



Empowering Islamic Boarding Schools through Collaborative Management for Recognized and Sustainable Quality Education

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Abstrak

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and play a vital role in shaping the nation's morals and character. With the changing times and technological advancements, Islamic boarding schools face the challenge of remaining relevant and competitive with other educational institutions. This study aims to examine how the application of collaborative management can empower Islamic boarding schools to create quality, recognized, and sustainable education. The research method used is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA model. The study was conducted on eight scientific articles published between 2020 and 2025, selected based on the criteria of relevance, open access, and contextual suitability to the theme of Islamic boarding school empowerment and management. The analysis was conducted using content analysis to identify key themes related to institutional empowerment, human resource strengthening, and quality assurance systems. The study's results indicate that collaborative management plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality and sustainability of Islamic boarding schools. Collaboration involving internal elements—such as kiai, teachers, and students—as well as external elements, including the community, government, and partner institutions, can create governance that is more participatory and adaptive to the needs of the time. Human resource empowerment is a primary focus through training, competency development, and teacher regeneration. Furthermore, some Islamic boarding schools are beginning to integrate Islamic values. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the curriculum and learning activities to foster social and environmental awareness among students. Overall, the implementation of collaborative management has been proven to encourage Islamic boarding schools to become more independent, professional, and competitive institutions without abandoning their Islamic identity. Thus, Islamic boarding schools have the potential to become models of quality and sustainable Islamic education in the modern era.

Keywords:

Empowerment; Boarding School; Quality Assurance; Collaborative Learning.

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and have made significant contributions to the nation. In fact, even before the establishment of general educational institutions, pesantren have existed since the 13th century AD. As Islamic educational institutions, pesantren are known for instilling religious teachings and fostering religious morals through traditional approaches such as *bandongan* and *sorogan* (Burhanudin et al., 2023). In line with global dynamics and technological advances, some pesantren have begun to innovate by integrating traditional learning methods with digital media. This effort is being undertaken to ensure the pesantren's continued existence and sustainability

(sustainable), and have equal competitiveness with other formal and private educational institutions. In the context of sustainable development, Islamic boarding schools are also required to improve the quality of education, both academically and non-academically, and ensure its relevance to community needs. Quality assurance and accreditation are also important instruments for validating the quality and ensuring the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in the modern era (Firda et al., 2025).

However, these innovations have not been evenly distributed across Islamic boarding schools. Most still employ traditional management that relies heavily on the figure of the *kiai*, while a systemic and standardized quality assurance system has not yet been fully implemented (Yugo, 2025). This situation demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools still face various challenges in the management and recognition of educational quality. Not all Islamic boarding schools are officially registered or integrated with national education standards, so their quality and recognition are not evenly distributed across regions. According to Ishom, many Islamic boarding schools still face obstacles in implementing education. Most are managed independently with limited infrastructure, minimal technological support, and teachers who are not fully certified. According to data from the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, more than 60% of teachers in Islamic boarding schools do not have a bachelor's degree. This condition does not reflect low individual quality, but rather indicates that access to higher education for Islamic boarding school educators is still unequal. Therefore, empowerment efforts and the implementation of more collaborative management are needed so that Islamic boarding schools can develop optimally and gain national and international recognition (El-saha, 2025).

Collaborative management is a crucial approach to optimizing the empowerment and sustainability of Islamic boarding school education in the face of contemporary dynamics. Previously rigid management patterns are now shifting toward a more open and participatory system. As explained by Mubarok et al., the implementation of collaborative supervision in Islamic boarding schools can create two-way communication between leaders, teachers, and *ustadz*, resulting in more harmonious and productive working relationships. This approach also opens up space for the exchange of ideas and collaborative learning, which impacts on improving teaching quality. With effective collaboration, Islamic boarding schools become not only places to study religion but also spaces for the growth of participation, openness, and a sense of belonging among all elements of education (Mubarok et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the success of Islamic boarding schools in improving the quality of education is inseparable from the active involvement of various parties, both internal and external. Haetami et al. found that quality and comfort were the primary considerations for parents when choosing an Islamic boarding school, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between the institution, guardians, and the community (Haetami et al., 2025). This support will be even stronger if the Islamic boarding school is able to establish partnerships with other institutions, such as Islamic universities. According to Dinata et al., collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and universities not only enriches the learning process but also strengthens human resource capacity and expands the social role of Islamic boarding schools in society. Through synergistic and mutually reinforcing collaboration, Islamic boarding schools can continue to maintain their identity while developing as quality, relevant, and sustainably competitive Islamic educational institutions (Dinata et al., 2025).

The primary goal of Islamic boarding school empowerment is to create independent, high-quality, competitive, and sustainable Islamic educational institutions that can face the challenges of the modern era. The independence of Islamic boarding schools is measured not only by economic aspects, but also by the institution's ability to manage its managerial system professionally, implement internal quality assurance, and innovate in the management of learning and business units. Islamic boarding schools are expected to balance traditional Islamic values with technological advances and the demands of 21st-century competencies. This is in line with research findings showing that strengthening managerial capacity, technological literacy, and implementing *strategic digital marketing* And *digital branding* proven to increase the

independence and competitiveness of Islamic boarding schools in various fields, both education and economics (Lathifah et al., 2024).

B. METHODS

This research uses the method *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) with the PRISMA model (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*). This method is carried out by analyzing a number of relevant and sustainable scientific journals to obtain a synthesis of the latest findings related to the empowerment of Islamic boarding schools through collaborative management to realize quality, recognized, and sustainable education.

The analysis was carried out using the content analysis method (*content analysis*) to identify key themes such as empowerment, Islamic boarding schools, collaborative management, accreditation processes, and quality and sustainable education.

Research Stages

The stages of implementing a systematic literature review (SLR) in this research consist of four main stages, namely:

1. Identification and Formulation of Research Questions

The first stage was carried out by formulating the main research question, namely: "How can the implementation of collaborative management empower Islamic boarding schools to realize quality, recognized, and sustainable education?"

2. Search Procedure

The second stage involved searching for journal articles through Google Scholar and Publish or Perish, using the keywords "Pesantren Empowerment," "Collaborative Management," "Madrasah Accreditation," and "Quality and Sustainability." Furthermore, the search was limited to publications from the last six years, from 2020 to 2025, to ensure the data reviewed was relevant and up-to-date.

3. Journal Selection

The third stage is journal selection, where the selection process. The selection process involved two criteria: inclusion and exclusion. Eight articles met the inclusion criteria, while 343 articles were eliminated because they did not align with the research focus.

Inclusion criteria:

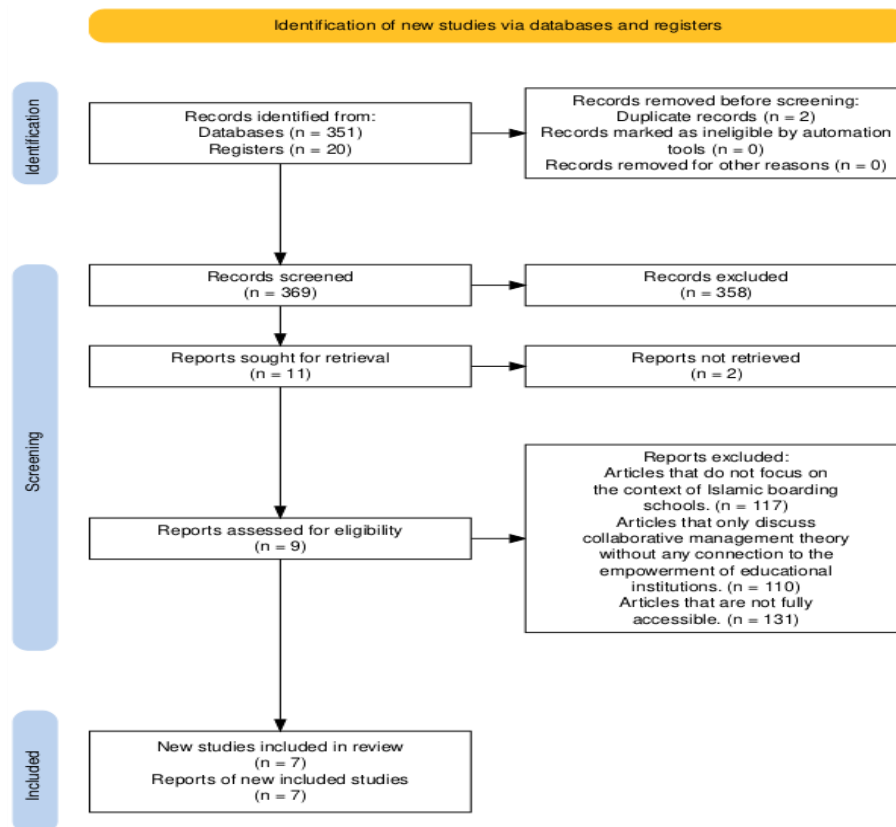
- 1) Articles published between 2020-2025
- 2) Discussing the topics of Islamic boarding school empowerment, collaborative management, quality assurance, and continuing education.
- 3) It is a scientific journal that is available in full text (*open access*).
- 4) Written in Indonesian.

Exclusion criteria:

- 1) Articles that do not focus on the context of Islamic educational institutions, namely Islamic Boarding Schools.
- 2) Articles that only discuss collaborative management theory without any connection to the empowerment of educational institutions.
- 3) Duplicate and non-scientific articles.
- 4) Articles that are not fully accessible (*restricted access*).

4. Data Analysis

The final stage is data analysis of articles that pass the selection stage using content analysis (*content analysis*). The analysis was conducted to find patterns, themes, and relationships between the concepts of Islamic boarding school empowerment, collaborative management, quality assurance, and continuing education.



C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Empowering Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is a process of strengthening their role and capacity as Islamic educational institutions deeply rooted in society. Pesantren serve not only as places to study religion but also as driving forces in the social, economic, and educational spheres of the surrounding community. Through empowerment, pesantren are guided to become independent, productive institutions capable of adapting to the needs of the times. Furthermore, collaborative management is defined as pesantren management that involves the active participation of all internal and external elements, including kiai (Islamic scholars), teachers, students, the community, the government, and other institutional partners. Collaborative management encourages a consultative and participatory decision-making process, in which each party plays a role in determining the direction of pesantren policies and program implementation.

Based on eight scientific journals that met comprehensive criteria, ranging from Islamic boarding school empowerment, collaborative management, quality, and institutional sustainability, the research findings are as follows. See Table 1.

Table 1. Research Results on Empowering Islamic Boarding Schools Through Collaborative Management

NO.	Researcher (Year)	Research Title	Results
1.	Fauzul Atqia, Siti Nur Zalikha, Putri Marzaniar (2024)	Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Berkualitas di Pesantren Modern Provinsi Aceh	Research shows that modern Islamic boarding schools in Aceh strive to provide quality and sustainable education aligned with the SDGs through talent development programs, adaptive curricula, and character-based learning. In terms of accreditation, the quality of Islamic boarding schools varies—only a small proportion are accredited A+ and A—requiring improvement in quality management. The implementation of collaborative

			management between the government, Islamic boarding schools, and NGOs such as Aceh Hijau is a form of institutional empowerment to maintain the sustainability and quality of Islamic education in Aceh.
2.	Didin Kurniadin Maskar (2025)	Penguatan Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia Untuk Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Pesantren Miftahussa'adah SindangBarang.	Research at the Miftahussa'adah Islamic Boarding School in Sindangbarang, Indramayu, West Java, shows that strengthening human resource management is key to improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools. Empowerment is carried out through strategic human resource planning, Islamic-based recruitment, ongoing training, and a ustadz regeneration system. The implementation of collaborative management between leaders and educators has an impact on improving the quality of learning and institutional governance. Strengthening human resources also strengthens the Islamic boarding school's readiness for accreditation and ensures the long-term sustainability of educational quality.
3.	Ahmad Yani, Muhammad Anggung, Manumanoso Prasetyo (2024)	Peran Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama dalam Meningkatkan Akreditasi Pesantren di Kabupaten Bener Meriah	The results of this study emphasize the importance of empowering Islamic boarding schools through collaborative management in the madrasah accreditation process. The MPU plays an active role in guiding and supporting Islamic boarding schools to meet established `accreditation standards, enabling them to continuously improve their educational quality. Through collaboration between the MPU and Islamic boarding schools, it is hoped that an education system that is not only high-quality but also sustainable will be created, which in turn will strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools in society and ensure educational services are aligned with Islamic values.
4.	Ulfa Amalia Firda, Syaiful Anwar, Uswatun Hasanah (2025)	Implementasi Pemberdayaan Tenaga Pendidik Dalam Pengembangan Program Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs) Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Furqon Panaragan Jaya Tulang Bawang Barat	The results of this study indicate that the empowerment of the Al-Furqon Panaragan Jaya Islamic Boarding School community in developing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program focuses on collaborative management and accreditation of quality and sustainable madrasahs. Educator empowerment is carried out through training, curriculum development, and awards to improve teacher competence and motivation. Collaboration with external parties, including child protection agencies and the community, is also strengthened to create an inclusive and quality educational environment. The impact of this strategy is seen in the increased awareness of students about social and environmental responsibility, although there are still obstacles such as a lack of training and resources. This study recommends strengthening the capacity of educators and integrating SDGs values into the curriculum to support the sustainability of education in Islamic boarding schools.
5.	Mistina Hidayati (2022)	Manajemen Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Di Madrasah	The research results show that the principal of the Islamic boarding school (MTs PPPI Miftahussalam Banyumas) implements directed management through planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. Planning is developed through an

		Tsanawiyah Pondok Pesantren Pendidikan Islam Miftahussalam Banyumas	integrated RKM (Work Plan), organizing is carried out collaboratively between the Islamic boarding school (madrasah) and the Islamic boarding school (pesantren), implementation emphasizes teacher empowerment, and regular supervision is carried out to maintain quality. These findings confirm that collaborative management is capable of empowering Islamic boarding schools, improving the quality of education, and strengthening readiness for accreditation in a sustainable manner. The research results show that administrative service management in the Rejang Lebong Islamic Boarding School PD Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) is effective through the implementation of POAC and collaboration between employees. This program empowers Islamic boarding schools through EMIS data collection, operational permits, and institutional verification to support madrasah accreditation. Collaborative management between staff, leaders, and administrators of Islamic boarding schools has been proven to improve efficiency and service quality. Despite technical constraints and limited human resources, this system contributes to empowering Islamic boarding schools and strengthening the quality and sustainability of Islamic education.
6.	Faradisa, Audya and Bahri, Syaiful and Fransiska, Jenny (2025)	Manajemen Layanan Administrasi Pada Seksi Pendidikan Diniyah Dan Pondok Pesantren Di Kantor Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Rejang Lebong	
7.	Putri Melina Binti Fatmawati (2025)	Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Berbasis Pesantren (Studi Kasus Di Mts Darul Huda Mayak Tonatan Ponorogo)	The main findings of this study emphasize that collaborative management is crucial for improving the quality of education at MTs Darul Huda. Collaboration between various parties, such as the principal, teachers, and Islamic boarding school administrators, is key to empowering and sustaining educational quality. Through participatory planning, effective organization, and ongoing evaluation, all elements can work together to achieve the goal of quality education.

The results of seven studies indicate that empowering Islamic boarding schools through collaborative management plays a crucial role in improving educational quality, accreditation, and institutional sustainability. Overall, these studies reinforce each other in emphasizing the need for integration between internal and external collaboration. Research by Fauzul Atqia et al. highlights the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Yayasan Aceh Hijau, HUDA (Himpunan Dayah Aceh), and UNICEF Aceh, in empowering Islamic boarding schools. This external support takes the form of mentoring, training, and logistical assistance that increases the capacity of these institutions. These findings are in line with the study by Ulfa Amalia et al., which found that external collaboration with the community, parents, and government (e.g., the Ministry of Religious Affairs) through forums for friendship and information exchange contributes positively to the development of santri and the coordination of educational programs.

Meanwhile, research by Didin Kurniadin and Mistina Hidayati emphasizes the importance of internal empowerment in Islamic boarding schools. Through human resource capacity building, integrated planning, and experience sharing among teachers, Islamic boarding schools are able to manage education more effectively and efficiently. The research by Putri Melina and Audya Faradisa adds that the formation of a development team and the participation of service users (boarding school administrators and majelis taklim) strengthen participatory and sustainable

decision-making. Thus, this combination of internal and external strategies reinforces each other, forming a comprehensive and adaptive collaborative management framework..

The implications of these findings show that collaborative management of Islamic boarding schools not only improves the quality of education, but also strengthens the accreditation and sustainability of the institution. Internal empowerment strengthens the capacity of teachers and staff, while external collaboration expands resources, networks, and strategic support. NGOs play an important role in promoting the empowerment process through human resource capacity building, financial support, and technical assistance, enabling Islamic boarding schools to manage education independently while remaining connected to the broader education ecosystem. The contribution of collaborative management to the sustainability of pesantren quality can be seen in the institution's ability to adapt to the needs of students, harmonize religious and general curricula, and build an inclusive decision-making structure. By involving various stakeholders, pesantren not only improve internal performance but also build resilience to changes in the educational environment.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are consistent with collaboration theory, which emphasizes synergy between internal and external actors to achieve common goals more effectively. This approach shows that improving institutional quality is greatly influenced by the ability to build partnership networks that enable the sustainable exchange of resources, expertise, and technical support (Dinata et al., 2025). Furthermore, the findings of various studies are also consistent with governance theory, which emphasizes the importance of participation, accountability, and transparency in the decision-making process. Governance is understood as a mechanism for managing resources and resolving problems that involves various actors, in which the government and/or institutional leaders act as facilitators who create an environment conducive to community participation. The application of these principles in Islamic boarding schools ensures that empowerment is more open, responsive, professional, and able to adapt to the needs of stakeholders (Surur & Cholifah, 2018).

Furthermore, empowerment theory views empowerment as a process that enables individuals and organizations to actively participate in creating and making decisions that affect their lives through increased authority, strengthened skills, and expanded access to resources. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this means giving institutions greater authority to independently manage educational development, while strengthening internal capacity through training, mentoring, and external cooperation (Ulum, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study proves that empowering Islamic boarding schools through collaborative management significantly improves the quality of education, accreditation readiness, and institutional sustainability. The integration of internal strategies—such as human resource development, teacher empowerment, and participatory planning—with external collaboration involving stakeholders, the government, and NGOs enables Islamic boarding schools to operate more effectively, adaptively, and independently. These findings expand our understanding of governance and empowerment in Islamic education, demonstrating that a comprehensive collaborative management framework can strengthen organizational capacity and community involvement.

Furthermore, the role of NGOs and external partners in providing technical assistance, financial support, and capacity-building programs confirms that empowerment is most effective when internal and external resources are managed synergistically. This proves that participatory and transparent decision-making practices not only improve institutional performance but also build resilience to changes in the educational environment. In practical terms, Islamic boarding schools can utilize collaborative management to continuously update and harmonize their educational programs, while policymakers and education practitioners can adopt this model to improve the performance and resilience of other Islamic educational institutions. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of collaboration on student achievement, institutional innovation, and the role of technology in strengthening governance and empowerment in Islamic boarding schools.

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