. These indicators are consistently based on: (1) achievement; (2) loyalty and dedication to the organization; and (3) an attitude of resignation and submission to God as the absolute determining factor. Within this framework of informal regeneration, both the older and younger generations must actively participate in endeavors that are beneficial and constructive in order to cultivate capable leaders. The older generation is tasked with setting a positive example, as well as guiding and directing the younger generation—who are the potential leaders—toward the demonstration of commendable attitudes and ethical conduct (Rivai & Mulyadi, 2011).

IMBS Muhammadiyah Pekajangan is not worried about leadership transformation, because in addition to informal regeneration, it also openly conducts formal regeneration (Falah, 2019, p. 6) through sending students to various educational institutions both formal and non-formal such as Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, Pondok Modern Arrisalah Ponorogo, Pondok Pesantren Tebu Ireng Jombang East Java, Pondok Pesantren Modern Putri Al-Mawaddah, Pondok Pesantren Modern Putri Gontor Mantingan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, IKIP Semarang, UNDIP, UIN KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, UIN Walisongo Semarang and others.

Thus, the style of pesantren leadership, which has generally been natural, does not have a regular and settled form, has now shifted to awareness among pesantren leaders in order to regenerate the leadership of pesantren in the future by sending santri or kiai's children to large pesantren, *enrolling* their children in schools and universities, and after returning home, they serve and *take care of the* pesantren. The transformation of pesantren leadership in IMBS Muhammadiyah Pekajangan seems to deny Lukens-Bull's (2004) thesis that Muhammadiyah's failure to establish pesantren was due to the fact that they were not founded by kiai, and the lack of barakah kiai.

The pesantren leadership transformation model consists of: descent (kinship), organization, and *caretaker* (Falah, 2019). Leadership transformation based on lineage (kinship) after the kiai dies (Dhofier, 2011; Mastuhu, 1994; Ziemek, 1986). Organizational leadership shift is the transformation of pesantren leadership

carried out by organizations in the pesantren environment, such as by the foundation (Falah, 2019). *Caretaker* leadership transformation is the transformation of leadership by pesantren leaders to their successors or descendants, but temporarily represented by organizations (foundations, for example) (Falah, 2019, p. 8), because the prospective successors of pesantren leadership are aging or still young so it is deemed inappropriate to replace them immediately.

From the three models of pesantren leadership transformation in Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran and International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum Pekajangan, it is known that the style of pesantren leadership transformation in both pesantren uses an organizational leadership transformation model, where the leaders (caregivers: kiai) of pesantren are elected and appointed by the organization (foundation) periodically and can be re-elected for the next period. This is different from the leadership transformation in traditional (salafiyah) pesantren which is usually carried out naturally when the pesantren leader dies, then the descendants, family or relatives of the kiai definitively become his successor.

Meanwhile, the transformation model of pesantren ownership in the two studied pesantren, although organizationally, took a different style. Pondok Modern Al-Qur'an Buaran applies the descent model (kinship) of its founders in the ownership of the pesantren through the foundation established. This is known from the composition of the management of the foundation which appears to be prominently composed of the descendants/family of H. A. Djunaid and KH. Syafi'i Abdul Madjid. Whereas at the International Muhammadiyah Boarding School (IMBS) Miftahul Ulum Pekajangan, the ownership of the pesantren is under the Muhammadiyah organization, namely the Muhammadiyah Board of Pekajangan Pekalongan Branch, they are the people who are responsible for the existence and sustainability of the pesantren.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of kiai-free pesantren, which are managed by business figures, politicians, foundations, or religious organizations, represents a novel phenomenon within the realm of Islamic education in Indonesia. The leadership

model employed in these pesantren diverges from that of traditional pesantren, which are typically overseen by the descendants of their founders. Despite the leadership being held by individuals outside the founder's family, these pesantren continue to attract community interest, as parents choose to enroll their children in these institutions. This trend indicates that pesantren devoid of kiai are capable of adapting to contemporary societal changes and maintaining their relevance.

The findings of this study necessitate additional comprehensive research focused on the comparative analysis between traditional pesantren and pesantren that operate without kiai. This research should aim to identify the success factors and challenges encountered by each model. Furthermore, it is essential to investigate successful instances of pesantren without kiai and to analyze the factors that contribute to their achievements. Additionally, an evaluation of the curriculum implemented in pesantren without kiai is required to assess its relevance to contemporary needs and its effectiveness in producing high-quality graduates.

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