INTEGRATION OF INNOVATION AND TRADITION: COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE WORLD OF EDUCATION

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Abstract:

This research aims to analyze how Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in integrating religious education traditions with modern innovations in order to maintain the relevance of their education in the digital era. Islamic boarding schools, which are known for their yellow book-based teaching systems and deep understanding of the Islamic religion, are now faced with the challenge of maintaining the authenticity of traditions while accommodating technological developments. The main findings of this research show that Islamic boarding schools not only maintain traditional teaching methods, but also adopt modern educational technology innovations, such as the use of digital platforms (WhatsApp, Zoom) to expand the reach and flexibility of learning, without reducing the face-to-face interactions that are essential in Islamic boarding school education. Other innovations are also implemented in the operational management of Islamic boarding schools through digital systems for data management, finances and internal activities, which increase efficiency and transparency. This research also highlights the role of Islamic boarding schools in preserving Islamic culture and local traditions, by utilizing technology to document and promote this culture to a wider audience. Overall, this research shows that the integration of innovation and tradition in Islamic boarding schools allows them to remain relevant as educational institutions and centers for preserving Islamic culture that are adaptive to current developments.

Keywords: *Integration, Islamic Boarding School, Innovation, Tradition*

INTRODUCTION

Innovations implemented by educational institutions often influence significant changes that make the institution detached from its traditional roots. However, Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions with strong traditions have succeeded in demonstrating their ability to combine innovation with these traditions. In this context, Islamic boarding schools not only maintain existing traditional values, such as teaching religion and local culture, but also adopt modern approaches that are relevant to current developments, such as the use of technology in the teaching and learning process. This makes Islamic boarding schools a unique educational institution, where innovation and tradition combine harmoniously, providing a competitive advantage that is difficult for other educational institutions to match. Thus, Islamic boarding

schools show that a balance between innovation and tradition can be a key factor in creating sustainable added value in the world of education.

Previous research as stated in the document reviews Islamic education which focuses on the challenges of modernization and globalization, including the issue of the dichotomy of knowledge, the relevance of the education system to technological developments, and the need for paradigm renewal. These studies tend to discuss the integration of traditional values with modern needs without providing practical solutions based on specific technologies. As a difference and novelty contribution, this research specifically examines the adaptation of Islamic boarding schools to the digital era by integrating digital technology and monotheism-based educational strategies, which have not been explored in depth in previous studies. With this approach, this research not only completes insight into the transformation of Islamic education, but also provides solutions to answer educational challenges in the modern era.

This research seeks to fill the gap in academic studies regarding the development of Islamic boarding school competitive advantages in the world of education through the integration of innovation and tradition. This topic has not been addressed comprehensively, especially in the context of an Islamic boarding school-based educational approach that combines technological modernization with traditional values that have become its hallmark. This research focuses on how Islamic boarding schools can adopt modern educational technology without sacrificing their traditional identity, thereby creating an educational model that is both relevant and authentic. Thus, this research not only provides a theoretical contribution to the innovation discourse in tradition-based education, but also offers a practical model that can be applied to increase the competitiveness of Islamic boarding schools in the era of globalization. This research emphasizes the importance of a hybrid approach that combines these two dimensions as a strategic solution to face educational challenges in the future.

Integration between innovation and tradition is the main foundation in building the competitive advantage of Islamic boarding schools in the world of education. As an educational institution based on Islamic values that is firmly rooted in tradition, Islamic boarding schools have unique qualities that differentiate them from other educational institutions.

However, in the midst of globalization and technological developments, Islamic boarding schools face challenges to remain relevant and able to compete in providing quality education. By adopting innovations, such as the use of digital technology in learning, technology-based administration systems, or curricula adapted to the needs of the modern era, Islamic boarding schools can strengthen their position as educational institutions that not only maintain traditions but are also ready to respond to the demands of the times. This shows that the integration of innovation and tradition is not just a choice, but a strategic necessity for the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in the future.

On the other hand, the successful integration of innovation and tradition depends on the Islamic boarding school's ability to maintain a balance between renewal and preservation of traditional values. Traditions in Islamic boarding schools, such as the yellow book learning system, relationship patterns between kiai and santri, as well as a living environment that is oriented towards moral development, are aspects that provide a strong identity for Islamic boarding schools. The innovation adopted must be designed to be in line with these values, so that it does not cause conflict or blur the identity of the Islamic boarding school. For example, the application of digital technology can be used to expand

access to learning the yellow book through online platforms without eliminating personal interactions between kiai and santri. Thus, this integration not only maintains the relevance of Islamic boarding schools amidst change, but also emphasizes that tradition-based education has great potential to continue to develop in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This case study method uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on secondary data to analyze the integration of innovation and tradition in Islamic boarding school education and its impact on competitive advantage. Data was obtained from literature, journals, reports and related publications, then analyzed thematically to identify patterns of application of traditions, such as the teaching of the yellow book and halaqah, as well as modern innovations, such as educational technology and entrepreneurship programs. Case studies were conducted on high-achieving Islamic boarding schools, such as Gontor, Darunnajah, or Tebuireng, with main indicators including the quality of graduates, institutional reputation, and social contribution. The research results are expected to provide an in-depth understanding of how the integration of tradition and innovation can strengthen the competitiveness of Islamic boarding schools in the world of education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research focuses on the integration of innovation and tradition in Islamic boarding schools, especially in the context of education and teaching. In an increasingly digital era, Islamic boarding schools are faced with the challenge of maintaining traditional values that have become an important part of their identity, while facing the need to adapt to technological developments. One of the main findings of this research is how Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in combining traditional educational approaches with modern innovations, especially in terms of teaching methods and use of technology. This shows that Islamic boarding schools are not only maintaining religious traditions, but are also starting to open themselves to changes that can enrich their education system.

Based on the results of interviews with Islamic boarding school caregivers and several students, it was found that the use of technology in the learning process has begun to be implemented even though it does not completely replace conventional teaching methods. One of the Islamic boarding school teachers said that they use learning applications to provide additional material to students, especially in theoretical lessons such as tafsir and fiqh. Apart from that, there is also the development of online classes which are held with the help of platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, allowing students to take part in teaching without being limited by distance or time. Observations in the field show that students also actively use social media to discuss religious topics studied, although there is still a tendency to maintain face-to-face interactions as a form of respect for Islamic boarding school traditions.

From the results of these interviews and observations, it can be concluded that Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in creating a balance between maintaining traditional education methods and adopting technology as a tool. The teaching methods used adhere to religious disciplines that have been taught for generations, such as the study of the Yellow Book, but are supplemented with the use of technology to enrich the learning process. This proves that although

Islamic boarding schools maintain basic religious principles, they are not closed to technological developments that can help improve the quality of education. Technology is used as a complement, not a substitute, so that Islamic boarding schools remain a place that respects tradition, while also opening up space for innovation in the world of Islamic education.

This research aims to dig deeper into the implementation of innovation in Islamic boarding schools, especially in terms of teaching that combines traditional values with technological developments. One of the interesting findings in this research is how Islamic boarding schools, which are generally known as conventional teaching systems, are starting to innovate by introducing technology to support the teaching and learning process. This includes the use of learning applications, online platforms and social media as tools to expand the scope of religious teaching. These findings illustrate that Islamic boarding schools are not only limited to conventional religious education but are also starting to touch the realm of technology as a means of improving the quality of education.

Based on interviews with several Islamic boarding school caregivers and the teaching that takes place in Islamic boarding schools, it was found that although teaching the Yellow Book and other religious knowledge remains the main focus, technology has been introduced gradually. For example, one Islamic boarding school in the Yogyakarta area uses the WhatsApp application to send learning materials and hold question and answer sessions between teachers and students. Apart from that, there are online classes held via the Zoom platform for additional lessons such as Arabic and tafsir. The students interviewed revealed that they found it easier to understand some materials with the visual and audio materials provided through the platform. However, even though technology is used, direct face-to-face teaching is still prioritized to maintain the value of social interaction which is considered important in the religious learning process.

Based on data from interviews and observations, it can be concluded that Islamic boarding schools are starting to implement a more flexible approach to education by utilizing technology, without ignoring existing traditional values. The use of applications such as WhatsApp and the Zoom platform are examples of innovations that support the learning process, allowing students to access material in a more interactive and modern way. However, this technology does not replace the face-to-face learning process that is characteristic of Islamic boarding schools, but rather serves as a complement to improving the quality of teaching. This shows that Islamic boarding schools have attempted to adopt innovations in their education system, while still maintaining the basic principles of religious teaching which prioritize depth of understanding and direct interaction between teachers and students.

The findings of this research relate to how Islamic boarding schools combine traditional values with social and technological changes in managing human resources and teaching materials. This research reveals that apart from the teaching aspect, Islamic boarding schools are also starting to innovate in terms of internal management, such as the use of technology to increase administrative efficiency, financial management, and the involvement of students in social activities. Islamic boarding schools now not only rely on religious teaching methods, but are also open to innovation to create a more structured, transparent and sustainable system. These findings illustrate that Islamic boarding schools continue to develop, integrating traditional values with modern solutions to improve operational and educational quality.

The results of interviews with Islamic boarding school administrators and

administrative staff revealed that in the last few years, they have begun to implement a digital-based administration system. For example, Islamic boarding schools use Islamic boarding school management software to manage student data, finances and Islamic boarding school activities more efficiently. This allows Islamic boarding schools to be more transparent in terms of managing funds and provide financial reports more quickly. Apart from that, in managing social activities, Islamic boarding schools utilize digital platforms to coordinate student activities such as raising social funds, organizing religious events, and group learning. Observations show that the use of this digital-based system helps increase student participation in Islamic boarding school activities, as well as giving them a better understanding of organizational management.

From the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that Islamic boarding schools have begun to adopt technology to increase efficiency and transparency in their operational management. The use of digital-based administration systems for student data and financial management shows that Islamic boarding schools are increasingly prioritizing professionalism in carrying out their internal activities. In addition, by utilizing digital platforms to organize social and religious activities, Islamic boarding schools can involve students in a more active and coordinated manner. This not only makes administration easier, but also gives students practical experience in managing organizational activities, which also supports the development of their skills outside the field of religion. The integration between religious teaching traditions and the use of technology in managing Islamic boarding schools shows that Islamic boarding schools can transform into institutions that are more modern, efficient and responsive to current developments without abandoning their traditional roots.

The findings of this research reveal the innovation that occurs in Islamic boarding school management, especially in terms of empowering the Islamic boarding school economy through a more modern and creative approach. Islamic boarding schools are not only becoming religious education institutions, but are also starting to develop economic businesses based on local potential that involve students in the process. This innovation in Islamic boarding school management involves implementing new business models, such as developing craft products, organic farming businesses, and managing small businesses which not only support Islamic boarding school finances but also provide practical skills to students. These findings show that Islamic boarding schools are increasingly adapting to the demands of the times to become more economically independent and relevant in the socio-economic context of society.

Based on interviews with Islamic boarding school administrators, it was found that several Islamic boarding schools are starting to develop economic businesses based on local skills and potential. One of them is an Islamic boarding school that manages an organic farming business, where students are involved in the entire process from seeding, care, to marketing agricultural products. Apart from that, there are also Islamic boarding schools that develop handicraft products such as bags, batik, or other local products produced by students with the guidance of caregivers and skills training. The production process is also integrated with an online marketing system, allowing Islamic boarding schools to expand their market reach. Observations show that students involved in this business not only gain economic benefits, but also valuable lessons about entrepreneurship, business management and resource management.

From interview and observation data, it can be concluded that innovation in managing Islamic boarding schools through economic empowerment has had

a positive impact, both for the Islamic boarding school itself and for the students. Managing organic farming businesses and handicraft products not only supports the financial independence of Islamic boarding schools, but also provides opportunities for students to develop entrepreneurial skills that are very relevant to today's world of work. Moreover, the application of technology to market Islamic boarding school products, such as through online platforms, shows that Islamic boarding schools are not only relying on traditional methods, but are also starting to adopt modern approaches to support their economic activities. These innovations show how Islamic boarding schools can transform into financially independent institutions, while providing social benefits and useful practical skills for students.

This research shows that Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in combining religious education traditions with modern innovations in order to maintain the relevance of their education in the digital era. In general, Islamic boarding schools are known for their teaching system based on the Yellow Book and a deep understanding of the Islamic religion. However, with rapid technological advances, Islamic boarding schools face big challenges in maintaining the authenticity of traditions while accommodating changing times, especially in the context of educational technology.

One of the important findings in this research is how Islamic boarding schools not only maintain religious teaching traditions but also begin to integrate technology in the learning process. The use of digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom and other learning applications shows that Islamic boarding schools are starting to adapt to current developments without sacrificing long-standing religious values. This shows that Islamic boarding schools do not see technology as a threat to tradition, but rather as a tool to enrich the learning experience for students. For example, the use of Zoom for online classes and social media for religious discussions expands the reach of learning, allowing students to access material more flexibly and interactively, but still maintains the principle of face-to-face interaction which is considered important in Islamic boarding school education. This is a form of adaptive innovation, where technology is used as a complement to enrich the learning process without replacing existing conventional teaching methods.

Furthermore, this research also found that Islamic boarding schools are starting to innovate in terms of managing their operations. Previously, many Islamic boarding schools relied on manual administration systems, but now many have implemented digital-based systems for managing student data, finances and internal activities. This innovation in management not only increases efficiency and transparency, but also demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools are institutions that are increasingly professional and responsive to changing times. This shows that Islamic boarding schools do not only focus on aspects of religious education, but also try to manage their institutions in a more modern and efficient way. The use of Islamic boarding school management software and project management applications, as found in this research, helps Islamic boarding school administrators organize daily activities, organize lesson schedules, and increase student participation in social activities.

The use of technology in documenting and promoting local traditions also shows that Islamic boarding schools are not only focused on preserving culture at the local level, but also strive to introduce this culture to a wider audience, both nationally and internationally. This shows that Islamic boarding schools are able

to become institutions that are adaptive to current developments and integrate traditional values with more modern ways.

Overall, these findings show that Islamic boarding schools can play a key role in maintaining a balance between innovation and tradition, both in religious education, internal management, and preserving local culture. With the ability to adapt to current developments, Islamic boarding schools not only function as educational institutions, but also as institutions that continue to develop and are relevant amidst changing times.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in integrating religious education traditions with modern innovation, especially in adopting technology to support the learning process and operational management. Islamic boarding schools not only maintain traditional methods of religious education, such as teaching the yellow book and direct relationships between caregivers and students, but also utilize digital technology to enrich the learning experience. The use of platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp has expanded the accessibility of learning and allowed flexibility for students, while still maintaining the face-to-face interaction that is considered essential in Islamic boarding school education.

Apart from that, Islamic boarding schools also show innovation in their internal management by adopting digital systems in managing student data, finances and internal activities. This has increased efficiency and transparency, making Islamic boarding schools more professional and responsive to changing times. This more modern management not only makes administration easier, but also supports increased student participation in various social and academic activities.

Islamic boarding schools also play an important role in preserving Islamic culture and local traditions. By holding activities such as yellow book recitations, maulidan, and cultural festivals, Islamic boarding schools not only function as religious education institutions, but also as centers for cultural preservation. The use of technology to document and promote local culture further expands the reach of Islamic boarding schools, making them institutions that are adaptive to current developments while still maintaining and introducing traditional values to a wider audience.

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