

## ***Pesantren* Leadership Policies in Improving the Quality of *Pesantren* Learning**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Pesantren* face pressure in maintaining a balance between the deepening of *kitab turats* (classical texts) and the demands of 21st-century competencies amidst educational transformation. This imbalance has the potential to reduce the relevance of graduates if not addressed through adaptive and measurable learning policies. This study aims to analyze the leadership policies in improving the quality of learning at Pondok *Pesantren* Darullughah Wadda'wah Putri. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that leadership policies are implemented integratively through participatory planning, professionalism-based execution by the *asatidzab* (teachers), and continuous evaluation. These policies are able to integrate *salaf* (traditional) values with a *badhari* (civilizational) approach as well as the strengthening of 21st-century skills, thereby creating an adaptive learning ecosystem and producing competent graduates with character.

**Keywords:** Policy, Islamic Boarding School Leadership, Quality of Education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Pesantren* hold a strategic role in shaping the character, knowledge, and morality of the Muslim community. Historically, *pesantren* have functioned not only as educational institutions but also as centers for proselytization (*dakwah*) and social empowerment integrated with community life.<sup>1</sup> This affirms the unique character of *pesantren* as value-based institutions that prioritize the holistic personality development of students (*santri*) alongside academic aspects. However, these characteristics now face the challenges of the digital transformation era, which demands adaptation to global changes. Islamic educational institutions need to reconstruct their curricula to integrate spiritual values with global

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<sup>1</sup> Sahara Adjie Samudera, "Undang-Undang *Pesantren* Sebagai Landasan Pembaruan Pondok *Pesantren* Di Indonesia (Studi Kebijakan Uu No. 18 Tahun 2019)," *Fabima: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kajian Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2023), <https://www.academia.edu/download/104778346/92.pdf>.

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competencies, such as data and technological literacy.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the *pesantren* environment remains the primary force for internalizing Islamic values, but it must be strengthened with responsive learning approaches. Thus, optimizing the role of *pesantren* becomes crucial not only to preserve Islamic values but also to prepare a generation of Muslims who are adaptive, competitive, and relevant to global dynamics.<sup>3</sup>

Despite having great potential, the sustainability of the role of *pesantren* requires a learning system that is high in quality and relevant to the demands of the times. The quality of education in *pesantren* becomes very crucial so that graduates are able to compete and contribute in a global era full of competition. Carefully managing the quality of education is the key to ensuring that *pesantren* remain superior.<sup>4</sup> A concrete challenge in this integration is the existence of a double curriculum burden that requires students to balance the deepening of classical texts (*turats*) with technical training within a limited duration. This gap creates a pressing urgency to examine how *pesantren* leadership policies can become transformative agents in building holistic and futuristic learning quality, bridging tradition and modernity.

The curriculum and teaching at the Darullughah Wadda'wah Putri (Dalwa) *pesantren* focus on three main pillars: religious understanding, Arabic language, and *dakwah*. Its curriculum is independent and not tied to national standards, with materials covering *nahwu*, *shorof*, *arobiyah*, *kitab kuning* practice, as well as various books on Sufism, *taubid*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, and *fiqh*. To ensure that the quality of learning is maintained, the *pesantren* implements *ikhtibar syabri* or monthly examinations. This system serves as an important benchmark to ensure that every student has achieved the expected learning mastery before moving on to more difficult material. This indicates that even though *pesantren* have the freedom to design their curriculum, they still maintain strict quality standards through periodic evaluations. This focus on learning quality is very crucial; without an effective evaluation system, it is feared that the educational process in *pesantren* would only become a formality without tangible results. Therefore, consistency in maintaining quality through these exams is the key so that *pesantren* can continue to produce graduates who are deeply knowledgeable and ready to face the challenges of the times.

Although the quality assurance system in this *pesantren* appears practically established, managerially, the effectiveness of the system highly depends on the policies and transformational leadership behind it. This suggests that the implementation of these policies requires a deeper investigation to understand how transformational strategies are designed, executed, and evaluated in the context of student learning. The need for this deepening is crucial considering that although some literature has discussed leadership and educational quality in *pesantren* in general, there is still a void of specific studies. Therefore, this research is urgently needed to fill that gap, specifically regarding how quality transformation is actually actualized down to the classroom level. For instance, Luthfi's research<sup>5</sup> only focuses on the general role of the *kiai*, without delving into concrete policies in the teaching and learning

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<sup>2</sup> Musaddad Ahmad and Sudarsono Sudarsono Novena Ade FS., "Konvergensi Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Dan Sekuler Dalam Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia: Analisis Literatur.," *Al Ma'ruf: Journal Of Islamic Education*, 2025, 40–58, <https://journal.staidenpasar.ac.id/index.php/AlMarufBali/article/view/569>.

<sup>3</sup> Latifah and Awad, "Metode Pendidikan Karakter Di *Pesantren* Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Agama Islam.," *JIS: Journal Islamic Studies* 1, no. 3 (2023): 391–98, <https://yptb.org/index.php/jis/article/view/527/410>.

<sup>4</sup> N Hizbulloh, A Anshori, and ..., "Peningkatan Kualitas Manajemen Pendidikan Pondok *Pesantren* Salafiyah Di Era Globalisasi (Studi Pondok *Pesantren* Tradisional Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ilir ...)," *Edukasi Islami Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* Vol. 12, no. No. 001 (2023): 1215–24, <https://www.jurnal.staialhidayahbogor.ac.id/index.php/ei/article/view/7447>.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Lutfi, Zainuddin Al Haj Zaini, and Rusydi Baya'gub, "Peran Kepemimpinan Kiai Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Di Pondok *Pesantren* Fatihul Ulum Jember.," *LINGUA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya* 21, no. 1 (2024): 134–41, <https://doi.org/10.30957/lingua.v21i1.928>.

process. Similarly, Siregar's study<sup>6</sup> discusses *pesantren* education management on a macro level but has not touched on the aspect of policy transformation to respond to contemporary challenges. Aslamiyah et al.<sup>7</sup> also limited their study to a value-based management model without linking it to the dynamics of learning quality in the classroom. Furthermore, Atqia and Marzaniar<sup>8</sup> explored quality education policies within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Aceh, but the focus is still limited to aspects of inclusivity and regional access equality. Meanwhile, Ali and Kawakip,<sup>9</sup> through a literature review, discussed the adaptation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) policies in modern *pesantren* in combining *salafi* and *khalafi* systems, but have not empirically dissected the implementation of transformative technology strategies integrated directly with the learning ecosystem and quality control in the field.

This research is presented to fill that gap with the research objective to analyze in depth the planning, implementation, and evaluation of leadership policies in improving the quality of learning in *pesantren*. This research is expected to provide a substantial contribution, namely becoming a reference for other *pesantren* leaders in designing learning quality improvement strategies that are relevant, futuristic, and remain based on *pesantren* values.

## METHOD

This research utilizes a qualitative approach with a case study design,<sup>10</sup> which took place from February to April 2026 at Pondok *Pesantren* Putri Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa). The selection of Dalwa as the research location is based on its reputation as an Islamic educational institution focusing on language development and *dakwah*, as well as having an integrated curriculum between formal and religious education, making it relevant for examining leadership policies and learning quality. This approach is grounded in the constructivist assumption<sup>11</sup> that reality is multiple and dynamic, allowing for a deep understanding of the phenomena experienced by subjects, such as behavior, perception, and motivation, within the natural context of the *pesantren*. As qualitative descriptive research, the data produced consists of written or spoken words from people and observed behaviors, focusing on a complete description of objects and individuals.<sup>12</sup>

The researcher acts as the key instrument<sup>13</sup> and is actively involved as a participatory researcher to obtain a holistic understanding. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with key informants including the vice head of curriculum for the female *pesantren*, several female instructors with different subject backgrounds to obtain diverse perspectives, and 3 representatives of female students from different educational levels and grades for experiential representation. In addition to interviews, direct observation of learning activities and interactions was used, as well as documentation (curriculum, syllabi,

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Mugni Siregar, "Kebijakan Pimpinan *Pesantren* Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Riset* 1, no. 2 (2023): 178–88.

<sup>7</sup> Nurul Aslamiyah et al., "Kebijakan Pengambilan Keputusan Pimpinan Di Lingkungan Pondok *Pesantren* Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Manajerial Pendidikan Formal," *Attractive: Innovative Education Journal* 4, no. 3 (2022): 155–65, <https://attractivejournal.com/index.php/aj/article/view/471>.

<sup>8</sup> Fauzul Atqia, Siti Nur Zalikha, and Putri Marzaniar, "Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Berkualitas Di *Pesantren* Modern Provinsi Aceh," *Risenologi: Jurnal Sains, Teknologi, Sosial, Pendidikan, Dan Bahasa* 9, no. 2 (2024): 59–70, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7968/436e2eaab44e0005b0970a6e3dc96ca656a9.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Muchamad Sifan Ali and Akhmad Nurul Kawakip, "Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Agama Islam Di *Pesantren* Modern," *JIIIP (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)* 8 (2025): 2329–35, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7968/436e2eaab44e0005b0970a6e3dc96ca656a9.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Zainal Arifin, *Penelitian Pendidikan Metode Dan Paradigma Baru* (Bandung: Rosda Karya, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> E Kuswarno, *Metode Penelitian Komunikasi Fenomenologi* (Bandung: Widya Padjajaran, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Lexy Johannes Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Sugiono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R & D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, n.d.).

activity reports). All collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model,<sup>14</sup> which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification iteratively to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

To reduce researcher subjectivity and ensure data validity, this study employs several data credibility testing techniques, namely: source triangulation by comparing information between informants (leadership, instructors, and students) and technical triangulation through the comparison of interview results, observations, and documentation. Additionally, member checks were conducted by re-confirming interview results and preliminary findings with informants to ensure the accuracy of the data's meaning. The researcher also applied persistent observation and referential adequacy through systematic data recording and the use of official *pesantren* documents as supporting data. This entire series of methodological procedures was carried out systematically to ensure the level of trustworthiness and authenticity of the research findings. With this in-depth and tested approach, it is expected that the results of this study will be able to present an objective portrait of the transformation of leadership policies in improving the quality of learning at *Pesantren* Darullughah Wadda'wah Putri.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Policy Planning for Improving Learning Quality at *Pesantren* Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa) Putri

The quality of learning at *Pesantren* Dalwa Putri is managed under the auspices of the *Qism Tarbiyah* (Education Division), which holds full responsibility for managing the entire academic ecosystem, ranging from daily learning and *taklim* activities to the execution of scientific *daurah* and the administration of *ikhtibar syabri* (monthly exams) as quality control instruments. The policy planning stage at this institution involves a series of systematic techniques involving the active role of leadership in formulating the direction of education. This process is not merely an administrative formality but a comprehensive strategy regulated through several main components.

First, the mechanism of participatory planning and professional human resource development. This process begins with the execution of strategic *ijtimak* (meetings) involving all board members of the *pesantren* down to the *ummul mantiqoh* (dormitory complex managers). This forum serves as a platform to identify areas requiring quality improvement and to determine urgent priority needs. In this stage, the leadership consciously plans the involvement of highly qualified professional instructors, both from within the country and abroad, such as Sudan, Medina, Syria, and Tarim. This planning aims to create synergy between the expertise of local *asatidzab* and the global insights of international educators to ensure authentic scientific standards.

This is reinforced by the results of interviews with the curriculum department, which explained how the flow of coordination and decision-making takes place, as stated by an instructor at Dalwa Banat:

*“Usually, we start everything from an ijtimak or meeting involving all pondok administrators down to the ummul mantiqoh. But of course, we still follow the amar (orders) and decisions of the Mudir and Mudirotul so that all our steps are directed. Even for the matter of instructors from abroad, such as from Tarim or Syria, we always coordinate and follow the decisions from the Banin (boys' section) or the male pesantren. All this is done with one big goal: to improve the students' abilities, both in terms of lughob (language) and the deepening of their religious studies.”*

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<sup>14</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan Re&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014).

Second, the planning of infrastructure and the *biah lughowiyah* (linguistic environment) ecosystem. The leadership formulates policies oriented towards the functional mapping of infrastructure to support students' competency achievements. This planning emphasizes the development of an integrated library as a center for literacy and scientific reference, as well as the optimization of classroom functions conducive to the process of knowledge transformation. Specifically, infrastructure planning is integrated with efforts to create a *biah lughowiyah* or a comprehensive linguistic environment within the *pesantren* area. In this context, physical facilities are utilized as a medium for strengthening active Arabic language competence and providing supporting facilities for English Club activities as a forum for developing students' international languages. This aims to ensure that the physical environment of the *pesantren* is not just a passive place for learning but is capable of becoming a stimulus for holistic language mastery to face global challenges.

*“When it comes to infrastructure, Abuya always prioritizes the interests of the students. All facilities built, starting from the maktabah (library), dormitories, and others, are indeed intended for the students and the progress of the ma’had. Now, for the bi’ah lughowiyah or the language environment, that is indeed the main focus of the friends in the qism lughob (language division) who handle much of it. This is part of our effort to maximize the students’ Arabic language competence so they are truly proficient.”*

Third, the technique of quality control planning based on reward and punishment. As a behavior management instrument, the leadership establishes a blueprint through a reward and logical consequence approach. This policy is designed structurally to build a disciplined organizational culture. Rewards are planned as a motivational stimulus for the achievements of students and instructors, while punishments serve as educational corrective actions to ensure all learning standard operating procedures (SOPs) are followed to guarantee learning mastery. Fourth, the periodic evaluation planning method. The leadership carefully establishes an evaluation model to measure quality success through the standardization of structured *ikhtibar syabri* or monthly exams. This method is used as a measuring tool for learning mastery to ensure every student has reached the expected targets before proceeding to more difficult material.

Policy planning at Dalwa Putri demonstrates a policy character that is responsive to social changes in contemporary Islamic education. From William N. Dunn's perspective, educational policy is not only judged by the existence of a program but by the level of appropriateness and its responsiveness to the needs of the educational community. The findings at Dalwa show that policy formulation is carried out through the identification of students' real needs, the strengthening of language competencies, and the integration of *salaf* values with global demands.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, policy planning in improving learning quality at *Pesantren* Dalwa Putri shows its character as a process that is not only administrative but also strategic and contextual. This is reflected in the *ijtimak* mechanism involving various internal elements of the *pesantren* in formulating policy directions. This practice indicates a participatory approach which, in the perspective of educational policy, is understood as an effort to build policy legitimacy and effectiveness through the involvement of organizational actors. Studies on modern *pesantren* policies affirm that policy formulation involving multiple stakeholders will be more adaptive to the needs of students and the dynamics of the educational

<sup>15</sup> Widya Putri Azhari, Novi Aurannisa, dan Sutiah, “Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam dalam RPJMN 2025-2029 Perspektif William N. Dunn,” *Volume* 12, no. 01 (2026): 106–126. <http://jurnal.iaih.ac.id/index.php/inovatif/article/view/1935/560>

environment.<sup>16</sup> Within the framework of rational policy theory, this process also reflects the stages of problem-structuring and policy design based on the real needs of the institution. Thus, the formulated policies are not merely administrative but have moved toward an adaptive orientation for the quality transformation of Islamic education.

Nevertheless, if analyzed more critically, participation in the *pesantren* context cannot be entirely detached from traditional authority structures that place the *kiai* as a central figure. In many cases, as found in *pesantren* policy studies, strategic decisions remain centered on the authority of the *kiai*, so participation tends to be consultative rather than deliberative.<sup>17</sup> This phenomenon reflects the dynamics between modern governance principles that emphasize collective participation and the tradition of charismatic leadership that positions the *kiai* figure as the primary decision-maker in the *pesantren*. Thus, the planning model in *pesantren* is more accurately understood as a semi-participatory policy model, rather than pure participation.

Furthermore, human resource planning through the involvement of professional teaching staff, including those from abroad, shows a transformational orientation in *pesantren* leadership. This policy reflects an effort to adapt to the globalization of education, where *pesantren* no longer only function as institutions for the transmission of religious knowledge but also as institutions that prepare students to face global challenges. This is in line with findings that modern *pesantren* are able to integrate traditional systems (*salafî*) with modern approaches (*kehalafî*) in their educational policies.<sup>18</sup> From an educational management perspective, this strategy is part of strategic HR planning aimed at improving the quality of the institution's output.

However, this transformational approach also raises criticism. The integration of global teaching staff has the potential to create dependency on external resources and risks shifting the epistemic authority of the *pesantren*, which has historically been based on local scientific traditions. In *pesantren* policy studies, modernization that is not balanced with the strengthening of local identity can cause "cultural dislocation" within the *pesantren* education system.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, innovation in HR planning needs to remain grounded in the principle of balance between globalization and the preservation of tradition.

Regarding the aspect of infrastructure planning and the development of *bi'ah lughowiyah*, the formulated policies show a systemic approach in building a conducive learning environment. The provision of facilities such as an integrated library, representative learning rooms, and the formation of a language environment are part of a strategy to create a holistic learning ecosystem. In the perspective of *pesantren* management, such planning is an implementation of the planning function in the management cycle (POAC), which emphasizes the importance of integration between resources, goals, and the needs of learners.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, *pesantren* as educational institutions cannot be detached from the demands of change and modernization, so infrastructure planning must be adaptive to the times without abandoning its traditional values.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> T. Rohmawati et al., "Challenges and Opportunities in *Pesantren* Education Policy Formulation: An Application of William N. Dunn's Framework in West Bandung," *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 2025, 2835-2840.

<sup>17</sup> N. M. Mumtaz, E. Muafiah, and D Witro, "Educational Policy Analysis: Examining *Pesantren* Policies in Contemporary Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 287-306. (2024), <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/tarbiyah/jpai/article/view/v21i2.9612/3803>.

<sup>18</sup> Ali and Kawakip, "Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Agama Islam Di *Pesantren* Modern."

<sup>19</sup> Mumtaz, Muafiah, and Witro, "Educational Policy Analysis: Examining *Pesantren* Policies in Contemporary Indonesia."

<sup>20</sup> Imam Saerozi, *Manajemen Pondok Pesantren* (Purbalingga: Eureka Media Aksara, 2023).

<sup>21</sup> Saerozi.

Nevertheless, studies on *pesantren* education policy show that infrastructure development often faces structural constraints, such as funding limitations and disparities in access between *pesantren*.<sup>22</sup> Even historically, government policies toward *pesantren* have tended not to provide equal support compared to formal educational institutions, causing many *pesantren* to develop independently with limited resources. This indicates that the success of infrastructure planning in *pesantren* depends not only on internal capacity but is also influenced by the government's macro policies.

In the context of quality control, policy planning through the implementation of reward and punishment shows an integration between transformational and transactional approaches in *pesantren* leadership. This system is used to build discipline and ensure the achievement of set learning standards. In management theory, this mechanism is part of an organizational control strategy aimed at maintaining the consistency of individual and group performance.<sup>23</sup>

Lastly, evaluation planning through *ikebtibar syabri* reflects the application of evidence-based policy in the *pesantren* education system. This periodic evaluation serves as a monitoring instrument to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. In the public policy perspective, evaluation is an integral part of the policy cycle that determines the sustainability and effectiveness of a program.<sup>24</sup> These findings reinforce the view that modern *pesantren* have adopted a more systematic and measurable managerial approach. However, an evaluation orientation that focuses too much on cognitive aspects has the potential to neglect the affective and spiritual dimensions that are characteristic of *pesantren* education. In fact, the main goal of *pesantren* education is not only the mastery of knowledge but also the formation of the students' character and spirituality. Therefore, a more holistic evaluation model is needed that is capable of integrating academic aspects and character building in a balanced manner.

### **Policy Implementation in Improving Learning Quality at *Pesantren* Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa) Putri**

The implementation of learning quality policies at Pondok *Pesantren* Darullughah Wadda'wah Putri (Dalwa Putri) manifests in a series of measurable instructional and managerial activities. At this stage, the leadership's vision has transformed into real actions that drive all elements of the *pesantren*. Program implementation is carried out through a clear distribution of roles, where each division operationally performs its duties to ensure the pillars of religious understanding, language, and *dakwah* are applied in the students' daily lives.

#### **1. Operationalization of Quality Improvement Through Professional *Asatidz* Performance**

In practice, the policy of improving teacher quality is no longer just an administrative criterion but has become a daily performance standard. The *asatidz*, whether graduates from the Middle East or domestic universities, are actively involved in the process of knowledge transfer using adaptive methods. The presence of instructors from Yemen and Syria tangibly impacts the academic atmosphere; they do not only teach in class but also serve as role models in daily language interaction. This professionalism is evident in how the instructors educate, nurture, and guide the students consistently, ensuring that every subject is delivered with authentic scientific depth yet remains relevant to the modern context.

<sup>22</sup> Atqia, Zalikha, and Marzaniar, "Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Berkualitas Di *Pesantren* Modern Provinsi Aceh."

<sup>23</sup> Saerozi, *Manajemen Pondok Pesantren*.

<sup>24</sup> Rohmawati et al., "Challenges and Opportunities in *Pesantren* Education Policy Formulation: An Application of William N. Dunn's Framework in West Bandung."

## 2. Application of Learning Programs and Utilization of Field Facilities

The implementation of learning quality in the field is visible from the students' discipline in carrying out linguistic routines. Every day, students tangibly practice memorizing 3 to 5 *mufrodat* (vocabulary words) in active conversation within the dormitory and school environment. The *biah lughowiyah* policy is no longer a concept but a physical reality where posters for Arabic and English language guidance are clearly displayed in every strategic corner of the *pesantren* as visual stimuli. In terms of facilities, the integrated library is operated maximally as a student research center, while classrooms are used as living laboratories for *muhadharah* (speech) simulations, the schedule of which is strictly executed every week. These activities prove that the physical facilities have fully functioned to support the curriculum achievement targets.

*“Many factors support this biah lughowiyah program, including the existence of the Qism lughah, learning directly with native speakers (an-natiq asli), and the fact that 80% of subjects are in Arabic.”*

## 3. Implementation of Skill Programs and Quality Control Mechanisms

Several skills and programs running at Dalwa Banat include *muhadhoroh* (Islamic public speaking), and the English Club is also organized as a venue for intensive international language practice.

*“This English Club program started from the direction of Ustazah Fatimah as an administrator who saw the importance of English language skills for the students' future outside the pesantren. Initially, it was only held once a week every Friday afternoon, but because there was a lot of interest in the riayah section, the schedule was increased to Saturday nights. Indeed, currently, its status is still optional (according to interest) and it is not yet fully balanced with book studies, but we are starting to familiarize students through announcements in three languages so they begin to get used to it.”*

On the other hand, the *Muhadhoroh* activity aims to maximize the students' *dakwah* abilities, scheduled periodically as a means of public speaking training, delivery of religious material, as well as the strengthening of mental fortitude and self-confidence. Through this activity, students are trained to be able to convey *dakwah* messages well, structurally, and easily understood by the audience. Additionally, *Muhadhoroh* also becomes a forum for developing communication skills, leadership, and student character building so they are better prepared to enter and contribute to society.

In parallel, quality control is carried out through the public awarding of rewards to high-achieving students to boost motivation, as well as the application of punishment (educational consequences) for those who violate language standard procedures. The application of this discipline ensures that every planned policy is truly obeyed and becomes a living organizational culture. All the dynamics of implementation at Dalwa Putri show the effectiveness of a bottom-up implementation model, where the success of the policy is largely determined by the commitment of the *asatidzah* as the frontline implementers. Although the leadership provides strategic direction, the quality of educational output is tangibly shaped by the daily interpretation and application carried out by each division. This synergy between a well-ordered organization, appropriate task interpretation, and responsive action application is what makes Dalwa Putri able to maintain its educational quality standards sustainably.

The implementation of the policy to improve learning quality at *Pesantren* Darullughah Wadda'wah Putri shows that policy does not stop at the conceptual level but moves into

structured institutional practice through coordination among internal *pesantren* actors. This implementation demonstrates the connection between the leadership's vision and the operational actions carried out by the *asatidzab* and the implementing units. This condition is in line with the public policy analysis framework which emphasizes that successful implementation is largely determined by a systematic process, from formulation to evaluation involving various actors contextually and participatively.<sup>25</sup> In the *pesantren* context, policy implementation is also influenced by the internal character of the institution as well as external demands that drive continuous adaptation to modern educational dynamics.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the aspect of operationalizing quality improvement through *asatidzab* performance, findings at Dalwa Putri show that learning quality is built through professionalism that is not only pedagogical but also cultural and exemplary. The *asatidzab* act as the primary agents who bring values, language, and academic traditions to life in the students' daily routines. This reinforces the view that the success of educational policy in *pesantren* is heavily determined by the role of key actors such as the *kiai* and educators, who possess both authority and responsibility in maintaining the institutional direction.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the professionalism of the *asatidzab* cannot be reduced to mere technical competence but is a combination of academic capacity, moral integrity, and the ability to build a sustainable learning culture.

The application of learning programs and the utilization of facilities at Dalwa Putri demonstrate that quality policy has been internalized in the form of a concrete learning ecosystem. The practice of *biab lughowiyah*, the use of visual language media, and the optimization of libraries and classrooms as learning laboratories show that quality is not only measured by the curriculum but also by a supportive learning environment. This finding is in line with the *pesantren*-based educational policy model which emphasizes the importance of multi-party coordination, environmental analysis, and facility support in ensuring effective implementation.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, educational quality is also determined by the institution's ability to provide learning spaces that are flexible, adaptive, and suited to the students' needs.<sup>29</sup>

At the technical implementation level, skill-strengthening programs such as fashion design training, mastery of technology, and international language development show that quality policy at Dalwa Putri has aimed at strengthening students' life skills. This is in accordance with the *pesantren* educational policy model that places skills as an important part of preparing students to face global challenges.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the implementation of reward and punishment mechanisms shows a consistently functioning quality control system. In the public policy perspective, this control is part of the monitoring and evaluation stage which ensures the policy continues to run according to the set goals and standards.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Rohmawati et al., "Challenges and Opportunities in *Pesantren* Education Policy Formulation: An Application of William N. Dunn's Framework in West Bandung."

<sup>26</sup> A. Mufarokah et al., "The Life Skills Education Policy Model in *Pesantren*-Based Schools.," *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 6:4 (2022): 2288-2299.

<sup>27</sup> N. M. Mumtaz, E. Muafiah, and D. Witro, "Educational Policy Analysis: Examining *Pesantren* Policies and Their Implications on the Independence of Kyai and *Pesantren* in the Contemporary Era.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2 (2024): 287-306.

<sup>28</sup> Mufarokah et al., "The Life Skills Education Policy Model in *Pesantren*-Based Schools."

<sup>29</sup> Atqia, Zalikha, and Marzaniar, "Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Berkualitas Di *Pesantren* Modern Provinsi Aceh."

<sup>30</sup> Mufarokah et al., "The Life Skills Education Policy Model in *Pesantren*-Based Schools."

<sup>31</sup> Rohmawati et al., "Challenges and Opportunities in *Pesantren* Education Policy Formulation: An Application of William N. Dunn's Framework in West Bandung."

Overall, the policy implementation at Dalwa Putri reflects a strong implementation pattern at the executor level, where the success of the policy is largely determined by the ability of field actors to translate policy into daily practice. This shows that policy effectiveness depends not only on the policy design but also on organizational capacity, system support, and the institutional culture that is formed. Thus, the quality of learning at Dalwa Putri is the result of synergy between leadership, educator professionalism, facility support, curriculum integration, and a continuous supervision system.

### **Policy Evaluation for Improving Learning Quality at *Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa) Putri***

Policy evaluation at Dalwa Putri is a quality control mechanism aimed at synchronizing the leadership's ideal standards with the operational realities in the field. This stage is not merely a final assessment but a reflective process that determines the direction of sustainable learning quality. Evaluation at Dalwa Putri is carried out through a participatory scheme involving cross-sectoral actors. The *pesantren* leadership acts as strategic evaluators, while the curriculum administrators, *asatidzab* (teachers), and *ummul mantiqob* (dormitory supervisors) serve as operational evaluators. The primary mechanism is manifested in the form of periodic *ijtimak* (coordination meetings). Weekly, the evaluation focuses on the routine control of *mufrodat* (vocabulary), while monthly, it is conducted through structured *Ikhtibar Syabri* (monthly examinations). This *ijtimak* forum is crucial as it functions as a dialectical space to dissect technical obstacles experienced by teachers and supervisors, ensuring that the resulting solutions are applicable and based on field data, as noted in the following interview excerpt with one of the teachers:

*“Evaluation in the Qism Tarbiyah is carried out routinely, from the weekly mufrodat control to the monthly Ikhtibar Syabri. If there are obstacles felt by teachers in the classroom or supervisors in the dormitory, everything is immediately discussed in the ijtimak forum to find solutions right then and there. The focus is indeed on maintaining academic quality and discipline, so that our graduates will have a strong religious foundation but remain ready to compete in the outside world.”*

On the other hand, the substance of the evaluation at Dalwa Putri covers four main dimensions. First, program effectiveness, particularly regarding the implementation of *Biab Lughowiyah*. Second, academic achievement, which emphasizes the mastery of *kitab turats* (classical texts). Third, human resource performance, to ensure the professionalism of the *asatidzab* in nurturing and educating. Fourth, infrastructure support and discipline, including evaluation of the functionality of the integrated library and the impact of the reward and punishment system on student behavior patterns. The entire content of this evaluation leads to one goal: ensuring the graduate profile remains rooted in *salaf* (traditional) values while possessing competitive competencies, as stated in the following interview excerpt:

*“The impact is very significant, especially in motivating students to study harder. They become driven to master as much material as possible. Moreover, Abuya or the Mudir also frequently provides rewards as a form of attention. For example, students with good grades are taken on a pilgrimage (ziarah) to the Hubabah or the Maqbarah. So, there is a certain happiness for the students; besides gaining knowledge, they also receive blessings from the pilgrimage.”*

Policy evaluation in improving the quality of learning at *Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah Putri* demonstrates a character as a control system that is reflective, sustainable, and field-based. Evaluation is not positioned as a final stage but as an integral part of the policy cycle that functions to identify gaps between normative standards and implementative reality. This is consistent with the policy analysis framework that places evaluation as a

process of monitoring, assessing, and continuously improving policy to guarantee the effectiveness of educational programs.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, in the *pesantren* context, evaluation cannot be separated from cultural dimensions because it must maintain a balance between traditional values and the demands of educational modernity.<sup>33</sup>

The evaluation mechanism involving the leadership, *asatidzah*, curriculum administrators, and *ummul mantiqob* indicates a strong participatory evaluation model. This pattern reinforces findings that the success of educational policy is heavily determined by multi-stakeholder involvement and internal institutional coordination.<sup>34</sup> The *ijtimak* forum as a space for collective evaluation serves as a deliberative arena to identify problems, formulate solutions, and ensure that implementation aligns with the field context. In the public policy perspective, this mechanism reflects a bottom-up approach that places implementers as key actors in determining policy effectiveness.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, the involvement of leadership still indicates strategic control that maintains the institutional direction in accordance with the *pesantren's* vision.

If analyzed through educational evaluation models, the practices at Dalwa Putri show alignment with the formative-summative and CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) approaches. Weekly evaluations through *mufrodad* control and the *ijtimak* forum reflect formative evaluation aimed at improving ongoing processes, while the *Iktibar Syabri* indicates summative evaluation that measures learning outcome achievements.<sup>36</sup> At the context level, evaluation ensures the alignment between the *salaf* vision and the *hadhari* (civilizational) orientation. At the input level, evaluation assesses the quality of human resources and facilities. At the process level, evaluation monitors the execution of language and learning programs. At the product level, evaluation assesses academic achievement and graduate profiles. This approach shows that evaluation at Dalwa Putri is systemic and decision-oriented, rather than merely administrative.

Furthermore, the evaluation at Dalwa Putri can also be interpreted as an instrument for organizational conflict management. The intensity of interaction within a dormitory-based *pesantren* system has the potential to generate individual, group, and institutional conflicts.<sup>37</sup> In this context, routine evaluations through *ijtimak* function as a preventive mechanism to mitigate potential conflicts before they become destructive. This aligns with findings that the organizational effectiveness of a *pesantren* is significantly determined by the leadership's ability to manage conflict through the reinforcement of collective values, communication, and adaptive resolution strategies.<sup>38</sup> Thus, evaluation functions not only as a tool for measuring quality but also as an instrument for organizational stabilization.

From the substantive side, the evaluation at Dalwa Putri, which includes program effectiveness, academic achievement, human resource performance, as well as facilities and discipline, demonstrates a comprehensive evaluation character. This is in line with the principles of educational policy evaluation that emphasize the importance of a thorough

<sup>32</sup> Fionita, W. et al., "Monitoring Dan Evaluasi Kebijakan Pendidikan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 7 no 6 (2024).

<sup>33</sup> Saerozi, *Manajemen Pondok Pesantren*.

<sup>34</sup> Mumtaz, Muafiah, and Witro, "Educational Policy Analysis: Examining *Pesantren* Policies in Contemporary Indonesia."

<sup>35</sup> Rohmawati et al., "Challenges and Opportunities in *Pesantren* Education Policy Formulation: An Application of William N. Dunn's Framework in West Bandung."

<sup>36</sup> Fionita, W. et al., "Monitoring Dan Evaluasi Kebijakan Pendidikan."

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Anggung Manumanoso Prasetyo et al., "Management Conflict of *Pesantren*: Political Policy Practices of *Pesantren* Organizations in Aceh Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Civilization*, 6.1 (2024): 1-12., <https://journal2.unusa.ac.id/index.php/JIC/article/view/5868>.

<sup>38</sup> Prasetyo et al.

approach covering all components of the educational system.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the focus on the integration of *kitab turats* and modern competencies shows that evaluation is not only oriented toward academic output but also toward an epistemological balance between tradition and modernity. In this regard, the *pesantren* demonstrates its adaptive capacity in responding to global demands without losing its scientific identity.<sup>40</sup>

Evaluation of the reward and punishment system and student disciplinary culture shows that educational quality cannot be separated from organizational culture. In the *pesantren* management perspective, policy success depends heavily on the internalization of values and the behavioral consistency of all institutional actors.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, evaluation at Dalwa Putri is not only technical but also cultural, as it measures the extent to which *pesantren* values live within daily practices. This condition simultaneously reinforces that the success of educational policy in *pesantren* is the result of interaction between the managerial system, leadership, and institutional culture.

Overall, policy evaluation at Dalwa Putri shows an integration between managerial and cultural approaches. The managerial approach is evident in the use of performance indicators, routine monitoring, and a structured evaluation system. Meanwhile, the cultural approach is visible through the practice of *musyawarah* (consultation), the reinforcement of values, and the central role of leadership in maintaining organizational stability. This integration is key because *pesantren* cannot be managed solely through administrative approaches; they also require sensitivity toward values, traditions, and internal social dynamics.<sup>42</sup> Thus, evaluation at Dalwa Putri functions not only as a quality control tool but also as a mechanism for adaptation, integration, and the sustainability of the *pesantren* education system.

## CONCLUSION

Leadership policy at Pondok *Pesantren* Dalwa Putri in improving the quality of learning is carried out through a comprehensive and integrative managerial cycle. The planning stage adopts a Systems Model through a participatory *ijtimak* mechanism involving various organizational elements, while the implementation and evaluation stages reflect a Rational Model oriented toward the institutional vision. The success of this model lies in the leadership's ability to harmoniously consolidate the *turats* scientific tradition with the demands of 21st-century skills. This synergy proves that policies based on the "Modernization of Tradition" paradigm are capable of creating an adaptive educational ecosystem without reducing the identity and ideological roots of the *pesantren*.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the discourse of Islamic education management regarding the importance of balance between formal system stability and visionary, paternalistic leadership flexibility. The practical implications of this research emphasize that improving the quality of learning in *pesantren* depends not only on the sophistication of technological infrastructure but also on the internalization of *Insan Kamil* character values through a sustainable techno-cultural evaluation approach. On the other hand, this research is limited to one location and time, so the scope of its findings does not yet represent the diversity of other institutions. Future research is suggested to conduct

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<sup>39</sup> Fionita, W. et al., "Monitoring Dan Evaluasi Kebijakan Pendidikan."

<sup>40</sup> Mumtaz, Muafiah, and Witro, "Educational Policy Analysis: Examining *Pesantren* Policies in Contemporary Indonesia."

<sup>41</sup> Saerozi, *Manajemen Pondok Pesantren*.

<sup>42</sup> Mumtaz, Muafiah, and Witro, "Educational Policy Analysis: Examining *Pesantren* Policies in Contemporary Indonesia."

comparative studies between *pesantren* models and use mixed methods to measure the tangible impact of policies on graduate competitiveness more accurately.

As a recommendation, subsequent research is expected to explore the long-term effectiveness of this management model on the competitiveness of graduates in the international professional arena. Thus, the management pattern at Dalwa Putri can serve as a strategic reference for other *pesantren* institutions in carrying out quality transformations that remain grounded in local wisdom.

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