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The Role of NU Paringgonan Islamic Boarding School in Ulu Barumun Kabupaten Padang Lawas in the Development of Islamic Education

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Abstract: This The background of this study is based on preliminary findings indicating that NU Paringgonan Islamic Boarding School (Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan) has made a significant contribution to the surrounding community. However, there have been limited studies that comprehensively examine its roles. Therefore, this research is important to explore these roles in greater depth. The research problems in this study are formulated into three sub-sections: how NU Paringgonan Islamic Boarding School functions as an Islamic educational institution in Padang Lawas Regency, how NU Paringgonan Islamic Boarding School serves as a center for da, wah and the dissemination of Islamic teachings in the development of Islamic education in Padang Lawas Regency, and how NU Paringgonan Islamic Boarding School acts as a social agent and agent of transformation in the development of Islamic education in Padang Lawas Regency. The purpose of this study is to identify the role of NU Paringgonan Islamic Boarding School in the development of Islamic education, its function in da, wah and the dissemination of Islamic teachings, as well as its role as a social and transformative agent within the community. This study employs a qualitative research approach using case study, historical, and sociological methods. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects include the pesantren leader, teachers (ustadz/ustadzah), students (santri/santriah), and members of the surrounding community. The findings of this study indicate that the role of this Islamic boarding school is not limited to being a place for students to acquire knowledge; rather, it also functions as a center for da, wah and the dissemination of Islamic teachings, as well as a social and transformative agent that encourages community empowerment and social change. Through these roles, the community has developed a high level of trust in the Islamic boarding school.

Keywords: Role, Islamic Boarding School, Development, Islamic Education

INTRODUCTION

Historically, pesantren are among the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, growing and developing alongside the process of Islamic dissemination in the archipelago. The existence of pesantren has become an inseparable part of the historical journey of Islamic education in Indonesia. The term *pesantren* derives from the word *santri*, which refers to a person who studies religious knowledge, while the word *pondok* comes from the Arabic term *funduq*, meaning lodging or dormitory. In several regions, similar institutions are known by different terms, such as *dayah* in Aceh and *surau* in Minangkabau. For hundreds of years, pesantren have functioned as centers of Islamic education that teach religious sciences while also shaping the character and morals of the Muslim community (Ariza, 2023).

Pesantren have developed not only as educational institutions but also as centers of Islamic civilization that play a role in preserving Islamic scholarly traditions. Various disciplines such as تفسیر (tafsir), hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (tawhid), Sufism, and Arabic language have been transmitted across generations through a distinctive educational system. The ability of pesantren to maintain their existence demonstrates their adaptability to social and cultural developments without abandoning their Islamic identity (Rahmawati, 2024).

In addition to their historical function, pesantren also play a crucial sociological role in society. They are not only places for learning religious knowledge but also centers for dakwah, moral development, and community empowerment. Through various religious and social activities, pesantren contribute to building a religious, harmonious, and morally upright society. This role makes pesantren one of the institutions with significant influence in shaping the character of Indonesian Muslim society (Mujahidin, 2021).

As indigenous Islamic educational institutions, pesantren have characteristics that distinguish them from other educational institutions. The boarding-based education system allows learning to take place 24 hours a day, enabling intensive character formation. Values such as simplicity, independence, togetherness, discipline, and respect for teachers are continuously preserved within pesantren life. This condition makes pesantren an effective institution for producing knowledgeable, faithful, and morally upright individuals (Muhidin, Aminudin, & Rahmah, 2025).

The role of pesantren in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia

cannot be separated from its contribution to producing scholars, educators, leaders, and public figures. Many national figures were born from pesantren environments, such as K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, K.H. Wahid Hasyim, K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, and K.H. Ma'ruf Amin. Their presence demonstrates that pesantren have made a major contribution to human resource development, not only in the religious field but also in strategic roles in national life.

During Indonesia's struggle for independence, pesantren contributed significantly to fostering nationalism and resistance against colonialism. Ulama and santri played an important role in defending the nation's independence. After independence, pesantren continued to contribute to national development through education, dakwah, and social activities. Therefore, pesantren are not only seen as religious educational institutions but also as social institutions with a strategic role in nation-building (Mujahidin, 2021).

Along with the development of time, pesantren have undergone various transformations in their educational systems and management. While in the past they focused mainly on classical Islamic texts, many pesantren today integrate general education with religious education in their curricula. Curriculum development that adapts to modern societal needs is one of the factors supporting the sustainability of pesantren in the era of globalization. Through such innovations, pesantren are able to produce graduates with a balance of religious knowledge and general sciences (Yuniarti, Ariadi, & Mustafiyanti, 2023).

State recognition of pesantren has been strengthened by the issuance of Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Pesantren. This law provides a clear legal foundation for the implementation of pesantren education and reinforces their position as part of the national education system. The regulation explains that pesantren have three main functions: education, dakwah, and community empowerment, aimed at improving the quality of life of both the Muslim community and the nation.

From an Islamic perspective, the primary goal of education is to form individuals of noble character. This aligns with the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ

مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

Meaning: "Indeed, I was sent only to perfect noble character." (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, n.d.; Malik ibn Anas, n.d.).

The hadith indicates that character building is the primary objective of Islamic education. Therefore, pesantren have a great responsibility in shaping students' character so that they become individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble morals (*akhlak karimah*).

Pesantren that grow and develop within society have made a significant contribution to the realization of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation). Through education based on the values of moderation, tolerance, and respect for differences, pesantren strive to produce Muslim generations who are able to live peacefully in a plural society. These values of tolerance also serve as an important foundation in maintaining the unity of Indonesia, which is characterized by religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity (Ali, 2017).

Based on preliminary observations and interviews with several community leaders and educators in Padang Lawas Regency, it is known that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun has a significant role in the development of Islamic education in the region. This pesantren is not only a place for religious learning but also a center for character building, skills development, and community empowerment. Various educational programs implemented demonstrate serious efforts to improve the quality of human resources based on Islamic values.

These initial findings indicate that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun makes a real contribution to maintaining the existence of Islamic education in Padang Lawas Regency. However, a more in-depth study is still needed regarding the strategies, educational models, and forms of contribution carried out by the pesantren in developing Islamic education and empowering the surrounding community.

Research on pesantren in Padang Lawas Regency is still relatively limited compared to studies conducted on larger pesantren in Java. Therefore, this study is important to comprehensively examine the role of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun in the development of Islamic education, both in terms of formal education, religious guidance, and social-community activities. The findings of this research are expected to contribute academically to the development

of Islamic education studies and serve as a reference for the future management of pesantren.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method, which is a research approach that produces descriptive data in the form of words, sentences, diagrams, images, and not statistical numbers. This method is also often referred to as an artistic method because the research process is more flexible, dynamic, and not strictly structured like quantitative research. In addition, qualitative research is also known as an interpretative method because the researcher seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of social phenomena occurring in the field based on the participants' perspectives. Thus, this study does not only focus on what happens, but also on how and why a phenomenon occurs within a particular social context.

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the main instrument in the data collection process by observing, interviewing, and documenting various information obtained from the field. This process is carried out in depth to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The data collected are then organized, categorized, analyzed, and interpreted systematically to produce meaningful findings that reflect social reality as a whole.

The subjects of this study are individuals who are directly involved in Islamic education activities at Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun, Padang Lawas Regency. The research subjects consist of the pesantren leader or Kyai, who is responsible for formulating policies and directing the development of the pesantren; the Ustadz and Ustadzah, who teach and guide the students in the learning process; and the students (*santri*), who are the main participants in the educational process at the pesantren.

In addition, local community leaders are also included as part of the research subjects. This is because the pesantren does not only function as an educational institution but also has a strong social role within the community. The interaction between the pesantren and the surrounding society is an important aspect in understanding the contribution of the pesantren to the development of Islamic education and social empowerment in the local environment. Thus, the involvement of various parties in this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth description of the role of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun in the development of Islamic education.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Role of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun as an Educational Institution in the Development of Islamic Education in Padang Lawas Regency

Education is a fundamental aspect of human life that serves as a means to develop intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social potentials. In the context of education in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are one of the Islamic educational institutions that play a strategic role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. The existence of *pesantren* is not only oriented toward the transfer of knowledge but also emphasizes the formation of personality based on Islamic values. Therefore, *pesantren* make a significant contribution to producing human resources who are faithful, pious, possess noble character, and are able to live in accordance with Islamic teachings (Huda, 2021).

Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan is one of the Islamic educational institutions that seeks to integrate religious education with general education in its learning process. The curriculum implemented does not only include general subjects but also various religious subjects aimed at shaping students' character and morals. Subjects such as Islamic Creed and Ethics (*Akidah Akhlak*), *Ta'lim Muta'allim*, *Fathul Qorib*, and *Taqrib* are important parts of the educational process aimed at instilling moral values, ethics, and a deep understanding of Islam among the students (*santri*) (Kholiq, 2022).

The research findings show that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan is viewed as an educational institution that plays an important role in shaping students' character, attitudes, and behavior. The education provided does not only focus on the relationship between humans and Allah (*ḥablum minallāh*), but also the relationship among humans (*ḥablum minannās*), the relationship with oneself, and the relationship with the environment. Through this approach, the *pesantren* seeks to produce a generation that has a balance between intellectual intelligence and spiritual maturity.

As an educational institution that grows within society, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan also functions as a center for moral and social development. Various religious activities such as congregational prayers, classical Islamic book studies (*kitab kuning*), *wirid* recitations, short sermons (*kultum*), and *dakwah* activities serve as means of character building for the students. In addition, the boarding system helps to develop discipline, responsibility, independence, and social awareness among the students (Siregar, 2023).

Moral education is the main foundation of all educational activities at Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan. The instillation of moral values is not only carried out through theoretical learning but also through the methods of exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*), habituation (*habituation*), and continuous supervision. Teachers and caregivers act as role models in applying Islamic values in daily life.

The characteristics of moral education in the pesantren can be seen in the habituation of students to practice virtuous behavior such as respecting teachers, showing kindness to others, maintaining cleanliness, speaking truthfully, being disciplined, and being responsible. Thus, moral education does not only produce conceptual understanding but also shapes real behavior in students' daily lives.

In addition to religious education, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan also pays great attention to the development of general knowledge. This shows awareness that the challenges of modern life require students to have academic competencies without leaving Islamic values behind. Therefore, the pesantren implements the national curriculum as an adaptation to contemporary developments.

Subjects such as Mathematics, Natural Sciences (Science), Social Sciences, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Indonesian Language are taught systematically. This learning aims to equip students with the ability to compete in both the academic world and the job market. Thus, students are expected to adapt to the development of science and technology.

The students' perspectives show that the pesantren provides a comprehensive learning experience. They benefit from a balanced integration of religious and general education. The pesantren not only strengthens their religious understanding but also equips them with academic skills relevant to current needs. Students also believe that learning science and technology helps them keep up with the digital era. This shows that the pesantren is able to accommodate modern educational needs without abandoning Islamic values.

From the community's perspective, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan is seen as an educational institution that has made a significant contribution to the development of Islamic education. The community places great trust in the pesantren because it is considered capable of shaping character while also providing good academic education (Nasution, 2020).

This trust is also based on the belief that pesantren provide a balanced

provision for both worldly and spiritual life. Parents hope that their children will gain beneficial knowledge as well as strong religious understanding as a guide for life. Therefore, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan is viewed as a strategic educational institution in producing Muslim generations who are knowledgeable, morally upright, and possess Islamic character. Thus, the pesantren plays an important role in human resource development based on Islamic values in the modern era.

The Role of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan Ulu Barumun as a Center for Dakwah and the Dissemination of Islam in the Development of Islamic Education in Padang Lawas Regency

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are Islamic educational institutions that function not only as centers of religious learning but also as institutions of dakwah that play a role in fostering and developing the religious life of society. Since their early development, pesantren have served as centers for the dissemination of Islamic values oriented toward strengthening faith, moral character (*akhlaq*), and social awareness among the Muslim community. Through various educational and dakwah activities, pesantren strive to create a society that has a strong understanding of Islam and is able to implement Islamic teachings in daily life.

From a social perspective, dakwah is not merely understood as the verbal transmission of religious teachings, but also as an effort to build a social order based on Islamic values. Dakwah encompasses various aspects of life, including education, culture, social affairs, economics, and other community activities. Therefore, the existence of pesantren holds a strategic position in societal development because it functions as an agent of social change oriented toward character building and improving the quality of community life.

The research findings show that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan actively carries out its dakwah role through various religious development programs involving both students (*santri*) and the surrounding community. One form of dakwah activity is the weekly Friday religious gathering known as the *Majelis Utsmaniyah*. This program is attended by the surrounding community and aims to improve religious understanding, strengthen Islamic values, and serve as a means of strengthening social ties between the pesantren and the community. Through this assembly, the pesantren functions as a center of Islamic education that contributes significantly to increasing the community's Islamic knowledge (Kemenag RI, 2022).

In addition to community development, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan also places strong emphasis on developing the dakwah skills of its students. One of the consistently implemented programs is the daily short sermon (*kultum*) conducted every morning. This activity serves as a practical learning medium for students to train public speaking skills, deliver religious messages, and build self-confidence. This habit is part of the pesantren's strategy in preparing future dakwah cadres who are capable of playing active roles in society (Masyhuri, 2021).

The regular implementation of *kultum* also provides students with direct experience in preparing sermon materials, managing communication with audiences, and developing rhetorical skills. These abilities become essential competencies for students in carrying out dakwah roles after completing their education at the pesantren. Thus, dakwah learning is not only theoretical but also implemented through continuous practice so that students' abilities can develop optimally.

The findings also show that the pesantren provides opportunities for students to participate directly in various community religious activities. Some students are entrusted with responsibilities as mosque caretakers, prayer leaders (*imams*), *muadzin* (callers to prayer), and Friday preachers (*khatib*). This involvement reflects the trust given by both the pesantren and the community to students in carrying out religious duties. These experiences serve as effective learning tools in shaping leadership qualities, responsibility, and socio-religious competence among students (Rasyid, 2023).

Furthermore, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan encourages students to participate in various dakwah-related talent development activities, one of which is the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ), particularly in the *Syarhil Qur'an* category. This activity trains students to deliver Qur'anic messages in a systematic, communicative, and engaging manner. Participation in such competitions not only enhances students' dakwah competencies but also broadens their Islamic knowledge and experience.

From the community's perspective, the existence of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan has a positive impact on the social and religious life of the surrounding environment. The community directly benefits from the activities of students involved in various religious programs. Students are not only learners but also part of society who actively assist in religious and social activities. Their presence serves

as a valuable resource in maintaining and developing religious life in the community.

Students' participation in socio-religious activities can be seen in their involvement in funeral rites (*fardu kifayah*), funeral management, commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*Maulid Nabi*), religious study gatherings, and other religious activities. This involvement reflects the success of the pesantren in instilling values of social care, cooperation, and community service. These activities also serve as a real implementation of character education within the pesantren environment.

The success of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan in carrying out its dakwah function shows that the pesantren not only serves as a formal educational institution but also as a center for community development based on Islamic values. Through various religious development programs, dakwah training, and active involvement in social-religious activities, the pesantren is able to build harmonious relationships with society while strengthening its role as an institution contributing to social and religious development.

Overall, this study indicates that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan plays a significant role in the development of Islamic dakwah and community empowerment. This role is realized through religious education for the community, the development of students' dakwah skills, and active participation in various socio-religious activities. Thus, the pesantren does not only produce individuals with good religious understanding but also shapes dakwah cadres who are able to make positive contributions to society and become agents of change in creating a religious, harmonious, and Islamic value-based social life.

The Role of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan as a Social Agent and Agent of Transformation in the Development of Islamic Education in Padang Lawas Regency

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) do not only function as religious educational institutions but also play a role as social agents that encourage transformation in society. In continuously developing social dynamics, communities are often confronted with cultural changes that may potentially shift long-established religious values. The presence of pesantren is therefore important as an institution that preserves, strengthens, and transforms Islamic values so that they remain a guiding principle in social life. Through continuous education, guidance, and dakwah activities, pesantren strive to shape a society with a better understanding of Islam and the ability to respond to social change wisely (Azra, 2021).

The research findings show that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan makes a significant contribution to driving social change within the surrounding community. The pesantren is seen as an institution capable of influencing people's mindsets and behavior through the Islamic education provided to its students (*santri*). The high level of community interest in sending their children to pesantren reflects the expectation that pesantren education can serve as a means of character building and moral improvement. The community believes that students who receive strong religious education are able to bring positive change, both within their families and in broader social life (Nata, 2020).

The contribution of pesantren to social transformation is evident in the changing views of society toward traditions and cultural practices considered inconsistent with Islamic teachings. Through religious study sessions, dakwah activities, and the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, the community increasingly understands the distinction between local customs (*adat*) and Islamic law (*sharia*). This understanding gradually leads to social change, where practices considered incompatible with Islamic values are slowly abandoned. This transformation occurs naturally through the growing awareness of the importance of living according to religious guidance.

In addition to strengthening religious values, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan also plays a role in shaping a more open mindset within society toward the development of science and technology. The education provided does not focus solely on religious studies but also integrates general knowledge, producing graduates who have a balance of intellectual, spiritual, and moral intelligence. The pesantren's success in maintaining the moral character of its alumni amid modern developments demonstrates its ability to produce individuals who are both morally grounded and adaptable to social change. This further strengthens public trust in pesantren as relevant educational institutions in the modern era.

The findings also indicate that the process of social transformation carried out by the pesantren does not only occur through formal activities but also through the role of students as agents of change within their families and communities. The religious knowledge acquired by students often becomes a reference for their families in addressing various religious issues. Through this interaction, students contribute to changing societal perspectives on practices that are not in accordance with Islamic teachings. Thus, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan can be understood as an institution that plays a strategic role in fostering social change, strengthening Islamic values, and creating a society that is more religious, critical, and oriented toward progress.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan plays a very important role in the development of Islamic education, the formation of students' moral character (*akhlak*), the strengthening of dakwah activities, and the social transformation of society. As an Islamic educational institution, the pesantren not only provides religious instruction but also integrates general knowledge, thereby producing a generation that has a balance between intellectual, spiritual, and moral intelligence. Through a curriculum that combines religious and general sciences, the pesantren seeks to develop students (*santri*) who are faithful, possess noble character, and are able to face the challenges of modern development.

In terms of religious development, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan plays an active role as a center for dakwah and Islamic learning for both students and the surrounding community. Various activities such as the weekly *Majelis Utsmaniyah* study circle, daily short sermons (*kultum*), preaching training, the involvement of students as Friday preachers (*khatib*), and participation in Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) serve as effective means for developing students' dakwah skills and religious leadership. Through these activities, the pesantren successfully instills Islamic values while also preparing dakwah cadres who are able to make positive contributions to society.

The research findings also show that the existence of Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan has a significant impact on the social life of the surrounding community. The pesantren functions as a social agent that encourages a shift in community mindset toward a better understanding of Islam. This is evident from the increasing awareness among parents to send their children to pesantren, as well as the gradual decline of traditional practices and cultural customs considered incompatible with Islamic teachings. Through continuous education, guidance, and dakwah, the pesantren contributes to building a society that is religious, morally upright, and socially aware.

Students (*santri*) also play a role as agents of change within their families and communities. The religious knowledge they acquire during their education at the pesantren is not only applied in their personal lives but is also shared with their families and surrounding environment. This condition demonstrates that the educational process in pesantren has a broad influence on the formation of religious

and social values within society.

Thus, Pondok Pesantren NU Paringgonan functions not only as an Islamic educational institution but also as a center for dakwah, character building, and social transformation in society. Its existence makes a real contribution to producing a generation that is knowledgeable, morally upright, possesses dakwah skills, and is able to become a driving force for positive change in society in accordance with Islamic teachings.

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