

Managerial Approach in Preserving Islamic Scientific Traditions in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam

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Abstract: The preservation of Islamic scholarly traditions in the archipelago faces challenges from modernization and globalization of education. This study aims to analyze the managerial approaches applied by Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and Islamic educational institutions in Brunei Darussalam. The study employs library research with a qualitative and comparative approach. Data was obtained through scientific literature reviews, educational policy documents, and classical Islamic works. The analysis was conducted using a thematic-comparative approach to identify similarities, differences, and integrative strategies between countries. The results show that Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia implement bottom-up management based on spiritual values and kiai leadership, while Brunei uses top-down management that emphasizes administrative standardization and the national curriculum. The integration of traditional values and modern management is an ideal strategy for maintaining the continuity of knowledge, manners, and the relevance of Islamic education. These findings contribute to the development of contextual, sustainable, and value-based Islamic education management.

Keywords: Islamic Education Management, Scientific Tradition, Islam Nusantara, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam



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Introduction

The tradition of Islamic scholarship in the archipelago has become the moral and intellectual foundation that shapes the religious character of Indonesian society and neighboring countries such as Brunei Darussalam (Azra: 2019; Sadali: 2020). Classical learning systems, such as Islamic boarding schools, religious lectures by scholars, and formal and informal educational institutions that preserve traditional books and teaching methods, have become the main means of transmitting this scholarship (Al-Ghazali: 2024; Zarnuji: 2023). Along with the modernization of education, scientific traditions face challenges in the form of curriculum changes, teacher certification requirements, and the globalization of science (Arifin: 2020; Hasan Basri: 2020). On the other hand, traditional values remain relevant because they shape a distinctive Islamic identity in the archipelago (Tilaar: 2021; Siregar: 2019). Socio-economic transformation and the development of information technology have put pressure on Islamic educational institutions to adapt in order to remain competitive and relevant (Yunus & Mitrohardjono: 2020; Wening & Santosa: 2020). Therefore, the preservation of scientific traditions is not only a cultural heritage, but also a strategic responsibility of Islamic educational institutions to maintain the continuity of knowledge and manners within the framework of Tamadun Islam Nusantara (Madjid: 2020; Arifin: 2020; Tilaar: 2021).

Although scientific traditions continue to be valued socially and culturally, Islamic educational institutions face the need for managerial adaptation so that these traditions are not marginalized by administrative standards and national regulations (Azman & Mahmud: 2019; Hashim: 2021; Abdullah: 2020). In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools are known for their method of teaching classical Islamic texts, scholarly lineage, and intense interaction between students and teachers (Azra: 2019; Sadali: 2020). However, recent research emphasizes the need to strengthen managerial aspects so that Islamic boarding schools can face modern challenges, such as accreditation and institutional professionalization (Nurhidayati: 2022). Meanwhile, formal Islamic educational institutions in Brunei Darussalam are also required to integrate scientific traditions with national education regulations (Rahman & Ahmad: 2021). A comparison of these two contexts shows the need for a systematic and structured managerial approach to ensure the sustainability of Islamic scholarly traditions (Azman & Mahmud: 2019; Hashim: 2021; Tilaar: 2021).

Previous research gaps are evident in the limited comparative studies on Islamic education management between Indonesia and Brunei. Previous literature tends to focus on curriculum, state policy, or socio-cultural aspects, without examining in depth the managerial strategies and leadership of institutions in maintaining scientific traditions (Zulkifli: 2020; Madjid: 2020; Sadali: 2020). In fact, good educational management influences resource allocation, organizational structure, teacher training, and mechanisms for preserving traditional learning practices (Hasan Basri: 2020; Wening & Santosa: 2020). This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on the managerial approach, thereby exploring the similarities, differences, and potential for integration of concepts between the two contexts of Islamic education (Tilaar: 2021; Abdullah: 2020).

Based on the identification of these issues, this study has the following objectives: first, to analyze the managerial strategies of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia; second, to examine similar strategies in Brunei Darussalam; third, to compare the effectiveness and challenges of each approach; and fourth, to formulate recommendations for a managerial model in accordance with the principles of Tamadun Islam Nusantara (Arifin: 2020; Tilaar: 2021; Sadali: 2020). This study is also relevant to the development of Islamic education policy, the strengthening of scientific traditions, and the improvement of the quality and relevance of education in the Nusantara region and neighboring countries (Azra: 2019; Madjid: 2020; Yunus & Mitrohardjono: 2020).

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a comparative library research method. This approach was chosen because the focus of the study lies in analyzing scientific literature that discusses the preservation of Islamic scientific traditions through education management in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam (Arifin: 2020; Madjid: 2020). With a qualitative approach, researchers can understand the meaning contained in texts, policy documents, and scientific works in a contextual manner, thus

enabling an in-depth interpretation of the managerial practices of Islamic educational institutions (Azhar: 2020; Abdullah: 2020).

The research locations include traditional Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, particularly in West Java, and formal Islamic educational institutions in Brunei Darussalam, such as the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Tahfiz Institute (Hashim: 2021; Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam: 2022). The research subjects are documents, literature, and scientific works that discuss Islamic education management, institutional leadership, curriculum, and the preservation of Islamic scientific traditions. The data sources consist of primary sources, such as classical books such as *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* by Al-Ghazali and *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Al-Zarnuji, as well as secondary sources in the form of scientific journals, dissertations, research reports, and national and religious education policies (Al-Ghazali: 2024; Zarnuji: 2023; Hashim: 2021).

The research instrument was a literature analysis guideline that emphasized key themes, such as managerial strategies, preservation of scientific traditions, institutional structures, and leadership of Islamic educational institutions. Data collection techniques were carried out through the identification and classification of literature, close reading, recording of important content, creation of argumentative summaries, and concept mapping to facilitate thematic and comparative analysis (Arifin: 2020; Azhar: 2020).

Data analysis used thematic-comparative analysis techniques, comprising three main stages: data reduction, categorization, and conclusion drawing. The reduction stage is carried out by filtering information relevant to the research focus, the categorization stage organizes data into broad themes such as education policy, traditional values, and organizational structure, while the conclusion drawing stage compares the managerial models of Indonesia and Brunei to find similarities, differences, and potential for concept integration. Data validity is maintained through triangulation of sources, peer review, and consistency of literature analysis, resulting in a reliable theoretical synthesis in the context of Islamic education in the Indonesian archipelago and Brunei Darussalam (Tilaar: 2021; Abdullah: 2020).

Results and Discussion

In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools maintain Islamic scholarly traditions through the charismatic leadership of kiai, the sorogan and bandongan systems, and a curriculum based on classical Islamic texts (Azra: 2019; Sadali: 2020). Education is viewed as a means of worship and spiritual character building, with organic management that emphasizes values and ethics (Al-Ghazali: 2024; Zarnuji: 2023; Arifin: 2020). Pesantren have begun to adopt modern administration, such as computer-based academic and financial record keeping, without reducing local flexibility and spiritual depth (Azhar: 2020; Wening & Santosa: 2020). The leadership of the kiai strengthens community bonds and student motivation through a mentoring approach, although limited resources pose a challenge to standardizing the quality of education (Tilaar: 2021; Abdullah: 2020; Hefniy & Najma: 2019).

In Brunei, Islamic education management is more structured and based on state policy (Hashim: 2021; Azman & Mahmud: 2019). The national curriculum integrates religious and general knowledge, while the government acts as a facilitator through regulation, financial support, and teacher training (Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam: 2022; Ministry of Religious Affairs of Brunei Darussalam: 2020; Hasan Basri: 2020). This top-down system ensures the continuity of scientific traditions while improving administrative efficiency and educational quality, although local flexibility tends to be limited (Tilaar: 2021; Abdullah: 2020).

Comparative analysis shows two managerial paradigms: bottom-up in Indonesia and top-down in Brunei (Azra: 2019; Hashim: 2021). The Indonesian system excels in flexibility and spiritual depth, while Brunei stands out in standardization and administrative continuity (Al-Ghazali: 2024; Azman & Mahmud: 2019; Sadali: 2020). The ideal approach for Tamadun Islam Nusantara is one that is able to combine traditional values with modern managerial innovation, maintain the continuity of knowledge and manners, and maintain the relevance of Islamic education in the era of globalization (Wening & Santosa: 2020; Yunus & Mitrohardjono: 2020).

Conclusion

The managerial approach has proven to be important in preserving Islamic scholarly traditions in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam (Arifin, 2020; Hashim, 2021). In Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools prioritize value-based management and kiai leadership, while in Brunei, the Islamic educational institution implements structured management based on state policy (Azra, 2019; Madjid, 2020; Rahman & Ahmad, 2021). A comparative analysis shows that flexibility and spiritual depth are the strengths of Islamic boarding schools, while standardization and administrative continuity are the strengths of the Brunei system (Sadali, 2020; Tilaar, 2021).

This study emphasizes the importance of balancing traditional values and modern managerial innovation so that scientific traditions remain relevant in the era of globalization (Azra, 2019; Arifin, 2020). The practical implications of this research are strategic guidelines for leaders of Islamic educational institutions and policymakers to formulate contextual and sustainable organizational structures, evaluation mechanisms, and internal policies (Madjid, 2020; Rahman & Ahmad, 2021).

Theoretically, this study confirms that preserving Islamic scholarly traditions requires the integration of spiritual values and strategic management in order to maintain the quality of Islamic education and teacher professionalism (Arifin, 2020; Tilaar, 2021). As a recommendation, Islamic educational institutions should implement flexible yet structured management, strengthen leadership capacity, and utilize technology selectively without sacrificing scientific traditions (Azra, 2019; Madjid, 2020).

Thus, the preservation of Islamic scholarly traditions through educational management is not merely cultural conservation, but an important strategy to ensure the sustainability of Islamic knowledge, values, and character in the Indonesian archipelago and Brunei Darussalam (Arifin, 2020; Hashim, 2021).

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