

LEGALITY AND EXISTENCE OF MAMBAUL ULUM ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL, KOREK VILLAGE, KUBU RAYA REGENCY

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Abstract

This research effort aims to examine the legal status and operational existence of the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, located in Korek Village, Kubu Raya Regency, within the framework of social dynamics and national education policies, especially following the implementation of Law Number 18 of 2019 related to Islamic Boarding Schools. The investigation used a descriptive qualitative methodology, utilizing field research techniques that included observational analysis, comprehensive interviews, and documentation from caregivers, institutional centers, alumni, and the surrounding community. The findings show that the legal recognition of Islamic boarding schools has a major influence on the fortification of institutional frameworks, the management of educational processes, as well as the improvement of a more structured and integrated learning experience that bridges traditional and formal curricula. Instead, the persistence of boarding schools is enforced through the proactive involvement of students, who serve as guardians of Islamic values, traditions, and adaptation to contemporary progress. These results support the assertion that the interaction between formal legal recognition and the cultural resilience of Islamic boarding schools is an important determinant in maintaining their relevance and survival in the face of complex social transformations.

Keywords: *Legality of Islamic Boarding Schools; Institutional Administration Mechanisms; Role of Santri; Local Islamic Education.*

Abstrak

Upaya penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji status hukum dan keberadaan operasional Pondok Pesantren Mambaul Ulum, yang terletak di Desa Korek Kabupaten Kubu Raya, dalam kerangka dinamika sosial dan kebijakan pendidikan



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nasional, khususnya menyusul implementasi Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2019 yang berkaitan dengan Pesantren. Investigasi menggunakan metodologi kualitatif deskriptif, memanfaatkan teknik penelitian lapangan yang mencakup analisis observasional, wawancara komprehensif, dan dokumentasi yang berasal dari pengasuh, pusat kelembagaan, alumni, dan masyarakat sekitarnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pengakuan hukum pondok pesantren memberikan pengaruh besar pada fortifikasi kerangka kelembagaan, pengelolaan proses pendidikan, serta peningkatan pengalaman belajar yang lebih terstruktur dan terintegrasi yang menjembatani kurikulum tradisional dan formal. Sebaliknya, kegigihan sekolah asrama ditegakkan melalui keterlibatan proaktif santri, yang berfungsi sebagai penjaga nilai-nilai Islam, tradisi, dan adaptasi terhadap kemajuan kontemporer. Hasil ini mendukung pernyataan bahwa interaksi antara pengakuan hukum formal dan ketahanan budaya pondok pesantren merupakan penentu penting dalam mempertahankan relevansi dan kelangsungan hidup mereka dalam menghadapi transformasi sosial yang rumit.

Kata Kunci: *Legalitas Pesantren; Mekanisme Administrasi Kelembagaan; Peran Santri; Pendidikan Islam Lokal.*

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have served as important institutions for education, spiritual guidance, and community empowerment without the need for official state support. The long-standing existence of Islamic boarding schools rests primarily on pillars of social and religious legitimacy. Nevertheless, with the emergence of government recognition as articulated in Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools and Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 30 of 2020, a new paradox has emerged: boarding schools, which have been established sociologically, are now forced to navigate bureaucratic requirements that are not always aligned with their traditional institutional characteristics (Najiya, 2025). This irony was further emphasized when the Constitutional Court, in the early months of 2026, approved a judicial review petition related to Article 48 of the Islamic Boarding School Law, which was considered to offer no guarantee of operational financing, thus showing that the recognition of the law in the absence of compliance with fiscal impartiality is only symbolic (Argawati, 2026).

In the past, pesantren have been one of the main pillars of religious education in Indonesia. Pesantren have been helping people maintain and spread Islamic values since the early 18th century. Given that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, the role of pesantren in religious education is very important. Therefore, the educational pattern of pesantren should be studied further, and

pesantren education should be legally recognized under the national education system (Zibbat & Hariri, 2024). With a majority Muslim population in Indonesia, thousands of pesantren are spread throughout the country. Initially, these pesantren were established in rural areas far from the city. So the kiai and their students in ancient times used pesantren as a place to fight against the invaders. The spirit of "*Hubbu al-wathan mi al-iman*", which means "Love of the homeland is part of faith", encourages pesantren to develop into educational institutions that teach Islam. However, over time, the definition changes due to various factors (Nuraeni, 2021).

To better understand the transformation of state recognition toward pesantren, it is important to examine the regulatory and historical trajectory of the formation of Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, as reflected in the following chronology.

The presence of the Islamic Boarding School Law serves as a reaffirmation of the important role of Islamic boarding schools, which are currently recognized as supporters of the concept of Islamic Washatiyah. The introduction of the Islamic Boarding School Law is anticipated to further improve and strengthen the contributions of its participants in various domains, especially in the fields of tafaquh fiddin, missionary activities, community empowerment, community economic improvement, as well as many other dimensions that are often considered as distinguishing characteristics of correctional institutions. With the Islamic Boarding School Law, the position of students will be strengthened. They will be able to continue formal education, so that students from salaf Islamic boarding schools no longer need to take an equivalence exam or package to obtain a diploma (Khairani et al., 2021, p. 87).

Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools describes the administrative framework for educational responsibility, the proclamation of functions, and community empowerment. Through this Law related to Islamic Boarding Schools, the arrangement of Islamic Boarding School Education has been recognized as an integral component of the national education framework. Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools establishes a legal basis to recognize the significant contribution of Islamic Boarding Schools in the formation, formation, development, and preservation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as the traditions, values, norms, variety of activities, professionalism of educators and education personnel, as well as quality assurance processes and methodologies (Herlina, 2021, p. 234).

Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools is a joint agreement involving parties representing the Islamic Boarding School community, each of which has validated the formulation of legal norms optimally in accordance with the characteristics and peculiarities of Islamic Boarding Schools. Pesantren are community-based institutions established by Islamic individuals, foundations, communities, or organizations. They instill faith and piety in Allah SWT, sow noble morals, and uphold the Islamic teachings of *rahmatan lil'alam*, which is shown by the attitude of humility, tolerance, balance, moderation, and other noble values possessed by Indonesians. Pesantren also offer education, Islamic da'wah, example, and community empowerment through.

In Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, the functions of education, da'wah, and community empowerment are regulated. This law combines the implementation of pesantren education into the implementation of national education. Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools provides a legal basis for recognition of the role of pesantren in forming, establishing, building, and maintaining the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as the traditions, values, norms, variants, and activities, professionalism of educators and education personnel, as well as quality assurance processes and methodologies (Panut et al., 2021, p. 824).

In Akhmad Zaini's research (2021, pp. 70–71), the Islamic Boarding School Law No. 18 of 2019 explains, among others; First, the Definition of Islamic Boarding Schools In Chapter I Article 1 explains that Islamic boarding schools are community-based institutions and established by individuals, foundations, Islamic community organizations, and/or communities that instill faith and piety in Allah SWT, sow noble morals and uphold the Islamic teachings of *rahmatan lil'alam* which are reflected in the attitude of humility, tolerance, balance, moderation, and other noble values of the Indonesian nation through education, Islamic da'wah, example, and community empowerment within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, in article 2 it is stated that pesantren is an educational institution that implements the yellow book curriculum as a characteristic of pesantren.

Both CHAPTER II states: "Pesantren is based on; a. the One Godhead; b. nationality; c. independence; d. empowerment e. benefits; f. multicultural; g. professionalism; h. accountability; i. sustainability; and j. legal certainty". And Pesantren is held with the aim of: a) to form human beings who are superior in all fields and have good morals, faith, piety, independence, moderate understanding, love for the homeland and encourage religious harmony as well as improving the

quality of life and also the welfare of the community. Furthermore, the function of pesantren is mentioned as an educational institution, da'wah institution and also a community empowerment institution.

Third, CHAPTER III explains the establishment and implementation of Islamic Boarding Schools, a. Islamic Boarding Schools that provide education in the form of studying the Yellow Book"; b. "Islamic Boarding Schools that provide education in the form of Islamic Dirasah with a Muallimin Education Pattern;" c. "Islamic Boarding Schools that provide education in other forms that are integrated with general education" further explained that Islamic boarding schools must have minimal elements, namely; the existence of a kiai, students who live in Islamic boarding schools, dormitories or cottages for residence, mosques or prayer rooms, and the curriculum applied is the yellow book or Islamic dirosah with the pattern of muallimin education. Pesantren are established by individuals, foundations, Islamic organizations or communities based on Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia and Bhineka tunggal ika, who are committed to spreading Islam that *is rahmatan lil alamin*, in the establishment of the pesantren must be registered and also a legal entity. Article 9 CHAPTER III OF THE PESANTREN LAW STATES THAT "A Kiai is a person who has a pesantren education, is highly educated, and an expert in the field of Islamic religion who is the leader of the pesantren, educator, caregiver, and role model in the pesantren."

Furthermore, according to Nuraeni (2021, p. 8) in his research, it is stated that article 17 CHAPTER III states that pesantren provide formal and non-formal education, namely basic education, which includes: *ula and wustha*. Secondary education or ulya and higher education in the form of ma'had Ali. Furthermore, the curriculum applied is a combination of the pesantren curriculum and general education determined by the minister of education. The next article explains that students who have completed their education and are declared to have graduated have the right to continue to the same or different level of education, and students have the right to get jobs. The next article reads that pesantren can organize higher education or ma'had Ali with bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs, and the alumni of ma'had Ali are entitled to get a bachelor's degree and continue to a higher level and their diplomas can be used to find jobs like other general education, and the diploma issued by the pesantren has an equivalent position to other formal education, by meeting the quality assurance of education from the government. Fourth, pesantren will receive endowment funds from the government, as stated in article 49 paragraphs 1 and 2. Thus, part of the description of Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning pesantren, actually this law consists of IX CHAPTER and 55 articles.

In West Kalimantan, the discourse around the legality status of Islamic boarding schools is closely related to the historical context of ethnic conflicts that occurred between 1996-1999, involving Madurese, Dayak, and Malay ethnic groups. After this conflict, the Madurese diaspora initiated the establishment of Islamic boarding schools, which serve not only as educational institutions but also as strategic approaches to encourage cultural reconciliation and increase social resilience. After the conflict, the institution of Islamic boarding schools institutionalized by the Madurese diaspora took on an important function, serving not only as educational centers but also as facilitators of reconciliation and agents of sustainable peacebuilding (Nurhalizah, 2025). Recent scientific investigations show that Islamic boarding schools located in West Kalimantan, including Mambaul Ulum, Darun Nasyi'in, Darul Ulum, Al-Murabbi, and Walisongso, are actively reforming their curricula, communal ceremonies, and admission criteria to promote the values of inclusivity, tolerance, and social cohesion between ethnicities.

Behind the considerable potential, however, structural issues remain a significant concern. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Kalimantan shows that there are a total of more than 370 boarding schools in the province, but only a small number have valid Building Permits (IMB) and comprehensive legal documentation. This situation illustrates the difference between the actual existence of boarding schools within the community and their formal legal status. The provincial government recognizes that a large number of boarding schools in the region, especially newly established and medium-scale ones, do not have operational permits as well as building permits, leading to a verification and recommendation process that is implemented gradually and systematically (Putri, 2025). These difficulties place these boarding schools in a legally precarious situation, despite their significant social contribution to the development of the younger generation and the promotion of social cohesion.

The Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, located in Korek Village, Kubu Raya Regency, is right at the intersection of regulatory idealism and field reality. Kubu Raya Regency itself is one of the areas with the highest concentration of Islamic boarding schools in West Kalimantan, with 98 Islamic boarding schools based on data in 2025 (Madrosid, 2025). The name "Mambaul Ulum" is not an exclusive identifier, because there are at least two dormitory institutions that bear this designation in Kubu Raya Regency, in addition to other institutions located in Bojonegoro, Madura in East Java, which have been examined regarding pedagogical methodologies related to learning yellow books. The repetition of this designation subtly indicates a broader phenomenon, the absence of constant standardization in

archival practices and the registration of boarding schools at the national level remains a considerable source of confusion.

However, the formal legality also poses new competition in school management. On the one hand, this law allows for the improvement of the quality and development of pesantren, but it also raises concerns about the independence and peculiarities of pesantren as tradition-based educational institutions. Several studies show that implementing the Pesantren Law has challenges in terms of administration, human resources, and funding (Zaini, 2021). In the era of educational modernization, the issue of the existence of pesantren is not just a matter of legality. It is important for pesantren to maintain their traditional values and still be able to compete with other formal educational institutions. Previous research has shown that pesantren have the ability to adapt well, but they face many problems in balancing tradition and modernity (Laila, 2025).

In previous research, the literature study method has been used more to investigate the existence and legality of Islamic boarding schools. First, the research conducted by Helmiyah et al. (2022) in their research analyzed the structured and systematic patterns of pesantren education based on the Yellow Book. Qualitative content analysis is the method used in this study. The results show that the Muallimin education method is used as the basis for education in Islamic boarding schools. Second, research by Taufik et al. (2025) in their research, the research method used by the library to analyze the educational patterns found in the Islamic Boarding School Law. This study emphasizes formal recognition, implementation issues, and their effects on various models of pesantren education in Indonesia. Third, research by Asy'ari and Akbar (2023) in their research shows the role of laws in Islamic boarding schools in regulating tradition-based educational patterns, the peculiarities of Islamic boarding schools, and how it impacts independent economic growth in Islamic boarding schools. This shows that field-based research that specifically investigates the existence and legality of Islamic boarding schools in certain local contexts is still very few.

Fourth, the research conducted by M. Fazry Maulana et al. (2025) in his research analyzed Article 46 of the Islamic Boarding School Law, which discusses the allocation of funds, and found important information. The results of his evaluation show that the boarding school funding program faces many challenges, especially the danger of financial dependence that can threaten the autonomy of the Islamic boarding school and the risk of foreign interference if external donors are involved. Fifth, research by Anisa (2025) in her research confirms that the Islamic Boarding School Law emerged as a product of political compromise that was not

fully aligned with the interests of boarding schools, thus making its implementation fraught with ambiguity. Fifth, research by Ahmad Sadzali et al. (2025) in his research examines how local governments help Islamic boarding schools after Law No. 18/2019 in the decentralization of education. Key findings: Licensing, operational assistance, and supervision are facilitated by local governments.

Based on the description above, it is very important to study directly how the existence and legality of pesantren at the local level, especially at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Korek Village, Kubu Raya Regency. This research uses a qualitative approach with field research methods to dig up data directly from informants such as pesantren caregivers, students, and the surrounding community. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how legality is applied and how pesantren survive in the social context of the local community.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, because it is based on the formulation of the problem to be observed, which requires the researcher to observe, understand, describe, and analyze the information obtained based on phenomena in the field. The qualitative method is used to collect descriptive data about the research subject about the legality and existence of Islamic boarding schools. This data consists of words, behaviors, and meanings. In this study, the researcher went directly to the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Korek Village, Kubu Raya Regency to collect empirical data from informants naturally. This method emphasizes the researcher as the main tool in data collection and analysis of social phenomena (Hezbollah et al., 2023, pp. 2–3).

The data sources in this study consist of primary data obtained directly through observation and interviews with pesantren caregivers, ustaz/ustazah, students, and the surrounding community, and secondary data sourced from written documents such as pesantren archives, legality documents (operational permits, decrees, and the like), books, and relevant scientific journals. Data collection techniques are carried out through participatory observation to understand the daily activities and social dynamics of pesantren, semi-structured *in-depth interviews* to explore perceptions, experiences, and strategies in maintaining the existence of pesantren, as well as complementary documentation in the form of legality archives, activity photos, curriculum, organizational structure, and other administrative records; the combination of these three techniques is a

form of triangulation of methods used to increase the validity and reliability of research results.

In this study, observations, *in-depth interviews*, and documentation are used to collect data. The purpose of this observation is to gain an accurate understanding of social interactions and activities in the pesantren. To obtain complete information, interviews were conducted with people such as pesantren caregivers, ustaz, students, and members of the surrounding community. Meanwhile, documentation is used to complete the data, which consists of photos, archives, and documents on the legality of the pesantren. The combination of this method is a form of data triangulation intended to increase the accuracy and depth of research information (Wardani, 2023, pp. 51–52). While the analysis of this research, an interactive model is used to analyze the data, which consistently reduces, presents, and draws conclusions. This study uses the source and method triangulation technique, namely by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, to test the credibility of the data. Triangulation is used to make research results more valid and scientifically accountable (Seneru, 2023, p. 473). This process takes place cyclically and continuously from the beginning to the end of the research, resulting in findings that are valid and scientifically accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of field research conducted at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Korek Village, Kubu Raya Regency show that the institutional strengthening of pesantren is significantly influenced by the legality elements included in the implementation of Law Number 18 of 2019. The results of interviews and observations show that pesantren have undergone changes in a more organized administrative management system. This is especially true for educational management, curriculum, and formal recognition of institutions. This legality serves as formal legitimacy and increases public trust in pesantren as a trustworthy educational institution.

Furthermore, the results of the study also show that learning in pesantren combines traditional education systems and modern formal education. Interviews with pesantren managers show that general subjects have been added and the learning schedule is arranged more systematically but still maintains the main characteristic, namely the recitation of the yellow book. This integration shows the process of maintaining the scientific identity of the pesantren while showing a process of adaptation to the demands of the times. In the context of the learning experience of students, the implementation of a more structured system has a

positive impact on improving discipline and learning quality. Student schools are scheduled from morning to night and include formal lessons, early activities, and character building. A consistent and directed learning pattern is formed by this intensive activity structure.

In relation to students, alumni play an important role in maintaining the existence of boarding schools. Based on the results of the researchers' interviews, alumni serve as a direct representation of the caliber of educational offerings at boarding schools in public perception. Alumni achievement in community engagement serves as a metric to evaluate the efficacy of boarding school education frameworks. Ultimately, research shows that the longevity of boarding schools is significantly influenced by their capacity to adapt to evolving social contexts, especially in relation to globalization and digital transformation. Santri have begun the use of digital platforms as a medium for the dissemination of Islamic teachings and values. Nevertheless, challenges remain in the form of evolving mentalities and cultural paradigms that can influence student identity. As a result, there is a need for strategies centered on internal fortification through sustainable character education initiatives. Therefore, pesantren are the result of the relationship between formal legality, traditional culture, and the active role of students in social change.

Implementation of the Legality of Islamic Boarding Schools in Shaping the Education System and Learning Experience of Students

The implementation of the legal framework around boarding schools can be interpreted as the process of enacting legal policies, especially through formal recognition through laws such as the Islamic Boarding School Law, which regulates the structural organization, curriculum, and administration of educational institutions in the context of boarding schools. This legal framework serves as a normative basis that strengthens the position of boarding schools in the national education paradigm while promoting standardization and improvement of the quality of education. In the field of legal studies, the concept of legality also has significant implications for the incorporation of national values into the boarding school curriculum, while maintaining its unique characteristics (Pasya et al., 2025). In the realm of the educational framework, the implementation of legal principles significantly contributes to the formation of a more coherent, methodical, and cohesive educational architecture. Boarding institutions progressively go beyond reliance on conventional paradigms, embarking on the formation of integrative educational frameworks that combine formal, non-formal, and informal pedagogical approaches. This paradigm allows boarding institutions to improve the quality of

education while retaining the distinctive attributes associated with yellow book-based scholarship (Mukhayatun, 2023).

From an educational perspective, the enforcement of the legal framework encourages the formation of learning systems that are increasingly innovative and responsive to contemporary advancements. For example, the implementation of project-based learning methodologies (Project-Based Learning) in addition to the integration of digital media in educational settings has been empirically demonstrated to increase student engagement and participation in the learning process. This evidence suggests that the legal framework also facilitates opportunities for pedagogical innovation in the context of boarding schools (Jannah & El-Yunusi, 2024). In a comprehensive and detailed manner, the establishment of the legality of boarding schools can be characterized as a methodical effort aimed at combining legal, administrative, and pedagogical dimensions to foster a superior educational framework, in addition to fostering a comprehensive learning environment in the context of the school. Boarding schools function not only as institutions for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as educational institutions proficient in endearing students with academic, social, and vocational competencies essential for navigating the complexities of contemporary existence (Habsi, 2024).

The start of the Islamic boarding school law is not without political significance, especially regarding the legitimacy of authority. With regard to the politicization of boarding schools, Gusdur articulated, "On issues related to morality, one must obey the guidance of scholars; however, political issues must be separated from religious affairs, thus preventing the politicization of boarding schools for political gain," he stressed. With the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 relating to Islamic Boarding Schools, boarding institutions are given equal rights with conventional educational institutions, and these institutions are empowered to grant shahadah or diplomas, thus allowing their graduates to have formal completion certifications that facilitate access to further education opportunities and improve employment prospects (Riyani, 2022, pp. 34–35).

The enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 and its subsequent implementation regarding the legitimacy of boarding schools indicates a profound transformation in educational governance at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School located in Korek Village. Based on empirical evidence gathered from the field, this legitimacy serves as a normative framework that incentivizes boarding schools to make the necessary administrative and institutional modifications, thereby building a more organized and accountable education management system. This development

further strengthens the role of boarding schools as a fundamental component of the national education framework.

As revealed by Ustaz Aburrohim, one of Alm's sons. the founder of the Islamic Boarding School related to the question, namely, Are there changes in the learning activities of students after the rules of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools? Then, he answered in the interview stating:

"That after the implementation of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools came into effect, for me the student education program underwent several changes. Among them were some changes in general subjects that were added and a more organized schedule. But for me, the principles that are typical of Islamic boarding schools, such as the recitation of the yellow book, are still the main characteristics of education".

Based on the results of the interview with Ustaz Abdurrahomin it shows that the student education system at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School is really influenced by the implementation of Law Number 18 of 2019. The changes that have occurred include substantive aspects of the learning process as well as administrative changes. There are efforts to integrate the traditional pesantren education system with a more modern and standardized formal education system. This is shown by the addition of general subjects and the preparation of a more organized schedule.

In the context of the education system, the implementation of legality encourages integration between the traditional curriculum of pesantren and the formal education curriculum. Yellow book-based learning is still maintained as a distinctive feature, but enriched with general educational materials that are relevant to the times. This integration shows that there are efforts to harmonize tradition and modernity in the pesantren education system (Zibbat & Hariri, 2024).

In daily practice, students are involved in various religious and social activities that reflect the values of the pesantren. Based on observations, students actively participate in recitation activities, da'wah, and social activities in the community. This activity strengthens the identity of the students while expanding the influence of the pesantren in the social environment. The students are a real representation of the values of the pesantren in the life of the community. In Ustaz Abdurrohim's statement that:

"For me today, the student education system is more organized in terms of daily schedules, the division of time between early and formal activities, and disciplinary rules. Meanwhile, educational activities are attended by teachers from morning to night, which

includes formal learning, as well as recitation, and character development".

From the above statement, the implementation of the education system in Islamic boarding schools today shows a better structure, especially in terms of managing students' daily schedules, dividing time between early activities and formal education, and establishing clearer disciplinary rules. This is in line with Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, which encourages a more structured education system. In practice, student activities take place intensively from morning to night and include formal learning, book teaching, and character building. This condition shows that education in Islamic boarding schools focuses not only on academic education but also on the formation of moral and character of students. This allows students to increase their role as representatives of Islamic boarding school values in the social life of the community. It is still in Ustaz Abdurrohim's statement that:

"In the existing rules, it is enough to help students in improving the quality of student learning, with a clearer and more directed system, for me students become more disciplined and organized. Even so, adjustments are still needed so that the rules do not eliminate the peculiarities of pesantren education".

From the results of the statement, it can be seen that the implementation of more systematic rules in pesantren improves the quality of education of students. A more disciplined and organized learning pattern can be formed through a clear and directed system. This allows students to follow each educational activity better. However, he also emphasized that the rules applied must be adjusted so as not to eliminate the peculiarities of pesantren education. This is especially true to maintain traditional values and local wisdom, which is the main identity of pesantren schools.

The implementation of public policy is a dynamic process, in which policy implementers are positioned to carry out a series of activities that aim to ultimately achieve outcomes that are aligned with the goals or intentions inherent in the policy itself. The implementation of public policies is realized as a consequence of government actions that address specific social challenges, then take root in society and influence the decision-making process. This policy is considered a systematic policy formulation procedure that undergoes implementation and evaluation through different stages (Kharisma et al., 2025, p. 48).

In addition, there is a complex interplay between formal legal requirements and efforts to uphold the traditional values inherent in boarding institutions.

Caregivers in boarding schools seek to strike a balance between the progressive transformation of the educational framework and the protection of the unique essence of these institutions, which are based on spiritual principles and autonomy. This suggests that legal frameworks do not undermine the identity of boarding schools; rather, they reinforce their existence through the provision of formal legitimacy (Nuraeni, 2021). The enactment of the legal framework governing boarding schools serves as a significant catalyst in fostering a more adaptive, organized, and high-quality education system. This observation supports the statement that policies based on formal recognition can improve the quality of educational institutions, as long as they remain aligned with the local values that are the core identity of boarding schools.

The Role of Students in Maintaining and Strengthening the Existence of Islamic Boarding Schools in the Midst of Social Dynamics

In the perspective of the sociology of Islamic education, this condition shows that the students function as "agents of cultural reproduction" that maintain the continuity of the values of the pesantren . According to Mastuhu in Manfred, the main purpose of Islamic boarding school education is to cultivate and cultivate a Muslim identity, which includes individuals who are engaged in the worship of God and have faith, demonstrate exemplary character, contribute to society, or serve society by acting as Sahaya or public servants, while simultaneously embodying the qualities of an apostle, that is, individuals capable of independence, autonomy, and fortitude. in character, aspire to be a servant of the community, similar to the Personality of the Prophet Muhammad (following the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad), advocate religion or uphold Islamic principles and the prosperity of Muslims in the context of the wider society (*izzul islam wal muslimin*), and cultivate a passion for knowledge to further develop the character of Indonesia (Fitriyah et al., 2018, p. 162)

Santri is the main actor in maintaining the sustainability of the existence of the pesantren in the midst of increasingly dynamic and complex social changes. In the context of field research at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, students are not only positioned as subjects who receive the educational process, but also as active agents who internalize, reproduce, and transform the values of the pesantren in daily life. The existence of the pesantren is thus not solely determined by the structural aspects of the institution, but also by the success of the formation of the habitus of students rooted in Islamic values.

The existence of Islamic boarding schools in contemporary circumstances has given birth to the emergence of educational institutions that demonstrate their full academic abilities in a manner similar to the presentation of "fashion collections"; However, there are segments of the population that express dissatisfaction or harbor the belief that they do not have the necessary knowledge to make effective use of these resources. Alternatively, this phenomenon can also be likened to someone who has a "fashion collection" but does not have the knowledge of how to wear or distinguish the clothes that are most suitable for certain occasions (Sadali, 2020, p. 64).

Santri also play an important role in maintaining the intellectual and cultural traditions of the pesantren. Classical learning traditions such as halaqah, sorogan, and bandongan continue to exist as a way to learn, as well as to spread pesantren culture. By actively participating in these traditions, students indirectly maintain the epistemology of the pesantren, which is centered on classical Islamic literature (Siswanto & Yulita, 2019). In their daily lives, the students show active involvement in various religious, social, and educational activities. These activities show values such as discipline, responsibility, and independence, which are characteristic of pesantren education. Therefore, both the institutional system and the social habits of the students support the existence of the pesantren (Helmiyah et al., 2022).

It is very important for students to keep the pesantren alive and survive social change. Field studies show that students not only play a role as students but also play an important role in maintaining Islamic values and traditions in the pesantren. Students play an important role in maintaining the institutional identity of the pesantren through this dual role (Laila, 2025) As revealed by a student named Muksin after the researcher interviewed by asking; How are your daily learning activities at the pesantren? Brother Muksin explained that:

"The daily activities of the students start in the morning with early salaf lessons, then formal school activities during the day. After Magrib, the study of the Qur'an and the recitation of the book lasts until 22.00 WIB, after that, the students rest. Meanwhile, activities that focus on character development and discipline are also an important component in the lives of students. This is for me that pesantren education combines two academic and religious elements, therefore I am very proud to be a student at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School".

From the results of interviews with students named Muksin, it can be seen that education at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School is carried out

systematically and integrated, combining academic and religious elements. Muksin said that the daily routine begins in the morning with a salaf diniyah class before formal school activities during the day. After Magrib, students read the Qur'an and read the book until around 22.00 WIB, before breaking. Activities that focus on character development and discipline are also an important component in the lives of students. This shows that the pesantren education system is not only concerned with knowledge but also builds the morals and character of the students.

Furthermore, from the results of the researcher's interviews at the Mambaul ulum korek Islamic boarding school, students actively imitate the values of the pesantren through educational practices such as reading the yellow book, studying the Qur'an, and receiving character coaching. Muksin explained that these activities are not just routines; they are part of the process of forming one's identity as students. In this situation, the students function as the guardians of the epistemology of the pesantren, which means maintaining the continuity of the classical Islamic scientific tradition in the midst of modern developments. In the social view, the students also play an important role as a liaison between the community and the pesantren. Field observations show that the students at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School are involved in social and religious activities of the community, such as recitation and da'wah. This involvement shows that the students represent the principles of the pesantren in the public space. Therefore, the pesantren has an extended life through social interactions carried out by students, not only within the pesantren.

Furthermore, the statement from an Alumni named Aburrohman after the researcher interviewed by asking Abdurrohman's brother; What was Abdurrohman's experience when he was a student at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School? In his interview he said that:

"When I was at the Mambaul Ulum boarding school, there were a lot of things that changed my life. How I was taught to live a disciplined life that I didn't get before I went to school. How do we keep our free time so that it is always filled with goodness, good learning, and so on, and at the pesantren I was also taught how to live independently, not depending on others, all needs related to myself are all done by myself, washing clothes, tidying the room, cleaning the yard and so on, and in the pesantren is also taught how we live a simple and noble life. Of course, especially in this day and age, the progress of the digital world is very rapid, dominating the world, if I don't take a pesantren education, maybe now I have fallen into bad associations, we just see that nowadays many people, even teenagers to young children, are entangled in cases of murder, prostitution, online

gambling, drunkenness, which is all life. Alhamdulillah, thanks to my education at the pesantren, I can get away from it all and know what is good and bad. Meanwhile, being an alumnus is one of those who plays an important role in maintaining the existence of the pesantren, because alumni are one of the ones who represent the face of the pesantren, if the alumni are good in the eyes of the community, it will certainly have a very extraordinary impact on attracting people to entrust their children in the pesantren".

Based on the results of an interview with an alumnus named Aburrohman, the experience gained from studying at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School had a significant influence on the formation of his personality and lifestyle. He said that during his internship, he was taught discipline, the ability to manage time, and the ability to spend free time on useful activities such as studying and worshipping. In addition, he was trained to become an independent person in his daily life, such as washing clothes, maintaining a clean environment, and meeting his own needs without depending on others. In addition, the principles of simplicity and noble morality are important components of the education he receives. Aburrohman stated that pesantren education is a moral fortress that protects him from deviant behavior in the midst of rapid development of the times and the negative influence of the digital world. In addition, he stated that alumni have a strategic role in maintaining the existence of pesantren because the behavior and quality of alumni are a direct representation of the image of the pesantren itself and can increase public trust to entrust their children's education in pesantren.

Santri serve as agents of social transformation, facilitating the relationship between boarding schools and the wider community. They take an important role in spreading local values of Islamic moderation, tolerance, and wisdom, thereby strengthening the status of boarding schools as related educational institutions in the social order of society. The functions of boarding schools are diverse, encompassing the internal dimension as custodians of values and the external dimension as catalysts for social change. The existence of boarding schools ultimately arises from the synergy between a strong institutional framework and the proactive involvement of boarding schools in realizing their values amidst societal dynamics. These findings support the assertion that the sustainability of boarding schools largely depends on the quality and capabilities of these institutions as key actors in the educational landscape (Siregar et al., 2025).

The involvement of students in social activities is one of the important ways to maintain the existence of Islamic boarding schools. Students are involved in

religious-based community empowerment programs, public recitations, and commemoration of Islamic holidays. These interactions illustrate the dialectical relationship that prevails between boarding schools and the surrounding community, where the two entities exert influence and fortify each other (Gunawan & Amaly, 2021). In the midst of advances in globalization and digitalization, the function of students has undergone a substantial metamorphosis. Students are no longer limited to the physical limitations of boarding schools; rather, they have begun to utilize digital platforms as a channel for religious dissemination and articulation. The use of social media as a means to spread Islamic principles exemplifies adaptation to technological advances while preserving the essence of traditional Islamic boarding school values. Although increasingly complex social dynamics simultaneously introduce many challenges for students in preserving the identity inherent in boarding schools. The momentum of cultural globalization, the infiltration of individualistic paradigms, in addition to transformations in social interaction patterns, has the capacity to change the value orientation of students. As a result, an internally focused strengthening strategy based on character education and sustainable normative supervision is considered important (Zakaria, 2019).

On the contrary, the communal existence of students within the boundaries of the boarding school environment gives birth to a real sense of social solidarity. The characteristics of the deep interaction of daily life foster strong ideals of unity, togetherness, and social accountability. This reservoir of social capital emerged as an important force in perpetuating the survival of boarding schools in the midst of the imperatives imposed by rapid social transformation. In addition, the contributions made by alumni of students are an important element in expanding the reach of boarding schools beyond the surrounding environment.

Alumni serve as a conduit for the dissemination of boarding school principles in various sectors, especially in education, religious propagation, and community involvement. The achievements of alumni in realizing the values embraced by Islamic boarding schools in the wider community serve as a barometer of the efficacy of the boarding school education framework itself. As a result, the involvement of students in preserving and improving the existence of boarding schools is multifaceted and enduring. Students fulfill the role not only as guardians of tradition but also as agents of social transformation who are adept at reconciling the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Ultimately, the persistence of boarding schools is due to the confluence of value systems, educational paradigms, and the proactive involvement of students as key actors in the ever-evolving social landscape.

CONCLUSION

Based on this study, the implementation of Law Number 18 of 2019 has increased the existence of the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Korek Village in terms of institutions and educational practices. Specifically, the law encourages a more organized education system by combining the traditional curriculum based on the yellow book with formal education, without eliminating the unique characteristics of the pesantren. The results of the study show that the survival of pesantren does not only depend on legal recognition, but also on the active role of students as maintainers of values, traditions, and social practices. In their daily routines, Mambaul Ulum students have proven to be able to internalize the principles of discipline, independence, and responsibility. They also function as a liaison between the pesantren and the community through da'wah and social activities, and alumni become concrete representations of the success of pesantren education that increase public trust in the institution.

In addition, students demonstrate the ability to adapt to the dynamics of globalization and digitalization by using technology as a da'wah tool while maintaining the basic values of pesantren values. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to emphasize that an innovative but tradition-based pesantren sustainability model is created by the synergy between formal legality, strengthening the education system, and the active role of students. In addition, this research makes a practical contribution as a reference for the formation of locally-based pesantren education policies. In addition, this research enriches empirical research on the social changes that occur in pesantren in the modern era.

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