

ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DIGITAL ERA COMMUNICATION CRISIS

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Abstract :

This research aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by Islamic boarding schools in facing the communication crisis in the digital era, as well as how Islamic boarding schools can adapt digital technology in their education and preaching. The method used is a qualitative approach with case studies in several Islamic boarding schools representing various levels of technology adoption. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews with Islamic boarding school administrators, ustaz and Islamic boarding school students, as well as direct observation of activities in Islamic boarding schools and analysis of digital documentation such as social media and preaching videos. The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify main themes regarding the use of technology, communication challenges and strategies implemented by Islamic boarding schools. The research results show that Islamic boarding schools face difficulties in adopting technology due to limited resources and digital skills, but also find opportunities to expand the reach of da'wah and education through digital media. This research suggests that Islamic boarding schools improve the digital skills of managers and students, and utilize technology effectively without reducing the traditional values taught. These findings provide recommendations for developing digital communication in Islamic boarding schools so that they remain relevant in the digital era.

Keywords : Crisis Islamic Boarding School, Digital Era

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi tantangan dan peluang yang dihadapi pesantren dalam menghadapi krisis komunikasi di era digital, serta bagaimana pesantren dapat mengadaptasi teknologi digital dalam pendidikan dan dakwah mereka. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi kasus pada beberapa pesantren yang mewakili berbagai tingkat adopsi teknologi. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan pengurus pesantren, ustaz, dan santri, serta observasi langsung terhadap kegiatan di pesantren dan analisis dokumentasi digital seperti media sosial dan video dakwah. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema utama mengenai pemanfaatan teknologi, tantangan komunikasi, dan strategi yang diterapkan pesantren. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pesantren menghadapi kesulitan dalam mengadopsi teknologi karena keterbatasan sumber daya dan keterampilan digital, namun juga menemukan peluang untuk memperluas jangkauan dakwah dan pendidikan melalui media digital. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar pesantren meningkatkan keterampilan digital pengelola dan santri, serta memanfaatkan teknologi secara efektif tanpa mengurangi nilai-nilai tradisional yang diajarkan. Temuan ini memberikan rekomendasi untuk pengembangan komunikasi digital di pesantren agar tetap relevan di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Pesantren Krisis, Era Digital

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools in the midst of the digital era communication crisis are an interesting phenomenon to analyze. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools as traditional educational institutions have a long history of maintaining religious and cultural values in Indonesia (Susilo & Wulansari, 2020). However, on the other hand, Islamic boarding schools are now facing big challenges due to the increasingly rapid development of information technology. The digital era has changed the way society communicates, including the way Islamic boarding schools interact with students and the wider community (Badi'ah et al., 2021). In this context, the communication crisis referred to does not only refer to challenges in conveying messages, but also to the gap between Islamic boarding school traditions and technological advances.

In the digital era, information spreads very quickly and easily through various platforms such as social media, websites and instant messaging applications (Alamsyah et al., 2024). This has led to a shift in communication patterns, where messages can be received or spread without geographic restrictions. However, for Islamic boarding schools, which mostly still rely on conventional education methods and direct communication, this is an obstacle. Many Islamic boarding schools are not ready to face the challenges of digitalization, both in terms of limited technological facilities, human resources who are not yet skilled in using technology, and communication patterns that are still considered traditional.

Apart from that, in the digital era, the phenomenon of hoaxes and fake news has also emerged which often affects society (Marwan & Prasanti, 2022). Unverified information can spread very quickly, influencing people's perceptions of various issues, including the Islamic boarding school itself. This communication crisis is increasingly exacerbated by the existence of various political and social interests that play a role in the dissemination of information. This is a big challenge for Islamic boarding schools to ensure that the messages they convey remain relevant and trustworthy.

However, despite these challenges, the digital era also brings opportunities for Islamic boarding schools to develop and become more widely known. Islamic boarding schools can use technology to spread da'wah, introduce their educational programs, and build wider networks. By utilizing social media and other digital platforms, Islamic boarding schools can reach a larger audience, including the younger generation who are more familiar with technology. In this case, Islamic boarding schools need to develop digital communication capabilities, adopt technology wisely, and strengthen the foundation of the religious and moral values they teach. That way, Islamic boarding schools can remain relevant amidst changing times, while maintaining the essence of the education they promote.

Previous research regarding Islamic boarding schools in the midst of the digital era communication crisis has been carried out with a focus on the impact of technology on these religious-based educational institutions. Several studies show that Islamic boarding schools, as traditional educational institutions, face major challenges in keeping up with the rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT). One relevant research is that conducted by Rahmawati (2020), which examines the application of technology in Islamic boarding schools. In her research, Rahmawati found that many Islamic boarding schools have difficulty adopting technology in the educational process due to limited internet access and a lack of technical skills among Islamic boarding school managers. The results of this research show that there is an imbalance in the use of technology, which can hinder Islamic boarding schools from developing and competing with other, more modern educational institutions.

Apart from that, research conducted by Wahyuni (2018) also discusses the role of social media in da'wah communication in Islamic boarding schools. In his research, Wahyuni revealed that social media can be a very effective tool for spreading information and Islamic da'wah, but many Islamic boarding schools have not yet utilized this digital platform optimally. Many Islamic boarding schools tend to be trapped in conventional communication practices, such as

face-to-face recitation, which, although it has positive values, is unable to reach a wider audience, especially the younger generation who are more familiar with the digital world.

Other research by Fadilah (2021) revealed that the communication crisis that occurred in Islamic boarding schools was not only related to limited access to technology, but also to communication patterns that were still very traditional. In her research, Fadilah shows that although Islamic boarding schools have great potential to use technology in da'wah, most Islamic boarding schools still rely on old methods, such as face-to-face lectures and direct learning. This causes Islamic boarding schools to have difficulty maintaining relevance amidst the rapid development of digital information. This research also highlights the importance of training for Islamic boarding school managers so they can utilize digital media effectively to introduce Islamic boarding schools and their da'wah activities.

Overall, previous research shows that Islamic boarding schools face various challenges in dealing with the communication crisis in the digital era. Nevertheless, there is great potential for Islamic boarding schools to develop themselves by utilizing information technology to expand the reach of da'wah and education. By using appropriate technology and strengthening digital skills among Islamic boarding school managers, this educational institution can remain relevant and make a major contribution to the world of education in the digital era.

The research entitled *Islamic Boarding Schools in the Midst of the Digital Era Communication Crisis* lies in a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by Islamic boarding schools in facing significant changes in the communication landscape due to advances in digital technology. This research will introduce a new perspective regarding the role of Islamic boarding schools in managing communication in an increasingly complex digital era, with a more comprehensive and innovative approach. One of the important aspects raised is how Islamic boarding schools can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, where many Islamic boarding schools still adhere to conventional

ways of educating and preaching, but at the same time must respond to the communication needs and behavior of the younger generation who are highly digital-savvy.

One of the new contributions of this research is a deeper analysis of how Islamic boarding schools can adapt a communication crisis into an opportunity to introduce more inclusive Islamic values through digital media. This research will not only assess the challenges faced, but will also offer practical solutions on how Islamic boarding schools can improve digital skills, both for Islamic boarding school managers and students. With a technology-based approach, Islamic boarding schools can develop educational methods that are more interesting and relevant for students in the midst of a fast flow of information that is often full of disinformation.

Apart from that, this research will also introduce a digital communication model based on Islamic boarding school values which can be a reference for other Islamic educational institutions. Here, Islamic boarding schools can be pioneers in creating a balanced communication system between tradition and technology, where Islamic boarding schools still maintain the uniqueness of Islamic teachings but are able to adapt to current developments. For example, Islamic boarding schools can utilize digital platforms such as YouTube, podcasts, or learning applications to spread religious teachings and engage a wider audience, including those who are not reached by traditional education methods.

With this approach, this research seeks to offer a new perspective that has not been widely discussed in the literature, namely how Islamic boarding schools can take advantage of the digital communication crisis as an opportunity to strengthen their position in religious education in the modern era. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies not only in understanding the digital challenges faced by Islamic boarding schools, but also in discovering the great potential that has not been fully explored to make Islamic boarding schools more relevant and adaptive amidst ever-changing technological developments.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method that will be used in this research on Islamic Boarding Schools in the Midst of the Digital Era Communication Crisis combines a qualitative approach with case study methods to provide an in-depth picture of the challenges and opportunities faced by Islamic boarding schools in facing communication changes in the digital era. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the perspectives, experiences and in-depth understanding of Islamic boarding school managers, students and the community regarding the impact of technology on communication in Islamic boarding schools.

The data collection process will be carried out through in-depth interviews with various related parties, including Islamic boarding school administrators, ustaz, santri, and educational technology experts. This interview aims to gain insight into how Islamic boarding schools manage internal and external communications, as well as the extent to which they adopt technology in teaching and learning activities and da'wah. Apart from interviews, researchers will also conduct direct observations of activities in several Islamic boarding schools, both those that have adopted digital technology in communication and education, and those that still rely on conventional methods. This observation aims to see the implementation of technology in the daily practices of Islamic boarding schools and its impact on interactions between Islamic boarding school managers and students.

Data analysis will be carried out using a thematic analysis approach, where researchers will identify the main themes that emerge from interviews, observations and documentation. These themes will be analyzed to identify challenges, opportunities and communication strategies implemented by Islamic boarding schools in facing the digital era communication crisis. It is hoped that the results of this analysis will provide a clearer understanding of how Islamic boarding schools can adapt to changing times, as well as how digital technology can be used to strengthen Islamic boarding school communication and

preaching, without reducing the essence of the religious values taught (Hizbulloh et al., 2023) .

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in communication patterns

This research reveals significant changes in communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools, which are now shifting from traditional methods to more digital approaches (Wibowo, 2019). However, this change is not without challenges (Munir & Su'ada, 2024). The emergence of confusion and misunderstanding between students and the community shows that the transition to digital communication has had a negative impact. Information conveyed via digital platforms is often unclear or distorted, confusing recipients. Thus, although digitalization offers convenience, efforts are needed to ensure that communication remains effective and understands the cultural context of the Islamic boarding school.

Interviews with Santri and Islamic Boarding School Administrators regarding Changes in Communication Patterns

Santri: What do you think about changes in communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools recently?

Manager: I feel happy with social media. Now, we can communicate faster and share information with friends. But, sometimes the information circulating can cause confusion.

Based on interviews with administrators and the findings presented in the table, it can be concluded that changes in communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools have shifted from traditional methods to digital approaches, which involve the use of social media and messaging applications. Although these changes allow for faster and more efficient communication, new challenges arise, such as confusion and misunderstanding among students and the community. Unverified information can cause the spread of rumors that are detrimental to the image of the Islamic boarding school

Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase media literacy among students and Islamic boarding school managers. This training is important so that they can use digital media effectively and understand the importance of verifying information before distributing it (Oktaria et al., 2023). Islamic boarding schools can minimize misunderstandings and improve the quality of communication, as well as maintain their reputation in an increasingly complex digital era (Kinansyah & Pujianto, 2023).

Digital Adaptation Readiness

Many Islamic boarding schools show varying levels of readiness in adopting digital technology (Mukhid, 2023). Some Islamic boarding schools have successfully adapted and utilized technology to disseminate information, while others are still lagging behind and have difficulty implementing effective digital communication strategies. Digital adaptation readiness in Islamic boarding schools shows significant differences, reflecting varying levels of readiness in adopting technology (Saini, 2024). Several Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in utilizing digital technology, such as social media and online applications, to disseminate information, expand the reach of da'wah, and increase interaction with students (Qury, 2024). On the other hand, many Islamic boarding schools still face challenges in integrating technology into their education and communication systems, both due to limited infrastructure, human resources and understanding of effective digital strategies (Soleh, 2024). These findings reflect the need for assistance and increasing digital capacity for Islamic boarding schools to support a more inclusive and sustainable digital transformation.

interview: Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. We want to discuss digital adaptation readiness in Islamic boarding schools. In your opinion, what is the current condition of Islamic boarding schools in adopting digital technology?

Ahmad Zainuddin: Thank you. In general, I see two large groups among Islamic boarding schools regarding adaptation to digital technology. Some

Islamic boarding schools are quite advanced in utilizing technology, such as social media for da'wah or e-learning platforms for teaching and learning activities. For example, at our Islamic boarding school, we have started using video conferencing applications and social media to maintain communication with students, especially during the pandemic. However, there are still many Islamic boarding schools that have not adopted technology optimally, especially in areas where internet infrastructure is limited.

Based on the conclusions, digital adaptation readiness in Islamic boarding schools varies. Several Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in utilizing technology, such as social media and e-learning platforms, to support da'wah and learning, especially during the pandemic (Junaidi et al., n.d.). However, there are still many Islamic boarding schools, especially in areas with limited internet infrastructure, that face difficulties in adopting technology optimally. This shows the need for further efforts to improve understanding, skills and digital infrastructure in underdeveloped Islamic boarding schools. The Digital Era can be interpreted as a condition of life or era where all activities that support life have been made easier by technology (Paramansyah et al., 2023).

The following are points that explain digital adaptation readiness

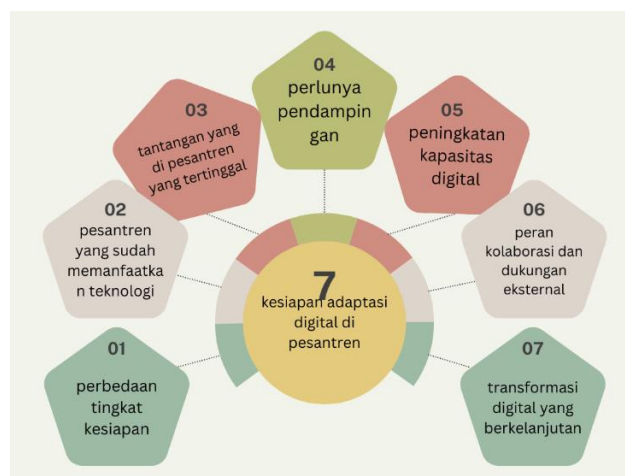


Figure 1. Digital adaptation readiness graph

The Role of Kiai in Communication

Research finds that kiai play an important role as leaders in handling communication crises (Maksum & Basyari, 2024). However, not all kiai have adequate communication skills to overcome the challenges that arise in the digital era. Recent research reveals that kiai play a central role in Islamic boarding school communication, especially in dealing with crises or situations that require quick decisions (Safitri, 2019) (Aminoto, 2022). As spiritual and social leaders, kiai are often the main figures in managing information and guiding students. However, not all kiai have adequate communication skills to overcome the challenges that arise in the digital era (Muid et al., 2024). In this context, kiai's understanding of social media and digital platforms is important to maintain communication effectiveness, both in dealing with internal Islamic boarding school issues and in responding to external challenges in an increasingly complex virtual world.

interview: Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. We want to discuss the role of kiai in Islamic boarding school communication, especially in facing communication challenges in the digital era. In your opinion, what is the role of kiai in dealing with communication crises in Islamic boarding schools?

Ahmad Zainuddin: Thank you. Kiai do play an important role, not only as spiritual leaders, but also in handling communication crises. They are highly respected figures in Islamic boarding schools, so when there is a problem or crisis, many people rely on them to provide guidance. For example, in situations such as a pandemic, kiai become the main liaison in managing appropriate information and maintaining good relations with students, parents and the community. However, the challenge is that not all kiai have adequate communication skills, especially in using technology and social media.

The following is the conclusion of the interview

Kiai play an important role in handling communication crises in Islamic boarding

schools, especially as leaders who manage information and maintain relationships with students, parents and the community (Afandi, 2024). However, the main challenge is the lack of digital communication skills among kiai, especially in using technology and social media. This requires training to improve the kiai's ability to communicate effectively in the digital era (A'yuni & Muhammad, 2023). The kiai's task is to provide direction on any problems that arise and conclude the results of the discussion (RENI, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This research reveals a significant change in communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools, which have shifted from traditional methods to digital approaches. The use of social media and messaging applications makes communication easier, but also creates challenges in the form of confusion and misunderstanding due to unverified information. Therefore, efforts need to be made to increase media literacy among students and Islamic boarding school managers so that communication remains effective and appropriate to the cultural context of Islamic boarding schools.

Readiness for digital adaptation in Islamic boarding schools varies. Some Islamic boarding schools have successfully utilized digital technology for da'wah and education, while others are still struggling, especially in areas with limited infrastructure. This shows the need for assistance in increasing the digital capacity of Islamic boarding schools, so that they can be more inclusive and sustainable in digital transformation.

The role of kiai in Islamic boarding school communication is very important, especially in dealing with crises or urgent situations. However, not all kiai have adequate communication skills to face digital challenges. Therefore, increasing the kiai's ability to use social media and digital platforms is very necessary to maintain the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school communication.

Media literacy training in Islamic boarding schools is very urgent. In the midst of the rapid development of the digital world, students and Islamic boarding

school managers need to be trained to filter and analyze information, and avoid misinformation. This training will help them use digital communication tools wisely and effectively, support educational and da'wah goals, and maintain the reputation of Islamic boarding schools in the digital era.

Overall, digital transformation in Islamic boarding schools requires adequate readiness and skills, both in terms of technology, communication and media literacy, so that Islamic boarding schools can adapt well in facing the challenges of the times.

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