

Negotiating Continuity and Change: Social Capital and Value-Mediated Governance Adaptation in an Indonesian Pesantren

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Indonesian pesantren face the challenge of responding to changing educational, technological, and administrative expectations while maintaining religious and cultural commitments. Although previous research has examined pesantren modernization and leadership, little is known about how relational resources and institutional values interact in everyday governance adaptation. This study examines how social capital and institutional values shaped governance adaptation at Pondok Pesantren Mathali'ul Falah Pekiringan, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative single-case design was used, drawing on semi-structured interviews with 12 internal and external stakeholders, 17 participant-observation sessions, and the analysis of institutional documents. Data were analyzed thematically using trust, networks, and norms as sensitizing concepts. Four interrelated findings were identified. Trust in the kiai supports institutional legitimacy but operates alongside parental considerations of affordability, distance, facilities, and educational quality. Alumni and community relationships provide informal, largely voluntary support. Technology was accepted for supervised learning, while personal smartphone use was restricted according to disciplinary and moral priorities. Centralized, family based governance supported continuity but left alumni coordination, documentation, and succession arrangements relatively informal. The findings suggest that relational governance may benefit from gradual, culturally feasible improvements in communication, alumni coordination, supervised digital access, administrative documentation, and leadership continuity. The originality of this study lies in connecting social capital with value-mediated governance adaptation to explain how change may be selectively accepted, limited, or reorganized within a culturally embedded educational institution. This case-based perspective is intended as an analytical heuristic rather than a general model for all pesantrens.

Keywords: social capital, value-mediated governance, pesantren, religious leadership, institutional adaptation, community-based education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, commonly known as *pesantren*, occupy an important position in the country's educational and religious landscape.¹ Beyond providing religious instruction, *pesantren* often function as community-based institutions in which moral formation, religious authority, social relationships, and cultural continuity intersect.² Their sustainability may therefore depend not only on formal administration and material resources but also on the trust, norms, and relationships connecting *kiai*, students, families, alumni, and surrounding communities.³ These relationships can support community participation, institutional legitimacy, and continuity of educational traditions.⁴

Traditional *pesantren*, nevertheless, operate within an increasingly competitive and changing educational environment. Modern Islamic schools, integrated school systems, and digitally visible education providers have influenced parental expectations regarding service quality, curriculum, facilities, technology, and public communication.⁵ Research shows that *pesantren* respond through curriculum adjustment, management reform, infrastructure development, technology adoption, and increased stakeholder participation. Such responses vary according to leadership, resources, organizational structures, and cultural commitments.⁶ Consequently, institutional adaptation does not always require a complete

¹ M Muzammil, A Sutawijaya, and M Harsasi, "Investigating Student Satisfaction In Online Learning: The Role Of Student Interaction And Engagement In Distance Learning University," *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 21 (2021): 88–96, <https://doi.org/10.17718/TOJDE.770928>; Nurul H. Rofiah, Norimune Kawai, and Dara Sudiraharja, "Pesantren and Inclusion: Bridging Religion and Disability in Islamic Education in Indonesia," *African Journal of Disability* 14 (September 25, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v14i0.1741>.

² Ahmad Ihwanul Muttaqin, "Institutional Adaptation of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia: Balancing Tradition and Modern Education," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 3 (October 3, 2025): 1016–29, <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v9i3.11585>; Rofiah, Kawai, and Sudiraharja, "Pesantren and Inclusion: Bridging Religion and Disability in Islamic Education in Indonesia"; Margi Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School," *Society* 11, no. 2 (December 29, 2023): 377–97, <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v11i2.591>.

³ Nadifatul Mufidah, Maskuri Maskuri, and Sugeng Listiyo, "Integral Education in Institutional Development: Partnership between Islamic Boarding Schools and Alumni," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 17, no. 1 (February 3, 2025): 270–79, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v17i1.6407>; Nabila Tahira et al., "Social Capital in Islamic Community-Based Pesantren," *Privet Social Sciences Journal* 5, no. 10 (October 13, 2025): 184–93, <https://doi.org/10.55942/pssj.v5i10.706>; Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School."

⁴ Chatia Hastasari, Benni Setiawan, and Suranto Aw, "Students' Communication Patterns of Islamic Boarding Schools: The Case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta," *Heliyon* 8, no. 1 (January 2022): e08824, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08824>; Mufidah, Maskuri, and Listiyo, "Integral Education in Institutional Development: Partnership between Islamic Boarding Schools and Alumni"; Amirul Muttaqin et al., "Examining the Model for Forming Religious Character Education through Santri Behavior Traditions in Islamic Boarding Schools," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 4 (December 24, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i4.6181>.

⁵ Mochamad Arif Faizin, "Islamic Boarding Education Management Reform: Transformation Strategies to Improve Competitiveness and Relevance," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 2 (June 25, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.4462>; Lukman Hakim et al., "Transforming Islamic Boarding School Education: Institutional Modernization and Quality Improvement in Tebuireng Jombang," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 17, no. 3 (August 14, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v17i3.7685>; Afiful Ikhwani, Fina Kholij Zukhrufin, and Anisah Triyuliasari, "Integrated Islamic School Marketing Management in Indonesia: Competitive or Business Oriented?," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (April 10, 2025): 174–91, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i2.1759>.

⁶ Muttaqin, "Institutional Adaptation of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia: Balancing Tradition and Modern Education"; Nur Agus Salim et al., "Islamic Boarding School Leadership Innovation: From Traditional to Modernization of Education," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 4 (January 8, 2025): 447–60, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i4.1392>.

transition from a traditional to a modern model; selected changes may be incorporated while retaining established religious and cultural practices.

Although this literature explains important dimensions of modernization, less attention has been paid to the relational processes through which traditional *pesantren* maintain legitimacy, mobilize informal support, and negotiate changes in everyday governance. Formal administration, curricula, and facilities offer only partial explanations for institutional continuity. Trust in religious leadership, alumni attachment, community relationships, and shared norms may also influence how decisions are understood and supported by the community. Recent studies have identified community trust, alumni networks, collective norms, and voluntary participation as resources for *pesantren* development.⁷ However, further case-based evidence is needed to clarify how these relational resources interact with institutional values in governance adaptations.

Putnam's (2000) conception of social capital as trust, networks, and norms provides a useful analytical lens for examining these processes.⁸ In a *pesantren*, these dimensions are closely connected to the religious authority and moral leadership. The *kiai* may simultaneously act as a religious leader, institutional decision-maker, and point of connection among students, families, alumni, and community members.⁹ This study combines social capital with value-mediated governance adaptation, which is defined as a process in which institutional changes are accepted, limited, or reorganized according to established religious, moral, and educational priorities. This perspective directs attention to how institutional actors determine whether changes are educationally useful, culturally appropriate, or compatible with existing disciplinary norms.

Pondok Pesantren Mathali'ul Falah (PPMF) Pekiringan in Purbalingga Regency, Central Java, provides an information-rich setting for examining these dynamics. PPMF is a traditional, *salaf*-oriented *pesantren* that maintains religious learning, moral discipline, community relationships, and a centralized leadership. Preliminary observations indicate that it continues to attract local families despite the growing visibility of more formalized Islamic education providers. PPMF appear to rely largely on the moral reputation of their leadership, face-to-face relationships, and alumni attachment rather than extensive public branding. It also introduced supervised computer and Internet facilities through its Vocational Training Center (*Balai Latihan Kerja* or BLK) while restricting students' personal smartphone use. These

⁷ Syamsuri Syamsuri et al., "Five Principles of Pesantren as Social Capital to Overcome the Problems of Economic Business Development at Pesantren," *Society* 11, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 173–92, <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v11i1.467>; Tahira et al., "Social Capital in Islamic Community-Based Pesantren"; Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School."

⁸ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster, 2000).

⁹ Nur Azizah and Sugiono Sugiono, "Social Modalities of Kiai in The Development of Islamic Boarding School," *Journal of Educational Management Research* 4, no. 1 (May 21, 2025): 68–81, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i1.783>; Ahmad Faisal et al., "Strengthening Religious Moderatism through the Traditional Authority of Kiai in Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (December 31, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2150450>; Farid Wajdi et al., "The Pattern of Leadership of Kiai in Managing Learning Pesantren," *Nidhomul Haq : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (March 20, 2022): 15–30, <https://doi.org/10.31538/ndh.v7i1.1832>.

characteristics enabled us to examine how relational resources and institutional values intersect in selective adaptation.

This study addresses the following research question: ***How do social capital and institutional values interact to shape governance adaptation within a traditional Indonesian pesantren?*** This question is examined through four objectives: (1) to explore how trust in the *kiai* contributes to institutional legitimacy and parental selection; (2) to examine how alumni and community networks function as informal relational resources; (3) to analyze how technological change is negotiated through *pesantren* values and disciplinary priorities; and (4) to investigate how centralized and family based governance influences institutional continuity and sustainability.

This study offers a contextual contribution to the field of Islamic educational governance. It applies social capital as a sensitizing framework to examine how trust, networks, and norms operate within a culturally embedded religious institution. It also develops a value-mediated perspective on governance adaptation by examining how institutional values shape selective regulation of change. Finally, it highlights how parents, alumni, community members, religious leaders, and family administrators participate in the everyday governance. This study's contribution lies not in proposing a general model but in showing how relational and formal governance resources may coexist, complement one another, and create tensions within a locally embedded institution. Although the case is not intended to represent all Indonesian *pesantren*, its findings may inform broader discussions on how community-based and faith-oriented educational institutions negotiate change while maintaining cultural legitimacy.

METHOD

1. Research design and setting

This study employed a qualitative single-case design to examine how social capital and institutional values interact in governance adaptation within a traditional Indonesian *pesantren*. A case study was appropriate because the research focused on stakeholder perceptions, relationships, and institutional practices within their organizational and cultural contexts.¹⁰ The purpose was not to produce statistical generalizations but to develop an analytically bounded explanation of how relational resources and institutional values operate within a specific educational setting.

Pondok Pesantren Mathali'ul Falah (PPMF) Pekiringan was treated as a bounded case encompassing the institution, its governance actors, and stakeholders directly connected to its educational and community activities. PPMF was selected purposively because it combined a *salaf*-oriented educational identity with selected technological facilities, informal alumni and community relationships, and centralized family based governance. The study was

¹⁰ Samson Mtisi, "The Qualitative Case Study Research Strategy as Applied on a Rural Enterprise Development Doctoral Research Project," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 21 (April 19, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221145849>; R K Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (New York: SAGE Publications, 2017), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=uX1ZDwAAQBAJ>.

conducted from January 12 to May 10, 2026, in Karangmoncol, Purbalingga Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. During this period, the researcher examined supervised student routines, learning activities, interactions with institutional leaders, smartphone regulation, and supervised computer and Internet use through the Vocational Training Center (*Balai Latihan Kerja* [BLK]).

2. Participants and sampling

Twelve participants were selected purposively based on their knowledge of PPMF governance, community relationships, student regulation, and institutional adaptation.¹¹ The internal participants included the *kiai* or chief caregiver, one member of the *ndalem* or family based administrative circle, and three student board members. External participants included three parents or guardians, two alumni, and two community leaders. Sampling sought variation in institutional position and experience rather than demographic representation, enabling a comparison between internal accounts and the perspectives of families, alumni, and community members.

Table 1. Participant groups and contributions to the study

Participant group	Code	Number	Main contribution
<i>Kiai</i>	K1	1	Leadership, institutional values, decision-making, and public trust
Member of <i>ndalem</i>	N1	1	Family-based administration, guardian communication, and institutional continuity
Student board members	SB1–SB3	3	Student discipline, routines, and technology regulation
Parents or guardians	P1–P3	3	Institutional selection, expectations, trust, and technology regulation
Alumni	A1–A2	2	Alumni attachment, informal networks, and participation
Community figures	C1–C2	2	Local legitimacy, community relationships, and social support
Total		12	

3. Data collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analyses. These sources provided complementary evidence of how social capital and institutional values were perceived and enacted at the PPMF.

3.1 Semi-structured interviews

All 12 participants took part in semi-structured interviews (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).¹² Participants other than the *kiai* were interviewed in two stages. The initial screening

¹¹ Karen M Staller, "Big Enough? Sampling in Qualitative Inquiry," *Qualitative Social Work* 20, no. 4 (July 15, 2021): 897–904, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211024516>.

¹² Omolola A. Adeoye-Olatunde and Nicole L. Olenik, "Research and Scholarly Methods: Semi-structured Interviews," *JACCP: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CLINICAL PHARMACY* 4, no. 10 (October 2, 2021): 1358–67, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>.

interviews lasted approximately 35 minutes and identified each participant's relationship with PPMF, knowledge of institutional practices, and issues requiring further exploration. Subsequent in-depth interviews lasted approximately 65 min. The interview with the *kiai* lasted for approximately 60 minutes.

The interview topics were adjusted according to the participants' institutional positions. The *kiai* and *ndalem* interviews addressed leadership, institutional history and values, public trust, family based administration, decision-making, and institutional continuity. The student board interviews focused on student routines, discipline, and technology regulation. Parent interviews examined institutional selection, educational expectations, affordability, trust, facilities, and smartphone use restrictions. Alumni and community interviews addressed continued participation, informal support, local legitimacy, and possible institutional development.

All interviews were conducted in Indonesian and documented through audio recordings and notes. The recordings were transcribed in Indonesian before coding, and the notes captured contextual information and emerging analytical observations. Selected quotations were translated into English, emphasizing semantic and contextual equivalence. A bilingual researcher checked the translations against Indonesian transcripts.

3.2 Participant observation and documents

The researcher conducted 17 participant-observation sessions, each lasting approximately 45 min, for a total of 12 h and 45 min. Observations focused on student routines, learning activities, interactions among students and institutional actors, respect for religious authority, smartphone regulation, and the supervised use of BLK facilities. Field notes were taken during or immediately after each session. Observations were used to contextualize reported practices but were not treated as evidence of participants' intentions without supporting interview or documentary data.

The documents included student registration information, institutional activity records, available notes on alumni or community participation, BLK information, public communication materials, and student technology regulations. Because these materials did not constitute comprehensive administrative records, they were used primarily to contextualize the cases and assess selected interview claims. The absence of formal documentation was not interpreted as evidence that informal participation had occurred.

4. Data analysis

Data analysis followed an iterative process of data condensation, display, thematic development and conclusion drawing.¹³ The primary researcher repeatedly read the Indonesian transcripts, interview and observation notes, and institutional documents before conducting initial coding. Putnam's (2000) concepts of trust, networks, and norms were used as sensitizing categories alongside religious authority, institutional values, and governance

¹³ Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, and Johny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage Publications, 2018.

adaptation to analyze the data.¹⁴ These concepts guided the analytical attention without functioning as fixed variables or predetermined themes.

Trust codes captured the accounts of moral reputation, parental confidence, and institutional legitimacy. Network codes addressed alumni attachment, community relationships, and stakeholder participation, whereas norm-related codes focused on discipline, religious learning, authority, and technology regulation. Value-mediated governance adaptation was used to identify instances in which institutional change was accepted, restricted, or reorganized according to religious, moral, and educational priorities.

The analysis combined concept-informed and data-responsive coding methods. The codes were compared across participant groups and sources to identify converging, complementary, and divergent accounts. For example, parents' attention to affordability, distance, and facilities qualified an interpretation of institutional selection based solely on trust, while differing views on smartphones revealed tension between discipline and digital access. An evidence matrix connected provisional themes with interview excerpts, observation notes, and available documents, helping to distinguish claims supported by multiple sources from interpretations based mainly on individual accounts.

The coding produced four themes: (1) public trust and institutional selection, (2) alumni and community networks, (3) value-mediated technology use, and (4) centralized, family based governance and sustainability. The research team reviewed the themes and their supporting evidence for conceptual clarity, alignment with the research question, and adequacy of the evidential support. Themes were revised when their boundaries were unclear or when the stakeholder accounts qualified the initial interpretation. This procedure represented a collaborative analytical review rather than a statistical assessment of intercoder reliability.

5. Trustworthiness and reflexivity

Credibility was supported through stakeholder variation, comparisons across data sources, and attention to divergent accounts.¹⁵ The evidence matrix maintained a record linking the interpretations to the supporting material. Transferability was addressed by describing the setting, participants, and boundaries of the case, whereas dependability and confirmability were supported through documented coding and team review.

The primary researcher's familiarity with the local educational and cultural context facilitated access and interpretation but could also have introduced assumptions about *pesantren* norms and authority.¹⁶ Reflexive notes, cross-source comparisons, and team discussions were used to examine these assumptions. Claims were limited to the scope of the

¹⁴ Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.

¹⁵ Sirwan Khalid Ahmed, "The Pillars of Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health* 2 (April 2024): 100051, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051>; Margaritha Charlotte Schlunegger, Maya Zumstein-Shaha, and Rebecca Palm, "Methodologic and Data-Analysis Triangulation in Case Studies: A Scoping Review," *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 46, no. 8 (August 30, 2024): 611–22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01939459241263011>.

¹⁶ Monica Peddle, "Maintaining Reflexivity in Qualitative Nursing Research," *Nursing Open* 9, no. 6 (November 24, 2022): 2908–14, <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.999>.

available evidence and presented as contextual interpretations rather than general conclusions about Indonesian *Pesantren*.

6. Ethical considerations

This study was not reviewed by a formal institutional ethics committee. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from PPMF through the *ndalem*; this institutional permission was not equivalent to independent ethical approval. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the intended use of the data, and their right to decline questions or withdraw from the study. Informed consent was obtained before the interviews and audio recordings. Participant observation was conducted using institutional knowledge and permission. Names were replaced with participant codes to protect their identities. However, because PPMF was identified and the number of institutional leaders was small, complete anonymity could not be guaranteed in this case. The participants were informed of this limitation. Therefore, reporting excluded unnecessary personal information and focused on institutional practices and stakeholder perspectives. The institution and its leadership were identified with permission from the relevant authorities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The analysis produced four themes: (1) public trust and institutional selection, (2) alumni and community networks, (3) value-mediated technology use, and (4) centralized, family based governance and sustainability. The themes were developed by comparing stakeholder accounts with participant observations and the available documents. They are presented as case-specific patterns rather than as independent causal mechanisms. Table 2 summarizes the main evidence and findings.

Table 2. Thematic summary of social capital and governance adaptation at PPMF

Theme	Principal evidence	Case-specific pattern
Public trust and institutional selection	<i>Kiai</i> and parent interviews; observations of direct communication; public communication materials	Trust supports institutional legitimacy but interacts with affordability, distance, facilities, and perceived quality.
Alumni and community networks	<i>Kiai</i> , alumni, and community interviews; participation in study sessions and events	Relationships were maintained through religious attachment and event-based participation rather than through formal organizations.
Value-mediated technology use	Student board and parent interviews; observations of the BLK and smartphone regulation	Supervised technology was accepted for learning, whereas personal smartphone access was restricted.
Governance continuity and sustainability	<i>Ndalem</i> , alumni, and community interviews; limited institutional records	Family based governance supported continuity, but alumni coordination and succession arrangements remained informal.

1. Public trust in the *kiai* and institutional selection

Institutional participants positioned the *kiai* as a moral and religious figure whose reputation developed through continuing engagement with the surrounding community. K1 associated public confidence with personal conduct rather than formal promotion:

"We do not advertise publicly; public trust is built over years of consistent behaviour and communal interaction." (K1)

Participant observations around the *ndalem* provided contextual support for this description. During several sessions, guardians and community members communicated with institutional actors through direct interactions. The *ndalem* remained an accessible channel for discussing institutional and student-related issues. These observations did not independently establish the existence of trust but showed the continuing importance of face-to-face communication. PPMF also used Instagram, although the available public materials indicated that it supplemented, rather than replaced, direct communication.

Parents identified trust in the *kiai* as a consideration when selecting a PPMF. P1 connected religious confidence with practical institutional conditions as follows:

*"I believe that the *kiai* will guide my child to learn Islam properly. I chose PPMF because the distance is manageable, and the learning facilities are sufficient."* (P1)

P1 similarly emphasized that distance and educational costs were important considerations under uncertain economic conditions. The participants regarded PPMF as relatively affordable while providing an educational quality close to parental expectations. Therefore, the parent accounts did not support an explanation based on religious trust alone. Trust in the *kiai* was considered alongside accessibility, affordability, facilities, and perceived educational quality of the pesantren. Institutional selection in this case reflected a combination of moral confidence and practical considerations.

2. Alumni and community networks as informal relational resources

Relationships with alumni were maintained primarily through religious activities, personal connections, and participation in specific institutional events. The available records do not indicate a formal alumni organization, a fixed contribution system, or a comprehensive membership database. K1 described the relationship as a spiritual and educational connection sustained when former students continued attending religious lectures.

Alumni accounts support this characterization. A1 described their continuing participation in religious learning as follows:

"Although I have graduated from PPMF, I sometimes attend regular study sessions to refresh and increase my knowledge of Islam." (A1)

A1's attendance depended on the available time because of responsibilities in the family grocery business. A2 described a more event-based form of participation, stating, Alumni with different occupational and family responsibilities attempted to attend PPMF activities and sometimes assisted in preparations for *Akhirussanah*. These accounts indicate that alumni involvement includes study attendance, personal contact, and event assistance but does not necessarily involve regular administrative or financial responsibilities.

Community participants described the PPMF as an educational, religious, and social space. C1 noted that institutional events created opportunities for local interaction and small-scale economic activity:

"Pesantren have become places where residents meet and socialize, he said. Many residents sell snacks and drinks during pesantren events, which also supports the surrounding community's economy." (C1)

C1 described *kiai* as a source of religious and social guidance for local residents, particularly when community members sought advice on everyday matters. Community participation was visible in religious lectures, student departures and returns, and other institutional events.

Together, these accounts show that alumni and community relationships support religious continuity, social interaction, event participation, and local legitimacy. Their operation largely depends on personal attachment, voluntary attendance, and situational availability. The limited institutional records are consistent with the informal character of these relationships but do not provide a complete account of their frequency or material contribution.

3. Value-mediated technology use and student discipline

PPMF provided computers and Internet access through BLK for school assignments and practical learning while restricting students' personal smartphone use. A student board member explained this operational distinction as follows:

"We are allowed to use computers for school assignments in the BLK under supervision, but our personal mobile phones must be deposited with board members after school hours." (SB1)

The participant observations supported this account. Computers and Internet access were located in a designated learning facility rather than in students' residential spaces. Their use was connected to supervised educational tasks and was not available as unrestricted personal access. Personal smartphones were subject to rules governing when and where students could use them in class.

Parents generally supported restrictions intended to protect students' attention and religious learning during the pandemic. P1 expressed concern that continuous smartphone access could distract students from their learning responsibilities and supported restrictions

that enabled them to focus on religious and general education subjects. P3, however, argued that maintaining discipline should not prevent structured access to digital resources:

“PPMF should provide digital learning access, even though it is a traditional pesantren. For example, library digitalization would make it easier for children to access learning materials.” (P3)

P3 also considered knowledge of appropriate smartphone and Internet use important for students. Neither parent rejected the educational use of technology in the classroom. Their accounts differed primarily in terms of the degree and form of access they considered appropriate. One emphasized protection from distraction, while the other emphasized supervised access and opportunities for digital learning.

The interview and observational evidence showed that PPMF accepted technology when it served identified educational purposes, while restricting access perceived as inconsistent with memorization, discipline, and moral formation. The data therefore indicate supervised and selective technology use rather than either complete rejection or comprehensive digital transformation.

4. Centralized authority, family-based administration, and governance sustainability

Kiai and *ndalem* occupy central positions in decision-making, communication, and the maintenance of institutional values. N1 explained that family involvement originated from a responsibility inherited from the founder and was understood as a commitment to sustaining PPMF:

“We were entrusted to ensure the continuity of the PPMF. Although we are a family, we try to provide the best service to the community, and it is easier to remind one another because we are family.” (N1)

This study indicated that family based administration was supported by shared responsibility, historical commitment, and direct interpersonal coordination. Family relationships enable institutional actors to communicate and correct each other without extensive formal procedures. However, the available data provide less information about formal divisions of responsibility, documented decision-making processes, and succession arrangements.

The distinction between relational commitment and formal coordination is also visible in alumni involvement. A1 suggested:

“The pesantren should create an alumni association so that coordination becomes easier and communication can better support pesantren activities.” (A1)

This suggests that continuing alumni attachment has not developed into a systematic organizational structure. An alumni association was presented as a possible mechanism for

coordinating existing relationships rather than creating entirely new connections between alumni and PPMF.

C2 also reported that government assistance supported building renovation and classroom construction at PPMF. This study identified external infrastructure assistance as a resource associated with institutional continuity. However, the available documentary materials do not comprehensively record the sources, administration, or distribution of such assistance. Therefore, the statement was treated as a participant account rather than independently verified evidence of specific funding arrangements.

Centralized and family based governance provides PPMF continuity, shared commitment, and direct coordination. Simultaneously, the data indicated limited formalization of alumni coordination and insufficient documentary evidence concerning succession and resource-management procedures. These findings describe the features of the existing governance arrangement but do not establish that the PPMF faced an immediate institutional crisis.

5. Integrative summary

Social capital at PPMF is built through relationships among the *kiai*, *ndalem*, parents, alumni, students, and community members. Trust contributes to institutional selection, along with practical considerations. Alumni and community networks supported informal participation in the study. Technology was incorporated through supervised access, and family based governance sustained continuity. Across these themes, institutional changes were selectively accepted or regulated according to the PPMF's religious, moral, and educational priorities.

Discussion

This study examined the interaction between social capital and institutional values in governance adaptation at a traditional Indonesian *pesantren*. The findings indicate that adaptation at PPMF was embedded in relationships rather than being driven solely by formal modernization. Trust in the *kiai* contributes to legitimacy but operates alongside practical parental considerations. Alumni and community relationships provide informal support. The technology was selectively accepted. Family based governance sustained continuity while leaving some administrative functions informal. Together, these patterns suggest that social capital became relevant to governance when it was mediated through religious authority, institutional norms, and stakeholders' expectations.

1. Trust as relational and pragmatic legitimacy

Trust in the *kiai* functioned as a source of institutional legitimacy, consistent with Putnam's (2000) view that trust facilitates cooperation and collective confidence.¹⁷ At PPMF, this trust appeared to develop through moral reputation, accessibility, and repeated face-to-face interactions rather than extensive branding. This interpretation corresponds with studies linking *kiai* leadership and moral credibility to *pesantren* reputation and stakeholder

¹⁷ Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.

support.¹⁸ However, the parent accounts qualify any assumption that religious authority alone determines the institutional selection. Distance, fees, facilities, and perceived educational quality were also important, reflecting evidence that parental choice combines relational confidence with assessments of cost, services, and institutional suitability.¹⁹

This finding refines the application of social capital theory to educational governance. Trust is neither an abstract cultural attribute nor a substitute for institutional provisions. Its significance depended partly on whether the PPMF remained accessible and adequate for families. Therefore, relational and practical legitimacy operated together: the *kiai*'s reputation gave the institution moral credibility, while affordability and educational provision made that credibility actionable in parental decisions. Because the study did not measure enrolment trends or compare PPMF with competing schools, this pattern should be interpreted as a stakeholder-based explanation rather than as evidence that trust directly increased recruitment.

For PPMF and similar institutions, the implication is to preserve direct communication while making practical information more transparent. Clear information about fees, facilities, learning arrangements, student protection, and available digital resources can complement, rather than displace, relationships with families. Relational trust may be strengthened when parents connect moral leadership with visible institutional reliability.

2. Informal networks as social capital

Alumni and community relationships operated as informal social capital through study attendance, event participation, personal attachment, and local activities. These patterns are consistent with research showing that alumni partnerships and community relationships can support *pesantren* continuity through moral commitment and voluntary participation.²⁰ Using Putnam's framework, alumni attachment can be understood as a bonding relationship grounded in a shared educational history, whereas connections with local residents and external actors may provide bridging opportunities. This distinction is interpretive rather than definitive because the study did not map the structure or intensity of networks.

The findings also show why informal social capital should not be idealized. Flexibility allowed alumni to contribute according to their availability, but the absence of systematic records or coordination limited the predictability and organizational memory. Social attachment alone does not ensure sustained resource mobilization. The suggestion to establish an alumni association demonstrated that the participants recognized a difference between maintaining relationships and coordinating them. This supports studies showing that

¹⁸ Azizah and Sugiono, "Social Modalities of Kiai in The Development of Islamic Boarding School"; Faisal et al., "Strengthening Religious Moderatism through the Traditional Authority of Kiai in Indonesia."

¹⁹ Wernando Wilys Aritonang, Ronald Suryaputra, and Dany M. Handarini, "The Influence of School Image, Service Quality, and Parental Trust on School Choice Decisions," *Journal of Educational Management Research* 5, no. 2 (February 2, 2026): 1441–54, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i2.1896>; Stephanie Tjay, Widi Dewi, and Teguh Widodo, "The Effect of Education Quality and Tuition Fees on School Selection Decisions Through Mediation of School Image at Citra Bangsa School Tangerang," *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE)* 8, no. 2 (May 1, 2025): 5133–48, <https://doi.org/10.31538/IIJSE.V8I2.6667>.

²⁰ Mufidah, Maskuri, and Listiyo, "Integral Education in Institutional Development: Partnership between Islamic Boarding Schools and Alumni"; Tahira et al., "Social Capital in Islamic Community-Based Pesantren."

trust and shared norms may facilitate participation while still requiring organizational mechanisms to sustain collective action.²¹

A proportionate response would be light formalization rather than an extensive bureaucracy. The PPMF can appoint an alumni contact person, develop a consent-based directory, maintain an annual activity calendar, and document voluntary contributions and responsibilities. Simple reporting procedures can improve transparency without converting religious attachment into compulsory participation. Community engagement can also be planned around activities that already attract local involvement. These measures are practical possibilities arising from the case; their effectiveness requires subsequent evaluation.

3. Value-mediated technology adaptation

The technological findings challenge a binary interpretation in which traditional institutions either embrace digitalization or resist change. The PPMF permitted supervised computer and Internet access through the BLK while restricting personal smartphones in residential life. Therefore, institutional norms operated as a filter through which technology was differentiated by purpose, setting, and perceived educational risk. This pattern is consistent with studies suggesting that *pesantren* digitalization is negotiated alongside discipline, religious learning, infrastructure, and moral concerns.²²

The contrasting parental emphasis is analytically important. Support for smartphone restrictions reflected concerns about distraction, while requests for digital libraries and structured access reflected concerns about students' future competence. These positions were not mutually exclusive of each other. Both treated regulations as legitimate but differed over the balance between protection and opportunity. Value-mediated adaptation thus involves negotiation over the conditions of access rather than a simple decision to accept or reject technology.

This interpretation places limits on both the modernization and preservation claims. Supervised BLK access does not demonstrate a comprehensive digital transformation, and smartphone restrictions do not establish technological resistance. The available evidence concerns institutional arrangements and stakeholder perceptions, not their effects on learning, discipline or digital competence. Future evaluations are needed before concluding that the existing approach improves educational outcomes.

The practical implication is the development of a graduated digital-access model. PPMF could combine scheduled BLK use, curated digital library resources, supervised research tasks, age-appropriate digital literacy, and explicit guidance on online ethics and safety. Teachers and student board members would require clear responsibilities for supervision, and access rules should be communicated to parents and periodically reviewed. Such measures align

²¹ Syamsuri et al., "Five Principles of Pesantren as Social Capital to Overcome the Problems of Economic Business Development at Pesantren"; Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School."

²² Rachmad Arif Ma'ruf et al., "Islamic Boarding Schools and Technology: Efforts to Overcome Social Changes in Santri Misuse of Gadgets," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 2 (June 20, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5338>; Apriyanto Nugroho and Anita Puji Astutik, "Digital Transformation of Islamic Boarding School Education," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 12, no. 2 (May 4, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijis.v12i2.1723>.

with research emphasizing managed digital literacy and ethically guided technology use in *pesantren*.²³ They would extend the institution's existing regulatory logic rather than require unrestricted access to devices.

4. Family-based governance, continuity, and sustainability

Family based administration provides PPMF with historical continuity, shared commitment, and direct coordination. The *ndalem* account showed that responsibility was understood as an inherited service to the institution and community. This finding aligns with research showing how *kiai* leadership and family relationships can sustain *pesantren* values, organizational culture, and institutional direction.²⁴ In a relatively small institution, relational proximity may allow decisions and communication to occur without elaborate procedures to be followed.

However, the same arrangement may create vulnerabilities when responsibilities, external assistance, and succession processes remain poorly documented. The findings do not demonstrate an immediate governance crisis; rather, they identify uncertainty about how existing relationships would be maintained during leadership transition or organizational expansion. Therefore, family commitment and formal administration should not be treated as opposing models. Social capital can provide legitimacy and participation, whereas documentation can support continuity, accountability, and institutional memory. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing transparency, communication, and resource management in *pesantren* governance.²⁵

Practical strengthening could begin with modest measures: written role descriptions, records of major decisions and external assistance, basic financial and asset documentation, an alumni liaison mechanism, and periodic discussions of leadership continuity. These measures do not need to redistribute the *kiai*'s religious authority. Their purpose would be to make existing responsibilities traceable and to reduce dependence on unrecorded knowledge. Any formalization should be developed with the *ndalem* and relevant stakeholders to ensure that it remains culturally workable.

5. Theoretical and broader educational implications

This study offers two related conceptual implications for research and practice. First, the findings suggest that social capital in culturally embedded educational governance should not be understood as merely external support for formal administration. Research on school networks and educational governance similarly demonstrates that trust and relationships can

²³ Aep Saepurohman et al., "Strategic Management of Digital Literacy Initiatives in Islamic Boarding Schools of Tasikmalaya," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (May 22, 2025): 238–50, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i2.1711>; Taufikin Taufikin et al., "Integrating Creative Digital Content in Pesantren: Improving Santri's Digital Literacy And Islamic Learning," *Edukasia Islamika* 10, no. 1 (June 23, 2025): 35–54, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v10i1.10326>.

²⁴ Samsul Arifin et al., "Kiai's Transformative Leadership in Developing an Organizational Culture of Islamic Boarding Schools: Multicase Study," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 2 (June 30, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5325>; Wajdi et al., "The Pattern of Leadership of Kiai in Managing Learning Pesantren."

²⁵ Imro Atus Soliha, Faridi Faridi, and Tobroni Tobroni, "Building Transparency and Accountability: Implementation of Good Governance in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools of Muhammadiyah Paciran," *International Journal Of Education, Social Studies, And Management (IJESSM)* 4, no. 3 (January 4, 2025): 1326–39, <https://doi.org/10.52121/ijessm.v4i3.573>.

be embedded in leadership, participation, coordination, and institutional capacity.²⁶ At PPMF, trust, networks, and norms were part of how legitimacy, participation, technology regulation, and institutional continuity were enacted, consistent with recent *pesantren* research connecting social capital with alumni relations, community participation, institutional resilience, and responses to technological change.²⁷ Religious authority shaped these processes but did not eliminate stakeholders' practical judgments or differing expectations, reflecting evidence that faith-based educational leadership operates through culturally situated relationships while remaining responsive to organizational and contextual demands.²⁸ This case illustrates social capital as a conditional governance resource whose operation depends on institutional provision, coordination, communication, and accountability.²⁹

Second, value-mediated governance adaptation provides a cautious way to understand institutional change that seeks continuity alongside responsiveness. Recent *pesantren* research similarly depicts adaptation as selective and context-dependent, with institutions maintaining core religious and cultural values while modifying educational provision, governance arrangements, or organizational practices.³⁰ The concept does not describe a fixed model or developmental stage. Rather, it functions as a heuristic for examining how proposed changes are assessed against institutional values, permitted in selected settings, or constrained through institutional rules. Studies of *pesantren* adaptation and technology regulation demonstrate comparable efforts to balance modernization, digital access, discipline, and religious identity.³¹ At PPMF, this process was visible in supervised technology

²⁶ Jacqueline Baxter and Melanie Ehren, "Factors Contributing to and Detracting from Relational Trust in Leadership: The Case of Primary Schools in South Africa," *Frontiers in Education* 8 (March 23, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.1004575>; Ruth Bourke, "Responding to Complexity in Disadvantaged School Contexts: The Role of School Networks in Building Social Capital," *Irish Educational Studies* 42, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 1043–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2023.2258499>; Chris Brown et al., "How Educational Leaders Can Maximise the Social Capital Benefits of Inter-School Networks: Findings from a Systematic Review," *International Journal of Educational Management* 38, no. 1 (January 18, 2024): 213–64, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-09-2023-0447>; Kwok Kuen Tsang et al., "Social Participation of Social Organizations in Education Governance in China," *Asia Pacific Education Review* 25, no. 2 (June 26, 2024): 287–98, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-022-09771-8>.

²⁷ Mufidah, Maskuri, and Listiyo, "Integral Education in Institutional Development: Partnership between Islamic Boarding Schools and Alumni"; Tahira et al., "Social Capital in Islamic Community-Based Pesantren"; Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School."

²⁸ Khalid Arar, Rania Sawalhi, and Munube Yilmaz, "The Research on Islamic-Based Educational Leadership since 1990: An International Review of Empirical Evidence and a Future Research Agenda," *Religions* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): 42, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010042>; Elize Jacinto et al., "Religion-Spirituality Influences in the Governance of Faith-Based Organizations during the Covid Pandemic," *Public Organization Review* 23, no. 2 (June 27, 2023): 531–50, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-023-00704-6>.

²⁹ Baxter and Ehren, "Factors Contributing to and Detracting from Relational Trust in Leadership: The Case of Primary Schools in South Africa"; Brown et al., "How Educational Leaders Can Maximise the Social Capital Benefits of Inter-School Networks: Findings from a Systematic Review"; Tsang et al., "Social Participation of Social Organizations in Education Governance in China."

³⁰ Muttaqin, "Institutional Adaptation of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia: Balancing Tradition and Modern Education"; Shofiyullah Muzammil et al., "THE ADAPTABILITY OF PESANTREN IN INDONESIA DURING THE NEW NORMAL ERA," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 16, no. 2 (December 1, 2022): 426, <https://doi.org/10.15642/IIIS.2022.16.2.426-454>; Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School."

³¹ Ma'ruf et al., "Islamic Boarding Schools and Technology: Efforts to Overcome Social Changes in Santri Misuse of Gadgets"; Muttaqin, "Institutional Adaptation of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia: Balancing Tradition and Modern Education";

access, informal alumni participation, and the possible gradual formalization of administrative practices and patterns that resonate with research on regulated technology use and alumni partnerships in Islamic boarding schools.³²

Although *pesantren* have distinctive histories and authority structures, these implications may be relevant to other community-based or faith-oriented schools in which leadership legitimacy, cultural values, and informal relationships influence governance.³³ Research on faith-based organizations, school networks, and community participation similarly indicates that governance is shaped by interactions among leadership, values, networks, organizational capacity, and accountability, rather than by formal structures alone.³⁴ The analytical transfer therefore lies in the questions raised—who authorizes change, which values filter it, how informal support is coordinated, and where relational governance requires documentation—rather than in assuming that the PPMF provides a model for other institutions.

6. Limitations and future research

The findings are limited by a single case, purposive participation, and a fieldwork period that did not cover a complete institutional year. Ordinary resident students, teachers, and government representatives were not included, and institutional records concerning informal contributions and external assistance were also incomplete. This study examined perceptions and practices but did not measure enrolment, learning outcomes, financial sustainability, or digital competence. The identification of the institution also limited participant anonymity despite the use of codes.

Comparative studies could examine whether value-mediated adaptation appears across *pesantren* of different sizes, leadership structures, locations, and degrees of modernization. Longitudinal research could trace how trust, technology regulation, alumni coordination, and succession develop over time. Future studies should integrate student perspectives, governance documents, digital-literacy measures, and institutional outcome data. Such work would clarify which patterns are specific to PPMF and which have wider analytical relevance.

Wahono et al., "The Role of Social Capital of Islamic Students (Santri) in Facing the Impacts of Globalization: A Case Study at Buntet Islamic Boarding School."

³² Ma'ruf et al., "Islamic Boarding Schools and Technology: Efforts to Overcome Social Changes in Santri Misuse of Gadgets"; Mufidah, Maskuri, and Listiyo, "Integral Education in Institutional Development: Partnership between Islamic Boarding Schools and Alumni."

³³ Arar, Sawalhi, and Yilmaz, "The Research on Islamic-Based Educational Leadership since 1990: An International Review of Empirical Evidence and a Future Research Agenda"; Khalid Arar and Anna Saiti, "Ethical Leadership, Ethical Dilemmas and Decision Making Among School Administrators," *Equity in Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2022): 126–41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461211070828>; Baxter and Ehren, "Factors Contributing to and Detracting from Relational Trust in Leadership: The Case of Primary Schools in South Africa"; Jacinto et al., "Religion-Spirituality Influences in the Governance of Faith-Based Organizations during the Covid Pandemic."

³⁴ Bourke, "Responding to Complexity in Disadvantaged School Contexts: The Role of School Networks in Building Social Capital"; Brown et al., "How Educational Leaders Can Maximise the Social Capital Benefits of Inter-School Networks: Findings from a Systematic Review"; Jacinto et al., "Religion-Spirituality Influences in the Governance of Faith-Based Organizations during the Covid Pandemic"; Tsang et al., "Social Participation of Social Organizations in Education Governance in China."

CONCLUSION

This study examined the interaction between social capital and institutional values in governance adaptation within a traditional Indonesian pesantren. The findings indicate that governance at PPMF was sustained through relationships among the kiai, ndalem, parents, alumni, students, and the community. Trust supported institutional legitimacy but operated alongside parents' practical considerations of the school. Informal networks enabled continued participation. The technology was accepted under supervised conditions. Family based administration supports continuity while leaving some coordination and succession arrangements weakly documented.

This study contributes a value-mediated perspective to educational governance adaptation. From this perspective, institutional change is neither automatically accepted as modernization nor rejected in defence of tradition. Instead, proposed changes are assessed, limited, or reorganized according to religious, moral, and educational priorities. Consequently, social capital functioned as a conditional governance resource: trust, networks, and norms supported participation and continuity, but their institutional value depended partly on practical provision, coordination, and accountability.

For PPMF, the findings suggest the potential value of gradual and culturally workable improvements, including clearer institutional information, light alumni coordination, supervised digital learning opportunities, basic administrative documentation, and discussion of leadership continuity. These possibilities should complement, rather than replace, existing relational practices. Because the evidence comes from one purposively selected case and does not include institutional outcome measures, the findings should not be generalized to all pesantren schools. Their broader relevance lies in providing questions and concepts for examining how other community-based or faith-oriented educational institutions negotiate continuity and changes.

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