

# Transforming Islamic Boarding School Education: Institutional Modernization and Quality Improvement in Tebuireng Jombang

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the educational transformation and institutional modernization of Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, Indonesia. The focus is on enhancing educational quality and reforming governance to meet the evolving demands of society and educational standards. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and analysis of institutional documents to gather comprehensive data on internal processes and structural changes. Findings reveal that transformation at Tebuireng is largely driven by the leadership's growing awareness of the importance of educational quality and community expectations for graduates who are both religiously grounded and academically proficient. A key factor in this shift is the transition from a charismatic leadership style to a collective-delegative model. This change has fostered a more professional and innovative governance system and enhanced the recruitment and training of competent human resources. As a result, the school has witnessed improved graduate quality, rising public interest, and a stronger reputation as an adaptive, quality-focused pesantren. The study underscores the significance of participatory leadership and institutional responsiveness in pesantren modernization. The governance shift has enabled Tebuireng to maintain traditional Islamic values while adopting professional educational practices. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of institutional transformation and participatory leadership in Islamic education. Practically, it offers a replicable model for other pesantren seeking modernization without compromising core religious principles.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) represent one of the oldest and most influential forms of educational institutions in Indonesia. Since the pre-independence period, *pesantren* have played a pivotal role in shaping religious education and developing human resources grounded in moral and spiritual values (Nur, Antariksa, Wahidmurni, & Wahyudin, 2024; Rohman & Fauziah, 2023). Central to the function and governance of these institutions is the figure of the *kiai*, who serves not only as a religious leader but also as the key authority overseeing all educational and administrative activities. Beyond their primary role in Islamic instruction, *pesantren* also function as vital centers for the transmission of religious and socio-cultural values, particularly within rural Muslim communities (Jahidin, 2023; Saepullah, 2021).

Contemporary data further reinforce the continued significance of *pesantren* in Indonesian society. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2021), there are over 28,000 Islamic boarding schools operating across the country, accommodating millions of students. This widespread presence highlights the enduring trust and reliance of rural and small-town Muslim communities on *pesantren* as key institutions for both educational and moral development.

Traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren salaf*) face numerous social and educational challenges in the context of the modern era. Contemporary developments—such as urbanization, technological advancement, and globalization—demand that *pesantren* adapt to rapidly evolving societal dynamics. The traditional instructional methods of *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *wetonan*, which have long characterized conservative *salaf* institutions, are increasingly viewed as inadequate for equipping students with the competencies required in the 21st century (A. Faizin, Riyanto, & Roesminingsih, 2024; Ihsan, Ahmad, Hasanah, & Suhartini, 2021). Moreover, the highly centralized leadership model—where authority is concentrated in the hands of the *kiai*—often hinders innovation and limits the scope for modernization, particularly in relation to formal education systems and the integration of technology.

A growing body of research supports the need for transformation within the *pesantren* system. Abdulwahab, Mad Sa'i, and Riza Hamid (2023) argue that the shift from *salaf* to *khalaf* models represents a necessary response to societal demands for educational institutions that integrate religious and national formal education. Similarly, Suhartini, Hidayat, and Basri (2025) found that modern *pesantren* adopting formal curricula have significantly improved educational quality and enhanced the competitiveness of their graduates at both national and international levels. Ilyasin (2020) further asserts that modern Islamic boarding schools not only raise educational standards but also better prepare students to navigate an increasingly competitive academic and professional landscape. Reinforcing these findings, Anwar, Ridlwan, Wahyudin, and Budi (2025) emphasize that the successful integration of religious values with formal education is closely tied to a *pesantren's* capacity for innovation and its responsiveness to broader socio-cultural shifts.

Thus, this previous research shows the importance of transformation and adaptation of *pesantren* to remain relevant in the context of today's education. This context is that although *pesantren* have an important role in building the nation's morality and spirituality, without adaptation to the times, *pesantren* risk losing their relevance and influence. (A. Faizin et al., 2024; Thoyib & Fauzan, 2021; Yamin, 2023) Therefore, it is very important to examine how *pesantren* can maintain their traditional values while innovating in management and learning systems to meet the needs of modern education. This research seeks to identify the challenges faced by traditional Islamic boarding schools and examine the adaptation process carried out, so that it can provide strategic recommendations for the development of Islamic boarding schools in the future.

The Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School was chosen as the object of research because it has an important strategic and historical position in the development of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia. As one of the oldest and largest Islamic boarding schools founded by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama, Tebuireng has become a nationally influential Islamic education center and a reference in the development of traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools. In addition, the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School has shown significant adaptability in facing the challenges of the times, such as the integration of religious education with the formal curriculum, professional

management, and the renewal of the learning system that is relevant to the needs of students and society today. With these characteristics, Tebuireng is a representative example to examine how traditional pesantren can transform into an adaptive educational institution without losing the basic values of Islam and pesantren traditions. In addition, the large number of students and the diversity of educational programs in Tebuireng allowed this study to obtain comprehensive and representative data related to the dynamics of change in pesantren.

This study aims to identify the main challenges faced by traditional pesantren in facing the development of modern education, analyze the adaptation strategies carried out by pesantren to social changes and formal education demands, and assess the impact of the transformation of pesantren from salaf to kholaf on the quality of education and community acceptance. With this goal, this research is expected to contribute to the development of pesantren as an educational institution that can adapt to the development of the times while maintaining traditional values that are the main foundation of pesantren. This research is expected to make a real contribution to the development of pesantren as an educational institution that is adaptive, competitive, and still maintains the noble values that are the basic principles of pesantren.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach within a naturalistic paradigm, aiming to explore and interpret data in a deep, holistic manner from the emic perspective—that is, based on the viewpoints and lived experiences of the research subjects themselves (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024; Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024). Such an approach enables the researcher to authentically capture participants' experiences, perceptions, and the socio-cultural contexts in which they are embedded, without introducing external assumptions or interference. The case study method was selected due to its capacity to provide an in-depth examination of phenomena within a specific, real-life context, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics present in the pesantren under investigation (Grenier, 2023; Mudjia Raharjo, 2017).

Participant selection was conducted using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure the inclusion of individuals with relevant experience and roles within the Islamic boarding school setting. The criteria for participation included pesantren administrators, kiai, teachers, and active students who are directly involved in the educational and managerial processes of the institution. A total of 15 participants, representing a range of ages, backgrounds, and roles, were engaged in order to ensure the data collected reflected diverse perspectives within the pesantren environment.

Data was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques (Sugiono, 2019; Vivek, 2023). The analysis process includes coding data to identify patterns and themes that appear, and then the systematic interpretation of the theme according to the research objectives, referring to the Bogdan and Biklenen methods. In the ethical aspect, this research prioritizes qualitative research norms by implementing informed consent, maintaining data confidentiality, and ensuring that participants understand the objectives and procedures of the research in accordance with the Lincoln and Guba guidelines. (Abdussamad, 2021; Suprayitno, Ahmad, Tartila, & Aladdin, 2024).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Findings

#### 3.1.1 Institutional Change Process

The Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School was established in 1899 by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, initially adopting a highly traditional educational model centered on the direct recitation and study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*). Field observations indicate that, during its early years, teaching and learning activities were exclusive in nature and heavily characterized by *salaf* pedagogical methods, which emphasized memorization and the comprehension of classical texts. A significant transformation began

in 1922 when Tebuireng introduced discussion-based learning (*musyawarah*) as part of its instructional approach and began incorporating general subjects into its curriculum. As one senior teacher noted during an interview, "Since the time of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, there has been a clear awareness that Islamic boarding schools must open themselves to broader horizons. Learning should not be limited to memorizing texts, but must also involve discussion to cultivate critical thinking and contextual understanding."

This pedagogical shift marked the beginning of Tebuireng's transformation from a purely *salaf* educational institution to a *khalaf* model that integrates traditional Islamic education with elements of modern, formal schooling. This evolution continued with the establishment of formal educational institutions under the umbrella of Tebuireng. Archival records and field observations show that a *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* was established in 1950, followed by a *Madrasah Aliyah* in 1960, Hasyim Asy'ari University in 1967, and Wahid Hasyim Junior and Senior High School in 1975. An official from the Tebuireng educational institution remarked, "The establishment of these madrassas and the university represents a concrete effort to respond to national educational challenges. Our goal is to produce students who are not only well-versed in religious knowledge but also competent in general sciences."

Today, Tebuireng has expanded significantly, operating 10 branches across 10 provinces in Indonesia. Since its founding, the institution has experienced eight leadership transitions, each contributing to its ongoing development and adaptation in response to the changing educational landscape.

**Table 1.** Period of Parenting of Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School

Period I	KH. Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari	1899 – 1947 (48 years)
Period II	KH. Abdul Wahid Hasyim	1947 – 1950 (3 year)
Period III	KH. Abdul Karim Hasyim	1950 – 1951 (1 year)
Period IV	KH. Ahmad Baihawi	1951 – 1952 (1 year)
Period V	KH. Abdul Kholik Hasyim	1953 – 1965 (12 years)
Period VI	KH. Muhammad Yusuf Hasyim	1965 – 2006 (41 years)
Period VII	KH. Sholahudin Wahid	2006 – 2020 (14 years)
Period IIX	KH. Abdul Hakim Mahfud	2020 – Now

Nurturing as well as leadership at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School runs by producing policies in each period with different parenting patterns but to achieve the same goal. As an organization that serves the community, the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School also follows the trend of change in the community. The Islamic boarding school was originally *salaf* (traditional). Only teaching the yellow book (religious studies) changed to the *kholaf* (modern) Islamic Boarding School.

The change in Islamic Boarding School is an adaptation of a change in people's perspective on Islamic Boarding School. The community sees the need for Islamic Boarding Schools to provide more services in the form of formal educational institutions in the Islamic Boarding School environment. Thus, Islamic Boarding Schools need to pay attention to the desire of Islamic Boarding Schools in providing educational services to the community.

In this process of institutional change, the national curriculum began to be systematically integrated, while maintaining religious lessons as a characteristic of Islamic boarding schools. In addition, human resource management has also undergone fundamental changes. Observations in the field show that the recruitment of teachers and staff is carried out through strict selection based on academic and religious competence. This aims to improve the quality of teaching and professionalism of educators. A teacher who has been serving for a long time said, "Now the selection of teachers is

stricter. We also regularly receive training so that teaching methods are always developed and in accordance with modern educational standards."

In addition, the leadership system in Tebuireng has been modernized with the development of a delegative leadership style. Leadership is no longer centralistic and hierarchical, but involves various units and divisions that are given the authority to make decisions collectively. Observations in the pesantren management meeting show that the process of deliberation and active participation of various stakeholders is a characteristic of current institutional governance.

From the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the process of institutional change at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School took place gradually but consistently, starting from the adaptation of teaching methods, the establishment of formal institutions, the integration of the national curriculum, to the strengthening of human resources and a modern leadership system. This transformation is an important capital for Islamic boarding schools to face educational and social dynamics in the contemporary era.

### 3.1.2 Factors influencing transformation

#### *Internal Factors*

The transformation of education in Tebuireng cannot be separated from the leaders' deep awareness of the importance of improving the quality of education. This can be seen from the strategic steps of establishing new educational units such as Madrasah Muallimin and SMA Trensains which integrate the salaf curriculum with the national curriculum. This process is a serious attempt to balance traditional values with the needs of modern education. An administrator of the pesantren explained, *"The leadership's awareness is very strong that education in Tebuireng must keep up with the times without eliminating religious roots. So we developed a new institution that adopts the national curriculum, but still maintains the salaf tradition."*

In addition, the quality of human resources (HR) is the main focus of this transformation. The teacher selection process is carried out strictly to attract teaching staff who are not only proficient in religious science but also competent in the general field. After being accepted, teachers are given regular training and supervised through a quality assurance unit that is specially formed to maintain educational standards. From the results of observations in the quality assurance unit, it can be seen that there is a periodic monitoring and evaluation system for teacher performance and teaching quality. The head of the quality assurance unit explained, *"We conduct regular supervision and training to ensure that the quality of learning remains high and teachers can adapt relevant teaching methods."*

#### *External Factors*

In addition to internal factors, pressure and expectations from the community are also strong drivers for institutional transformation in Tebuireng. The community wants pesantren not only to focus on religious education but also to provide general competencies that can compete in the public sector and the world of work. An alumnus of the pesantren who now works in the government sector stated, *"The community demands that pesantren graduates can compete, not only in the pesantren environment, but also in the outside world. This makes pesantren have to change and open themselves to formal education."*

Observations in various discussion forums between Islamic boarding schools and local communities also corroborate this. There is an increasing demand for Islamic boarding schools to implement national education standards so that graduates can be accepted into state universities and the job market. These external factors force pesantren to adapt quickly, change their institutional structure, and develop a more modern and integrated education system, while maintaining Islamic values as a characteristic of pesantren.

### 3.1.3 Leadership and Human Resource Development

Leadership at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School underwent a significant transformation from a model that was initially charismatic and centralistic to a more collective and delegative leadership

model. This shift opens up space for more modern and professional institutional governance innovations. One of the tangible manifestations of this change is the establishment of several special fields, such as the field of educational institutions, the field of quality assurance, and training centers that function as training centers and competency development of educators. In an interview with the Head of Institutional Affairs, he explained "Previously, all decisions depended more on one leader, but now we run a system that involves many parties. This speeds up the decision-making process and opens up a wider space for innovation."

Observations in the coordination meeting in the field of quality assurance show that the decision-making process is deliberative and collective, where various divisions and units play an active role in determining the direction of education policy. This leadership model allows for the implementation of a quality control system that is more effective and responsive to the needs of human resource development.

In addition to a more open institutional structure, the involvement of Tebuireng's caregiver families and the Family Assembly is also an important factor that strengthens the success of the transformation. In an interview, one of the members of the Family Assembly stated "*Caregiver families have always supported every step of change by providing moral encouragement and resources. The synergy between families and pesantren administrators is very important so that change can run smoothly and sustainably.*"

Human resource development is the main focus that continues to be taken seriously. The training center that was formed functions as a continuous training center for teachers and education staff. In field observation, the training center routinely holds workshops and training with materials that include strengthening pedagogic competence, classroom management, and the integration of educational technology. One trainee said, "*The training we participated in really helped improve the way we teach and understand the new curriculum. It also encourages us to continue to learn and innovate.*"

Overall, the shift in leadership style from charismatic to collective-delegative has opened up opportunities for the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School to manage its human resources more professionally and systematically, thereby supporting the goal of improving the quality of education and modernizing the institution.

### **3.1.4 Transformation Impact and Outcomes**

#### ***Quality of Graduates and Community Interest***

The transformation carried out by the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School has had a significant impact on the quality of graduates. Changes that include the integration of the national curriculum and intensive training for teachers have succeeded in improving the academic competence of students without reducing the religious aspect. An alumnus who is now active as a teacher and also a social actor said "*Tebuireng graduates are now not only good at reciting and understanding religion but also able to compete in the world of work and play an active role in the public sector such as the government and social institutions.*"

Observations in the pesantren environment show an increase in public interest in registering their children in Tebuireng. Data from the administration department recorded a 30% surge in enrollment in the last five years, showing public trust in the quality of education provided by Islamic boarding schools. A prospective guardian stated, "*We chose Tebuireng because of its good reputation and its complete curriculum, not only religion but also general science.*"

#### ***Institutional Reputation and Governance***

The Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School is now increasingly known as an Islamic educational institution that is adaptive to the changing times and oriented towards improving quality. This can be seen from the governance system that is carried out systematically and professionally. Based on the results of observations, each educational program and activity is reviewed periodically through a planning, implementation, and evaluation process involving various stakeholders. The Head of Quality

Assurance revealed *"We run a strict quality management cycle, from program planning to evaluation of results. This makes every step of education development in Tebuireng measurable and directed."*

This positive reputation is also reflected in the recognition of various parties, including local governments and national educational institutions that routinely collaborate with Tebuireng for the development of Islamic education at the regional and national levels. A local government official revealed, *"Tebuireng is an example of a pesantren that has succeeded in modernizing without eliminating traditional values. We fully support their efforts to improve the quality of education and governance."* The transformation that took place in Tebuireng showed that institutional modernization and the development of the quality of education not only improved the quality of graduates but also increased the image and trust of the community in the Islamic boarding school. This is strategic capital for the sustainability and development of the institution in the future.

### 3.2 Discussion

#### 3.2.1 Institutional and Educational Transformation Through the Lens of Organizational Change Theory

The institutional transformation at Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School can be effectively examined through established organizational change theories, particularly Kurt Lewin's three-stage change model and the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) framework proposed by Hammer and Champy (1993). Lewin's model—which consists of the unfreezing, moving, and refreezing stages—offers a relevant conceptual framework to understand the dynamic shifts that have taken place at Tebuireng (Rosdiana & Aslami, 2022; Sa'idu, 2021; Telaumbanua & Aslami, 2023).

In the unfreezing phase, a growing awareness emerged among Tebuireng's leadership regarding the urgent need to modernize in response to societal changes and the expectations of the broader community. This internal recognition, coupled with external pressures, served as the initial driver for reform. As Burnes (2020) and Aziz (2023) argue, successful transformation begins with an acknowledgment of the inadequacy of existing practices and a willingness to shift organizational culture.

During the moving stage, Tebuireng implemented a range of strategic changes, including the creation of new educational units such as Madrasah Muallimin and SMA Trensains. It also began integrating the national curriculum with the traditional salaf curriculum, thereby bridging religious instruction with contemporary academic standards. Furthermore, significant efforts were made in the professional development of educators and in implementing a structured quality management system. These changes represent structural and systemic interventions in line with contemporary models of educational reform.

In the final refreezing phase, the institution sought to stabilize these innovations by institutionalizing quality assurance mechanisms, creating training centers for continued staff development, and adopting a collective-delegative leadership model. These measures ensured that changes were not only implemented but also sustained over time—confirming Schein's view that without cultural reinforcement, change efforts are unlikely to endure (Burnes, 2020).

#### 3.2.2 Business Process Reengineering and Structural Renewal

In parallel with Lewin's model, the transformation at Tebuireng aligns with the principles of Business Process Reengineering (BPR), which advocates for radical, comprehensive redesigns of core institutional processes to achieve substantial improvements in performance, efficiency, and service quality (Hammer & Champy, 1993). As Kereselidze and Kereselidze (2024) emphasize, BPR in education involves more than procedural tweaks—it demands a rethinking of institutional goals, systems, and resource allocations.

Tebuireng's transformation reflects these principles through overhauls in curriculum design, competency-based recruitment of teachers, and the strengthening of institutional governance structures. This is consistent with Renna and Colonnese (2025), who note that successful BPR in

educational institutions requires innovation in processes, roles, and institutional hierarchies. The school's adaptability and capacity for systemic innovation demonstrate what Awais et al. (2023) and Dimple and Tripathi (2024) describe as the organizational agility necessary for sustained transformation in complex educational environments.

This theoretical application underscores a broader contribution: the adaptability of classical organizational change models to religious-based educational contexts. It also offers practical guidance for other pesantren seeking to modernize without losing their foundational identity.

### 3.2.3 Integration of Salaf and National Curricula: A Model of Curriculum Dualism

One of the most notable aspects of Tebuireng's transformation is the integration of traditional Islamic education (salaf) with national formal education (khalaf). Through the establishment of educational units such as Madrasah Muallimin and SMA Trensains, Tebuireng has institutionalized a dual curriculum model that meets both religious and academic demands. This hybrid system addresses the tension between preserving Islamic pedagogical heritage and responding to the demands of modern education (Syaharuddin, Astuti, & Khusniyah, 2024).

Abidin and Sulaiman (2024) emphasize that the resilience of pesantren lies in their ability to synthesize Islamic traditions with systemic reforms, particularly in curriculum design and institutional governance. Tebuireng's longstanding legitimacy enhances its capacity to serve as a model for other institutions navigating similar transformations.

Furthermore, Salim et al. (2025) demonstrate that dual curriculum models are not merely strategic adaptations but vital mechanisms for institutional sustainability. Their field study on madrasas revealed that curriculum integration increases the attractiveness of religious schools among urban and middle-class Muslim families. This view is echoed by Setiawan (2020) and Six (2022), who stress the importance of combining scriptural reasoning with secular literacy to foster "civic integration"—the development of graduates capable of contributing to modern civic life while maintaining religious identity.

Heriyudanta and Hakim (2021) refer to this as the cultivation of multiple literacies, wherein students are equipped to navigate religious, academic, and social spheres simultaneously. In this light, Tebuireng's curriculum innovation not only facilitates educational relevance but also nurtures a generation of Muslims who are spiritually grounded, socially competent, and intellectually agile.

### 3.2.4 Collective-Delegative Leadership and Human Resource Development

A critical element of Tebuireng's transformation is its shift from charismatic to collective-delegative leadership. This participatory model aligns with Yukl's (2010) theory of distributed leadership, which advocates for shared authority, team-based coordination, and decentralized decision-making (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022).

In Tebuireng, leadership is no longer centered solely on the *kiai*, but is distributed across functional units such as the educational institution board, quality assurance division, and training center. This structure fosters collaboration, innovation, and accountability, allowing for dynamic responses to internal and external challenges.

Arifin et al. (2024) assert that collective leadership fosters a professional and adaptive academic environment and minimizes dependency on singular charismatic figures. This finding is supported by Harris, Jones, and Ismail (2022), as well as Printy and Liu (2021), who argue that distributed leadership enhances instructional quality, promotes innovation, and strengthens organizational resilience.

From a sociological perspective, the active involvement of *kiai* families and the Family Assembly in decision-making processes mirrors Putnam's concept of community-based leadership, wherein change is deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts (Abenir, Manzanero, & Bollettino, 2022; Puxley & Chapin, 2021). This dynamic is reinforced by Etzioni's communitarian leadership theory, which emphasizes the need for alignment between institutional goals and community values (Crosweiler & Tschakert, 2021).

In line with these theoretical insights, Bakker et al. (2023) highlight that effective reform in education relies not only on individual leadership but also on institutional dynamics that enable collaboration and innovation. Tebuireng's collective-delegative leadership model thus represents a convergence of traditional Islamic values with modern governance principles.

### 3.2.5 Quality of Graduates and Public Response

Tebuireng's transformation has significantly impacted the quality and versatility of its graduates, who now contribute across a wide range of sectors—including education, government, entrepreneurship, and technology. This shift underscores the success of its holistic educational model, which integrates religious and general education to produce well-rounded individuals.

Rahman et al. (2025) note that integrative Islamic education produces graduates who are more adaptive, employable, and socially responsive. Similarly, Suwendi et al. (2024) assert that institutions that effectively integrate curricula are better positioned to contribute to civil society development, as their graduates possess both religious literacy and civic competence.

Public perception also reflects this success. Increased interest in Tebuireng following its transformation indicates a rise in public trust and institutional legitimacy. Irfana, Usman, and Herachwati (2023b) found that families increasingly seek Islamic schools that offer both spiritual formation and practical life skills—a demand Tebuireng has effectively met.

Mujahid (2021) describes this dual-competency model as enabling students to acquire bridging capital, allowing them to connect religious traditions with the demands of modern life. This resonates with Berglund's perspective in Arroisi et al. (2025), which emphasizes that inclusive religious education—integrated with general knowledge—can transform students into agents of social change.

### 3.2.6 Governance, Quality Management, and Institutional Maturity

Tebuireng's transformation also involved the implementation of quality-based education governance, closely aligned with the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM promotes continuous improvement, stakeholder involvement, and a focus on client satisfaction—in this case, the students and the broader community (BahjatAL-Tamimi, 2021; Sallis, 2012; Purnomo & Maksun, 2020).

Concrete steps taken by Tebuireng include the establishment of quality assurance units, human resource training centers, and periodic monitoring and evaluation systems. These initiatives reflect a commitment to systemic improvement and align with Sallis's (2012) assertion that an innovation-friendly organizational culture is essential for effective TQM implementation.

Kotter's theory of organizational change also finds application here. Successful transformation, as he posits, requires a clear vision, robust strategy, and a support system comprising leadership, communication, and evaluation mechanisms (Fikri et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2024; Sudiro, 2021). Tebuireng's reforms demonstrate these principles through structured planning and consistent institutional development.

Supporting this, Diana and Zaini (2023) report that pesantren adopting TQM principles tend to outperform others in terms of academic excellence and public reputation. Tabroni et al. (2023) also emphasize that quality-focused management enhances teacher motivation, student outcomes, and institutional prestige.

The modernization of Tebuireng thus affirms the applicability of transformational leadership and organizational change theory in religious education. Andrews (2023), Brooks and Ezzani (2022), and Rizki et al. (2023) argue that successful educational reform relies on the synergy of adaptive leadership, structured systems, and community engagement—all of which Tebuireng has demonstrated over time.

The institutional transformation of the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School illustrates that pesantren can successfully modernize without sacrificing their foundational religious values. Through the integration of traditional and national curricula, collective leadership, quality management systems, and responsive governance, Tebuireng has become a model of adaptive and sustainable Islamic education.

This study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that classical models of change—such as Lewin’s and BPR—can be meaningfully applied in religious educational contexts. Practically, it provides a roadmap for other Islamic boarding schools seeking to navigate modernization while retaining identity. In an era marked by rapid globalization and complex educational demands, Tebuireng’s transformation offers a compelling example of how tradition and innovation can coexist in harmony.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the process of educational and institutional transformation at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, with a focus on institutional modernization and the improvement of educational quality. The study's results show that the transformation is triggered by leaders' awareness of the importance of quality education and the community's insistence on producing competent graduates in the fields of religion and academia. Institutional changes include the establishment of new formal education units, the implementation of a national curriculum that is balanced with the *salaf* curriculum, as well as human resource development through rigorous selection and continuous training. The shift in leadership style from charismatic to collective-delegative strengthens systematic and innovative governance, supported by the involvement of caregiver families and Family Assemblies. The impact of transformation can be seen in the improvement of the quality of graduates, increased public interest, and the reputation of Pesantren as an adaptive and quality-oriented educational institution.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of the theory of institutional transformation and participatory leadership in the context of modern pesantren education. In practical terms, these findings confirm the importance of synergy between collective leadership, quality management, and community involvement in supporting the success of modernizing traditional value-based education. Thus, the Tebuireng transformation model can be used as a reference for other Islamic boarding schools that want to improve the quality of education while maintaining their Islamic identity.

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