

## Tradition of Science Without Technology: Educational Management Strategy at Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School in the Digital Era

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### Abstract:

Islamic boarding schools are Islamic educational institutions that have an important role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School, as one of the salaf nurul qadim Islamic boarding schools, as one of the Islamic boarding schools that still maintains the salaf tradition, faces major challenges in the digital era that demands the ability to adapt to technological developments. This study aims to analyze the strategic educational management applied in maintaining classical scientific traditions amidst the flow of digitalization. The research method used is a qualitative approach with observation, interview and documentation techniques. The results of this study indicate that the Islamic boarding school applies a value-based management strategy, by balancing between preserving the tradition of salaf science and the selective use of technology to support teaching and learning activities. Thus, Nurul Qadim salaf Islamic boarding school is able to maintain its identity as a center of traditional science without being overtaken by digital developments, but remains relevant to the needs of the times.

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## INTRODUCTION

Historically, Islamic boarding schools have emphasized the development of Islamic education (the Salaf). Islamic education is more prominent in Islamic boarding schools than in general education, as they are educational institutions that teach various theories developed from insights derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. However, they also teach Islamic texts that can equip students to develop Islamic education (Caldas et al., 2022; Nugraha et al., 2023).

As time goes by, Islamic religious education faces various challenges, both from within the education system itself and from external factors, such as technological advancements and social change. Amidst these ongoing dynamics, the concept of Society 5.0, which integrates advanced technology into human life, has presented new challenges for Islamic



educational institutions. The digital technology created has significantly impacted educational institutions, particularly Islamic ones, both positively and negatively (Mormah, 2023; Kochetova et al., 2024; Leath et al., 2025). In this context, Salaf Islamic boarding schools like Nurul Qadim in Probolinggo are among those that maintain traditional educational methods amidst the digitalization wave. These Islamic boarding schools maintain the *bandongan* and *sorogan* systems as the core of the learning process, where students read yellow books directly in front of their teachers as a form of preserving the Salaf scientific tradition.

Educational management techniques are crucial in this situation. For example, the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School implements a learning approach that is not only technologically efficient but also based on values and tradition. If handled properly, tradition and technological advancement can coexist, according to Zhang et al (2020). The purpose of technology is to support the sustainability of Islamic boarding school operations as an administrative tool, not to replace the *kiai* (Islamic leaders) (Oke et al., 2021).

To align traditional values with the demands of modernization, an educational management strategy is required. This approach supports the learning process while maintaining the identity of Islamic boarding schools through curriculum, human resource management, and the selective use of technology. Fatmawati et al (2023) emphasized that to remain relevant in the face of change, Islamic boarding school education management needs to be flexible and transformative. To maintain a balance between the use of technology in the digital era and the preservation of tradition, this study aims to examine the educational management strategy at the Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school (Umunyana et al., 2020).

Based on the description above, this study seeks to answer the question of how educational management strategies are implemented at the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School in the face of the digital era. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of educational management that balances the preservation of traditional Islamic values with the wise use of technology within the Islamic boarding school environment.

Furthermore, this research is expected to advance Islamic education management, particularly within conventional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in the digital era. To ensure that *pesantren* remain competent and relevant in the face of change, these findings are also expected to serve as a guide for other Islamic educational institutions in developing flexible teaching methods that balance scientific tradition and technology.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth description of educational management strategies at the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School in facing the digital era. According to Ruiz & Muñoz (2024), qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning and social phenomena from the perspective of the research subjects. This approach is relevant for examining the values, traditions, and strategies implemented by Islamic boarding schools in managing education amidst technological developments.

The research location was the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school in Probolinggo Regency, East Java. The subjects of this research were the caretakers,

administrators, teachers, and students at the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school in Probolinggo. Subject selection was carried out using purposive sampling, which involves selecting information deemed to best understand the problem being studied. This method allows researchers to obtain in-depth and relevant information regarding the educational management strategies being implemented.

This research focuses on the educational management strategies implemented at the Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school in the face of technological developments in the digital era. This study seeks to examine how the boarding school maintains traditional Islamic traditions, such as the yellow book learning system and the closeness of students to their religious leaders (kiai), while adapting to modern technology. In other words, this research focuses on how the boarding school organizes teaching and learning activities, manages human resources (teachers and students), and utilizes technology without eliminating Islamic values and boarding school traditions.

Data collection techniques include: (1) in-depth interviews, conducted with Islamic boarding school caretakers (kiai), administrators, teachers, and several students who are considered to understand the educational management process at the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school to gather information about management strategies, learning implementation, and their views on the use of technology in educational activities. (2) direct observation, conducted on learning activities, Islamic boarding school administration management, and interactions between teachers and students in the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school environment. This observation aims to obtain a real picture of the application of traditional Salaf values. (3) documentation studies are used to obtain written data such as archives, organizational structures, and activity records related to the Islamic boarding school education process.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and interactively through three main stages: data reduction, which is the process of selecting, this stage is carried out by selecting and filtering important data to suit the research focus on educational management strategies at the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school. (2) data presentation, which is carried out by compiling the results of interviews, observations, and documentation into a description that describes educational management practices at the Islamic boarding school. (3) drawing conclusions, which is the process of interpreting meaning to answer the formulation of research problems (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To ensure that the research results are accurate and reliable, triangulation of sources and techniques is carried out, namely comparing various data and different data collection methods.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

Based on research findings obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation at the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic boarding school, the discussion focuses on how this Islamic boarding school maintains classical scholarly traditions while adapting to current developments. The results demonstrate a balance between preserving traditional values and implementing management that adapts to the digital era. The following is a description of the results and their discussion.

First, preserving scholarly traditions amidst the digital era, research findings show that

the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School upholds traditional educational traditions, based on yellow books and involving kiai (Islamic religious teachers) who teach directly to students. Without the use of digital technology, all learning activities are conducted face-to-face. Under the strict supervision of teachers, students learn using the Sorogan and Bandongan approaches, which involve reading, listening to, and understanding classical texts. These practices are believed to successfully foster discipline, character, and spiritual depth. Traditional Islamic boarding schools play a crucial role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic academic traditions through traditional teaching methods, claims Zakiyyah et al (2024) in the *Mudarrisuna Journal*. This supports the statement of Luneto et al (2022) that the strength of conventional Islamic boarding schools lies in their ability to uphold an Islamic-based curriculum in the face of rapid modernization. Therefore, even in the digital era, Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School demonstrates a strong dedication to maintaining the integrity of educational traditions.

Second, an Adaptive Educational Management Strategy to the Times. Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School has a management system that continues to evolve with the times while still upholding traditional traditions. The administrators, teachers, and students each have their own roles in the well-organized management of the boarding school. The boarding school ensures that all its policies are in line with Islamic principles and applies the principle of deliberation in decision-making. For boarding schools to remain relevant without losing their identity, adaptive management is crucial, claims Chotimah et al., 2023 in the *Muslim Heritage Journal*. Thoyib et al (2024) explain that Islamic education management must undergo a careful transition while maintaining its spiritual foundation. These results indicate that the management of Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School is flexible not in terms of utilizing technology, but in strengthening its organizational structure and values-based governance.

Third, Limited Use of Technology for Administration. At the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School, technology is used limitedly and only to assist with administrative tasks. Teaching and learning activities are still conducted manually and traditionally, without the use of digital devices, according to observations and interviews. However, the use of technology facilitates administrative tasks, including document storage, recording student data, and communication between administrators. The goal of digitization in Islamic boarding schools is to improve the efficiency of institutional management, not to replace the traditional education system or kiai (Enes Işıkgöz, 2024; Rado Zuniga et al., 2025). This is in line with the findings of Dwi Asri, Raihan Sipahutar, who emphasized that administrative efficiency should be the primary focus of technology utilization, rather than simply following contemporary trends. Furthermore, Rubio Hernández et al (2021) explained that digitizing Islamic boarding school administrative systems can increase the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of student data management while preserving the institution's traditional core values. Therefore, Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School promotes educational administration, adheres to Islamic values, and exemplifies the proportional use of technology.

Fourth, participation in education management. At the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School, all administrators, teachers, and senior students participate in the decision-making process, particularly regarding educational policies and student activities. The Islamic boarding school's educational management is based on the values of trust, caring, and

exemplary behavior. By fostering a sense of responsibility and shared ownership among all members of the Islamic boarding school, this participatory approach enhances organizational effectiveness. Because every strategic choice requires the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, emphasized that the implementation of participatory management can enhance the unity and effectiveness of Islamic educational institutions. Similarly, emphasized that schools or madrasas can become leading institutions with an Islamic character when all stakeholders actively participate. Consequently, the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School's value-based and participatory management style enhances the overall effectiveness and quality of education while maintaining the institution's identity in line with its religious vision.

Fifth, Balance between Tradition and Modernization. Harmony between modernization and tradition. Pesantren Salaf Nurul Qadim has successfully achieved a balance between maintaining tradition and embracing contemporary progress. Without neglecting contemporary progress, this pesantren is committed to fostering the moral character and classical intellectual values of its students. One term for this balance is "transformative traditionalism," which, as stated by Ali & Habtoor (2022) Maintains invaluable customs while filtering out useful innovative ideas. This perspective is consistent with the approach of Miles & Huberman (1994), who stated that to understand the significance of social phenomena, qualitative analysis is carried out interactively through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Therefore, Pesantren Nurul Qadim's management approach can be used as a reference for how Islamic educational institutions should respond to contemporary issues without sacrificing their Islamic identity.

The study's findings indicate that the ability of the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School to balance tradition and modernity depends not only on teaching strategies and administrative oversight, but also on the proactive participation of all members of the boarding school kiai, instructors, students, and administrators in creating a cohesive institutional culture. This strategy makes the boarding school more cohesive, fosters a sense of collective responsibility, and enables it to change with the times without losing its spiritual foundation. These results suggest that other boarding schools facing similar issues, particularly in the face of modernity and digitalization, can use a values-based and participatory educational management approach as a model. In other words, the boarding school succeeds by combining traditional values with adaptive contemporary management techniques that remain grounded in Islamic principles, not simply by its ability to adapt to technology. Thus, the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School serves as an example of Islamic educational practices that harmonize tradition and modernity.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research shows that the Nurul Qadim Salaf Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren Salaf) has its own unique characteristics in maintaining classical scholarly traditions amidst the digitalization of education. The success of this Islamic boarding school lies not in its ability to adopt technology, but rather in its consistency in maintaining traditional learning methods such as sorogan and bandongan, which emphasize the close relationship between kiai (Islamic teachers) and santri (students). This tradition of scholarly learning, based on the yellow books, serves not only as a medium for transmitting knowledge but also as a means of developing the character, discipline, and spirituality of the students (Darimus & Hanif,

2023; Idoko, 2023; Putri et al., 2024). This approach demonstrates that classical Islamic education remains relevant and sustainable in the digital age, as the essence of education is not simply the transfer of knowledge but also the formation of personality based on Islamic values. Thus, the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School is living proof that the tradition of knowledge can survive without being dependent on technology.

Furthermore, in terms of educational management, the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School demonstrates a form of adaptation that does not undermine its identity as a Salaf Islamic boarding school. This adaptation is achieved not by completely replacing traditional systems with modern ones, but by strengthening values-based governance and deliberation (Munawwaroh et al., 2024; Onia, 2024; Qushwa, 2024). The principles of participation, trust, and collective responsibility are the primary foundations for decision-making and institutional management. This confirms that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) possess the ability to manage organizations in a modern way, in terms of values, not merely in terms of technology. In this way, Islamic boarding schools successfully demonstrate values-based adaptive management—a model that demonstrates how Islamic educational institutions can be relevant today without losing their spiritual and traditional orientation.

Meanwhile, the limited use of technology at Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School does not indicate backwardness, but rather a manifestation of institutional awareness in utilizing technology appropriately. Technology is used only for administrative aspects such as data collection, internal communication, and document archiving, without altering traditional learning patterns (Dinda Febrianti Putri & Hina, 2024; Putri & Hasan Jali, 2025). This approach emphasizes that technology should complement, not replace, direct interaction between teachers and students. The administrative efficiency generated by the use of technology actually strengthens the institution's governance without diminishing the spiritual values and classical scholarship that are the *pesantren*'s identity. Thus, Islamic boarding schools are able to demonstrate a balance between modern efficiency and traditional sincerity, creating a harmonious balance between progress and the noble values of Islam (Hidayah et al., 2024).

Ultimately, the balance between tradition and modernization demonstrated by *Pesantren Nurul Qadim* can be described as a form of transformative traditionalism the ability to maintain cherished old values while filtering out beneficial new ones. This *pesantren* has not only survived but also thrived through collaboration between *kiai*, *ustaz*, *santri*, and administrators in creating a solid and adaptive institutional culture (Akhbar et al., 2020; Wannapiroon et al., 2021; Hefniy, 2024). This values-based and participatory management strategy serves as an ideal model for other Islamic educational institutions facing the challenges of the digital era. By maintaining the integrity of tradition while selectively adapting to change, *Pesantren Nurul Qadim* demonstrates that a “tradition of knowledge without technology” is not a symbol of rejection of progress, but rather a representation of the wisdom of aligning technology with the values and vision of Islamic education.

## CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, the Salaf Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School has successfully balanced upholding traditional academic traditions and adapting to current developments. This Islamic boarding school fosters spiritual depth, discipline, and character

in its students by adhering to the yellow books and the Sorogan-Bandongan teaching method.

All members of the pesantren community kiai, instructors, students, and administrators are involved in decision-making and management of activities at the Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School, which also implements adaptive and participatory educational management. Technology is used only for a limited number of administrative tasks in an effort to increase productivity without replacing conventional techniques. This strategy embodies the idea of "transformative traditionalism," which upholds significant traditional values while encouraging beneficial progress.

According to research findings, Nurul Qadim Islamic Boarding School is an effective and relevant model of Islamic education in the digital age due to its values-based administration, tradition-building, and selective modernization. In addition to preserving the institution's Islamic identity, this approach can serve as an example for other Islamic boarding schools striving to meet the demands of modernization.

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