

Hybridization of Islamic Education Management in the Integration of a Collaborative-Based Pesantren Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the practice of hybridization in Islamic education management through the integration of a collaborative-based curriculum in pesantren, as well as its implications for educational governance, the roles of key actors, and the development of students' competencies. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design conducted at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Asy-Syafi'iyah Darul Qur'an. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the hybridization of educational management contributes to the emergence of participatory collaborative governance, the development of an adaptive *living curriculum*, and the repositioning of teachers as knowledge brokers within a collaborative learning network. In addition, students demonstrate enhanced competencies that integrate religious understanding, collaborative skills, and contextual awareness. The study also identifies a dynamic interplay between traditional authority and open collaboration, which is continuously negotiated through adaptive processes. This research contributes to the development of hybridization as an integrative framework in Islamic education management that bridges tradition and innovation in a sustainable manner.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of hybridization in Islamic educational management within pesantren reflects a significant paradigm shift from traditional management patterns toward more adaptive, integrative, and collaborative models (Ahyani et al., 2024; Hasanah & Husna, 2025; Izzah & Magfiroh, 2025; Ningsih et al., 2025). This transformation extends beyond administrative aspects to encompass the values, culture, and overall educational orientation of the pesantren. This issue is significant for the development of scientific knowledge and practical applications because Islamic boarding schools are required to respond to the complexity of contemporary challenges (Arif et al., 2024; Haidar et al., 2022; Istiyani et al., 2024; Ramadhan et al., 2025). In this context, pesantren can no longer rely on closed and exclusive systems; instead, they are required to engage in collaborative networks with formal educational institutions, government agencies, the industrial sector, and the broader community (Arifin et al., 2023; Febrianti et al., 2025; Irfani et al., 2025; K et al., 2025; Masuwd et al., 2025; Salabi, 2026).

Empirical evidence indicates that pesantren implementing collaborative-based hybrid management experience improvements in learning quality, including teaching methods, curriculum design, and graduate competencies. Furthermore, this integration fosters educational innovation while maintaining strong Islamic values (Nordin et al., 2024; Riaz et al., 2023). Therefore, hybridization can be understood as an adaptive strategy to strengthen the sustainability and relevance of pesantren in the modern era.

One of the key transformations occurs in the integration of pesantren curricula, which were previously dichotomous between religious and general sciences (Budiharso et al., 2023). The shift toward a collaborative-based integrative curriculum aims to produce graduates who possess not only spiritual depth but also academic and social competencies relevant to contemporary society (Bou Saad et al., 2025; Grant et al., 2021). Many pesantren have begun to adopt integrative curricula by combining classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), formal education, and collaborative skill-based programs. This approach reflects a transition from individual-centered to collective learning processes (Annisa & Jumari, 2024; Arif et al., 2025; Feng & Wei, 2025; Hanani et al., 2024; Lambert et al., 2022).

In addition, the roles of educational actors, particularly teachers, have undergone significant repositioning (Datnow, 2020). Teachers are no longer merely knowledge transmitters but have evolved into learning facilitators, knowledge mediators, and connectors within broader educational networks (Datnow, 2020). This shift is essential in responding to the growing complexity of knowledge and the need to integrate diverse learning resources. Studies show that teacher involvement in collaborative training, academic forums, and cross-institutional partnerships enhances both pedagogical and professional competencies, while also fostering innovative learning environments (Christiansen et al., 2023; Zou et al., 2024).

Hybridization also influences decision-making patterns in pesantren management, shifting from centralized authority toward more participatory and inclusive approaches (Rofiqi et al., 2026; Sjoraida et al., 2025). Stakeholders such as teachers, students, alumni, and external partners are increasingly involved in decision-making processes. This participatory model produces more comprehensive and contextual decisions and enhances institutional adaptability to change (Hakiman & Sheely, 2025; Parsons et al., 2025). Moreover, stakeholder involvement strengthens collective ownership of policies and programs.

Although an increasing number of studies in the field of Islamic education management have highlighted curriculum integration, teacher capacity building, and the use of technology (Ahyani et al., 2024; Apologia et al., 2024; Azhar & Halwati, n.d.; Basri et al., 2024; Bukar et al., 2022), there remains a significant gap in the literature, particularly in the qualitative context. Most previous studies tend to examine these aspects separately or partially, so a comprehensive framework capable of integrating managerial, curricular, and collaborative dimensions into a single unified system is not yet available. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by contributing a new perspective on hybridization as a holistic approach that systematically connects these elements (Wattegama et al., 2026; Łach, 2026; Cavu et al., 2025). Through in-depth exploration, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how hybrid management through the integration of a collaborative-based curriculum contributes to institutional sustainability and maintains a balance between traditional Islamic values and the demands of modern education. As an empirical foundation, this research tests the hypothesis that the integration of hybrid management and collaborative curricula has a positive effect on the adaptability and relevance of pesantren graduates. By using relevant data and methods, This study is expected to provide empirical evidence that supports or refutes the assumptions in the literature regarding the effectiveness of management transformation in traditional educational institutions.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive orientation to explore in depth the phenomenon of hybridization in Islamic education management through the integration of a collaborative-based pesantren curriculum (Zainuri et al., 2025)(Nasir & Nazar, 2026). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate as it allows for the exploration of dynamic, contextual, and meaning-rich social realities, particularly within the unique educational environment of pesantren. The study adopts a case study design, focusing on Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Asy-Syafi'iyah Darul Qur'an as the primary research site. This site was selected purposively due to its characteristics as a salafiyah-based institution undergoing adaptive transformation through the implementation of a collaborative curriculum.

The object of this research is the practice of hybridization in Islamic education management, particularly in the process of curriculum integration that combines traditional pesantren values with adaptive and collaborative approaches. The study examines interactions among educational actors, including pesantren leaders, teachers (*ustadz/ustadzah*), students (*santri*), and external collaborators, in developing a curriculum that integrates Islamic knowledge with social and collaborative competencies (Bassachs et al., 2020)(Penuel et al., 2020). In addition, the research investigates strategies, policies, and implementation practices involved in integrating various curriculum elements within the pesantren context.

Data sources in this study consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from key informants selected purposively based on their relevance and involvement in the educational process, including pesantren leaders, curriculum managers, teachers, students, alumni, and institutional administrators. Secondary data were collected from institutional documents such as curriculum structures, activity schedules, organizational records, and program reports (Irawan, 2022). as well as relevant academic literature to support the theoretical framework.

Data collection techniques include participatory observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation study (Dharmayanti et al., 2023)(Reeves et al., 2013). Participatory observation was conducted through direct involvement in pesantren activities to understand real

practices of curriculum implementation and actor interactions. In-depth interviews were used to explore the perspectives, experiences, and strategies of informants in implementing collaborative-based curriculum integration. Documentation analysis complemented these methods by examining relevant written and visual records.

Data analysis follows an interactive model conducted continuously throughout the research process, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Halder et al., 2024)(Maietta et al., 2021)(Khoei & Singh, 2025). Data were systematically organized into descriptive narratives, thematic categories, and relational patterns to facilitate interpretation. The conclusions were drawn iteratively to ensure consistency and alignment with empirical findings.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this study applies triangulation techniques, including source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation (Lim, 2025)(Hanson-DeFusco, 2023). In addition, member checking was conducted to confirm the accuracy of interview data with informants, and peer discussions were carried out to strengthen the reliability of the findings.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Informant Code	Position/Role	Role in Research	Selection Criteria
1	IF-01	Pesantren Leader	Main source of policy and curriculum direction	Holds decision-making authority
2	IF-02	Curriculum Manager	Coordinator of curriculum integration	Directly involved in curriculum planning
3	IF-03	Teacher (Ustadz/Ustadzah)	Implementer of collaborative curriculum	Actively engaged in teaching
4	IF-04	Guru Tamu/Kolaborator	Partner in collaborative learning development	Involved in educational collaboration programs
5	IF-05	Guest Teacher/Collaborator	Representation of learner	Actively participates in learning activities
6	IF-06	Alumni	Provides perspective on curriculum impact	Has experienced the pesantren curriculum
7	IF-07	Administrative Staff	Supports educational program operations	Involved in institutional management

Note: Informants were selected purposively based on their strategic roles and direct involvement in the management and implementation of the collaborative-based pesantren curriculum. This diversity enables a comprehensive understanding of the hybridization process in Islamic education management.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Emergence of a “Collaborative Islamic Education Governance” Ecosystem

The emergence of a Collaborative Islamic Education Governance ecosystem in pesantren indicates a gradual yet significant transformation in Islamic educational management (Kosim et al., 2023). Empirically, pesantren management is no longer fully centralized under the sole authority of the *kiai*, but increasingly involves various stakeholders such as teachers, alumni, community members, and external partners in curriculum planning and evaluation processes (Hanafi et al., 2021)(Arar et al., 2022). This transformation is driven by the need to respond to the complexity of contemporary educational challenges that demand openness, flexibility, and cross-sector collaboration.

Concrete evidence of this phenomenon can be observed in the establishment of curriculum deliberation forums, collaborative programs with other educational institutions, and the increasing involvement of alumni in pesantren development. In addition, decision-making patterns have shifted from a top-down approach to a more participatory and dialogical model. Therefore, this collaborative ecosystem reflects a new reality in pesantren management that remains rooted in traditional values while evolving in an adaptive, inclusive, and contextually relevant manner.

This is supported by the statement of KH Mukhrial, S.Ag., the leader of Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Asy-Syafi'iyah Darul Qur'an (IF-1), who stated:

“Now we no longer design the curriculum on our own. We involve teachers, alumni, and even discuss with external parties such as lecturers or education practitioners so that the curriculum is more aligned with the needs of the times.” (IF-1)

This is further reinforced by Ustadz Achmad Rafsyanjani (IF-3), one of the teachers, who explained: “We are often involved in curriculum development meetings. We do not only receive decisions, but also contribute ideas. This makes us feel more responsible for the learning process.” (IF-3)

In addition, an interview with Mr. Khaerudin (IF-7), a community member around the pesantren, revealed: “Pesantren is now more open. We are involved in several activities and programs, so there is a strong relationship between the pesantren and the community.” (IF-7)

These interviews indicate a paradigm shift in pesantren educational governance from a centralized model toward a more participatory and collaborative approach. The involvement of leaders, teachers, alumni, and the community in curriculum development reflects a collective awareness that educational quality can no longer rely on a single authority but must be built through multi-stakeholder synergy. Teachers' active participation in curriculum forums strengthens professionalism and distributes academic responsibility (Fitzgerald, 2020)(Cai et al., 2022)(Richter et al., 2022). while openness to alumni and the community expands the pesantren's social legitimacy. Thus, Collaborative Islamic Education Governance is no longer merely a normative concept but has become a practical reality that fosters adaptive, inclusive, and contextual educational systems without abandoning traditional values.

Collaborative Curriculum Integration Producing an Adaptive “Living Curriculum”

The integration of a collaborative-based curriculum resulting in a *living curriculum* reflects a fundamental shift in how pesantren design and develop their curricula (Drake & Reid, 2020)(Weiss et al., 2021)(Haapaniemi et al., 2021). In practice, the curriculum is no longer perceived as a fixed and static document, but rather as a dynamic system continuously updated through dialogue, reflection, and collaboration among stakeholders (Lemieux, 2021).

This phenomenon emerges from the demand for educational relevance in responding to contemporary issues such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and socio-religious challenges. Empirical evidence includes periodic curriculum revisions through deliberative forums, the integration of contextual materials into classical Islamic texts (*kitab*), and adaptive programs tailored to the needs of students and society. Furthermore, teachers and administrators actively conduct experience-based evaluations to improve the learning process.

Thus, the living curriculum represents a new social reality in pesantren education, marking a shift from a normative curriculum toward an adaptive one that preserves traditional values while responding dynamically to social changes and global developments.

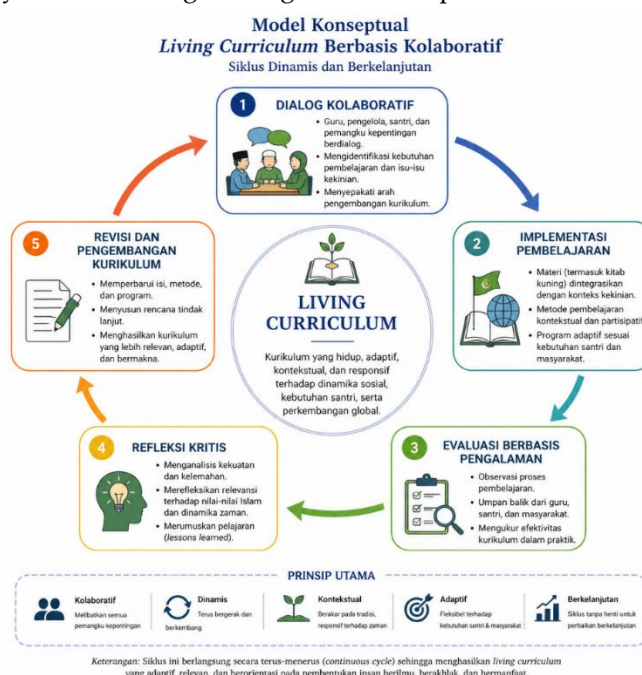


Figure 1. Model of Collaborative-Based Living Curriculum in Pesantren

The figure illustrates a conceptual model of a collaborative living curriculum as a continuous and dynamic cycle. It begins with collaborative dialogue involving stakeholders to identify learning needs, followed by contextual and participatory implementation, experience-based evaluation, critical reflection, and continuous curriculum revision. This cycle demonstrates that the curriculum is adaptive, contextual, and evolving in response to societal dynamics and student needs.

Hybridization Producing Collaborative Religious Intelligence among Students

Findings on the hybridization of Islamic education management indicate a significant transformation in students' competency profiles, moving beyond individual mastery of religious knowledge toward collaborative and integrated religious capabilities (Rof et al., 2022)(Drechsler et al., 2024)(Ghlamallah et al., 2025). Students demonstrate the ability to collaborate, engage in dialogue, and collectively address socio-religious issues in a contextual manner.

This transformation is driven by collaborative curriculum integration that promotes interactive learning activities such as group discussions, joint projects, and community engagement. Students actively participate in entrepreneurship programs, community service, and study forums linking Islamic teachings with contemporary social realities. Additionally, they show improved abilities in articulating religious ideas openly and argumentatively.

Therefore, hybridization in pesantren education contributes to the development of *Collaborative Religious Intelligence*, defined as the ability to integrate deep religious understanding with collaborative skills to respond constructively to social dynamics.



Figure 2. Students’ Discussion (Syawir) in Collaborative Learning

The figure depicts a collaborative learning process where students actively engage in discussion, exchange ideas, and construct knowledge collectively. This interaction reflects the development of critical thinking, argumentation, and teamwork, indicating a shift from passive to participatory learning.

Repositioning Teachers as Knowledge Brokers in Collaborative Networks

The repositioning of teachers as knowledge brokers within collaborative networks reflects a dynamic shift in educators’ roles in pesantren (Burns et al., 2022)(Ghلامallah et al., 2025). Teachers are no longer merely transmitters of knowledge but act as intermediaries who manage, filter, and distribute knowledge from both classical Islamic traditions and contemporary sources (Karsenty et al., 2023)(Li et al., 2024)(Hadar & Brody, 2021).

In practice, teachers integrate classical texts with contemporary issues, facilitate interactive discussions, and encourage students to explore diverse references. They also build collaborative networks with external actors such as academics and practitioners, enriching students’ learning experiences. This transformation highlights teachers as key agents in creating meaningful and adaptive learning environments.

Table 2. Evidence of Teacher Repositioning as Knowledge Brokers in Collaborative Networks

No	Aspect of Teacher Role	Indicators of Findings	Description of Field Evidence	Data Source
1	Knowledge Connector	Teachers integrate classical Islamic texts with contemporary issues	Teachers explain <i>kitab</i> materials by linking them to social phenomena and current developments	Classroom observation
2	Discussion Facilitator	Teachers encourage interaction and dialogue among students	Teachers provide space for group discussions and guide the exchange of ideas	Activity documentation & observation

3	Information Access Mediator	Teachers direct students to various additional references	Students are guided to use books, articles, and other sources beyond the main text	Learning documents
4	Network Developer	Teachers build collaboration with external parties	Involvement of academics/practitioners in learning activities or student training programs	Program & activity documentation
5	Collaborative Learning Manager	Teachers design collaborative-based learning	Implementation of group work, presentations, and joint projects in the classroom	Lesson plans & observation
6	Motivator and Guide	Teachers encourage active and independent	Students show active participation in discussions and	Observation & field notes

The table shows that teachers play multiple strategic roles, including knowledge connectors, discussion facilitators, information mediators, network developers, collaborative learning designers, and motivators. These roles collectively indicate that teachers are central actors in managing knowledge flow and fostering adaptive, interactive, and relevant learning environments.



Figure 3. Collaborative Discussion Forum of Teachers as Knowledge Brokers.

The figure illustrates a collaborative discussion environment where teachers facilitate interaction, guide discussions, and integrate multiple knowledge sources, demonstrating their role as knowledge brokers.

The Tension between Open Collaboration and Traditional Authority in Pesantren

The emergence of tension between open collaboration and traditional authority reflects a new dynamic in the transformation of Islamic education (Islam et al., 2022)(Wahono et al., 2023). On one hand, collaborative practices promote openness, student participation, and external engagement (Baran & AlZoubi, 2020)(Nguyen et al., 2020)(Handzic et al., 2021). On the other hand, traditional authority, which positions teachers as central figures and custodians of knowledge legitimacy, remains a foundational value.

This situation creates ongoing negotiation, such as limitations on students’ freedom of expression, selective acceptance of new knowledge, and cautious engagement with external collaborations. Some teachers strive to balance maintaining authority with adopting dialogical approaches. This indicates that pesantren transformation is non-linear and involves continuous adaptation between tradition and innovation.



Figure 4. Visual Diagram of Tension Dynamics in Pesantren Transformation

The figure illustrates the dynamic interaction between open collaboration and traditional authority, resulting in adaptive educational models that balance both elements.



Figure 5. Teacher Assistance in Digital Collaborative Learning

The figure shows students engaging in collaborative digital learning while being guided by teachers, reflecting a hybrid model where openness and authority coexist through pedagogical control and collaborative exploration.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully revealed that the practice of management hybridization at the Salafiyah Asy-Syafi'iyah Darul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is not merely a formal adaptation to regulations, but rather a profound organic transformation process. The most significant and unexpected finding was the emergence of educators as interactive knowledge brokers and the drastic improvement in students' adaptive competencies in collective problem-solving. This demonstrates that the integration of a collaborative curriculum can foster a more participatory boarding school governance system without negating traditional authority, but rather reinterpreting that authority within a more dynamic context. Empirically, these results also confirm the research hypothesis that the integration of hybrid management and a collaborative curriculum has a positive effect on the adaptability and relevance of education in the pesantren environment.

From a scholarly perspective, this study contributes to the development of hybrid management theory in Islamic educational institutions by offering a perspective on collaborative curriculum integration. This article challenges the long-held assumption that tends to view Salafi pesantren as institutions resistant to modern managerial changes. By presenting data on the negotiation between collaborative openness and traditional values, this study offers a new conceptual framework for educational administrators in balancing the preservation of religious identity with contemporary managerial demands.

However, this study has limitations due to its focus on a single case and limited geographical context, so generalizing the results to a broader scale should be done with caution. These limitations form the basis for a future research agenda with more diverse designs, such as the use of mixed-methods or comparative studies among Islamic boarding schools with different typologies. Future research is expected to yield a more comprehensive understanding to support the formulation of more effective and inclusive Islamic education management policies.

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