

Challenges Faced by Pesantren in South Tapanuli in Implementing the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020

Mira Rahmayanti Sormin¹, Adek Kholijah Siregar², Bambang Hermanto Nasution³

¹ Muhammadiyah University of South Tapanuli, Indonesia: mira.rahmayanti@um-tapsel.ac.id

² Muhammadiyah University of South Tapanuli, Indonesia: kholijah@um-tapsel.ac.id

³ Muhammadiyah University of South Tapanuli, Indonesia: drxbgnasty@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Implementation Challenges:
Pesantren;
Madrasah;
Muadalah;
Principals.

Article history:

Received 2025-05-14

Revised 2025-10-12

Accepted 2025-11-17

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the challenges faced by madrasah principals in implementing the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) Number 31 of 2020 concerning the Administration of Islamic Boarding School Education in South Tapanuli Regency. The study employed a qualitative, descriptive design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving madrasah principals in Islamic boarding schools. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that the implementation of PMA Number 31 of 2020 has not been fully optimized because the pesantren and madrasah systems remain integrated. Madrasah principals face administrative, socio-cultural, and resource-related challenges. Administrative challenges include heavy workloads and the transformation of the curriculum from the salaf system to Formal Diniyah Education (PDF) or muadalah. Socio-cultural challenges arise from resistance among senior teachers toward a more formal and structured educational system. Meanwhile, resource limitations are reflected in inadequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as in educators' limited qualifications according to PMA standards. Strategies to address these challenges include administrative digitalization, teacher training, and participatory approaches involving all pesantren stakeholders. The implementation of this PMA requires synergy among madrasah principals, pesantren institutions, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and local governments to improve the quality of pesantren education while preserving its traditions.

This is an open-access article under the CC BY SA license.



Corresponding Author:

Mira Rahmayanti Sormin

INTRODUCTION

The history of pesantren and madrasah in Indonesia has deep roots and is closely intertwined with the development of Islamic education in the archipelago (Arif et al., 2025; Bruinessen, 1995; Dhofier, 2011). With the emergence of Islamic reform ideas in Indonesia, Islamic educational institutions developed in the form of pesantren, which later evolved into madrasah. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), as traditional Islamic educational institutions, emerged and developed in Indonesia through a long historical process (Akmansyah et al., 2025; Baihaqi et al., 2023; Fauzi et al., 2025a; R & Thohir, 2024; Sintasari et al., 2026). Their institutionalization began when Islamic preachers and religious scholars spread Islam during the early period of Islam in Indonesia through mosques, surau, and langgar (Hamdanah et al., 2025; Kardi et al., 2023; Ma`arif et al., 2025; Miftahuddin et al., 2024). Madrasah, as one of the formal Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, originated from the pesantren tradition and has continued to develop rapidly until today. The role of pesantren and madrasah cannot be overlooked, as both have contributed significantly to the development of morally and culturally grounded Indonesian society, particularly within the context of Islamic education (Astra et al., 2024; Cahyono et al., 2025; Fatah et al., 2025).

Zamakhshari Dhofier categorizes pesantren into two major types: (1) salaf pesantren, which maintain the teaching of classical Islamic texts as the core of education while incorporating the madrasah system to facilitate traditional sorogan and bandongan learning methods without introducing general subjects; and (2) khalaf pesantren, which incorporate general subjects into the madrasah system they develop or establish general schools within the pesantren environment (Mustofa, 2020). In general, pesantren can be classified into two groups: traditional pesantren, which maintain traditional teaching systems centered on classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), and modern pesantren, which fully integrate classical classroom systems and formal schooling into the pesantren environment (Annisa & Jumari, 2024; Arif et al., 2025).

Within Indonesia's Islamic education system, madrasah and pesantren often maintain a close relationship. In practice, several pesantren simultaneously operate as madrasah institutions. Based on the researcher's preliminary observations in South Tapanuli, North Sumatra, several pesantren still combine pesantren and madrasah systems, even though PMA No. 31 of 2020 has formally separated the two educational systems. Pesantren and madrasah are required to operate independently according to the regulation. Failure to comply with PMA No. 31 of 2020 may result in issues such as duplicate institutional data.

This study focuses on the challenges faced by madrasah principals in implementing PMA No. 31 of 2020, particularly regarding how the government regulates pesantren education and the position of madrasah within pesantren institutions. PMA No. 31 was issued by the Minister of Religious Affairs on November 30, 2020. However, based on preliminary observations, not all pesantren in South Tapanuli have adjusted their systems in accordance with the regulation. The South Tapanuli Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly the Islamic Boarding School Division (Kasi Pontren), has conducted socialization programs for madrasah principals throughout South Tapanuli, yet the results have not been optimal. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in examining the challenges and obstacles experienced by madrasah principals in implementing PMA No. 31 of 2020.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is an approach that aims to understand social phenomena in depth based on participants' perspectives and natural conditions in the field. Qualitative research is descriptive and analytical in nature. The descriptive aspect of qualitative research refers to the researcher's effort to describe in detail the events, phenomena, and social situations being investigated, while the analytical aspect refers to interpreting, understanding, and comparing research findings to obtain deeper meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate for examining the challenges faced by madrasah principals in implementing the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) Number 31 of 2020 concerning the Administration of Islamic Boarding School Education.

In this study, the data were presented descriptively in the form of words, expressions, and narratives related to the research object. The study focused on administrative, socio-cultural, and resource-related challenges experienced by madrasah principals in Islamic boarding schools in South Tapanuli Regency in implementing PMA Number 31 of 2020. The primary data sources were madrasah principals who were directly involved in the implementation of the policy. Informants were selected purposively based on their relevance and experience related to the research focus. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation (Lubis, 2019). Observation was used to obtain a direct understanding of policy implementation in the field. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and obstacles faced by madrasah principals. Documentation was used to support the data through archives, reports, and other relevant documents related to the implementation of PMA Number 31 of 2020 (Sari, 2025).

Data analysis is a systematic process of organizing, classifying, and interpreting data to generate meaningful information and draw conclusions. In qualitative research, data analysis is conducted continuously throughout the research process. This study applied the data analysis model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which consists of three stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying data relevant to the research objectives. Data display was conducted in narrative form to facilitate understanding and interpretation. Finally, conclusion drawing was carried out to identify meanings, patterns, and relationships among the data in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by madrasah principals in implementing PMA Number 31 of 2020 (Bachri et al., 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Position of Pesantren and Madrasah in the Islamic Education System

Pesantren and madrasah are two Islamic educational institutions with a very close historical relationship in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. The existence of pesantren is inseparable from the process of Islamic propagation carried out by scholars through mosques, surau, and langgar. Over time, pesantren developed into traditional Islamic educational institutions with distinctive learning systems such as sorogan, bandongan, tahfiz, and muazakarah or bahtsul masa'il (Faridah, 2019). In its development, pesantren has not only functioned as a center for religious education but also as an institution for moral and social development within society.

According to Zamakhsyari Dhofier, pesantren are categorized into salaf and khalaf pesantren. Salaf pesantren maintain the teaching of classical Islamic texts as the core curriculum without extensively incorporating general subjects, while khalaf pesantren integrate general education into the pesantren learning system (Dhofier, 2011). This distinction indicates that pesantren have undergone a transformation process in response to societal needs and developments in the national education system (Syukron, 2020).

Madrasah later emerged as an evolution of the pesantren education system toward a more modern educational framework. Madrasah began to develop in Indonesia in the early twentieth century as a response to Islamic reform movements and societal demands for a more structured educational system. The first madrasah in Indonesia was established by Syekh Abdullah Ahmad in Padang in 1909 under the name Adabiah School. The emergence of madrasah marked an important milestone in the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia (Azizah & Mardiana, 2024; Enes et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025b).

The legitimacy of madrasah increased after the government issued the Joint Decree of Three Ministers in 1975, which declared that madrasah diplomas were equivalent to those of general schools, enabling madrasah graduates to continue their studies in general schools and allowing student transfers between institutions of the same level. This policy reinforced the position of madrasah as part of the national education system.

Subsequently, the enactment of Law Number 2 of 1989 concerning the National Education System further strengthened the existence of madrasah as Islamic educational institutions. However, these developments also created new challenges regarding how madrasah could maintain their Islamic identity amid the demands of educational modernization (A. Aziz et al., 2025).

Within the context of South Tapanuli, the relationship between pesantren and madrasah remains very strong. Based on field observations, many Islamic boarding schools still combine pesantren and madrasah educational systems within a single institution. This phenomenon is influenced by the historical development of pesantren in South Tapanuli, which is closely connected to Musthafawiyah Purba Baru Islamic Boarding School as the oldest pesantren in North Sumatra.

Research conducted by Musa et al. (2022) explains that the Musthafawiyah Purba Baru pesantren network has had a significant influence on the development of pesantren in the South Tapanuli region (Tabagsel), including South Tapanuli Regency, Mandailing Natal, North Padang Lawas, Padang Lawas, and Padangsidempuan City. At least 40 pesantren have teacher-student scholarly relationships with Musthafawiyah Purba Baru, which was established by Syekh Musthafa Husein in 1912. This finding indicates that the tradition of pesantren education in South Tapanuli is strongly influenced by the salaf pesantren educational system (Arifin et al., 2023).

The influence of the salaf educational system has become one of the factors causing several pesantren in South Tapanuli to maintain traditional educational models and not fully adapt to new government policies, particularly PMA No. 31 of 2020.

The Implementation of PMA No. 31 of 2020 in Pesantren Education

The Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) Number 31 of 2020 concerning the Administration of Pesantren Education is a government policy aimed at improving the quality of pesantren education without eliminating its distinctive characteristics. This policy was established based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the

National Education System, Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Pesantren, and Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious and Religious-Based Education.

PMA No. 31 of 2020 states that pesantren are community-based educational institutions that function to instill faith, piety, noble character, and the values of Islam rahmatan lil'alam. The implementation of this policy includes various aspects such as institutional legality, curriculum, educators, infrastructure, supervision, development, and educational digitalization (Kemenag RI, 2020).

One important change introduced by PMA No. 31 of 2020 is the separation of formal and non-formal educational pathways within the pesantren system. Formal education is implemented through Formal Diniyah Education (PDF), Muadalah Education Units, and Ma'had Aly, while non-formal education is implemented through the study of classical Islamic texts and other forms of education integrated with general education (Rodliyana, 2022).

This policy provides pesantren with options to determine the educational model that best suits their characteristics and capacities. Pesantren that wish to obtain formal recognition for their diplomas must meet the standards of Formal Diniyah Education (PDF), whereas pesantren that wish to preserve salaf traditions may continue to use the Islamic Boarding School Equality Education model (PKPPS).

Based on field findings, Islamic boarding schools in South Tapanuli currently consist of several educational categories, namely two pesantren operating as Muadalah Education Units (SPM), twelve pesantren operating as Islamic Boarding School Equality Education (PKPPS), and twenty-one integrated pesantren. These data indicate that the majority of pesantren in South Tapanuli are still in a transitional phase toward the full implementation of PMA No. 31 of 2020.

Interviews with officials from the Islamic Boarding School Division of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in South Tapanuli revealed that the government has provided a transition period for policy implementation until 2027. However, there are still pesantren that have not made adjustments in accordance with PMA No. 31 of 2020.

This condition indicates that the implementation of pesantren education policies is not only related to regulatory aspects but also to institutional readiness, human resources, organizational culture, and government support.

Challenges Faced by Madrasah Principals in Implementing PMA No. 31 of 2020

Madrasah principals play a crucial role in implementing pesantren education policies. According to Imam Machali and Ara Hidayat, madrasah principals are educational leaders responsible for administrative management and improving the quality of human resources within the madrasah (Abdi Setiawan et al., 2021). Madrasah principals also function as academic leaders who must be capable of developing integrative curricula and ensuring that learning processes comply with the standards of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Mulyasa, 2012).

In implementing PMA No. 31 of 2020, madrasah principals in South Tapanuli face several complex challenges. Based on observations and interviews, these challenges can be categorized into three main aspects: administrative challenges, socio-cultural challenges, and limited resources.

Administrative Challenges

Administrative challenges are one of the main issues faced by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in South Tapanuli in implementing the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) Number 31 of 2020 concerning the Administration of Islamic Boarding School Education. This policy was issued as an effort by the government to improve the quality of pesantren education, strengthen institutional governance, and provide broader recognition of the pesantren education system in Indonesia. However, in its implementation, many pesantren face various administrative obstacles because they must adapt to a more formal, structured, and standardized educational management system (Huda et al., 2026).

Before the enactment of PMA Number 31 of 2020, most pesantren in South Tapanuli still applied traditional management patterns that focused on the study of classical Islamic texts, character building, and leadership based on the charisma of the kiai. Administrative systems in many pesantren were still managed in a simple manner and were not systematically documented. Under these conditions, the implementation of PMA Number 31 of 2020 requires pesantren to make various administrative adjustments that cannot easily be carried out in a short period of time (Muhksin, 2023).

One of the most prominent administrative challenges is the increasing institutional administrative workload. Pesantren are required to prepare various official documents, including student data, teacher data, organizational structures, activity reports, curriculum documents, and financial reports. In addition, pesantren are also required to complete institutional legality documents in order to obtain official recognition from the government. This condition becomes a challenge because many pesantren do not yet have adequate administrative staff. As a result, administrative responsibilities are often assigned to madrasah principals or teachers who should primarily focus on teaching activities. Consequently, administrative processes become less effective and frequently experience delays.

Another administrative challenge relates to curriculum transformation and the education system. PMA Number 31 of 2020 provides opportunities for pesantren to implement Formal Diniyah Education (PDF) or the muadalah system, which is officially recognized as equivalent to formal education. However, this transformation requires pesantren to develop more complex academic administration systems. Pesantren must prepare lesson plans, academic calendars, class schedules, evaluation systems, and structured student learning reports. For pesantren that previously applied the traditional salaf system, this change requires major adjustments because a formal academic administrative culture has not yet been fully implemented (Nurmadiansyah, 2016).

In addition, institutional data management has also become a serious administrative challenge. Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the government requires pesantren to regularly update institutional data through digital systems such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS) (Studi et al., 2020). This system is intended to facilitate the management of institutional, student, teacher, and educational data at the national level. However, in practice, many pesantren in South Tapanuli experience difficulties in operating the digital system. Limited technological skills, insufficient training in digital administration, and inadequate internet access are major obstacles. As a result, data entry processes are often problematic and affect the validity and completeness of pesantren data (Maulana & Ibrahim, 2025).

Limited human resources also constitute an important factor in administrative challenges. Most pesantren still have a limited number of administrative personnel, and some even lack dedicated administrative staff. This condition forces madrasah principals and teachers to perform dual roles, namely teaching and managing institutional administration simultaneously. The heavy workload not only affects the effectiveness of administrative management but also impacts the quality of the learning process. In addition, some educators in pesantren do not yet fully understand formal educational administration procedures in accordance with PMA Number 31 of 2020 (Nasikhin, 2022).

Administrative challenges are also reflected in the accreditation process and the fulfillment of educational quality standards. PMA Number 31 of 2020 emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of pesantren institutions through the fulfillment of standards related to curriculum, educators, facilities, infrastructure, and administrative governance. However, many pesantren encounter difficulties in meeting these requirements due to limited facilities and resources. The preparation of accreditation documents requires strong administrative capabilities, while not all pesantren possess adequate supporting resources. Consequently, some pesantren have not been able to participate optimally in the accreditation process (Ahyar, 2020; Rabbani et al., 2024; Tharaba et al., 2025).

In addition to these challenges, organizational cultural change also forms part of the administrative challenges. Pesantren, which have long emphasized family-oriented relationships and traditional leadership, are now required to adapt to a more formal and bureaucratic administrative system. This transformation sometimes creates resistance, particularly among senior teachers or pesantren administrators who believe that formal administrative systems may reduce the traditional values of pesantren. Therefore, madrasah principals are required to possess strong managerial and communication skills in order to balance the need for administrative modernization while preserving the distinctive identity of pesantren.

To address these administrative challenges, pesantren in South Tapanuli have begun implementing several adjustment strategies. One strategy involves gradually digitalizing administrative systems through training programs in information technology for educators and administrative staff. In addition, several pesantren have established special administrative teams to assist in managing institutional data and documents. Support and guidance from the Ministry of Religious Affairs also play an important role in helping pesantren understand administrative procedures and the implementation of PMA Number 31 of 2020.

Therefore, administrative challenges in implementing PMA Number 31 of 2020 are not only related to technical document management issues but also to the readiness of pesantren institutions to adapt to a more modern and standardized educational system. Despite facing various obstacles, pesantren in South Tapanuli continue striving to preserve their Islamic identity and traditions while improving educational governance in order to meet the demands of contemporary educational development and government policies.

Socio-Cultural Challenges

Socio-cultural challenges constitute one of the significant obstacles faced by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in South Tapanuli in implementing the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) Number 31 of 2020 concerning the Administration of Islamic Boarding School Education. These challenges are closely related to traditional values,

mindsets, organizational culture, and social relationships that have long developed within pesantren communities. As traditional Islamic educational institutions, pesantren function not only as centers for religious learning but also as institutions for moral development, cultural preservation, and social life within society. Therefore, any policy change that introduces a more formal educational system often creates socio-cultural dynamics within the pesantren environment (Isbah, 2020).

One of the most prominent socio-cultural challenges is resistance to changes in the educational system. Some pesantren leaders, senior teachers, and surrounding communities continue to maintain traditional educational patterns that have been passed down through generations. The salaf system, which emphasizes the study of classical Islamic texts through methods such as sorogan and bandongan, is regarded as the core identity of pesantren that must be preserved. When PMA Number 31 of 2020 encourages pesantren to adopt a more formal and standardized educational system, concerns emerge that such modernization may weaken the traditional values of pesantren (Zarkasyi, 2020).

In addition, changes in organizational culture also represent a major socio-cultural challenge. Before the implementation of this policy, pesantren management was generally simple and centered on the authority of the kiai as the primary leader. However, PMA Number 31 of 2020 requires a more structured management system, clearer division of responsibilities, and more formal administrative procedures. These changes are not always easily accepted because some pesantren administrators believe that formal bureaucratic systems may reduce the sense of kinship and emotional closeness that have long characterized pesantren life (Cahyani et al., 2026; Milati, 2024; Wulandari et al., 2025).

Socio-cultural challenges are also reflected in the relationship between older and younger generations within pesantren. Younger educators, especially those who are more familiar with technology and modern education, tend to be more open to educational reform and digitalization. In contrast, some senior teachers remain more comfortable with traditional methods and are less accustomed to using technology in administration and teaching. These differences in perspective sometimes create communication gaps and hinder the implementation of the policy.

Furthermore, surrounding communities also play an important role in the implementation of PMA Number 31 of 2020. In South Tapanuli, pesantren maintain close relationships with local communities because they are regarded as centers of Islamic education and moral development. Some community members still believe that pesantren should preserve their traditional systems without significant government intervention. Consequently, when pesantren begin implementing formal educational systems, concerns arise that they may lose their Islamic identity and traditional simplicity.

Local cultural values also form part of the socio-cultural challenges. Pesantren in South Tapanuli operate within communities that strongly uphold local customs and traditions. In certain situations, government educational policies must be adapted to local cultural contexts in order to gain acceptance among pesantren communities. Without careful cultural adaptation, these policies may generate resistance or social disharmony within the pesantren environment.

Another challenge relates to changes in the social interaction patterns between kiai and students. The introduction of administrative demands, academic evaluations, and formal curricula has caused some pesantren to adopt more structured and scheduled learning systems. As a result, the traditionally intensive spiritual and emotional interactions between

kiai and students may gradually decrease. This situation raises concerns that the distinctive spiritual relationships and emotional bonds within pesantren may weaken over time.

To address these socio-cultural challenges, pesantren in South Tapanuli have attempted to apply more adaptive and participatory approaches. Madrasah principals and pesantren administrators seek to explain that the implementation of PMA Number 31 of 2020 is not intended to eliminate pesantren traditions but rather to improve educational quality and institutional management. Dialogue among kiai, senior teachers, younger educators, and local communities has become an important strategy for building mutual understanding regarding the importance of adapting to contemporary developments while preserving pesantren values and traditions (Asifudin, 2016; M. Aziz et al., 2025; Masuwd et al., 2025).

Therefore, socio-cultural challenges in implementing PMA Number 31 of 2020 are not merely related to resistance to change, but also involve efforts to maintain a balance between educational modernization and the preservation of pesantren traditions. Pesantren in South Tapanuli are required to adapt to national educational policies while continuing to preserve the cultural identity and Islamic values that constitute the essential characteristics of pesantren institutions.

Limited Resources

Limited resources constitute another challenge faced by madrasah principals in implementing PMA No. 31 of 2020. Many pesantren in South Tapanuli, especially those located in rural areas, still experience limitations in infrastructure and human resources.

PMA No. 31 of 2020 stipulates that pesantren must provide adequate facilities such as classrooms, dormitories, libraries, places of worship, health facilities, and sanitation facilities. However, in reality, not all pesantren are able to meet these standards.

Furthermore, the transition toward Formal Diniyah Education requires educators with specific qualifications. Teachers are required to possess at least a bachelor's degree in Islamic Religious Education or be pesantren graduates with verified religious competencies. Teachers of classical Islamic texts are also required to possess certification or recognized chains of scholarly transmission (sanad).

This condition presents a significant challenge for madrasah principals, particularly in providing teachers who meet government standards. Therefore, various training and mentoring programs are needed to help educators adapt to the formal education system.

Strategies and Solutions for the Implementation of PMA No. 31 of 2020

Based on the findings of this study, several strategies can be implemented to address the challenges of implementing PMA No. 31 of 2020 in Islamic boarding schools in South Tapanuli.

First, the digitalization of pesantren administrative systems needs to be implemented to reduce the administrative burden on madrasah principals. The use of digital technology can assist in managing educational data, reporting systems, and madrasah administration more effectively and efficiently.

Second, continuous training and mentoring programs for teachers and madrasah principals are necessary. These programs are important to improve educators' understanding of the Formal Diniyah Education system, administrative management, and modern learning methods without abandoning pesantren traditions.

Third, participatory and persuasive approaches should be applied to reduce resistance from senior teachers toward change. Madrasah principals need to involve all

pesantren stakeholders in the decision-making process and provide appreciation for the contributions of senior teachers in preserving pesantren traditions.

Fourth, support from local governments and the Ministry of Religious Affairs is essential in the form of mentoring, infrastructure assistance, and strengthening pesantren education policies. Synergy between the government and pesantren institutions is an important factor in the successful implementation of PMA No. 31 of 2020.

Therefore, the implementation of PMA No. 31 of 2020 requires not only regulatory readiness but also institutional readiness, qualified human resources, and a supportive organizational culture within pesantren. Madrasah principals, as educational leaders, play a strategic role in directing this transformation process gradually without eliminating the identity and distinctive characteristics of pesantren.

Table 1. Challenges and Solutions

Challenges	Solutions	Strategies
Administrative burden	System digitalization	Training and mentoring
Resistance from senior teachers	Soft approach	Participatory approach, gradual training, and appreciation for their roles
Human resources	Training	Training and mentoring

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) Number 31 of 2020 concerning the Administration of Pesantren Education in Islamic boarding schools in South Tapanuli has not yet been fully optimized. This condition is influenced by the characteristics of pesantren in South Tapanuli, which still strongly maintain salaf educational traditions and the integrated system between pesantren and madrasah. PMA No. 31 of 2020 has introduced changes in pesantren educational management through the separation of formal and non-formal educational pathways, strengthening institutional legality, curriculum adjustments, improving educator competencies, and fulfilling infrastructure standards.

The findings of this study indicate that madrasah principals face three major challenges in implementing the policy: administrative challenges, socio-cultural challenges, and limited resources. Administrative challenges are related to the heavy administrative workload and the curriculum transformation process from the salaf system to Formal Diniyah Education or the muadalah system. Socio-cultural challenges are reflected in the resistance of senior teachers toward a more formal and structured educational system (Ikhwan et al., 2025). Meanwhile, resource limitations include inadequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as the insufficient qualifications of educators according to the standards of PMA No. 31 of 2020.

To address these challenges, several strategies are required, including the digitalization of administration, training and mentoring for educators, participatory approaches involving pesantren stakeholders, and continuous support from the government and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Therefore, the successful implementation of PMA No. 31 of 2020 requires synergy among madrasah principals, pesantren institutions, the

government, and society in order to improve the quality of pesantren education without eliminating the unique traditions of pesantren.

REFERENCES

- Ahyar, M. K. (2020). Tantangan Pondok Pesantren Menuju Lembaga Pendidikan Islam yang Akuntabel. *Journal of Islamic Finance and Accounting*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.22515/jifa.v3i1.2301>
- Akmansyah, M., Ramadhani, A., & Prawoto, A. (2025). Integrating Spiritual and Pedagogical Strategies in Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Education: A Comparative Study of Two Pesantren in Metro City, Lampung. *Fikroh: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam*, 18(1), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.37812/fikroh.v18i1.1767>
- Annisa, E. V. N., & Jumari, J. (2024). Efektivitas Pembelajaran Kitab Taisirul Kholaq Dalam Meningkatkan Akhlak Siswa. *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman*, 13(2), 271–284. <https://doi.org/10.54437/urwatulwutsqo.v13i2.1697>
- Arif, M., Nasir, R., & Ma'arif, M. A. (2025). The Kitab Kuning Learning Model in the Development of Student Expertise in Pesantren-Based Higher Education. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8(1), 52–74. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i1.8>
- Arifin, S., Utama, S., Aryani, S. A., Prayitno, H. J., & Waston, W. (2023). Improving The Professional Teacher Competence Through Clinical Supervision Based on Multicultural Values in Pesantren. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(3), 386–402. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v6i3.4037>
- Asifudin, A. J. (2016). Manajemen Pendidikan untuk Pondok Pesantren. *Manageria: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 1(November), 355–366. <https://doi.org/10.14421/manageria.2016.12-10>
- Astra, N. P. B., Hafid, E., & Suban, A. (2024). Scout Extracurricular Curriculum Management in Improving Student Discipline in Madrasah. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 5(2), 161–172. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i2.810>
- Aziz, A., Maryati, S., Azizah, F. N., Malintang, J., & Fahmi, F. (2025). Ventriloquism As A Medium For Strengthening Islamic Values And Character Education. *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 8(3), 740–751. <https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v8i3.1064>
- Aziz, M., Napitupulu, D. S., & Parapat, F. A. (2025). The Influence of Teacher Communication Patterns in Aqidah Akhlak Education on Students' Academic Achievement. *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 8(1), 71–86. <https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v8i1.840>
- Azizah, I., & Mardiana, D. (2024). Learning Transformation: Increasing Student Achievement through Discovery Learning. *Dirasah International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2(2), 155–166. <https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v2i2.42>
- Bachri, B. S., Pendidikan, T., & Pendidikan, F. I. (2010). MEYAKINKAN VALIDITAS DATA MELALUI TRIANGULASI PADA PENELITIAN KUALITATIF. *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 10(1).
- Baihaqi, M. R., Amaliyah, H., Awaliyah, Y. S., Khoerunnisa, S. P., & Laksono, B. A. (2023). Analisis Swot Kebijakan Pemerintah Dalam Upaya Mencegah Kekerasan Seksual Di Lingkungan Pesantren. *Attaqwa: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 19(2), 181–191. <https://doi.org/10.54069/attaqwa.v19i2.591>
- Bruinessen, M. van. (1995). *Kitab kuning, pesantren, dan tarekat: Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia*. Mizan.
- Cahyani, W. F., Albab, H. A. U., & Hidayati, E. W. (2026). Beyond Discipline: Integrating Religious and Counseling Approaches to Combat Student Moral Decadence.

- Adiluhung: Journal of Islamic Values and Civilization*, 2(1), 16–29.
<https://doi.org/10.59373/vrmysyt66>
- Cahyono, I. M. S. R., Sedana, I. M., & Suwindia, I. G. (2025). Determinasi Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah, Iklim Kerja Sekolah, Semangat Kerja Guru Terhadap Kinerja Guru Sekolah Dasar. *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 8(2), 421–435. <https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v8i2.918>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Dhofier, Z. (2011). *Tradisi pesantren: Studi pandangan hidup kyai dan visinya mengenai masa depan Indonesia*. LP3ES.
- Enes, U. O. R., Asha, L., & Wanto, D. (2024). Optimization of Facilities and Infrastructure Management in Improving the Quality of Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. *Kharisma: Jurnal Administrasi Dan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 3(2), 149–160. <https://doi.org/10.59373/kharisma.v3i2.54>
- Fatah, M., Khoiruddin, M. A., & Fakhruddin, F. M. (2025). Pesantren-Based Character Education: The Dzuriyah Strategy in Shaping the Character of Santri Ndalem. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.59373/ijoss.v2i2.191>
- Fauzi, A., Dakir, D., Qodir, A., Fatchurahman, M., & Minarti, S. (2025a). Influence of Satlogi Santri Values on Sufistic Leadership: Enhancing Service Quality and Productivity in Pesantren. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(4), 681–694. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.1950>
- Fauzi, A., Dakir, D., Qodir, A., Fatchurahman, M., & Minarti, S. (2025b). Influence of Satlogi Santri Values on Sufistic Leadership: Enhancing Service Quality and Productivity in Pesantren. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(4), 681–694. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.1950>
- Hamdanah, H., Baharun, H., Najiburrohman, N., Thohir, P. F. D. M., & Sanjani, M. A. F. (2025). The Role of Kiai Leadership and Service Quality in Shaping the Reputation of Pesantren. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(4), 695–709. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.1785>
- Huda, N. J., Hidayat, H. H., Tinggi, S., Islam, A., Tinggi, S., Islam, A., Tinggi, S., & Islam, A. (2026). SISTEM INFORMASI MANAJEMEN BERBASIS EDUTRENPADA ADMINISTRASI KESANTRIAN PESANTREN. *MUDIR(Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan)*, 8(1).
- Ikhwan, A., Zukhrufin, F. K., Subhan, M., & Sormin, D. (2025). The Implementation of Research-Based Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education Study Programs in Indonesia. *LEGALITY: JURNAL ILMIAH HUKUM*, 33(2), 445–469. <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v33i2.40611>
- Isbah, M. F. (2020). In the changing Indonesian context: History and current developments. *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies (QIJIS)*, 8(1), 65–106. <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.5629>
- Kardi, K., Basri, H., Suhartini, A., & Meliani, F. (2023). Challenges of Online Boarding Schools In The Digital Era. *At-Tadzkir: Islamic Education Journal*, 2(1), 37–51. <https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkir.v2i1.11>
- Ma`arif, M. A., Rokhman, M., Fatikh, M. A., Kartiko, A., Ahmadi, A., & Hasan, M. S. (2025). Kiai's Leadership Strategies in Strengthening Religious Moderation in Islamic Boarding Schools. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 13(1), 23–48. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i1.1168>

- Masuwd, M. A., Wasil, A., & Hidayatulloh, M. (2025). Islamic Boarding School Media as a Bridge of Communication for Multicultural Communities. *Communicator: Journal of Communication*, 2(1), 47–67. <https://doi.org/10.59373/comm.v2i1.97>
- Maulana, U. I. N., & Ibrahim, M. (2025). *TARLIM Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* Vol. 8No.1Maret 2025P-ISSN: 2615-7225E-ISSN: 2621-847X83JurnalProgram Studi Pendidikan Agama IslamPemanfaatan Digitalisasi Pesantren Melalui Sistem Administrasi dan Pelaporan Pendidikan Berbasis Aplikasi Santri App. 8(1), 83–98. <https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v8i1.2967>
- Miftahuddin, Aman, & Yuliantri, R. D. A. (2024). Islamic character education model: An in-depth analysis for Islamic boarding school. *Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 43(2), 370–380. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v43i2.66516>
- Milati, A. A. (2024). Urgensi Manajemen Pendidikan Pesantren dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Santri di Tengah Persaingan Global. *MANAGIERE: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 3(2), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.35719/managiere.v3i2.2346>
- Muhksin, A. (2023). Manajemen Administrasi dan Keuangan: Memanajemen Lembaga Madrasah dan Pesantren. *AL-KAINAH JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES*, 2(2), 119–130. <https://doi.org/10.69698/jis.v2i2.479>
- Mustofa, J. (2020). QUO VADIS PONDOK PESANTRENDI ERAUNDANG-UNDANGPESANTREN. *IJOIS: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(01), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.59525/ijois.v1i01.1>
- Nasikhin, Moch. M. (2022). STRATEGI PENGEMBANGANLEMBAGA PENDIDIKAN PESANTRENBERBASIS MANAJEMEN STRATEGIK MODERN. *Eduvis: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 7(1), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.47453/eduvis.v7i1.4223>
- Nurmadiansyah, M. T. (2016). MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN PESANTREN: SUATU UPAYA MEMAJUKAN TRADISI. *Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah (JMD)*, 2(1), 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jmd.2016.%25x>
- R, A. A. M., & Thohir, M. (2024). Cognitive Disputation Through Sholawat Burdah To Overcome Stress of a Santri In Pesantren. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(2), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.59373/ijoss.v1i2.62>
- Rabbani, I., Wahidmurni, & Zuhriyah, I. A. (2024). The Impact of Service Quality and Institutional Image on Students' Behavioral Intentions in Accredited Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior Secondary School) in Malang, Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 13(1), 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2024.131.23-33>
- Sari, A. S. (2025). Teknik Pengumpulan Data dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Observasi, Wawancara, dan Triangulasi. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education*, 5(2018), 539–545. <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v5i4.3011>
- Sintasari, B., Hasan, M. S., Maghfiroh, A., & Mastor, H. binti. (2026). Implementation of the Khidmah Program in Strengthening the Social Character of Islamic Boarding School Students. *Attaqwa: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 22(1), 44–55. <https://doi.org/10.54069/attaqwa.v22i1.1107>
- Studi, P., Ilmu, M., Negara, A., & Garut, U. (2020). Terhadap Kinerja Pengelolaan Emis PesantrenDalam Mewujudkan Efektivitas Pencapaian Program Indonesia Pintar Pesantren(Studi Pada Pesantren –Pesantren DibawahBinaan Kantor Kementerian AgamaKabupaten Garut). *Jurnal Publik*, 14(2), 75–85. <https://doi.org/10.52434/jp.v14i2.31>
- Syukron, A. (2020). Pendidikan Diniyah Formal: A Formal Curriculum for Pesantren in Indonesia. *Innovative Journal of Curriculum and Educational Technology*, 9(322), 63–71. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijcet.v9i2.36645>
- Tharaba, M. F., Asrori, M., Mubaroq, Z., Wahyudin, A., & Tazkiyah, I. (2025). Superior Accreditation Management Strategy Plan with International Reputation.

- Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 155–173.
<https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i1.1612>
- Wulandari, A., Nadlir, N., Munir, N., & Seenaa, I. (2025). Challenging the Epistemic Divide: Islamization of Reason in the Twin Towers Model of Islamic Education. *Adiluhung: Journal of Islamic Values and Civilization*, 1(2), 80–90. <https://doi.org/10.59373/cfz2sr39>
- Zarkasyi, H. F. (2020). IMAM ZARKASYI'S MODERNIZATION OF PESANTREN IN INDONESIA(A Case Study of Darussalam Gontor). *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies (QIJIS)*, 8(1), 161–200. <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v33i2.40611>
- Kemdikbud. (2018). Permendikbud No 15 Tahun 2018 tentang Beban Kerja Guru, Kepala Sekolah, dan Pengawas Sekolah. Dalam kemdikbud (Vol. 53, Nomor 9).
- Kemenag RI. (2020). Peraturan menteri Agama No.31 Tahun 2020 tentang Pendidikan Pesantren. Dalam Jdih Bpk Ri (Vol. 2507, Nomor February).
- Lubis, J. N. (2019). Perbandingan Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Materi Pokok Sistem Persamaan Linear Dua Variabel Dengan Menggunakan Model Pembelajaran Kooperatif Tipe Student Teams Achievement Division (Stad) Dan Model Pembelajaran Langsung Di Kelas X Sma Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan. *Al-Muaddib : Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial & Keislaman*, 4(1), 67. <https://doi.org/10.31604/muaddib.v1i1.793>
- Mulyasa, H. E. (2012). Manajemen dan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah / H. E. Mulyasa. Researchgate Net, June.
- Musa, F., Asari, H., & Arsyad, J. (2022). Syekh Musthafa Husein Al-Mandily: Pionir Tradisi Pesantren di Sumatera Utara. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 11(3), 1–17.
- Rodliyana, F. F. (2022). Implementasi Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 31 Tahun 2020 Tentang Pendidikan Pesantren. *JISS: Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains*, 3(11).
- Rohmah, U. S., Hamid, N., & Su'aedi, I. F. (2023). Sejarah dan Dinamika Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Nusantara: Surau, Meunasah, Pesantren, dan Madrasah. *Social Science Academic*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.37680/ssa.v1i2.4039>
- Setiawan, Abdi., Noor,Tajudin. & Sayan Suryana. (2021). Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Al-Idarah*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.54892/jmpialidarah.v6i1.106>
- Susilo, A. A., & Wulansari, R. (2020). Sejarah Pesantren Sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia. *Tamaddun: Jurnal Kebudayaan dan Sastra Islam*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.19109/tamaddun.v20i2.6676>
- Waruwu, M. (2023). Pendekatan Penelitian Pendidikan: Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Method). *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 7(1), 2896–2910. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam>