

The role of the *pesantren* law in strengthening the values of the boarding school tradition

Ahmad Wahib Maulana
Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: ahmadwahibmaulana@gmail.com

Moh. Heru Sunarko
Universitas Islam Negeri KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia
Email: herusunarko98@gmail.com

Abstract

The *Pesantren* Law holds significant importance in strengthening and preserving the traditions of *pesantren*, enabling these institutions to continue shaping the character and morals of the younger generation in alignment with noble Islamic values. This study examines the role of the *Pesantren* Law in reinforcing *pesantren* traditions at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Arifiyah*, Pekalongan City. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the findings reveal two key roles of the *Pesantren* Law. First, the administrative aspect enhances the values of simplicity, humility (*ketawadhu'an*), knowledge, and sincerity embedded in the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) curriculum, which must be integrated into the Simba PD Pontren system managed by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Second, the financial role is evident in the utilisation of the Smart Indonesia Programme, providing learning capital for *santri* (students) at Al-Arifiyah. The educational outcomes of the *santri* are showcased during the traditional *Haflah Akhirussanah* ceremony, reflecting values of gratitude and creativity. This study underscores the critical role of the *Pesantren* Law in institutional development and the preservation of *pesantren* traditions while supporting student growth and educational achievements.

Keywords: *Pesantren* law, Islamic boarding school traditions, *kitab kuning* curriculum, *santri* development, qualitative case study

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Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are witnesses to the history of the spread of Islam in Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools are able to bring people's perceptions regarding the importance of religious knowledge. This means that since that time the community has realised that Islamic boarding schools are present as Islamic educational institutions that help perfect the understanding of religious values seriously. The result that can be felt directly by the community from *pesantren* education is the usefulness of religious knowledge that is applied in everyday life. The community's need for education seems to go hand in hand with the development of Islamic boarding schools. Apart from being an educational institution, the existence of Islamic boarding schools is also an institution for preaching and propagating Islam as well as social religion (Setyawan, 2019).

Pesantren has been proven to be one of the main pillars of education in Indonesia. *Pesantren* have been able to help shape the character of a strong nation. Many human resources born from *pesantren* are able to make a difference and contribute to the progress of the nation. This is because simplicity, sincerity, love of knowledge, respect for teachers, courage to live independently are the values and spirit of *pesantren* that are always reminded repeatedly by kiai. Fighting is not common in the *pesantren* environment. Instead, what emerges is a warm and sincere friendship. The world of *pesantren* is known to be moderate, because from the beginning it has been accustomed to getting along closely with the surrounding community (Hidayat, 2016). *Pesantren* education was also regulated in the law before the *pesantren* law. This *pesantren* law is related to Law no 20 of 2003 which discusses the national education system article 11 paragraph (1), and article 30, which explains that "the government and regional governments are obliged to provide services and facilities, and guarantee the implementation of quality education for every citizen without discrimination".

The great expectation from the enactment of the *Pesantren* Law is that Islamic educational institutions will be more progressive in producing quality cadres who are able to answer the challenges of the times. Since long time ago, *pesantren* have produced quality cadres even though they have not been officially recognised by law, especially now that they have been officially recognised, it is expected to be a new spirit for *pesantren* to produce even better generations. The *pesantren* bill was passed at the DPR plenary meeting at the parliament complex, Senayan, Jakarta on Tuesday, 24 September 2019. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Speaker of the House Fahri Hamzah. Also present was the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs Lukman hakim Saifuddin, who said that the birth of the *Pesantren* Law was a form of recognition and independence of *pesantren* in carrying out their duties, namely as Islamic educational institutions.

Appreciation and appreciation must certainly be held from the *Pesantren* and religious education bill which has a mission to advance and improve the quality of religious education in this country to make a major contribution to the progress of the nation. The mission of improving the quality of religious education can also indirectly be interpreted as an effort to improve the quality of Indonesian human beings. These good intentions must of course be accompanied by the right path through laws and regulations that are in accordance with the democratic principles of the nation that adheres to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Hutabarat, 2018).

In relation to value, it can also be interpreted as a thought or idea that is considered important for human life. The truth of values also does not have to be proven empirically but tends to the sense of feeling the value. Somantri quoted from Allport explaining that value is a belief that becomes the basis for human action, humans choose their actions in accordance with beliefs based on the values they believe in (Budimansyah et al., 2011).

In its journey, *pesantren* always maintain the values of Islamic education. This is as stated by Said Aqil Siradj (1999) that *pesantren* have their own traditional values. However, *pesantren* also do not necessarily close their eyes to all forms of development of the times, which have undermined the value and existence of one's Islam. So that the development of *pesantren* is not considered stagnant and static. *Pesantren* provide a strategic role in community life in the form of service and service to the community, on the other hand, through *pesantren* education, they also participate in the framework of educating the nation. Therefore, *pesantren* have strong cultural roots with the community.

Since the enactment of the *Pesantren* Law on 24 September 2019, most groups consider that this is a gift for *pesantren* especially approaching the commemoration of the 2019 National *Santri* Day (HSN). However, there are some groups who think that this is actually a threat to

pesantren because *pesantren* will be regulated based on the Law, we know that since the beginning of the existence of Islamic boarding schools, *pesantren* are used to living independently and standing alone with all the systems used and management arranged by the kyai. However, after the enactment of the *Pesantren* Law, there needs to be more follow-up. Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School is one of the old Islamic boarding schools in Pekalongan City and part of the Islamic boarding schools that should get an impact from the existence of the *Pesantren* Law. Of course, the expected impact is a positive impact on the progress of *pesantren* education in the context of broadcasting Islam.

An article in the Ar-Raniry Journal by Muhammad Usman and Anton Widyanto (2021) with the title "*Pesantren* Law: Looking at the Direction of *Pesantren* Education Policy in Indonesia". The results of this study explain that the *Pesantren* Law has been passed and is even "considered" to be the best gift in the celebration of *santri* day on 22 October 2019. The presence of this special provision has answered and given hope for the pace of development of *pesantren* in Indonesia. The characteristics of *pesantren* such as the study of the yellow classical books and also the private institutional form are maintained as one of the characteristics of the past. The *Pesantren* Law has an emphasis on presenting *santri* who are humanist, tolerant, love the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and are anti-violence with anti-radicalism understanding. The *santri* who have graduated as evidenced by a diploma can continue their education to a higher level, and have equal opportunities in obtaining employment in the world of work. It should also be noted that the presence of the *Pesantren* Law cannot be separated from the pros and cons. Several times there were changes in the naming (nomenclature) in the proposed Bill (RUU) until it finally narrowed down to only regulate *pesantren*, but in general this law has been accepted by policy makers at the central level and has received public support from various Islamic organisations in Indonesia.

An article by Risalatul Hasanah and Mohammad Kosim (2021) in the re-JIEM Journal with the title "Analysis of Charismatic Leadership Style in Maintaining Traditional Boarding School Tradition Values at Pondok *Pesantren* Nurul Huda Kamundung Sampang. In the results of the study showed that: first, the application of charismatic leadership style in maintaining the values of traditional *pesantren* traditions still maintains the salaf boarding school which still maintains the teaching of previous scholars whose teaching uses yellow books using sorogan and wetonan teaching methods. And the management does not ask for funds from the government but asks for donations from students, asking for donations from the community to meet the needs of the boarding school. Second, the way of maintaining traditional values in charismatic leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools is by maintaining the tradition of salaf Islamic Boarding Schools, which means salaf, namely still following the teaching of the scholars, namely reciting the yellow book, praying in congregation, learning to read the Qur'an, khidmah, and seeking the pleasure of the teacher, and the method used is deliberation.

From this explanation, the authors are interested in conducting a study related to the role of the *Pesantren* Law on the values of *pesantren* traditions at Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan City with the aim of knowing the role of the *Pesantren* Law in strengthening the values of *pesantren* traditions. With the existence of a study related to the *Pesantren* Law, because there must be a certain impact after the presence of a law that specifically discusses *pesantren*. Meanwhile, since the beginning, *pesantren* were born with the principle of independence and prioritising traditional values, of course there are new policies that must be formulated by *pesantren* by referring to the Law. Before the *pesantren* had a special law, of course, the full authority was held by the *pesantren* itself, but after the presence of the *pesantren* law, of course there will be differences. The presence of the

Pesantren Law needs to be seen how big the role of the *Pesantren* Law is in the world of *pesantren* education.

Method

This study employs field research with a case study design to investigate the role of the *Pesantren* Law in strengthening Islamic boarding school traditions at the Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan City. A case study approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the specific context, providing a rich understanding of the phenomena under study by collecting data directly from participants in their natural environment (Untung, 2022).

The research is analytical-descriptive in nature, aimed at describing and analyzing the reality of how the *Pesantren* Law influences the preservation and development of *pesantren* traditions. Analytical-descriptive research not only provides a detailed account of the observed phenomena but also involves critically analyzing and interpreting these realities within a broader conceptual framework.

Research Approach

The study adopts a qualitative approach, which emphasizes a focus on processes and meanings rather than quantifiable measures. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring social and cultural phenomena as it relies on inductive and deductive reasoning to derive conclusions (Untung, 2022). The qualitative approach allows the researcher to gain deep insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of the *pesantren* community.

Data Sources

The data sources for this research are categorized into two types: (1) Primary Data Sources (key informants): This includes the management (e.g., the *kyai* and *pesantren* administrators) and students of Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School. These individuals provide firsthand accounts of how the *Pesantren* Law is perceived and implemented within the *pesantren* context. (2) Secondary Data Sources: They include books, journals, articles, and relevant legislative documents discussing the *Pesantren* Law and its implications for the traditional values and operational dynamics of *pesantren*.

Data Collection Techniques

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, multiple data collection techniques were employed: (1) Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including *pesantren* administrators and selected students. These interviews were designed to explore their perceptions of the *Pesantren* Law and its role in preserving traditional *pesantren* values. The interviews included open-ended questions to allow participants to express their views freely, while follow-up questions ensured the collection of detailed and nuanced data. (2) Observation: Non-participant observations were carried out within the *pesantren* environment to understand daily activities, teaching-learning processes, and interactions among students, teachers, and administrators. This technique enabled the researcher to identify how traditional values are maintained in practice and whether the *Pesantren* Law has influenced these processes. (3) Documentation: Relevant documents, including the *Pesantren* Law, administrative records of Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School, and previous studies or reports on *pesantren* education, were collected and analyzed. These materials provided context and supplementary information for the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this research was carried out systematically through the following steps: (1) Data Reduction: The researchers filtered and organized the raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Irrelevant or redundant information was excluded to focus on data relevant to the research objectives. (2) Data Display: The reduced data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions, thematic matrices, and conceptual

diagrams to facilitate interpretation and understanding. (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Patterns, relationships, and themes emerging from the data were identified and interpreted. The researcher drew conclusions based on these findings and verified them through cross-referencing with secondary data and revisiting key informants when necessary.

Result and Discussion

The Role of Pesantren Laws in Strengthening the Values of the Boarding School Tradition Administration

The presence of the *pesantren* law makes administrative governance in the *pesantren* environment orderly, because there are data that must be sent by each *pesantren* to the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Among the data that must be sent are statistical data on students, the number of students, the number of teachers accompanied by photos and complete bios, *pesantren* infrastructure and the condition of the building used. Before the law on *pesantren* administration, there was no requirement to make good administration, meaning that the running administration depended on the management of each *pesantren*. Because there is no demand for uniformity in terms of administration, whether the administration is good or bad depends on each *pesantren*.

Funding

Assistance in the form of funds received by *pesantren* education for several years is considered a lot in order to help the running of *pesantren* education both aimed at individual students, teachers and *pesantren* operations. Among the assistance is included in the table below.

Table 1

Pesantren Funding Assistance

No.	Funding Support	Description
1.	Indonesia Pintar Programme	This is assistance aimed at students who meet certain criteria and requirements, this PIP assistance is aimed at students who are only boarding students (not taking formal education levels) and are also considered underprivileged. The age limit for students who receive PIP assistance is a maximum of 21 years, this assistance is given once a year.
2.	Incentive Support	Incentive assistance is intended for Asatidz (teachers) of Islamic boarding schools, actually not only Islamic boarding schools, TPQ and Madin teachers also receive incentive assistance. This assistance comes from the Central Java Provincial Government, which is received every three months to teachers of Islamic boarding schools, TPQ and Madin.
3.	Transport Assistance	Transport assistance is intended for teachers of Islamic boarding schools sourced from the Pekalongan City government. This assistance is received every four months.
4.	Vocational Training Centre	This assistance refers to the training centre and supports the skills of <i>santri</i> , this assistance is sourced from the Ministry of Manpower.
5.	Grant Funding Assistance	The grant is a special aid for the development of <i>pesantren</i> , which is sourced from the Pekalongan City government and can be accessed every two years.

The Values of Boarding School Traditions at Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan City

Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School is one of the Islamic boarding schools in terms of its institutions, including the Salaf Islamic Boarding School with the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah madzab. As with other Islamic Boarding Schools, the role played is as an institution of da'wah, education, and struggle, as well as an agent of social change in society, especially for the village community where the Islamic Boarding School is located.

This Islamic Boarding School was founded by KH Zaenal Arifin in 1984. The name Al-Arifiyah was chosen by the founder with the hope that alumni would truly become ma'rifat people. The founder wants to realise his hopes by applying to the level of *santri* education, regulations and supported by prayer. In its implementation, there are values of *pesantren* tradition.

Table 2

The Values of the Boarding School Tradition

No.	Boarding school traditions	Value
1.	Learning Kitab Kuning	a. Simplicity b. Ketawadhu'an c. Knowledge d. Ikhlas e. Istiqomah f. Patience
2.	Bahtsul Masail	a. Courage b. Knowledge c. Tolerance d. Responsibility
3.	Ro'an	a. Discipline b. Cleanliness c. Independence d. Responsibility
4.	Khitobah	a. Science b. Courage c. Social
5.	Haflah Akhirussanah	a. Gratitude b. Creativity

In the study at Pondok *Pesantren* Al-Arifiyah Pekalongan City, there are two things from the role of the *Pesantren* Law in strengthening the values of the *pesantren* tradition, namely the role of *pesantren* administration and *pesantren* funding..

The Role of Islamic Boarding School Administration

Administration is a very important part of the running of the wheels of the organisation, often administration is forgotten and even some consider that this administration is not important. For the world of *pesantren*, an orderly administrative process is considered a taboo, because the simplicity of the *pesantren* with makeshift equipment that makes the means in bringing order to the administration makes it a bit of an obstacle. The makeshift infrastructure is the spirit of the *pesantren* management to try to organise the administration as well as possible, this is motivated by the demands of sending *santri* statistical data which must be submitted annually to the Ministry of Religion at the Pekalongan City level. Therefore, the administration must be well prepared, not meaning the compulsion of the demands to collect statistical data. Furthermore, the data collection process is very necessary in the course of the management of Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School because every year it must also make reports and collect archives of correspondence and other administration.

The *Pesantren* Law regulates the educational standards that must be followed by *pesantren*, including the administration of a curriculum that covers both academic and non-academic aspects. The curriculum should reflect traditional values such as sincerity, simplicity, and independence. With the standards set by the law, *pesantren* can ensure that the learning process does not only focus on the cognitive aspects but also on the character and moral formation of the *santri*. The characteristics of Pondok *Pesantren* can be seen from the teaching system of religious knowledge that still uses the yellow books as a reference (Hasanah & Kosim, 2021).

So it can be concluded that the curriculum administration of Pondok *Pesantren* Al-Arifiyah must be sent or entered into the Indonesian Ministry of Religion system, namely through the Simba PD application. Potren. The curriculum, which contains a list of yellow books, contains learning and can strengthen the values of the *pesantren* tradition, namely the value of simplicity and independence. However, the values of other *pesantren* traditions such as ketawadhu'an, the value of knowledge, the value of sincerity are also included and contained in the learning of yellow classical books in Islamic boarding schools.

Sincerity can be found in how students with full sincerity have to be away from their families and residences. The value of Ketawadhu'an can be seen from how the behaviour of students to their teachers or caregivers and during the learning process. The value of knowledge itself is in every yellow book taught at the Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan City.

The Role of Islamic Boarding School Funding

Since the presence of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools have been accustomed to economic independence. It is not uncommon for *pesantren* to develop their economy through certain sectors, agriculture, animal husbandry, business fields or others. Because in principle, *pesantren* is a social-based da'wah institution, the participation of the community to build a better national civilisation. Including Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan City, which is a social house for the community. So the boarding school is accustomed to economic independence.

The benefits of assistance presented to students and *pesantren* have a positive impact on students who are in need from an economic point of view. It is not uncommon for simple *santri* family backgrounds to also come from the lower middle class, at the Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School it is not uncommon for students to go home during the Shawwal holiday or Maulid month until finally the time to go to the *pesantren* arrives, the students are still at home to help their families find provisions and pocket money to be able to go to the *pesantren* again. One of the obstacles experienced by students is economic constraints, therefore students who are economically disadvantaged are greatly helped and become more focused on learning. Finally, they no longer think about how they can survive and get enough economic provisions.

The *pesantren* law provides a lot of assistance to *pesantren*, such as Indonesia Smart Programme assistance, incentive assistance, assistance from Kesra (city government) as well as *pesantren* operational assistance and grant funds. To get such assistance, among the requirements, of course, the *pesantren* must have a legal entity. For the distribution of assistance aimed at students, the management of Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School regulates the mechanism in such a way that the utilisation is used appropriately. The *pesantren* management distributes it through syahriah (*santri* tuition fees) which must be paid every month, thus for *santri* whose names are listed and classified as *santri* who receive assistance, the monthly syahriyah has been paid, not only that the management also distributes it to students who are deemed in need. Because not all students get assistance from the government, therefore the management regulates the mechanism so that the benefits of this assistance can be felt by the majority of students.

Thus, students become serious when studying and also eager to serve and continue to strive for knowledge. In addition to activities scheduled through the *pesantren* curriculum, there are several activities that are routinely carried out by students independently and in groups outside of *pesantren* activity hours, these activities are known as khitobah (speech) and ro'an (community service) and Haflah Akhirussanah. This shows that some students come from the lower middle class, which in fulfilling their needs need to be assisted.

According to Maulana Arif Setyawan in Usman and Widyanto (2021), regarding the attention of funds for *pesantren* in the *Pesantren* Law, it is hoped that teachers (educators) who teach will be more prosperous and *pesantren* facilities will also be better. The existence of this education budget allocation is a fundamental interest that favours the welfare of the people. Meanwhile, in *Pesantren* there is assistance that can be accessed by *santri*. So the existence of assistance is not only for the welfare of the teachers but also the *santri* can feel it.

An important point can be taken in the role of funding the implications of the implementation of the *Pesantren* Law that the Smart Indonesia Programme assistance can be felt by students who do meet the criteria of the programme. In improving *santri* learning achievement, it can be seen from the *pesantren* tradition in terms of this activity, namely through Haflah Akhirussanah activities. The value contained in Haflah Akhirussanah is the value of gratitude and the value of *santri* creativity. The value of gratitude here is the routine activities of Haflah Akhirussanah as a place where teachers and parents can find out the development or aspects of student learning outcomes from these activities. The gratitude effort is wrapped in a series of religious activities such as prayer together and recitation. In addition, the value of *santri* creativity is also in how to package Haflah Akhirussanah activities attractively.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of the *Pesantren* Law on strengthening Islamic boarding school traditions at Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan City. The findings reveal that the *Pesantren* Law has played a significant role in improving administrative governance and ensuring better financial support for *pesantren* operations, students, and teachers. The structured administrative processes mandated by the *Pesantren* Law have not only streamlined data reporting and record-keeping but also strengthened the incorporation of traditional Islamic values into the educational framework. Additionally, financial support facilitated through government programs has alleviated economic burdens for students and enhanced the operational capacity of *pesantren*. These developments have contributed to preserving and fostering traditional *pesantren* values such as sincerity, simplicity, knowledge, and independence while enabling *pesantren* to adapt to modern administrative and educational demands.

This study was conducted within a single *pesantren*, Al-Arifiyah Islamic Boarding School, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other *pesantren* with different traditions, sizes, or geographic locations. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the research relied heavily on subjective perspectives of informants, which may introduce bias or partiality in interpreting the findings. While the research focused on administrative governance and funding, it did not deeply explore other aspects of the *Pesantren* Law, such as its influence on curriculum development, teacher training, or alumni outcomes.

Future research should consider conducting comparative studies involving multiple *pesantren* across different regions to identify broader trends and variations in how the *Pesantren* Law is implemented. Quantitative approaches can also be employed to assess the statistical impact of financial assistance and administrative reforms on educational outcomes and student well-being. Furthermore, an exploration of the *Pesantren* Law's influence on other dimensions, such as curriculum innovation, digital integration, or the professional development of *pesantren* educators, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness. Lastly, studies could examine the long-term impact of these reforms on *pesantren* graduates' ability to balance traditional Islamic values with the demands of modern society.

Conflict of interests

The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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