

EXAMINING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SALAFIYAH, KHALAFIYAH, AND COMPREHENSIVE ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

**Ach Syarif Hidayatullah¹, Muhammad Hilman Fitroni²,
Muhamad Imam Khaudli³**

¹ Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat, Indonesia, ²Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat, Indonesia

³Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat, Indonesia

Email: achsyarif2208@gmail.com¹, Bunghilman20@gmail.com², Imamkhaudli13@gmail.com³

Received: 10 january 2026

Revised: 15 january 2026

Accepted: 20 january 2026

Abstract:

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are Islamic educational institutions with long historical roots in Indonesia and play a vital role in the moral, intellectual, and social development of society. Over time, pesantren have been divided into three main models: salafiyah, khalafiyah, and comprehensive. Salafiyah pesantren focus on teaching yellow books using traditional methods that emphasize the deepening of religious knowledge. Khalafiyah pesantren integrate the religious curriculum with general formal education. Meanwhile, comprehensive pesantren combine the advantages of the two previous models by adding skills education to meet the needs of modern society. This study used qualitative methods with library research. This study aims to understand the differences in characteristics, objectives, and contributions of each type of pesantren in supporting the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. The results show that salafiyah pesantren consistently maintain the transmission of classical knowledge, while khalafiyah pesantren successfully integrate the formal curriculum to meet the demands of professionalism. Comprehensive pesantren emerges as the most adaptive model, combining spiritual depth, general education, and practical skills simultaneously.

Keywords: *Salafiyah, Khalafiyah, Comprehensive Islamic boarding school*

Abstrak:

Pesantren merupakan lembaga pendidikan Islam yang memiliki akar sejarah panjang di Indonesia serta memainkan peran penting dalam pembentukan moral, intelektual, dan sosial masyarakat. Dalam perkembangannya, pesantren terbagi menjadi tiga model utama, yaitu pesantren salafiyah, khalafiyah, dan komprehensif. Pesantren salafiyah berfokus pada pengajaran kitab kuning dengan metode tradisional yang menekankan pendalaman ilmu agama. Pesantren khalafiyah mengintegrasikan kurikulum agama dengan pendidikan formal umum. Sementara itu, pesantren komprehensif memadukan keunggulan kedua model sebelumnya dengan menambahkan pendidikan keterampilan untuk menjawab kebutuhan masyarakat modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis riset kepustakaan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk memahami perbedaan karakteristik, tujuan, serta kontribusi masing-masing jenis pesantren dalam mendukung pembangunan pendidikan Islam di Indonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pesantren salafiyah konsisten menjaga transmisi keilmuan klasik, sementara pesantren khalafiyah berhasil mengintegrasikan kurikulum formal untuk menjawab tuntutan profesionalisme. Adapun pesantren komprehensif tampil sebagai model paling adaptif

yang memadukan kedalaman spiritual, pendidikan umum, dan keterampilan praktis secara simultan.

Kata Kunci: *pesantren salafiyah, Khalafiah, Komperhensif*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are among the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, contributing significantly to the moral, intellectual, and spiritual development of society (Anjani, Putri Amanah, & Chadidjah, 2025). Historically, Islamic boarding schools grew with the arrival of Islam in the archipelago and developed through a dormitory-based educational system that emphasized close relationships between kiai (Islamic scholars) and santri (students). Throughout their history, Islamic boarding schools have been able to survive and adapt to social dynamics without abandoning the essence of Islamic education: developing a generation of faithful, knowledgeable, and virtuous Muslims.

Over time, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have differentiated in response to social change, the demands of modernization, and the development of the national education system. Generally, Islamic boarding schools can be classified into three main types: salafiyah, khalafiyah, and comprehensive (Asyari et al., 2024). Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools represent a traditional model of Islamic education that emphasizes the study of yellow books using the sorogan and bandongan methods. This model is oriented towards preserving the tradition of classical Islamic scholarship and passing on scholarly authority from generation to generation. (Hidayatullah & Fauji, 2023)

Unlike Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools, Khalafiyah Islamic boarding schools emerged as a response to the demands of modern society by integrating religious and general knowledge into their curriculum, in accordance with the formal education system (Noor & Novarlia, 2023), while simultaneously enhancing the competitiveness of graduates in facing social complexities. This development gave rise to comprehensive Islamic boarding schools that simultaneously combine the advantages of Salafiyah and Khalafiyah Islamic boarding schools through in-depth religious knowledge, mastery of general knowledge, and the provision of practical skills, entrepreneurship, and social skills relevant to the needs of the workplace. This enables them to meet the challenges of globalization and modernization without diminishing the Islamic identity of their students (Amaliah et al., 2023).

This research is motivated by the limited public understanding of the differences in characteristics, advantages, and challenges faced by each type of Islamic boarding school. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are often perceived as homogenous traditional educational institutions, yet in practice, they exhibit a diversity of educational management models and strategies. Therefore, this study is crucial in providing a more complete and comprehensive picture of the typology of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. (Salman Hasan, Rofiatul Hasanah, 2023) The research questions include: what are the characteristics of salafiyah, khalafiyah, and comprehensive Islamic boarding schools within the Indonesian Islamic education system; what are the fundamental differences between the three in terms of curriculum, learning methods, and educational objectives; and what

are the advantages and challenges faced by each model of Islamic boarding school. This research question is designed to position Islamic boarding schools as dynamic and adaptive Islamic educational institutions to changing times.

The benefits of this research can be viewed from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge on Islamic boarding schools, particularly within the framework of typology and differentiation of Islamic educational institutions from the perspective of Islamic Education Management. Practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for the community, educators, and policymakers in understanding the role and function of each type of Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) as a basis for formulating more contextual Islamic education policies.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of three models of Islamic boarding schools: *salafiyah*, *khalafiyah*, and comprehensive, within a single conceptual framework of Islamic Education Management. To date, studies on Islamic boarding schools have tended to be partial and descriptive, thus failing to fully depict the dynamics of their management and transformation. With this approach, the research is expected to demonstrate that Islamic boarding schools do not develop in a single pattern, but rather through diverse managerial strategies to remain relevant and contribute to national education development.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative research with a library research approach. The research was conducted by reviewing various relevant scientific literature, such as books, journal articles, proceedings, and research reports that can be accessed through trusted academic sources (Miles & Huberman, 1992). The focus of the research is directed at a descriptive-comparative analysis of the characteristics, advantages, challenges, and fundamental differences as well as conceptual analysis in the perspective of Islamic Education management between *Salafiyah*, *Khalafiyah*, and comprehensive Islamic boarding schools in the perspective of Islamic education (Gunawan, 2013). Data obtained through literature were then analyzed using content analysis techniques, namely identifying, classifying, and interpreting relevant information to produce in-depth understanding (Rijali, 2019). With this approach, the research is expected to be able to present a comprehensive synthesis of theoretical knowledge without direct involvement in the field, but still based on authoritative and academic sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Islamic Boarding School

According to Dhofier, a *pesantren* is a traditional Islamic educational institution where students live and study under the guidance of a *kiai* (Islamic teacher), with the mosque as the center of activity and the teaching of classical texts (*kitab kuning*) as the core of the curriculum. This definition emphasizes the *pesantren* as a center for the transmission of traditional Islamic knowledge. (Holil, Asmuki, Mighfar, & Rafiqie, 2024)

Meanwhile, according to Azra, *pesantren* function not only as educational

institutions but also as socio-religious institutions that maintain, preserve, and disseminate Islamic values within society. (Komarodin, Komarodin, 2017) This view demonstrates the broader function of pesantren, namely as agents of social, cultural, and da'wah change.

Madjid views pesantren as a unique subculture. He emphasizes that pesantren have distinctive traditions, values, and leadership systems that distinguish them from other educational institutions. Pesantren, he believes, are able to maintain their identity while adapting to modern changes. Thus, Islamic boarding schools are seen not only as religious educational institutions, but also as social communities that shape the lifestyles of their students and the surrounding community. (Majid, 1997)

From these various definitions, it can be understood that Islamic boarding schools are Islamic educational institutions that emphasize not only intellectual aspects through the teaching of yellow books, but also spiritual, moral, and social aspects. Islamic boarding schools serve a dual role: preserving the tradition of classical Islamic scholarship while fostering the independence of their students and contributing to national development. Generally, Islamic boarding schools are divided into three parts:

Salafi Islamic Boarding Schools

Salaf Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are traditional Islamic educational institutions that maintain the classical learning system inherited from previous scholars. Their main characteristics lie in the deepening of religious knowledge through the study of yellow books using the sorogan and bandongan methods, as well as a strong personal relationship between the kiai (religious teacher) and the students, where the kiai serves as both a teacher and a spiritual figure and moral role model (Mahmudah & Khauldi, 2021). Students live a simple, communal life within the dormitory, with disciplined routines of worship, study, and religious activities. Thus, the values of obedience, simplicity, independence, and sincerity become the primary foundations for character formation (Nurhidayat & Subasman, 2021).

Salaf Islamic boarding schools focus more on mastery of Islamic sciences such as tafsir (interpretation of the Islamic texts), hadith (hadith), fiqh (jurisprudence), and morals, with less emphasis on general subjects such as science and technology. This distinction does not indicate backwardness, but rather a manifestation of consistency with the primary goal of Islamic boarding schools: to produce scholars and preachers who are knowledgeable in religion. Their traditional educational system focuses on the blessings of knowledge and spiritual depth, not solely on formal academic achievement. (Zainudin, 2023)

The superiority of traditional Islamic boarding schools lies in their ability to develop students with strong character and moral and spiritual resilience amidst the currents of globalization. Through the tradition of riyāḍah (religious practice), moral cultivation, and intense teacher-student relationships, traditional Islamic boarding schools produce individuals who are intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually mature. Furthermore, traditional Islamic boarding schools play a crucial role in preserving and passing down classical Islamic knowledge as the

foundation for the development of modern and comprehensive Islamic boarding schools (Triyono et al., 2023). Despite the challenges of modernization and digitalization, traditional Islamic boarding schools remain relevant because the moral values they teach form the basis for building a society with character and civility.

Khalafi Islamic Boarding Schools

Khalaf Islamic boarding schools or modern Islamic boarding schools are a form of evolution of Salaf Islamic boarding schools which try to adapt to the developments of the times and the needs of modern society. The main characteristic of the Khalaf Islamic boarding school lies in the integration of the religious education system (diniyah) and formal education (madrasah or public schools). This approach marks a paradigm shift in Islamic boarding school education from a traditional and textual approach to a rational, open, and adaptive system to global challenges (Raharjo & Ibad, 2024).

Managementally, the Khalaf Islamic boarding school applies modern principles in its institutional governance. The use of a digital-based administration system, transparent financial management, and collective leadership have begun to be implemented to support efficiency and accountability. The relationship between the kiai, teachers, and students has also undergone a transformation: the kiai's authority remains respected, but is accompanied by a more professional and participatory division of roles. Modern Islamic boarding schools generally also have a global vision, demonstrated by international cooperation, the application of information technology in learning, and the establishment of life skills training institutions (life skills centers) for students. (Khamid, 2024)

The main difference between the Salaf Islamic boarding school and the Khalaf Islamic boarding school lies in their educational orientation. The Khalaf Islamic boarding school strives for a balance between religious knowledge and general knowledge so that students can play an active role in various sectors of life. The modernization implemented does not eliminate the Islamic roots of Islamic boarding schools, as the values of sincerity, independence, and courtesy towards teachers remain the foundation of education (Noor & Novarlia, 2023). The excellence of Islamic boarding schools lies in their ability to produce a generation of moderate, broad-minded, and globally competitive Muslims, while simultaneously integrating tradition and innovation, positioning Islam as a paradigm for holistic human development and a bridge between classical Islamic values and the demands of the modern world (Mujahid, 2021).

Comprehensive Islamic Boarding Schools

Comprehensive Islamic boarding schools, often called integrative Islamic boarding schools, are a form of reform in Islamic educational institutions that seek to combine the strengths of both traditional and traditional Islamic boarding schools within a unified management system. (Olfah, 2024) This model emerged in response to the needs of the times, which demand that Islamic educational institutions remain rooted in classical scholarly traditions while simultaneously adapting to developments in science and technology. (Walid, 2021) The hallmark of comprehensive Islamic boarding schools lies in the balance between mastery of turāth (yellow books), implementation of a general curriculum, and the use of digital technology in the learning process. (Sahkholid Nasution, 2024)

In terms of management, comprehensive Islamic boarding schools employ a modern, planned and systematic approach, while still prioritizing spiritual values as the basis for decision-making. The Kiai (Islamic leader) plays a central role, combining charismatic leadership with professional management principles. (Muntaha & Asyhari, 2025) The Islamic boarding school administration system is equipped with a Management Information System (MIS), transparency-based financial management, and quality-based evaluation of education. Furthermore, collaboration between religious educators and general educators is carried out to create holistic and interdisciplinary learning. (Olfah, 2024)

The difference between comprehensive Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren salaf and khalaf) lies in their holistic educational orientation (syumuliyah), which integrates religious deepening, skills acquisition, and moral formation. Comprehensive Islamic boarding schools strive to produce a generation of faqih (Islamic scholars), fannān (skilled), and muta'addin (morally sound). Therefore, their graduates will not only serve as ulama (Islamic scholars) but also as academics, technocrats, and Muslim entrepreneurs grounded in Islamic values (Asnawi et al., 2023). The excellence of these Islamic boarding schools lies in their ability to bridge the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge through an integrative curriculum that fosters digital literacy, sharia entrepreneurship, and ecological awareness without neglecting spirituality, thus aligning with the demands of the Society 5.0 Era, which is oriented toward humanity and global welfare (Anggraeni et al., 2025).

Conceptual Differences Between Salaf, Khalaf, and Comprehensive Islamic Boarding Schools from an Islamic Education Management Perspective

From an Islamic Education Management (MPI) perspective, the differences between salaf, khalaf, and comprehensive Islamic boarding schools lie in the way they manage their management functions – planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising – according to their educational orientation (Ashari, 2021). Salaf Islamic boarding schools implement non-administrative management rooted in spiritual tradition, with charismatic and centralized leadership from kiai (Islamic scholars), based on the principles of blessing and ta'dhim (religious guidance), and oriented toward character formation and deepening religious knowledge through personal relationships (Musaddad, 2024). In contrast, khalaf Islamic boarding schools adopt modern, rational and professional management, characterized by a hierarchical organizational structure, market-driven planning, monitoring through performance indicators, and participatory leadership open to innovation, technology, and demands for transparency (Rangga Hasibuan, Zahra Nabila Iqbal, Nurul Atika Hasibuan, 2024).

Comprehensive Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) exist as a synthesis model that integrates the spirituality of traditional management with the rationality of traditional management. Management is carried out through collaborative leadership with the kiai as the central spiritual figure, supported by a professional and technology-based administrative system for efficiency and transparency (Syarifudin et al., 2025). Educational planning is integrative, combining the formation of noble morals with the strengthening of academic and

vocational competencies relevant to the Society 5.0 Era. The differences between these three types of Islamic boarding schools essentially lie in their managerial approach, not in Islamic values, with comprehensive Islamic boarding schools considered the most adaptive because they are able to harmonize tradition and modernization. (Irvan, Sari, & Brutu, 2025)

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, playing a strategic role in shaping the moral, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of the community. Their dynamic development has given rise to three main models: salafiyah, khalafiyah, and comprehensive pesantren. Salafiyah pesantren focus on classical scholarly traditions through the study of yellow books, khalafiyah pesantren combine religious knowledge with general knowledge to meet contemporary needs, while comprehensive pesantren combine the strength of tradition with a modern curriculum and practical skills in response to global challenges. The differences in characteristics, curriculum, methods, and objectives of these three models demonstrate that pesantren are not merely traditional institutions, but also adaptive and innovative. Research on these variations in pesantren is important, both theoretically to enrich Islamic education literature, and practically to provide a deeper understanding for the community, educators, and policymakers in supporting the role of pesantren as centers for developing a generation of Muslims who are faithful, knowledgeable, and have good character, while also being able to compete in the modern era.

REFERENCES

- Anjani, A. R., Putri Amanah, & Chadidjah, S. (2025). Pesantren Lembaga Tertua di Indonesia dan Perkembangannya. *Journal of Islamicjerusalem Studies*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47766/atjis.v7i1.6744>
- Gunawan, I. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: teori dan praktik*. Retrieved from <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:203102458>
- Hidayatullah, A. S., & Fauji, I. (2023). *Analysis of the Al-Iktisyaf Book in Nahwu Learning at the An-Nur Islamic Boarding School Kalibaru Banyuwangi Analisi Buku Al-Iktisyaf dalam Pembelajaran Nahwu di Pondok*. 1-8.
- Holil, M., Asmuki, A., Mighfar, S., & Rafiqie, M. (2024). Pengembangan Tipologi Pesantren: Sebuah Kritik atas Tipologi Dhofier dan Ziemek. *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ibrahimy*, 2(1), 45-53. <https://doi.org/10.35316/jummy.v2i1.5428>
- Irvan, I. A., Sari, M. P., & Brutu, D. (2025). Kepemimpinan Organisasi Yayasan Kependidikan Islam. *Jiip (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)*, 8, 1484-1491. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v8i2.6865>
- Khamid, N. (2024). Kiai Leadership Patterns in The Modernization of Boarding School Management. *AFKARINA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 9(1), 35-46. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33650/afkarina.v8i2.9397>
- Komarodin Komarodin. (2017). Modernisasi Kurikulum Pesantren Menurut Azyumardi Azra. *Perspektive*, 10(2), 46-65. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.kopertais4.or.id/mataraman/index.php/perspektif/article>

- /view/3329/2483
- Majid, N. (1997). *Bilik-bilik pesantren*. Paramadina.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1992). *Analisis data kualitatif: buku sumber tentang metode-metode baru*. Retrieved from <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:185330817>
- Muntaha, M. A., & Asyhari, A. (2025). Kepemimpinan Kiai dalam Manajemen Sekolah Berbasis Pesantren. *At Tadbir: Islamic Education Management Journal*, 3(1), 17–26. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54437/attadbir.v3i1.1880>
- Musaddad, A. (2024). Leadership in Pesantren: Educational Management Approaches for Spiritual and Academic Development. *AKSI: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 2(3), 186–194. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37348/aksi.v2i3.455>
- Olfah, H. (2024). Pendekatan Interdisipliner dalam Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam: Memperkuat Keterpaduan Kurikulum dan Metode Pembelajaran. *SENTRI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah*, 3(5), 2507–2517. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55681/sentri.v3i5.2813>
- Raharjo, N. P., & Ibad, M. N. (2024). *Transformasi Pesantren di Era Digital : Peluang dan Tantangan dalam Aspek Dakwah Dan Pendidikan (Pesantren Transformation in the Digital Age Digital : Opportunities and Challenges in the Aspects of Da ' wah and Education) Informasi Artikel*. 7, 39–47.
- Rangga Hasibuan, Zahra Nabila Iqbal, Nurul Atika Hasibuan, A. A. (2024). Indonesian Research Journal on Education. *Manajemen Pesantren Modern Di Tengah Tantangan Pendidikan: Sebuah Studi Pustaka*, 4, 227–232. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v4i2.542>
- Rijali, A. (2019). Analisis Data Kualitatif. *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 17(33), 81. <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v17i33.2374>
- Sahkholid Nasution, H. A. & H. A.-R. (2024). Kitab Kuning and Religious Moderation: A Study on State Islamic Universities in Indonesia. *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, 19(1), 73–88. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol19no2.5>
- Salman Hasan, Rofiatul Hasanah, S. W. J. (2023). Peran dan kontribusi masyarakat pesantren dalam berbangsa dan bernegara. *Tabsyir : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 4(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59059/tabsyir.v4i1.58>
- Triyono, B., Mediawati, E., Miftahul, Y., Dago, K., Indonesia, U. P., & Artikel, I. (2023). Transformasi Nilai-Nilai Islam melalui Pendidikan Pesantren: Implementasi dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri. *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62504/jimr403>
- Walid, M. K. (2021). Integralistik-interkoneksi pendidikan salaf dan khalaf pondok pesantren tebuireng jombang. *Rabbani: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2(September), 81–95. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/rjpai.v2i2.4645>
- Zainudin, M. (2023). Manajemen Pendidikan Pondok pesantren. *SENTRI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah*, 2(6), 2140–2147. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55681/sentri.v2i6.1028>
- Muhdi, ali. (2020) *“Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning DI Pesantren (Studi Komparatif Api*

Pondok Pesantren Salaf Tegalrejo Magelang Dan Pondok Pesantren An-Nawawi Berjan Purworejo),”.