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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS DURING AND AFTER COVID-19: STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the institutional governance of Islamic boarding schools, which had been operating stably. The uncertainty of the situation, restrictions on activities, and pressure on the education system test the resilience of the leadership structure in the Islamic boarding school environment. In this context, the role of leadership becomes crucial in determining the direction of response, adaptation, and institutional consolidation. This study aims to explore how transformational leadership in Islamic boarding schools can strengthen institutional governance during and after a crisis. The method used is a qualitative approach with data collection through literature studies of various relevant sources. Data are analyzed interpretively to reveal thematic patterns that reflect the leadership process during the pandemic. The results of the study show that Islamic boarding school leaders responded to the crisis with a strategy of rapid decision-making, reorganization of structures, and adaptive operational adjustments. During the recovery period, institutional consolidation occurred which was marked by structural transformation and strengthening of the coordinating function. In addition, leadership also encourages innovation and independence, both in terms of education, economy, and external institutional relations.

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia since early 2020 has triggered multidimensional challenges that are not only limited to the health aspect but have also shaken the education system and socio-religious institutions widely. Islamic boarding schools, as one of the traditional educational institutions that have a dormitory system and a very close social interaction pattern, are facing extraordinary disruptions that have never happened before (Tejani & Fukuda-Parr, 2021). This

situation forces Islamic boarding school leaders to face the crisis with high adaptation speed, decision-making abilities in uncertainty, and strong institutional resilience. In this context, Islamic boarding school leaders are required not only to respond to emergencies, but also to guide their communities through turbulent times while maintaining the stability of education, spirituality, and institutional management (Hanafi et al., 2021).

During the pandemic, many Islamic boarding schools in various regions of Indonesia were forced to temporarily close face-to-face learning activities, reduce the intensity of collective religious activities, and carry out internal quarantine independently to prevent the spread of the virus. However, limited infrastructure conditions, dense student housing, and limited access to health services make crisis management very complex (Salim et al., 2021). Amidst these pressures, various unique leadership dynamics have emerged, especially from the Kiai and Islamic Boarding School managers, who must take strategic steps to ensure that Islamic Boarding School continues to function as centers of education and character building for the community. The resilience of Islamic Boarding School institutions in facing this disruption is largely determined by the ability of leaders to organize resources, mobilize internal support, and build cross-sector communication with external parties such as the government, health services, and social assistance institutions (Arif, 2016).

Not a few Islamic boarding schools are experiencing economic pressure due to the decline in assistance from the community and minimal income from business activities that usually support daily operations. In this condition, Islamic boarding school leaders must think hard to maintain the continuity of the institution, maintain the welfare of students, and maintain the loyalty of teachers and education personnel (Roqib, 2021). In many cases, the absence of technical guidance from formal education authorities for community-based institutions such as Islamic boarding schools means that leaders must independently design adaptive and innovative strategies. Several Islamic boarding schools have tried to adopt digital technology to organize distance learning, although major challenges arise due to limited devices, internet networks, and low digital literacy among both students and teachers (Muyassaroh et al., 2021).

The tension between the traditional values of Islamic boarding schools and the need to adapt to the reality of the pandemic is also a challenge in itself. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools have strength in internal solidarity networks, students' trust in the kiai, and a high collective culture. However, on the other hand, this crisis demands breakthroughs that cannot be resolved by conventional means (Lundeto et al., 2021). Leadership that is only administrative or ritualistic is not sufficient to drive the necessary changes. On the contrary, leadership is needed that is capable of building a vision for the future amid a crisis, fostering hope and optimism among students, and encouraging behavioral changes in governance that are more adaptive and responsive to the challenges of the times (Fleming & Millar, 2019).

The reality that developed during the pandemic also showed a clear gap between Islamic boarding schools that had visionary and resilient leadership and Islamic boarding schools that experienced stagnation or even decline. Islamic boarding schools that were able to survive and develop showed leadership characteristics that were not only responsive to emergency conditions, but also able to articulate reforms in the fields of management, curriculum, health, and institutional relations with the external environment (Fealy, 2020). In some cases, the pandemic even became a momentum for

some Islamic boarding school leaders to reorganize internal organizational systems, strengthen digital networks, expand collaboration with other institutions, and build a more modern governance foundation without abandoning the deep-rooted values of Islamic boarding schools (Rachmawati et al., 2021).

However, not all Islamic boarding schools have the capacity to make such changes. Many of them still rely entirely on a single, highly charismatic leadership structure, so that the decision-making process becomes centralized and often does not involve collective consideration. This situation complicates the institutional transformation process because change is highly dependent on one figure (El Haddad et al., 2021). In addition, limited managerial capacity, low technological adaptability, and alienation from public policy networks make some Islamic boarding schools vulnerable to structural collapse during times of crisis. The pandemic crisis not only tests the physical and economic strength of Islamic boarding schools but also becomes a real test of the institutional governance capabilities and the quality of leadership within them (Bayırbağ & Penpecioglu, 2017).

After the peak of the pandemic, when various sectors began to design recovery measures, Islamic boarding schools also faced the need to reorganize the learning system, student management, and social relations that had been disrupted during the isolation period. This is where the big question arises about how an effective leadership model can bring Islamic boarding schools out of the crisis, and furthermore, make them stronger centers of socio-religious transformation in the future. Can the experience of facing the pandemic be a turning point for Islamic boarding schools to reflect on the structure and practices of institutional governance that have been carried out so far? Does this crisis open up space for leadership innovation that is not only reactive but also proactive in designing the future?

These questions show the urgency to examine more deeply the dynamics of Islamic boarding school leadership during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on how their leaders practice the values of change, build synergy within the community, and formulate resilient institutional strategies. This period of crisis is not only a challenge, but also an important opportunity for Islamic boarding schools to evaluate their internal strengths and weaknesses, and strengthen their position as adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable religious educational institutions. In this context, research on leadership in Islamic boarding schools during times of crisis becomes very relevant to answering current and future needs, especially in strengthening resilient institutional governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership in the context of education can be understood as a process of management, empowerment, and supervision carried out by an educational leader—such as a principal, rector, or even a teacher—towards students and other education personnel. The goal is to improve the quality of human resources in the educational environment in order to achieve the institution's vision and mission together. In general, leadership personality in the educational environment includes the ability to influence, direct, and foster the behavior and emotions of students and educators in order to create a positive and inclusive learning culture (Chukowry, 2018). In this context, the role of a leader is crucial in creating a conducive educational climate, as well as encouraging all elements

of education to continue to develop. Without the presence of a leader who guides and supports, educational institutions will find it difficult to achieve sustainable progress (Ariyani & Zuhaery, 2021).

In the world of education, a transformational leader is a figure who has charisma, a central role, and a strong strategy in leading the institution toward achieving more meaningful educational goals. Transformational leadership in the educational environment focuses on efforts to build a shared commitment toward a progressive educational vision and foster trust in educators and students to actively participate in change (Anderson, 2017). This theory explains how leaders are able to change school culture, redesign leadership structures, and develop educational management strategies that are adaptive to the challenges of the times. Transformational leaders in schools or campuses act as agents of change who inspire teachers and students to create innovations, update learning methods, and build productive collaborations in facing the dynamics of the ever-evolving world of education (Day et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership in education reflects a leader's ability to change the learning climate, motivate educators, and instill positive learning values in all elements of the school or institution. Through this approach, teachers and students can improve their enthusiasm for learning and the overall quality of learning (McCarley et al., 2016). This leadership not only plays a role in creating a dynamic learning environment but also in transforming educational values and enthusiasm to be in line with the vision and mission of the educational institution. Thus, it can be concluded that transformational leadership in education is a process of change led through a strong vision, active involvement of all parties, and a charismatic approach that strengthens the relationship between leaders, educators, and students in a harmonious manner (Godfrey, 2016).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore in depth the dynamics of transformational leadership in Islamic boarding schools during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in strengthening institutional governance in the midst of a crisis. This approach was chosen because it is able to capture the complexity of the social, cultural, and managerial contexts that shape the response and adaptation of Islamic boarding schools in emergencies. The focus of the study is directed at the leadership processes that occur during the crisis period, by tracing patterns of decision-making, organizing resources, forming new structures, and efforts to consolidate institutions after the peak of the pandemic. Thus, this approach opens up space for a more comprehensive interpretation of the strategic changes carried out by Islamic boarding schools in maintaining the sustainability of their function as educational and fostering institutions. In its implementation, this study will rely on data obtained from various relevant sources, both in the form of previous research results that are directly related to the experience of Islamic boarding schools in dealing with the pandemic. Data collection is carried out systematically through an in-depth literature review of literature that has thematic links to leadership, crisis management, and institutional innovation in the Islamic boarding school environment. After the data has been successfully collected, the next stage is to carry out the process of processing and analyzing the data qualitatively with an interpretive approach, to find thematic

patterns that can support a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Through this process, it is hoped that the research will be able to provide a conceptual contribution to the practice of Islamic boarding school leadership during the crisis and post-crisis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Boarding School Leadership Amidst Pandemic Disruption

Islamic boarding school leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic faced unprecedented challenges, especially in terms of responding to the crisis. This emergency required Islamic boarding school leaders to act quickly, responsively, and with great caution in responding to drastic changes that occurred in a short time. The lack of previous experience in dealing with a global health crisis meant that many Islamic boarding school leaders had to rely on intuition, previous leadership experience, and religious values as a basis for determining policy direction. They were required to make strategic decisions in a limited time, amidst a lack of accurate information and growing uncertainty about the duration of the pandemic, its impact on Islamic boarding school activities, and the government's policy response. In such conditions, flexibility and speed are key elements that distinguish resilient leadership from vulnerable leadership.

The decisions taken by Islamic boarding school leaders during the early stages of the pandemic tended to be reactive but still took into account various moral, social, and security considerations for the Islamic boarding school community as a whole. Some leaders took steps to temporarily close Islamic boarding schools, limit outside visits, and implement local quarantines to prevent the spread of the virus. On the other hand, some leaders choose to maintain activities with limited adjustments, while intensively monitoring the development of the situation. This decision-making process does not always take place in an ideal atmosphere, because leaders must face pressure from various directions, ranging from concerns from guardians of students, pressure from the surrounding community, and limited health facilities, to demands that the education process continue. All of these considerations require courage, decisiveness, and wisdom from the leaders of Islamic boarding schools to act quickly without ignoring greater risks (Hou, 2017).

To maintain the operational stability of the institution, the leadership of the Islamic boarding school reorganized the existing resources, both human and non-human. Teaching staff, daily administrators, and senior students were directed to contribute to maintaining the continuity of daily activities by observing strict health protocols. Human resources were diverted to support activities that were more relevant to the pandemic conditions, such as the formation of an internal health team, assignment of mobility supervision, and division of tasks in providing food and cleanliness. Meanwhile, non-human resources such as the physical facilities of the Islamic boarding school, study rooms, and prayer areas were also reorganized to suit the needs of social distancing and reducing the risk of disease spread. The leadership must evaluate the ability of the Islamic boarding school to provide basic needs, ranging from sanitation, and food logistics, to health equipment such as masks and body temperature measuring devices.

Logistical obstacles are a major challenge that requires creativity and tenacity from the leadership of the Islamic boarding school to overcome. Restrictions on movement, disruption of the supply chain, and large-scale social restrictions in various regions have resulted in difficulties in obtaining necessities, both for daily consumption and institutional operations (Nuby et al., 2019). Many Islamic boarding schools are faced with the fact that external assistance cannot be fully relied on, so they have to build an independent internal distribution system. In situations like this, leadership that is able to build internal solidarity and optimize community potential becomes very important. Some leaders utilize alumni networks, sympathizers, and local partners to help with logistics distribution, connect with suppliers of necessities, or even open independent agricultural land to meet the food needs of Islamic boarding schools sustainably.

Amidst all these pressures, maintaining order in the Santri community is a top priority that cannot be negotiated. Santri as a group living in a closed community has great potential for transmission if not managed strictly. Therefore, the leadership of the Islamic boarding school strives to maintain collective discipline through consistent educational, spiritual, and social control approaches. They try to instill an understanding that efforts to maintain health are part of moral responsibility and religious values that must be maintained together. Firmness in implementing rules, providing clear information about the pandemic conditions, and exemplary behavior from leaders are important parts of building the resilience of the Islamic boarding school community. In this situation, the emotional and spiritual relationship between leaders and santri is tested and at the same time strengthened, creating a leadership space that is not only administrative but also inspiring and transformative.

With the various complexities faced during the pandemic, the role of Islamic boarding school leadership is no longer limited to routine institutional management. They are required to be the main driving force in ensuring community safety, maintaining the continuity of education, and responding to social needs that arise in the midst of the crisis. Leadership in times of crisis is an important momentum to show the true capacity of an Islamic Boarding School leader in facing extraordinary situations, not only with decisiveness and strategy, but also with empathy, local wisdom, and the strength of spiritual values that have been rooted in the Islamic Boarding School tradition. In such dynamics, transformational leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools is a real reflection of the ability to adapt, survive, and even strengthen institutional governance amid unprecedented global shocks.

Institutional Adaptation and Changes in Managerial Structure During the Pandemic

The institutional adaptation of Islamic boarding schools during the COVID-19 pandemic took place in an atmosphere full of pressure and uncertainty. The pandemic not only disrupted educational routines and religious activities but also forced Islamic boarding school institutions to make comprehensive changes to their internal work mechanisms. This situation prompted Islamic boarding school leaders to re-evaluate the previously conventional way of working and replace it with a new work pattern that was able to adapt to the health protocols set by the government and the local needs of each institution. Activities that previously took place in crowds such as general religious studies, face-to-face learning, and socio-religious activities, had to be diverted

or reduced in intensity to avoid the potential spread of the virus. In these conditions, the internal system of Islamic boarding schools faced great pressure to continue to function functionally without losing its core values.

The internal work mechanism experienced fundamental changes in the way schedules were arranged, task distribution, and interaction procedures between Islamic boarding school residents. Several Islamic boarding schools implemented a job rotation system for teaching staff and administrators, in order to avoid crowds and ensure that services could still be provided while maintaining a safe physical distance. The administrative process that was previously carried out directly also began to shift to an online or semi-online model, despite all the limitations of the existing digital infrastructure (Ariyanti et al., 2021). In this situation, Islamic boarding schools not only adjust activities, but also have to reformulate institutional thinking to be more open to adaptive, dynamic, and risk-based work models. This change requires structural and cultural readiness because not all actors in Islamic boarding schools have the same readiness to accept and implement changes in a short time.

Reorganizing roles and functions within the management is an important step taken by many Islamic boarding schools in response to the challenges of the pandemic. Traditional functions such as teaching, care, logistics, and cleaning have been expanded to meet new needs that have emerged, including health monitoring, procurement of personal protective equipment, and internal counseling on the prevention of transmission. In many cases, the role of daily administrators has become more central, while senior teachers and students have been involved in supervisory and educational functions (Rowan & Laffey, 2021). The leadership structure that was previously centered on one or two key figures has been expanded into a more horizontal collaborative structure, in order to increase responsiveness and speed up the decision-making process. This reorganization also requires a redistribution of authority and responsibility to avoid stagnation due to the workload piling up on certain individuals.

Coordination between leadership elements, teachers, and administrators becomes a challenge in itself when the situation forces restrictions on face-to-face interactions. In normal situations, coordination is usually carried out directly through daily meetings, informal meetings, or spontaneous personal communication. However, during the pandemic, this approach has experienced significant obstacles, especially when it comes to avoiding physical meetings and maintaining health protocols. To address these challenges, many Islamic boarding schools have developed alternative communication systems, either through simple digital media such as short message groups or with a rotating communication schedule system that ensures all elements remain connected. This effort to strengthen coordination is not only important for timely decision-making but also for maintaining psychological stability and institutional solidarity in the midst of a very limited atmosphere.

In order to maintain the continuity of institutional functions, a number of Islamic boarding schools have begun to form a new control system that is more contextual and responsive to the dynamics of the pandemic. This system not only regulates the technical implementation of activities, but also includes emergency procedures, reporting mechanisms, and ongoing evaluation of policy implementation. Internal control is important to ensure that all Islamic boarding school residents comply with the established rules, including the use of masks, mobility restrictions, and the

implementation of quarantine when necessary. Islamic boarding school leaders realize that institutions that can survive in a crisis are those that have a control system that is not only repressive but also educative and participatory. Thus, students and administrators are actively involved in maintaining the continuity of this system through a spirit of togetherness and collective responsibility.

Internal communication is one of the weak points in the structural adaptation process during the pandemic, especially when access to communication technology is uneven or when some administrators are not yet accustomed to using digital devices. This causes information gaps, miscommunication between work units, and slow implementation of policies in the field. To overcome this, Islamic boarding school leaders are looking for creative solutions that can bridge these shortcomings. One approach is to develop a layered communication pattern, where information is delivered gradually through the management levels to make it easier to digest and follow. In addition, the use of traditional media such as written announcements, information rotation schedules, and even limited forums held in open spaces with strict health protocols are important alternatives in keeping the flow of communication going. Creativity in maintaining this structural synergy is proof that Islamic boarding schools are not only able to survive but also transform in facing major challenges that have never been faced before.

With various adaptations made during the pandemic, the managerial structure in Islamic boarding schools has undergone a reshaping that has had a long-term impact on the way the institution is run. Decisions that were previously taken centrally have begun to shift to a more collaborative model, work mechanisms that were once static have become more flexible, and structures that were originally hierarchical have slowly transformed into work structures that prioritize efficiency and togetherness. Although not all of these changes are permanent, the experience of the pandemic crisis has provided important lessons for Islamic boarding school institutions to strengthen institutional resilience and adaptability in facing various challenges in the future. Islamic boarding schools that can turn the crisis into an opportunity to improve structurally have demonstrated their ability to become stronger, visionary, and institutionally resilient institutions.

Recovery and Consolidation of Governance Post-Pandemic Peak

After passing through the most critical phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, Islamic boarding schools have entered a complex recovery phase that requires high caution. Recovery does not simply mean returning to pre-crisis conditions but rather involves a planned, gradual process to reorganize the institutional system that was shaken. One of the main priorities is to restore educational and fostering activities that were disrupted during the pandemic by social restrictions, the cessation of face-to-face activities, and regional isolation. Teaching activities that previously took place on a limited basis or online have begun to be restored gradually by considering health protocols and the readiness of the Islamic boarding school environment. This process cannot be carried out uniformly in all institutions, considering that the level of vulnerability, resources, and adaptive capacity of each Islamic boarding school varies. Therefore, Islamic boarding school leaders need to design flexible and responsive

strategies so that recovery does not trigger the potential for new spread while ensuring that the quality of education and fostering does not decline.

In addition to technical operational aspects, a major challenge in the recovery phase lies in restoring the psychological, social, and spiritual stability of students. The pandemic has left a traumatic trail, especially for students who experience isolation, loss of family members, or are cut off from socio-religious activities that are an important part of their lives (Frost et al., 2017). In this case, Islamic boarding schools are required not only to restore physical routines but also to develop structured steps to rebuild collective spirit and a stable inner atmosphere. Spiritual development activities, internal counseling, and discussion forums are very important as a means to strengthen the sense of togetherness and trust among fellow Islamic boarding school residents. This psychosocial recovery process requires the active role of teachers, administrators, and seniors who are able to become empathetic liaisons between crisis experiences and future hopes, while still upholding the values of religious traditions that are the moral foundation of the community.

The post-peak pandemic momentum is also the right time for Islamic boarding school leaders to evaluate and redesign institutional governance that has shown various weaknesses during the crisis. The emergency has exposed previously hidden structural aspects, such as weak communication systems, limited resources, and the lack of a systematic emergency response scheme. Therefore, medium-term planning is a crucial step in order to strengthen institutional capacity going forward. This can include the preparation of standard operating procedures for crises, the development of more resilient information systems, and leadership training that is more responsive to external dynamics. Islamic boarding schools that are able to read this phase as a turning point will have a great opportunity to build more effective, transparent, and adaptive governance, without abandoning the distinctive Islamic and cultural character that characterizes Islamic boarding schools.

In this recovery process, a collaborative approach is the main strategy used to reorganize the internal administration and service systems. The experience of the pandemic shows that institutional work that solely relies on a central authority or individuals is not adequate to face multidimensional challenges (Van Vaerenbergh & Orsingher, 2016). Therefore, the involvement of all elements of the Islamic boarding school - from the leadership, administrators, and teachers, to senior students - is crucial in formulating a new system that is more participatory and sustainable. A more open decision-making mechanism, clear division of tasks, and consistent communication are the foundation for a healthy and crisis-resistant administrative system. This consolidation also encourages the formation of internal networks that strengthen each other, so that the service process to students can run more efficiently and humanely, even amidst various limitations that may remain from the pandemic.

Amid the recovery process, Islamic boarding schools also have a great opportunity to renew the managerial structure that has been running conventionally. The moment of crisis provides a new awareness that institutional resilience is largely determined by the leadership's ability to manage complexity and uncertainty. Therefore, the renewal of the managerial structure can be directed at strengthening cross-functional coordination mechanisms, creating new strategic positions that are relevant to contemporary needs, and training young cadres who have high adaptive capacity. This strengthening does not have to change the substance of the values adopted by Islamic

boarding schools but rather expands the space for actualizing these values in the context of a changing world. Institutional resilience will be stronger if the managerial structure not only functions administratively but is also able to become a collective leadership space that lives and grows together with the challenges of the times.

The entire process of recovery and consolidation after the peak of the pandemic shows that Islamic boarding schools as traditional and socio-religious institutions have great potential to become models of institutional resilience. The major challenges posed by the pandemic are an opportunity for reflection and transformation, where Islamic boarding school institutions are not only restored but also strengthened through a comprehensive internal consolidation process. By prioritizing the principles of caution, community solidarity, and the spirit of renewal, Islamic boarding schools can move more firmly into the future as educational institutions that are not only able to survive the crisis, but also develop into strategic actors in socio-religious development at the national level. This process is far from over, but 2021 is an important marker that Islamic boarding schools have the ability to rise, grow, and reshape their institutional future in a more resilient and inclusive way.

The Role of Leadership in Encouraging Innovation and Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools

The role of Islamic boarding school leadership is becoming increasingly crucial in encouraging innovation and strengthening institutional independence. Leadership that previously focused on traditional management and ensuring routine stability is required to transform into a driver of progressive change. Islamic boarding school leaders are no longer sufficient in their role as moral guardians or guardians of tradition, but must also become facilitators of renewal that open up space for the birth of new ideas, both in terms of education and managerial governance. The courage to provide freedom to teachers, administrators, and even students to innovate is an important element in creating an ecosystem that is adaptive to the dynamics of the times. Visionary leaders will be able to build a collaborative environment, where initiatives are not stifled by bureaucratic rigidity but are instead developed through healthy and constructive internal dialogue.

Digital transformation is one of the most strategic areas in the post-pandemic Islamic boarding school innovation process. Experience during the crisis has shown the importance of using technology as a medium for communication, learning, and institutional data management. However, the adoption of this technology requires strong encouragement from leadership so that it can be accepted and utilized effectively by all elements within the Islamic boarding school. Leaders who have digital awareness will be quicker to take concrete steps, such as forming an internal information technology team, providing digital literacy training for teachers and students, and establishing partnerships with external parties to develop online systems that support distance learning. Amidst limited infrastructure, progressive Islamic boarding school leaders can turn challenges into opportunities, by creatively utilizing existing resources, and even developing gradual strategies towards institutional digitalization without sacrificing the identity and traditional values that are the identity of Islamic boarding schools.

In addition to the technological dimension, Islamic boarding school leadership also plays a central role in fostering collective awareness of the importance of economic independence as a foundation for institutional resilience. The pandemic has taught us that dependence on external funding sources can be a weak point that disrupts the continuity of Islamic boarding school educational and social activities. Therefore, leaders need to initiate concrete steps to build sustainable Islamic boarding school business units, empower local potential owned by the Islamic boarding school community, and create a fair and transparent benefit distribution mechanism. This collective awareness does not emerge spontaneously but must be instilled through a joint learning process, active involvement of all elements of the Islamic boarding school in economic planning, and providing space for the growth of the entrepreneurial spirit of students and administrators. Successful leadership will build a productive spirit of cooperation, where all parties feel ownership and responsibility for the economic success of the institution.

To oversee all these innovative processes, increasing internal participation in strategic decision-making is a necessity that cannot be postponed. Inclusive and participatory leadership allows for the emergence of fresh ideas from various lines, while strengthening a sense of ownership of every policy taken (Theesfeld et al., 2017). In the often hierarchical structure of Islamic boarding schools, leaders need to create an open, consultative space where the voices of teachers, senior students, and junior administrators can be heard and considered. This process requires a commitment to building an active and productive culture of deliberation, as well as the courage to correct ineffective policies based on input from below. This is where the quality of leadership is tested – not only in determining strategic direction but also in managing differences of opinion and maintaining synergy amidst diverse aspirations.

Equally important, leadership that encourages innovation and independence must also strengthen external relations as part of the institutional sustainability strategy. Connections with the government, donor agencies, the business world, and other educational networks are important elements in expanding the horizons of Islamic boarding schools while strengthening collaborative foundations. Islamic boarding school leaders who actively build networks will find it easier to access technical support, training opportunities, and resource assistance that can be utilized to strengthen institutional programs. However, these external partnerships need to be framed in the principles of equality and sustainability, so that Islamic boarding schools do not get caught up in new dependencies, but remain the main actors in managing their future. Careful leadership will ensure that all forms of collaboration do not erode the basic values of Islamic boarding schools, but rather enrich their capacity to survive, develop, and make wider contributions to society.

Thus, Islamic boarding schools led by figures who dare to innovate, are adaptive to change, and are visionary in building institutional independence, are in a very strategic position to become pioneers of value-based education amidst the current globalization. This process of innovation and independence is not only a demand of the times, but also a manifestation of the moral mandate of leadership that should not stop at routine management, but must continue to move forward in responding to increasingly complex challenges. Islamic boarding schools, through strong and wise leadership, have a great opportunity to reposition their role in the national education map and

become centers of excellence that are able to integrate tradition, modernity, and solid institutional resilience.

CONCLUSION

Islamic boarding schools have a strong adaptive capacity when led by figures who are responsive, visionary, and open to change. Islamic boarding school leadership plays a central role in dealing with crises, both through quick and appropriate decision-making in emergencies, efficient resource management, and community organization in limited circumstances. The pandemic has become a real test of the resilience of Islamic boarding school management systems, and in many cases, has driven the acceleration of institutional innovation, digital transformation, and the restructuring of internal structures that are more responsive to the needs of the times. Furthermore, the post-peak pandemic period is an important momentum for Islamic boarding schools to carry out more targeted institutional consolidation, by fostering collective awareness of the importance of independence and sustainability. Recovery efforts not only target the normalization of education and care activities but also involve structural transformations aimed at strengthening institutional resilience in the long term. Leadership that is able to integrate traditional values with a modern managerial approach has proven to be the main key to encouraging innovation, expanding internal participation, and strengthening strategic external partnerships. Thus, Islamic boarding schools not only survive the pressure of the crisis but are also able to grow into more resilient and relevant institutions in the national social and educational landscape.

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