

Strategic Management of Islamic Boarding School in The Digital Era: Building A Cadre of Leaders who Unit the People at Al Madani Islamic Boarding School Cikalong Majalengka

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions have a strategic role in producing cadres of leaders who are able to unite the people. In the digital era, the challenges and opportunities for Islamic boarding schools are increasingly complex, so adaptive and innovative strategic management is needed. This study aims to analyze the management strategy of Islamic boarding schools in building a cadre of leaders who unite the people at the Al Madani Cikalong Islamic Boarding School, Majalengka. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The results of the study indicate that Al Madani Islamic Boarding School implements a digital-based management strategy in education and resource management, including the use of information technology in learning, strengthening the leadership curriculum based on Islamic values, and collaboration with various parties in developing leader cadres. The implementation of this strategy has proven effective in improving the quality of students as prospective leaders who are broad-minded, moderate, and able to adapt to the times.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions have a strategic role in building the character and morals of the younger generation. Since its founding, the Islamic boarding school has become a center for religious learning as well as a place for developing religious leaders. However, in today's digital era, Islamic boarding schools face new challenges that demand transformation in their strategic management to remain relevant and able to answer the needs of the times. The digital era brings significant changes in various aspects of life, including education. Information technology has changed the way humans interact, learn, and work. Islamic boarding schools cannot ignore this reality if they want to remain influential institutions in producing future leaders. The use of digital technology can be a tool to strengthen the education system, expand

access to information, and increase the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school management (Hinayatullohi et al. 2023)

On the other hand, the digital era also presents challenges, such as unfiltered information flows, disruption of traditional values, and increasing individualism. These challenges require strong, visionary, and Islamic-based leadership that can be a glue for the people amidst social and religious diversity. Therefore, the implementation of strategic management in Islamic boarding schools is an urgent need. Strategic management in the context of Islamic boarding schools is not only about planning and managing resources, but also about how Islamic boarding schools can carry out their vision to form superior cadres of leaders who are able to unite the people. This includes strengthening an integrative curriculum, developing student competencies that are relevant to the needs of the times, and optimizing technology as a means of supporting education and preaching. (Rohmah 2024).

Al Madani Islamic Boarding School Cikalong, Majalengka, as one of the leading Islamic educational institutions, has a strategic role in building the character and morals of the younger generation. Since its establishment, this Islamic boarding school has become a center for religious learning as well as a place for the development of community leaders based on Islamic values. However, in today's digital era, Al Madani Islamic Boarding School faces new challenges that demand transformation in its strategic management in order to remain relevant and able to answer the needs of the times (Arief and Assya'bani 2023).

The digital era brings significant changes in various aspects of life, including education. Information technology has changed the way humans interact, learn, and work. Al Madani Islamic Boarding School cannot ignore this reality if it wants to remain an influential institution in producing future leaders. The use of digital technology can be a tool to strengthen the education system, expand access to information, and increase the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school management. On the other hand, the digital era also presents challenges, such as unfiltered information flow, disruption of traditional values, and increasing individualism. These challenges require strong, visionary, and Islamic value-based leadership that can unite the community amidst social and religious diversity. Therefore, the implementation of strategic management at Al Madani Islamic Boarding School is an urgent need (Zahro 2022)

Strategic management in the context of Al Madani Islamic Boarding School is not only about planning and managing resources, but also about how the Islamic boarding school can carry out its vision to form superior cadres of leaders who are able to unite the people. This includes strengthening an integrative curriculum, developing student competencies that are relevant to the needs of the times, and optimizing technology as a means of supporting education and preaching. This study will discuss how Islamic boarding schools can implement adaptive strategic management in the digital era to realize this vision. With a holistic approach, it is hoped that Islamic boarding schools will be able to produce a generation of leaders who are not only intellectually and spiritually superior, but also able to become agents of unifying the people amidst global dynamics (Afifuddin, M. 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the implementation of strategic management at the Al Madani Cikalong Islamic Boarding School, Majalengka. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews with Islamic boarding school leaders, administrators, and senior students; direct observation of educational activities and Islamic boarding school management; and analysis of documents related to Islamic boarding school policies and programs (Setiawan 2018).

Data analysis was conducted through triangulation steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, as well as a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by Islamic boarding schools in implementing digital-based strategies. This approach is designed to reveal how the integration of digital technology and traditional values can support the development of leader cadres that are relevant to the needs of the times (Wijaya 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Strategic Management at Al Madani Islamic Boarding School, Cikalong, Majalengka in Facing the Digital Era

Strategic management means a process or series of activities for making decisions that are fundamental and comprehensive in nature, accompanied by determining how to implement them, which are made by top management (managers), then implemented by all levels within an organization or company to achieve them (Nawawi 2000) . Strategic management as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals. Strategic management focuses on integrating several important aspects, namely: management, marketing, finance, production and operations, research and development, and no less important, information systems in producing data and facts to support the decision-making process to achieve organizational goals (Fadhli, M. 2020).

Along with the increasingly competitive development of the world of education, to achieve excellence, various educational institutions such as madrasas and Islamic boarding schools are trying to improve the quality of their human resources in order to be able to compete or survive and not be left behind by the progress of the times. Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions with the largest quantity in Indonesia (Sadali 2020) . With all their uniqueness and culture, Islamic boarding schools are also required to be able to innovate with current styles and needs. Islamic boarding schools are one of the Islamic educational institutions that have a role as an institution that has a special strategy in the application process to create human resources that are useful for the nation, nation, and religion (Muid, Arifin, and Karim 2024) . Of course, to achieve excellence in competing, Islamic boarding schools must have a strategy or method used to achieve it. Strategic management is a method that can be used in managing Islamic boarding schools without deviating from Islamic boarding school values.

Strategic management is a fundamental and comprehensive decision-making activity accompanied by how to implement it made by top management and implemented by all levels within an organization to achieve its goals (Machali 2012) . Strategic management is closely related to efforts to decide on strategic and planning issues and how the strategy is implemented in its application. Strategic management can be viewed as encompassing three main elements. First, there is a strategic analysis where the strategy maker in question attempts to understand the strategic position of the organization in question. Second, there is also a choice of strategies related to the formulation of various directions of action, their evaluation, and the choice between them. Third, there is also the implementation of strategies related to planning how strategic choices can be implemented (Rindaningsih 2012) . Through the process of strategic management, Islamic boarding school education can take advantage of the opportunities that arise due to changes in the times, create various programs based on the needs of the community and then implement them in Islamic boarding schools without departing from the values that have been the guidelines. This study reveals that Al Madani Cikalong Islamic Boarding School, Majalengka, has taken strategic steps in facing challenges and opportunities in the digital era. The implementation of strategic management in this Islamic boarding school includes three main aspects: technology-based education, human resource development, and strengthening external collaboratio.

Technology Based Education

Al Madani Islamic Boarding School has integrated digital technology into the teaching and learning process, including the use of online learning platforms, classroom management software, and social media for preaching. The Islamic boarding school curriculum has also been updated with the addition of information technology materials to equip students with relevant digital skills. This step aims to bridge the gap between the traditions of Islamic boarding schools and the needs of competence in the modern era.

Human Resource Development

The Islamic boarding school focuses on leadership training for senior students through mentoring programs, seminars, and workshops. In addition, caregivers and teachers are trained to adopt technology in teaching and management. The Islamic boarding school also builds an inclusive leadership culture, which instills the values of Islamic brotherhood, tolerance, and managerial skills. (Sulasih and Sulaeman 2020) .

Strengthening External Collaboration

Pesantren Al Madani actively collaborates with various parties, including higher education institutions, community organizations, and local governments. This collaboration aims to increase access to technology, funding, and training for pesantren managers. For example, Islamic boarding schools have partnered with non-profit organizations to distribute digital devices to underprivileged students (Saiful, A., & Arditya, P. 2024).

SWOT Analysis

Through SWOT analysis, it was found that the strength of Islamic boarding schools lies in the integrity of strong traditional Islamic values and the support of a solid local community. However, weaknesses in the form of limited technological resources and digital training are still a challenge. Great opportunities are seen in the increasing access to technology and government support for the digitalization of Islamic boarding schools. On the other hand, threats come from rapid global developments and competition from modern educational institutions (Sulasih and Sulaeman 2020) . Al Madani Islamic Boarding School has successfully demonstrated that the integration of traditional values and digital innovation can create a relevant educational ecosystem in the digital era. With this strategic approach, Islamic boarding schools are not only able to survive, but also become a model for other Islamic educational institutions in forming cadres of leaders who unite the people.

The Challenges of Al Madani Islamic Boarding School in Building a Cadre of Leaders Who Unite the People in the Digital Era

Islamic boarding schools in the contemporary era certainly have very significant challenges and must be taken seriously, for the sake of the existence and continuity of the existence of Islamic boarding schools. If Islamic boarding schools are left as they are with old traditions and close themselves off from new traditions and curricula, then Islamic boarding schools will no longer be of concern to the community, because whether we admit it or not, the world will experience development. Islamic boarding schools must be able to accommodate and accept these developments, and be prepared to face the developments of the era (Ayatullah, H. 2024).

In addition to the aim of Islamic boarding schools to provide basic religious knowledge to students and the community, they must also implement a new curriculum system that refers to skills and Human Resources (HR). With this, Islamic boarding schools not only

produce generations of intellectuals and scholars, but also produce skilled and talented souls, and master technology as a center for global world information (Kasmawati 2019) .

Discussing Islamic Boarding Schools and the Locus of their Role for the Republic of Indonesia is a discussion that can continue to be actualized in every century of the journey of the nation and state in Indonesia. Its contribution to civilization and culture in the Republic of Indonesia has great merit as the first institution to guard the creation and sustainability of the filling of independence in the Indonesian archipelago. The Indonesian archipelago, which basically has several social, ethical and aesthetic values with a religious and cultural background that has multiple rites and ethos, has been able to find its common sense with the Islamic values brought by the actors of Islamization in the Indonesian archipelago (Shalihah and Tohet 2020) .

This study identifies several challenges faced by Al Madani Cikalong Islamic Boarding School, Majalengka, in developing a cadre of leaders who unite the people in the digital era. Although Islamic boarding schools have taken strategic steps to integrate technology in the management of education and preaching, a number of obstacles still need to be overcome to achieve these goals. The main challenges found in this study are divided into the following categories:

Limitations of Technology Infrastructure

Although digital technology has begun to be implemented, Al Madani Islamic Boarding School still faces limitations in terms of technological infrastructure. Limited access to devices and stable internet connections are one of the main obstacles in the online learning process and the use of digital platforms for Islamic boarding school activities. This makes it difficult for students from families with low economic backgrounds to access technology-based educational facilities optimally (Muid et al. 2024) .

Improving Digital Skills of Caregivers and Students

Another significant challenge is the need to improve digital skills in both pesantren caretakers and students. Many caregivers are accustomed to traditional methods of teaching and educating, so the implementation of digital technology requires sufficient time and training. Meanwhile, although young students are more familiar with technology, not all of them have sufficient technical skills to utilize technology optimally in the context of education and leadership (Istiqamah 2021) .

Adaptation of Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Al Madani Islamic Boarding School also faces challenges in adapting a curriculum that is relevant to current developments. Although there have been efforts to include material related to information technology, the curriculum that is more based on the religious and cultural values of Islamic boarding schools still dominates. Maintaining a balance between in-depth religious education and the leadership skills needed in the digital age is a challenge in itself (Tabrani, Z. A., et al. 2021).

Competition with Modern Educational Institutions

In the digital era, Islamic boarding schools must also compete with modern educational institutions that offer more sophisticated and flexible technology-based educational programs. Formal educational institutions often have greater resources to implement the latest technology, making them strong competitors for Islamic boarding schools in attracting the younger generation. Although Islamic boarding schools have strong

values and emotional ties to the community, there is still pressure to adapt to the growing global education trends (Hinayatulohi et al. 2023) .

Dependence on External Funds

Technology management and human resource development in Islamic boarding schools require significant funds . Al Madani Islamic Boarding School still depends on external funds from donors and cooperation with external institutions to finance infrastructure and training. This dependence can be an obstacle if there is no sustainability of sufficient funds to ensure the continuity of the digital education program. (Shamin 2022) . The main challenges faced by Al Madani Islamic Boarding School in developing a cadre of leaders who unite the people in the digital era lie in the limitations of technological infrastructure, the need for digital skills training, and the difficulty in balancing the religious curriculum with the needs of modern education. However, despite these challenges, the Islamic boarding school continues to strive to create solutions through external collaboration and ongoing efforts to increase the capacity of human resources and technology. The success of the Islamic boarding school in facing these challenges will depend greatly on the ability to adapt quickly to change and optimize the use of technology in supporting educational and leadership goals (Rohmah 2024)

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Al Madani Cikalong Islamic Boarding School, Majalengka, has implemented effective strategic management in building a cadre of leaders who unite the people in the digital era. Through a combination of traditional pesantren values and technology-based innovation, this pesantren has succeeded in creating an environment that supports adaptive, inclusive, and relevant leadership education to the demands of the times. Al Madani Pesantren utilizes digital technology to enrich the learning process, both through the use of online platforms, learning management applications, and social media to spread da'wah and educational information. In addition, the pesantren also focuses on developing the leadership skills of students by involving them in various training and self-development programs that are oriented towards moderate Islamic values and uniting the people. Overall, Al Madani Cikalong Islamic Boarding School has shown a strong commitment in creating a cadre of leaders who are not only competent in spiritual and intellectual aspects, but also have the skills needed to unite the people amidst the dynamics of digital development. The implementation of strategic management oriented towards technology will continue to be the key to the success of Islamic boarding schools in carrying out their role as relevant educational institutions in the digital era.

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