

# Entrepreneurship-Based Strategies for Developing Superior Islamic Boarding Schools

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## Abstract:

This study examines strategies to enhance the excellence of Islamic boarding schools by integrating entrepreneurship within the Islamic Education Foundation. This study focuses on the role of Trubus Business Center (TSB) as the main driver in creating an independent, adaptive, and superior pesantren ecosystem. Using a qualitative approach with case study methods, data were collected through interviews, observations, and institutional documentation. The results of the study show that three main strategies are carried out integratively, namely: (1) development planning based on local potential through the optimization of waqf land and productive business units; (2) improving the quality of teachers and education personnel through selective recruitment, continuous professional development, and empowerment in the management of pesantren businesses; and (3) the provision of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure, which is directly supported by the results of pesantren business units. These three strategies not only support the financial sustainability of the institution but also strengthen the academic, spiritual, and character dimensions of students holistically. These findings make a conceptual contribution to the development of a model of superior pesantren based on entrepreneurship and sustainable management that is contextual with local needs.

**Keywords:** *Superior Islamic Boarding School, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Management*

## Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi peningkatan keunggulan pondok pesantren melalui integrasi kewirausahaan di lingkungan Yayasan Pendidikan Islam. Studi ini berfokus pada peran Trubus Sentra Bisnis (TSB) sebagai penggerak utama dalam menciptakan ekosistem pesantren yang mandiri, adaptif, dan unggul. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi institusional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga strategi utama yang dijalankan secara integratif, yaitu: (1) perencanaan pengembangan berbasis potensi lokal melalui optimalisasi lahan wakaf dan unit usaha produktif; (2) peningkatan kualitas guru dan tenaga kependidikan melalui rekrutmen selektif, pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan, serta pemberdayaan dalam pengelolaan usaha pesantren; dan (3) penyediaan sarana dan prasarana pendidikan yang memadai, yang didukung langsung oleh hasil unit-unit usaha pesantren. Ketiga strategi ini tidak hanya mendukung keberlanjutan finansial lembaga, tetapi juga memperkuat dimensi akademik, spiritual, dan karakter santri secara holistik. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi konseptual dalam pengembangan model pesantren unggul berbasis kewirausahaan dan manajemen berkelanjutan yang kontekstual dengan kebutuhan lokal.

**Kata Kunci:** *Pesantren Unggul, Kewirausahaan, Manajemen Berkelanjutan*

## INTRODUCTION

A superior Islamic boarding school is defined as an Islamic educational institution that not only meets national educational standards but also produces graduates who excel spiritually, intellectually, and socially (Supriyono et al., 2024; Mujahid, 2021; Rianawaty et al., 2021). In practice, these achievements require more than just curriculum input or learning methods. A comprehensive strategy is necessary that encompasses the management of human resources, infrastructure, and the institution's financial capabilities (Ajgaonkar et al., 2022; Azizi et al., 2022; Matei et al., 2024). The Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation presents an integrated approach through the development of Islamic boarding school business units, namely Trubus Business Center (TSB), which is managed professionally and based on the optimization of local potential. Waqf land management, integrated agricultural development, and community empowerment are integral to a long-term strategy aimed at creating an independent education ecosystem (Harahap et al., 2023; Majid et al., 2024; Misbah et al., 2022). This research aims to examine in depth the dynamics and implications of these strategies in supporting the excellence of Islamic boarding school institutions.

Previous studies have shown the importance of local potential-based strategies in encouraging the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools. Zainudin & Khotimah (2025) analyzed entrepreneurial development in the pesantren environment, focusing on food production based on local wisdom. This research highlights the challenges in managing production and marketing capacity that remain suboptimal, despite the development of product innovation. Several other studies have also found that the success of the pesanpreneur ecosystem is highly dependent on human resource development, a systematic production process, and distribution strategies that are tailored to the character of the internal and external community (Ginting et al., 2023; Khuong & Van, 2022; Roberts et al., 2024). Meanwhile, managerial reform in the pesantren environment requires a participatory approach that involves all stakeholders (Flood et al., 2025; Rangel-Buitrago et al., 2023; Zakaria et al., 2025). Several studies agree that pesantren, as community-based educational institutions, require comprehensive and sustainable strategic planning in order to respond to modern challenges, not only in terms of education but also in terms of economic independence and strengthening institutional governance.

Although various studies have explored the economic strategy of Islamic boarding schools, most still focus on aspects of the business unit separately without directly linking them to the institution's overall achievement of excellence. There has been little research that has comprehensively examined how managerial strategies based on local potential can be integrated into the holistic vision of Islamic education. This gap is even more evident when the concept of superior Islamic boarding schools is examined not only from an academic perspective but also in terms of spirituality, human resource management, and infrastructure sustainability. Especially in the context of

Islamic boarding schools that manage business units, such as Tribus Business Center, there is a lack of literature analyzing the causal relationship between economic development strategies and improving the overall quality of institutions. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by exploring how the strategy implemented by the Tribus Iman Foundation enables the integration of entrepreneurship, professional management, and spiritual values in creating superior Islamic boarding schools.

This research makes a unique contribution by proposing a development strategy for Islamic boarding schools based on an entrepreneurial model of institutions that leverages local potential, managed professionally and sustainably. The novelty lies in an integrative approach that combines three main pillars: local natural resource management, improving the quality of human resources (including teachers and education personnel), and strengthening educational infrastructure within a mutually supportive strategic framework. Unlike previous studies that separated managerial and educational aspects, this study actually reveals that the two can run in parallel in the pesantren ecosystem. The Tribus Business Center model is a significant case study that demonstrates how the business unit of the pesantren not only supports the institution's finances but also serves as an instrument of character education and entrepreneurship for students. Thus, this research provides a theoretical and practical foundation for the development of superior Islamic boarding schools that are adaptable to the changing times, while maintaining their spiritual and social roots.

This research aims to analyze in depth the development strategy of superior Islamic boarding schools run by the Tribus Iman Islamic Education Foundation through the Tribus Business Center. The primary focus lies in utilizing local potential as a strategic resource that supports the sustainability of the institution, enhances the quality of Islamic boarding school human resources, and strengthens educational facilities and infrastructure in an integrated manner. Using a qualitative approach of case studies, this study seeks to explain how three main strategies: (1) development planning based on local potential, (2) improving the quality of teachers and education personnel, and (3) providing adequate educational facilities, are applied in a real way in forming a superior education ecosystem. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a conceptual and practical reference for other Islamic boarding schools in developing Islamic education models that are oriented towards independence, professionalism, and sustainability.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative design with a case study approach, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the development strategy of Islamic boarding schools based on local potential (Alam, 2021; Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021; Mtisi, 2022). The selection of this design was based on the need to explore the dynamics of managerial and entrepreneurial strategies run by the Tribus Iman Islamic Education Foundation. This research was conducted in a geographical and social context in Paser Regency, East Kalimantan, which has natural wealth and vast potential for waqf land. The qualitative research type of

case study was chosen because it allows researchers to thoroughly analyze unique and contextual strategic practices in the implementation of pesantren-based education (Cleland et al., 2021; Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Lim, 2024). This approach is grounded in the theories of economic independence, educational entrepreneurship, and sustainable development, which strengthen the validity of the analysis. With this approach, researchers can understand the process, meaning, and local values that form the foundation of a superior and adaptive pesantren ecosystem.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and institutional documentation. Interviews were conducted with foundation administrators, heads of business units, teachers, and other related parties to obtain reflective and contextual data. The researcher plays the role of a participatory observer, engaging in field activities without intervening in the natural processes in the pesantren environment. The research subjects were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in the development strategy of Trubus Business Center (Andrade, 2021; Dereje et al., 2022; Marcella-Hood & Marcella, 2023). The research location is located at the Trubus Iman Islamic Boarding School, Paser, East Kalimantan. To ensure the credibility of the data, triangulation techniques are employed, including the use of multiple sources and methods, as well as member checking with key informants. The data from the interview results were confirmed through official documents from the foundation and field observations.

The data analysis technique employed in this study is the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing {Formatting Citation}. Data reduction is carried out because the collection process involves selecting relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents. The data is then presented in the form of a thematic matrix to identify strategic patterns and relationships between key variables. The final stage involves drawing conclusions and verification, which is done iteratively to maintain consistency of interpretation. The use of this technique was chosen because of its ability to systematically organize qualitative data and maintain the depth of meaning. The sustainability of this analysis process is also supported by checks between sources and the involvement of informants in member checking, which strengthens the credibility of the data (Janis, 2022; Lim, 2024; Rowlands, 2021). Thus, the results of the analysis not only describe the strategy descriptively, but also reveal conceptual patterns that are relevant for the development of a superior entrepreneurship-based pesantren model.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **Local Potential-Based Development Planning Strategy**

The development planning strategy based on local potential is a systematic approach that utilizes the surrounding natural resources and resources as the primary foundation in building the excellence of educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools. In the context of the Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation, this strategy is realized through the

optimization of 300 hectares of waqf land, the majority of which are in the form of productive oil palm plantations. The utilization of this local potential not only aims to support the sustainability of educational operations, but also creates an independent and sustainable pesantren economic ecosystem. By recognizing and managing local potential in a planned manner, pesantren can establish various business units, including porang cultivation, taro cultivation, livestock farming, fisheries, and bottled water production. This strategy reflects economic independence as the central pillar in achieving the vision of a highly competitive, superior Islamic boarding school.

In an interview with one of the foundation's administrators, he said: "We started from the existing local potential, we managed oil palm land, then slowly we developed other cultivation such as porang and taro beneng". The same sentiment was also expressed by the head of the pesantren business unit: "We see the needs of the surrounding community as well, from there we established a bottled water business and outbound facilities that the public can use." This shows that the pesantren development strategy is not only profit-oriented, but also responsive to local needs and available potential. This planning is progressive and long-term oriented.

Through the results of the interview conducted with the informant above, it is evident that the development of local potential is a form of adaptation by the pesantren to utilize its resources while addressing the needs of the surrounding community. Land that has not been cultivated previously is optimally converted into productive resources. This approach illustrates that the foundation does not only focus on the formal education aspect, but also places the economic aspect as a buffer for the sustainability of education. This step is a form of integration between education and community-based entrepreneurship, where education is inseparable from the social and economic reality of the community. This strategy also demonstrates a management approach that relies on needs-based research, potential-driven planning, and sustainable development. Departing from this, the form of development strategy found is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Local Potential Development Strategy and Results for Islamic Boarding Schools**

<b>Local Potential Development Strategy</b>	<b>Results for Islamic Boarding Schools</b>
Optimization of oil palm land and plantations	Fixed source of funding for educational operations
Cultivation of porang and taro beneng	Diversification of foundation income
Production of bottled drinking water (Green Trubus)	Financial independence and community involvement
Outbound facilities for the public	Improving the image of the pesantren and social contribution

Table 1 shows that the local potential development strategy implemented by pesantren has a tangible impact on the sustainability of the institution. The optimization of oil palm land and plantations, for example, presents a fixed source of funding that supports educational operations, thereby providing Islamic boarding schools with financial stability. Meanwhile, the cultivation of porang and taro beneng is a diversification step that not only increases income streams but also opens up new economic opportunities for foundations. The

production of Trubus Hijau bottled water reflects financial independence while strengthening the role of pesantren in actively involving the surrounding community. The provision of outbound facilities for the public affirms the social function of Islamic boarding schools, where the institution's positive image is increasing through real contributions to the community.

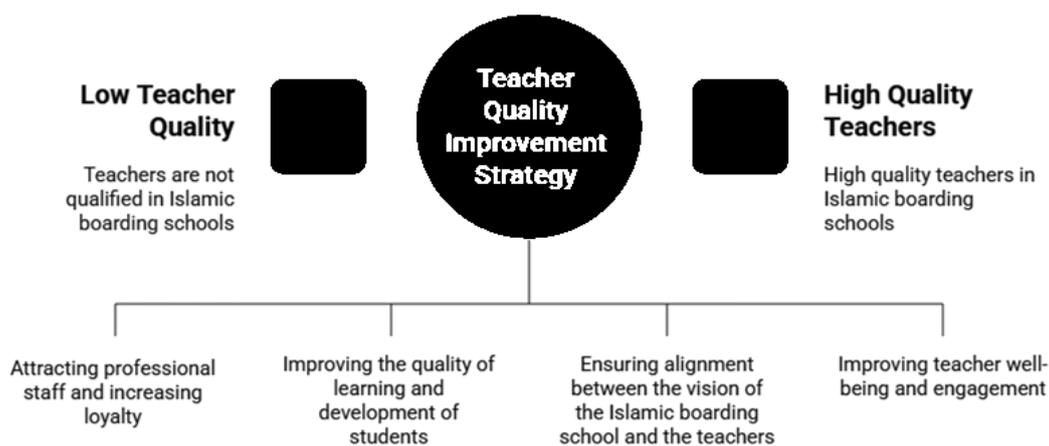
Building on the findings, the development planning strategy based on local potential at the Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation has proven to be a crucial foundation in creating superior and competitive Islamic boarding schools. Through the productive use of waqf land, the foundation can build business units that support the sustainability of education while empowering the surrounding community. These findings reveal a pattern of strategies informed by needs research, long-term planning, and social orientation. The contribution of this strategy is not only economic, but also strengthens the existence of pesantren as an adaptive and independent institution.

### **Strategies for Improving the Quality of Teachers and Education Personnel**

The strategy to improve the quality of teachers and education personnel is a systematic and sustainable effort made by educational institutions to ensure the quality of the learning process and educational management. In the context of the Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation, this strategy is realized through selective recruitment, the provision of adequate facilities and incentives, and continuous professional development for teachers. This strategy aims not only to create academically competent educators, but also those who are in harmony with the spiritual values and vision of the Islamic boarding school. In the pesantren environment, the role of teachers extends beyond that of an educator to include character builder and role model for students. Therefore, improving the quality of teachers is one of the important pillars in forming a superior and comprehensive Islamic boarding school.

As one of the foundation's administrators said, "At first, we had difficulty getting professional teachers because our location was quite remote. So we facilitate housing and encourage teachers to continue their S2 before teaching here." In line with that, one of the teachers stated, "We are not only taught to teach, but also equipped with soft skills, entrepreneurship, and training that increase our capacity." This demonstrates that the foundation has a strong commitment to fostering a work environment that supports the overall professional development of teachers.

Based on the interview results, the findings suggest that enhancing the quality of teachers at the Trubus Iman Foundation encompasses aspects of professional development and holistic empowerment. Measures such as housing facilitation, encouragement of further study, and regular training reflect a planned and visionary HR management system. Teachers are not only measured based on academic competence, but also on the suitability of values, integrity, and enthusiasm for learning. The foundation's commitment to fostering teachers has direct implications for the quality of the student learning process and the formation of a strong academic and spiritual culture in the pesantren environment. Building on this, the strategy for improving teacher quality is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Teacher Quality Improvement Strategy**

Figure 1 illustrates the strategy to enhance the quality of teachers in Islamic boarding schools, which is at the core of improving the quality of education. The diagram illustrates the initial condition, characterized by the low quality of teachers, which is characterized by a lack of qualifications in pesantren-based schools. It then outlines the strategies aimed at achieving high-quality teachers. The strategic efforts emphasized include attracting professionals while increasing loyalty, improving the quality of learning and student development, and ensuring the alignment of vision between Islamic boarding schools and teachers. Additionally, enhancing the welfare and involvement of teachers is a crucial factor in ensuring the sustainability of teaching quality.

The strategy to improve the quality of teachers at the Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation is carried out systematically through strict selection, routine training, support for further studies, and empowerment within business units. Teachers not only play the role of educators, but also as partners in building independent and superior Islamic boarding schools. Adequate facilities and incentives support their dedication and loyalty. These findings demonstrate that investment in teachers directly contributes to improving the quality of students, character development, and institutional sustainability. This strategy proves that strengthening human resources is the central pillar in creating an adaptive, professional, and highly competitive education ecosystem.

### **Strategy for Providing Adequate Educational Facilities and Infrastructure**

Providing adequate educational facilities and infrastructure is a systematic step in creating a learning environment that supports optimal learning activities. Facilities include learning tools and supporting facilities, while infrastructure includes physical buildings, classrooms, dormitories, and other public facilities. At the Trubus Iman Islamic Boarding School, this strategy is implemented by leveraging the results of the pesantren business unit to develop and maintain various educational facilities. This reflects the foundation's efforts to provide not only basic facilities but also to create innovative, conducive, and relevant learning spaces that meet the needs of the times. This strategy provides a crucial foundation for supporting the teaching and learning process, as well as the holistic development of students' character.

The strategy of providing facilities and infrastructure, as revealed by the foundation management, is as follows: "We use the profits of business units to build classrooms, mosques, and multimedia facilities so that students feel comfortable learning." The same point was also emphasized by the teacher: "The complete facilities are beneficial for us in teaching, especially when using technology or open spaces for discussion." This statement emphasizes that facilities and infrastructure are a top priority in supporting an effective learning process. Good facilities not only increase comfort but also support teacher performance and student motivation for learning.

Through the statements made by the informants above, it is evident that the provision of facilities and infrastructure is carried out in a planned and long-term manner. The facilities built not only function as a support for learning activities, but also as a medium for character formation and the development of student creativity. The provision of multimedia facilities, open spaces, and places of worship shows the integration between the academic, spiritual, and social needs of students. This reflects that this strategy is designed to create a holistic educational environment, while strengthening the image of pesantren as a modern institution that is responsive to the times. Departing from this, the form of provision of educational facilities and infrastructure is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Provision of Facilities and Infrastructure and Their Impact on Islamic Boarding Schools**

Types of Facilities and Infrastructure	Main Functions	Impact Categories	Impact on Islamic Boarding Schools
Modern classrooms and laboratories	Technology-based academic learning facilities	Academic	Improve the quality of learning and learning comfort
Digital and multimedia libraries	Access literature and interactive learning resources	Literacy & Innovation	Encourage interest in reading, support research, and increase students' creativity.
Representative dormitories and mosques	Residence and spiritual formation	Spirituality & Character	Forming discipline, fostering togetherness, and strengthening religious values
Sports facilities and outbound	Physical activity facilities and soft skill development	Character & Fitness	Improve physical health, train teamwork, and foster leadership spirit

Table 2. Explaining that the provision of facilities and infrastructure in Islamic boarding schools has a significant contribution to various aspects of the development of students and institutions as a whole. Modern classrooms and laboratories serve as technology-based learning facilities that have a direct impact on improving academic quality and student learning comfort. The presence of digital and multimedia libraries expands access to literacy while encouraging innovation, thereby motivating students to read, conduct research, and develop their creativity. In terms of spiritual guidance, representative dormitories and mosques serve as important forums for instilling discipline, fostering togetherness, and reinforcing religious values. Meanwhile, sports and

outbound facilities play a role in strengthening character by improving physical fitness, promoting teamwork, and fostering a leadership spirit.

The strategy of providing facilities and infrastructure at the Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation proves the importance of infrastructure in supporting quality education. Through the use of the business unit's results, the foundation can build facilities that not only support formal learning but also foster the character and creativity of students. This approach shows that the provision of facilities is carried out in a planned, integrated, and sustainable manner. Complete physical facilities create a conducive learning atmosphere, build a professional image of the Islamic boarding school, and strengthen public trust. Thus, this strategy is a crucial element in achieving the vision of a superior and independent Islamic boarding school.

## Discussion

The results of this study reveal that the development strategy of the Trubus Iman Islamic Education Foundation in building superior Islamic boarding schools is carried out through three main pillars: the use of local potential, the improvement of the quality of teachers and education personnel, and the provision of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure ((Khomairotusshiyamah, 2025; Mujiburrohman, 2025). These three strategies strengthen each other in creating an independent, adaptive, and highly competitive education ecosystem. The primary focus of this research is to explore how pesantren-based educational institutions can integrate entrepreneurial approaches and professionalism in educational governance. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of strengthening Islamic educational institutions that are not only religious but also economically and managerially resilient. Furthermore, the discussion will be examined within the theoretical framework of economic independence, entrepreneurship education, and sustainable development, and will be compared with the results of previous research.

The results of the study show that the optimization of 300 hectares of waqf land for productive business units such as oil palm plantations, porang cultivation, bottled water production, and outbound facilities has become the foundation of the Islamic boarding school's economic independence. This strategy aligns with Resource Dependence theory, which emphasizes the importance of managing internal resources to support the sustainability of the institution (Bhuiyan et al., 2023; Jamil et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2023). In addition, this approach also reflects the principles of sustainable development as it integrates social, economic, and environmental aspects (Andersson et al., 2022; Chopra et al., 2024; Hariram et al., 2023). Research conducted by Majid et al. (2024) suggests that Islamic boarding schools with business units are more financially independent. Research by Nair et al. (2025) on business incubators also emphasized the importance of internal facilitation in building new community-based businesses. Trubus Iman's strategy differs from the traditional approach of pesantren because it is based on research into needs and long-term planning, rather than a momentary response to economic opportunities.

The strategy to improve the quality of teachers at Trubus Iman is implemented through rigorous selection, offering incentives, facilitating further studies, and providing continuous training. This approach supports the theory of human capital and aligns with the perspective of educational progressivism, which emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning. Research by Raimi et al. (2024) suggests that internalizing values and continuous coaching are crucial to the development of professional teachers in the pesantren environment. These findings are also reinforced (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021), which emphasizes the importance of teacher character formation in the pesantren system. In comparison, Azizi et al. (2022) underlined that the leadership of the kyais and the work culture of the pesantren are important elements in maintaining the quality of education. Trubus Iman's strategy emphasizes modern professionalism by strengthening the role of teachers as partners in institutional development, which differs from traditional Islamic boarding schools that tend to be paternalistic.

In addition, this study reveals that educational facilities are built using the results of pesantren business units, including modern classrooms, laboratories, multimedia facilities, as well as religious and sports facilities. It reflects the integration between a holistic educational vision and an entrepreneurial approach. According to the theory of entrepreneurship-based education (Chopra et al., 2024; Marcella-Hood & Marcella, 2023; Rangel-Buitrago et al., 2023), this approach creates a learning space that is not only academic but also practical and contextual. Network collaboration and physical environment have a significant influence on the quality of learning (Harahaf, 2023; Khosi'in et al., 2024; Naningsih et al., 2024). Research by Rianawaty et al. (2021) also suggests that complete facilities encourage Islamic boarding schools to achieve a superior status. Trubus Iman distinguishes itself by building facilities not only for internal needs, but also for commercial value, strengthening aspects of sustainability and synergy with the community.

Based on the research results, the development strategy of Islamic boarding schools implemented by the Trubus Iman Foundation presents a unified pattern, characterized by the utilization of local potential, improvement of teacher quality, and strengthening of facilities and infrastructure. This synergy fosters a harmonious integration between Islamic values, professional education implementation, and a progressive entrepreneurial ethos. Such an approach not only reflects an adaptive response to the dynamics of contemporary challenges but also makes a significant contribution to formulating a model of superior pesantren that is independent, adaptive, and visionary. The contribution of this research primarily lies in affirming the role of pesantren as a center for community-based socio-economic transformation, which bridges the needs of education and community empowerment. Thus, further studies are suggested to test the effectiveness of this strategy through a quantitative approach and expand replication opportunities in various other Islamic boarding school contexts, so that the innovation of the Trubus Iman model can enrich the treasures of Islamic education in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes that the excellence of the Trubus Iman Islamic Boarding School is built through strategic synergy among local management, the improvement of human resource quality, and the provision of adequate educational infrastructure. A development strategy based on local potential not only creates economic independence but also strengthens the sustainability of institutions through the diversification of productive businesses. Improving the quality of teachers is carried out systematically through rigorous recruitment, continuous professional development, and planned empowerment, thereby forming a competent and characterful educational ecosystem. Meanwhile, the provision of representative educational infrastructure supports the creation of a holistic and conducive learning environment. These findings demonstrate that the integration of these three strategies forms the primary foundation for superior Islamic boarding schools that are adaptive, independent, and visionary. This research provides a conceptual foundation for developing an Islamic education model centered on entrepreneurship and sustainable management.

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