

کنزل

JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAMIC STUDIES

<https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/jiis/index>

Transformation of Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Garut (1986–2021): Institutional, Educational, and Social Aspects

Akbar Rahman Hakim^{1✉}, Ajid Thohir², Fathia Lestari³

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

Articles

Information

History:

Received: February

Approved: March

Publish: May

Keywords: Pesantren
Transformation; Islamic
Education; Modernization;
Institutional Adaptation;
Darussalam

Abstract

This study examines the transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Kersamanah, Garut, from 1986 to 2021 as a dynamic process of institutional adaptation within contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia. This study addresses an important gap in pesantren studies, as previous research has largely focused on general modernization trends, while limited attention has been given to longitudinal historical analyses of pesantren transformation using institutional perspectives. This research employs a historical method involving heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Data were collected from archival documents, institutional records, internal publications, and interviews with key informants. Talcott Parsons' structural-functional theory was employed as the analytical framework to examine how pesantren adapt to changing social and educational environments while maintaining institutional continuity. The findings reveal that the transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam occurred through three major phases: the pioneering phase (1986–1995), the consolidation phase (1996–2008), and the expansion phase (2009–2021). The transformation involved three major dimensions: institutional transformation, educational transformation, and social transformation. The findings show that Darussalam successfully evolved from a relatively small pesantren into a modern Islamic educational institution through governance restructuring, educational innovation, infrastructure expansion, digital adaptation, and economic strengthening. Despite significant modernization, the pesantren maintained its core identity through the preservation of Islamic values, discipline, classical Islamic scholarship, and character formation. This study demonstrates that pesantren transformation in contemporary Indonesia should be understood as a multidimensional process involving adaptation, continuity, modernization, and institutional sustainability. The study contributes to broader discussions on pesantren studies and Islamic education by offering a structural-functional perspective for understanding the transformation of Islamic educational institutions in modern Indonesia.

✉ Email Correspondent:
akbarrahmanhakim9@gmail.com

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have long been recognized as one of the oldest and most influential Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Historically, *pesantren* have played a central role not only in transmitting Islamic knowledge but also in shaping religious authority, moral values, and social life within Muslim communities. As indigenous Islamic institutions, *pesantren* have significantly contributed to the development of Islamic education, social transformation, and community empowerment across various regions in Indonesia (Dhofier, 2011; Bruinessen, 1995). Their existence reflects the close relationship between religious education, cultural traditions, and the socio-religious structure of Indonesian Muslim society.

Over time, *pesantren* have experienced substantial transformation in response to social, political, economic, and educational changes. The rapid development of modern education, technological advancement, globalization, and increasing public expectations have encouraged *pesantren* to adapt their institutional systems while maintaining their religious identity. This transformation has affected various dimensions of *pesantren* life, including educational systems, organizational management, leadership patterns, infrastructure development, and institutional roles in society (Azra, 2012; Ziemek, 1986). As a result, contemporary *pesantren* can no longer be viewed merely as traditional religious institutions, but as dynamic Islamic institutions continuously negotiating between tradition and modernity.

The modernization of *pesantren* in Indonesia has produced diverse patterns of transformation. Some *pesantren* maintain traditional systems centered on the study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), while others integrate formal education, modern management, digital technology, and professional governance. In many cases, *pesantren* transformation does not involve abandoning traditional educational values but rather reconfiguring them within more adaptive institutional frameworks. This demonstrates that *pesantren* modernization is often characterized by continuity and adaptation rather than institutional replacement (Mastuhu, 1994; Qomar, 2006).

This phenomenon has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Previous studies have examined *pesantren* from various perspectives, including *pesantren* tradition and religious authority (Dhofier, 2011), modernization and institutional change (Ziemek, 1986), Islamic education and globalization (Lukens-Bull, 2001), and *pesantren* transformation in the contemporary era (Azra, 2012). Other studies have highlighted the role of *pesantren* in social mobility, educational innovation, and community empowerment. These studies confirm that *pesantren* remain adaptive institutions capable of responding to changing societal demands.

Despite the growing body of literature, several important gaps remain. First, many studies on *pesantren* transformation focus on general modernization trends without examining transformation processes longitudinally across specific historical periods. Second, limited studies explore how *pesantren* transformation occurs as a multidimensional institutional process involving organizational restructuring, educational adaptation, and social expansion simultaneously. Third, few studies specifically analyze *pesantren* transformation using structural-functional perspectives to understand how Islamic educational institutions maintain continuity while adapting to changing environments.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Kersamanah, Garut, from 1986 to 2021. Pondok Pesantren Darussalam provides an important case for understanding pesantren transformation because it represents an Islamic educational institution that successfully transformed from a relatively small pesantren into a modern and rapidly growing institution while preserving its pesantren identity. Over more than three decades, Darussalam experienced significant transformation in institutional governance, educational systems, infrastructure development, social influence, and economic capacity.

This study employs Talcott Parsons' structural-functional theory as an analytical framework. Parsons argues that institutions survive and remain relevant through their ability to adapt to changing social conditions while maintaining functional stability (Parsons, 1951). This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant for understanding pesantren transformation, as pesantren continuously negotiate institutional adaptation and continuity in response to changing educational and social demands.

The novelty of this study lies in its longitudinal historical analysis of pesantren transformation through a structural-functional perspective. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on general modernization or descriptive institutional development, this research examines pesantren transformation as a multidimensional process involving institutional adaptation, educational transformation, organizational expansion, and sustainability. This study argues that the transformation of pesantren is best understood not merely as modernization, but as a dynamic process of adaptation, continuity, and institutional strengthening.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Kersamanah, Garut, from 1986 to 2021, with particular attention to institutional transformation, educational transformation, and social transformation. This study also seeks to explain how pesantren as Islamic educational institutions maintain relevance, sustainability, and social legitimacy amid changing social and educational environments.

Method

This study employed the historical method, as it aimed to examine and reconstruct the development of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Garut based on relevant historical sources. The research was conducted through four interconnected stages: heuristics, which involved the collection of historical sources; source criticism, which assessed the authenticity and credibility of the data; interpretation, which analyzed and assigned meaning to the historical facts; and historiography, which presented the findings in the form of a systematic historical narrative (Thohir & Sahidin, 2019).

The heuristic stage was conducted by collecting various sources related to the research object at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Sindangsari Village, Kersamanah District, Garut Regency. The research sources were classified into four categories: primary sources, consisting of documents, internal archives, photographs, and pesantren artifacts; oral sources, obtained through interviews with the first generation of students, senior teachers, members of the pesantren leader's family, and community leaders; archival sources, including institutional records and *MIKDAR Magazine* published during the 1990s;

and secondary sources, comprising books, journal articles, undergraduate theses, and other relevant digital resources.

The next stage involved source criticism, which consisted of external and internal criticism. External criticism was conducted to verify the authenticity of sources by examining the identity of the author or publisher, the publication date, and the physical condition of the documents. For example, *MIKDAR Magazine* was verified based on its publisher, year of publication, and consistency with the editions circulated during the corresponding period. Once the authenticity of the sources had been established, internal criticism was carried out to assess the credibility of their contents by analyzing the substance of the information, data consistency, and potential bias. The validity of the findings was further strengthened through comparison of primary, oral, and archival sources, resulting in historical facts that were both authentic and credible as the basis for historical interpretation.

The interpretation stage involved analyzing historical facts that had been verified through source criticism. The analysis employed Talcott Parsons' structural-functional approach to explain how the educational system, human resources, organizational structure, and supporting facilities interacted to sustain the development of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam. Using Parsons' AGIL framework (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency), the pesantren's development was understood as the institution's ability to adapt to social changes, achieve its organizational goals, maintain institutional integration, and preserve its core values over time (Parsons, 2013).

The final stage was historiography, which involved organizing the research findings into a systematic, chronological, and analytical historical narrative. The verified and interpreted historical facts were synthesized to reconstruct the development of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Garut in accordance with the research objectives and focus.

Results

Socio-Religious Context of Garut in the 1980s

The socio-religious condition of Garut in the 1980s provides an important background for understanding the emergence and transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Kersamanah. During this period, Garut society was still strongly rooted in Islamic values and rural social structures. Most communities lived within agrarian settings, where social relations were shaped by kinship, mutual assistance, communal solidarity, and respect for religious authorities. In this context, ulama and kiai occupied a central position as moral guides, religious educators, and social leaders.

During the New Order period, Islamic life in Garut developed through various religious activities, including Qur'anic study circles, madrasah education, majelis taklim, and pesantren-based learning. Pesantren functioned not only as religious educational institutions but also as centers for moral formation and social guidance. The strong influence of ulama in Garut demonstrates that Islamic leadership played a significant role in shaping social and religious life in the region (Gumilar, 2019).

The development of Islamic educational institutions in Garut during the 1980s also reflected a broader process of educational change. Several pesantren began to combine religious learning with formal education in response to the changing needs of society. This transformation was visible in several Islamic educational institutions in Garut, including

Pondok Pesantren Cipari and Persis Tarogong, which began adapting their educational systems while maintaining Islamic values (Nerla Misriani Saleh, 2010). At the same time, local religious traditions such as ziarah to the graves of ulama, village religious gatherings, Islamic commemorations, and local Sundanese rituals remained part of community life. This situation shows that Garut's religious culture in the 1980s was shaped by the interaction between Islamic norms, pesantren traditions, and local Sundanese culture.

This socio-religious environment created a supportive context for the emergence of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam as an Islamic educational institution. The strong religious character of Garut society, the authority of ulama, and the growing need for Islamic education provided an important foundation for the establishment and later transformation of the pesantren.

The Pioneering Phase: Establishment and Early Institutional Formation (1986–1995)

The pioneering phase of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sindangsari was rooted in a long historical process that began before its formal transformation in 1986. The pesantren tradition in the area had been initiated by H. Ahmad in 1915 and later continued by KH. Ishaq Asy'ary. During this early period, the pesantren developed as a family-based Islamic learning center and attracted students from various areas. However, its development was interrupted in 1954 due to security disturbances related to the DI/TII rebellion, which forced KH. Ishaq Asy'ary to leave the pesantren environment and move to Bandung (Ajang, 2026b).

Efforts to revive Islamic educational activities began in 1969 under KH. Abdul Mu'thy. He established Madrasah Diniyyah as a religious learning institution for the surrounding community and organized regular Islamic study sessions attended by local residents and non-resident students. These activities became the early foundation for restoring the function of the pesantren as a center of Islamic education and da'wah in Kersamanah.

A significant turning point occurred when KH. Abdul Mu'thy became familiar with the educational model of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor through his encounter with KH. Zainuddin Fananie in Jakarta. This encounter introduced a new vision of Islamic education that integrated religious knowledge, general education, character formation, discipline, and institutional management. As part of this educational renewal, KH. Abdul Mu'thy sent his sons to study at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. This decision became an important strategy for transferring the values, system, and institutional culture of Gontor to Darussalam.

The more structured development of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam began after the return of KH. Ahmad Ghozali Mu'thie from Gontor in 1972. In that year, the pesantren was established under the name "Darussalam" with the approval of KH. Imam Zarkasyi, one of the leaders of Pondok Modern Gontor (Muharrom, 2026). The development continued with the opening of the Tsanawiyah level using the Gontor curriculum and was strengthened by the return of KH. Asep Sholahuddin Mu'thie in 1978.

The pioneering phase reached a clearer institutional form on 9 December 1986, when KH. Cecep Ishaq Asy'ary Mu'thie returned from Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and Tarbiyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyyah (TMI) was officially established. TMI was led by three figures known as the Trimurti: KH. Ahmad Ghozali Mu'thie, KH. Asep Sholahuddin Mu'thie,

and KH. Cecep Ishaq Asy'ary Mu'thie. Each leader performed a distinct function. KH. Ahmad Ghozali Mu'thie focused on community development and religious activities, KH. Asep Sholahuddin Mu'thie was responsible for infrastructure and physical development, while KH. Cecep Ishaq Asy'ary Mu'thie managed the educational system. This division of roles contributed to a more organized pattern of leadership and institutional management.

The establishment of TMI marked the beginning of modern pesantren education at Darussalam. In its first year, the pesantren had 19 students (Hasan, Adang & Devi, 2026). Although the number was still small, this period was crucial because it introduced a new educational system adapted from Gontor. The system emphasized twenty-four-hour education, discipline, Arabic and English language development, student organization, and character formation. However, Darussalam did not fully abandon traditional pesantren learning. It continued to maintain the study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) as part of its curriculum. This integration shows that Darussalam's modernization did not eliminate the roots of pesantren tradition but combined modern educational management with classical Islamic scholarship.

During the period 1987–1989, student growth remained limited. The pesantren was still in a stage of social introduction and institutional consolidation. Limited facilities, human resources, and alumni networks contributed to slow development. Entering the early 1990s, particularly between 1990 and 1992, the number of students remained relatively stagnant. Nevertheless, public trust gradually increased. One important indicator was the growing demand from the community for the establishment of facilities for female students. Although the pesantren was not yet able to realize this due to limited resources, the demand reflected the community's growing confidence in Darussalam's educational system.

From 1993 to 1995, the pesantren began to show more stable development. Although student growth was not yet significant, institutional foundations became stronger through the consolidation of the education system, teacher development, and increasing public acceptance of the modern pesantren model (Ajang, 2026b). The continued interest of female students also became an important factor that later encouraged the establishment of the girls' pesantren. Therefore, the period 1986–1995 can be understood as the foundational phase in which Darussalam built its institutional identity, educational system, and public trust.

The Consolidation Phase: Institutional Strengthening and Educational Development (1996–2008)

The period 1996–2008 marked the consolidation phase of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam. This phase was characterized by the establishment of the girls' pesantren, the development of social education through Darul Aitam, the strengthening of the educational system, the growth of student enrollment, the increase in the number of teachers, and the development of infrastructure.

One of the most important institutional developments was the establishment of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Putri on 20 May 1995 (Joko Waluyo, 1966). The establishment of the girls' pesantren was driven by increasing public demand, particularly from families who wished to send their daughters to Darussalam. This development expanded the educational scope of the pesantren and strengthened its social presence. In

the same period, Darussalam also developed Darul Aitam, a pesantren for orphaned children. Initially, the education of orphans was carried out through TK/TP Al-Qur'an and Madrasah Diniyah. However, increasing social needs encouraged the pesantren to develop a more organized educational institution for orphans. The establishment of Darul Aitam demonstrates that Darussalam's transformation was not limited to formal education but also included social and humanitarian functions.

Institutional consolidation was also reflected in the transformation of the educational system from TMI to TMMI after the establishment of the girls' pesantren. Although the institutional structure changed, the educational system continued to refer to the Gontor curriculum, which emphasized character formation, discipline, language mastery, and the balance between religious and general knowledge (Ajang, 2026a).

Educational innovation also began to develop during this phase. In 1996, Darussalam organized journalism training for students to strengthen literacy and writing skills. This program later gave rise to an annual pesantren magazine, which functioned as a medium of communication, da'wah, and intellectual expression. In 1997, the pesantren collaborated with INCOM Bandung to introduce computer education to students (Waluyo, 1997). Although the facilities were limited to two computers and one printer, this initiative represented an early step in integrating technology into pesantren education.

Student enrollment increased steadily during the consolidation phase. In the 1997–1998 academic year, the pesantren had 212 students. This number increased to 233 in 1998–1999, 243 in 1999–2000, 283 in 2000–2001, and 317 in 2001–2002. In 2002–2003, the total number of residents reached approximately 400. By 2008–2009, the number of students had exceeded 600 (Darussalam, 2009). This increase indicates growing public trust in the quality and relevance of Darussalam's educational system.

Table 1. Student Enrollment Development during the Consolidation Phase

Academic Year	Number of Students
1997–1998	212
1998–1999	233
1999–2000	243
2000–2001	283
2001–2002	317
2002–2003	Approximately 400
2008–2009	More than 600

The growth of student enrollment was followed by an increase in the number of teachers. In 1998–1999, the pesantren had 35 teachers. This increased to 45 teachers in 2000–2001, 68 in 2005–2006, and 75 in 2007–2008 (Darussalam, 2009). Most teachers were alumni of TMI Darussalam, KMI Gontor, and ISID Gontor who lived within the pesantren environment. Their presence supported the twenty-four-hour educational system and strengthened student discipline and character formation.

Table 2. Development of Teachers during the Consolidation Phase

Academic Year	Number of Teachers
1998–1999	35
2000–2001	45
2005–2006	68
2007–2008	75

The pesantren also improved its learning system. In the 2002–2003 academic year, evaluations were conducted on teaching and learning activities, including student discipline, classroom conditions, cleanliness, and teaching methods (Darussalam, 2003). Additional learning programs such as *muwajjah*, *tasyji' al-lughah*, and night study guidance were introduced to strengthen academic ability and language competence. In 2006–2007, the study of classical Islamic texts was also reorganized. Previously held after Subuh, Maghrib, and Isya prayers, the *kitab kuning* sessions were adjusted to after Subuh and Maghrib to provide students with more effective evening study time (Darussalam, 2007). This adjustment shows that Darussalam was able to maintain classical Islamic learning while improving the efficiency of its educational system.

Government recognition further strengthened the position of the pesantren. Since 2005, the Department of National Education granted equivalency status to TMI, confirming that Darussalam's educational system had quality comparable to formal educational institutions (Darussalam, 2006a). In 2006–2007, the pesantren also attempted to pursue certificate equivalency with Al-Azhar University in Egypt to facilitate alumni access to higher education in the Middle East. This initiative reflects Darussalam's effort to connect local pesantren education with broader national and international educational networks.

Infrastructure development also became an important feature of the consolidation phase. In the late 1990s, infrastructure development focused on basic facilities such as connecting roads between the boys' pesantren, girls' pesantren, and Darul Aitam, as well as the construction of an artesian well to meet students' water needs (Darussalam, 1999). In 2001–2002, development expanded to include the construction of Madrasah Al-Qur'an buildings, dormitories, dining halls, sanitation facilities, and meeting rooms. In subsequent years, the pesantren continued to build classrooms, libraries, canteens, guest rooms, and administrative offices. In 2005, Darussalam also established Pos Kesehatan Pesantren (Poskestren) in collaboration with Puskesmas Kersamanah to provide health services for students and the surrounding community. These developments indicate that the pesantren was increasingly aware of the importance of educational support facilities and social services (Darussalam, 2006b).

The Expansion Phase: Organizational Strengthening, Modernization, and Institutional Growth (2009–2021)

The period 2009–2021 represents the expansion phase of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam. This phase was marked by rapid development in institutional governance, student enrollment, infrastructure, educational quality, digital outreach, waqf assets, and economic independence.

A major institutional milestone occurred on 15 January 2009 with the establishment of the Badan Wakaf Pondok Pesantren Darussalam (Darussalam, 2010a). The formation of the Waqf Board was based on the founders' awareness that the growing complexity of the pesantren required a collective, sustainable, and non-personalized management system. Within the institutional structure of Darussalam, the Waqf Board became the highest authority responsible for preserving the founders' vision and mission, supervising the implementation of the TMI educational system, managing waqf assets, and overseeing pesantren business units. The establishment of the Waqf Board marked a major shift from

personal leadership toward a more structured and collective institutional governance system.

The strengthening of governance directly contributed to the rapid increase in student enrollment. In 2009–2010, the pesantren had 600 students. The number increased to 710 in 2010–2011, 793 in 2011–2012, 946 in 2012–2013, 1,250 in 2013–2014, 1,440 in 2014–2015, 1,723 in 2015–2016, 1,857 in 2016–2017, 1,998 in 2017–2018, 2,145 in 2018–2019, 2,202 in 2019–2020, and 2,341 in 2020–2021. By the end of the period, the students were distributed across 72 classes for boys and girls.

Table 3. Student Enrollment Development during the Expansion Phase

Academic Year	Number of Students
2009–2010	600
2010–2011	710
2011–2012	793
2012–2013	946
2013–2014	1,250
2014–2015	1,440
2015–2016	1,723
2016–2017	1,857
2017–2018	1,998
2018–2019	2,145
2019–2020	2,202
2020–2021	2,341

This growth shows that student enrollment increased almost fourfold between 2009–2010 and 2020–2021. The number rose from 600 students to 2,341 students, indicating a substantial expansion of public trust and institutional capacity.

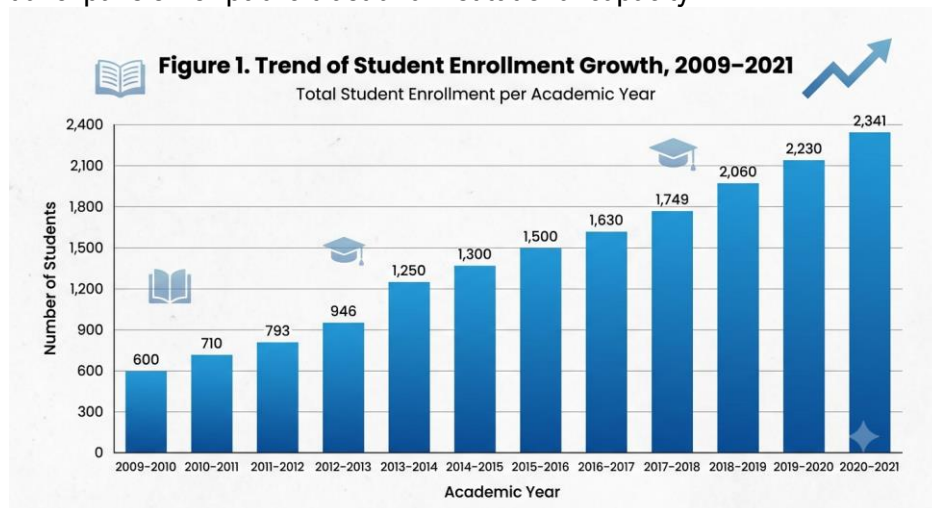


Figure 1. Trend of Student Enrollment Growth, 2009–2021

The increasing number of students was influenced by several factors. First, the formal recognition of the TMI system through the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 18 of 2014 concerning Muadalah Education strengthened Darussalam’s position as an Islamic educational institution equivalent to formal schooling (Darussalam, 2015). Second, the achievements of students and alumni in national and international da’wah competitions,

including AKSI and AKSI Asia, increased the public visibility of the pesantren. Third, the pesantren’s ability to use digital media strengthened its institutional branding. Since 2016, Darussalam has developed digital da’wah and publication through Instagram, YouTube, and its official website. These platforms enabled the pesantren to introduce its educational programs, student activities, and institutional achievements to a wider audience (Hasan, Adang & Devi, 2026).

The ability to adapt to digital media became particularly important in the context of educational competition among Islamic institutions. Digital platforms expanded the reach of pesantren communication and strengthened public trust. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Darussalam continued face-to-face learning with strict health protocols. This policy further reinforced community confidence in the pesantren’s commitment to maintaining the continuity of student education.

The rapid increase in student enrollment also created a greater need for infrastructure. During the expansion phase, Darussalam carried out intensive physical development. In 2009–2010, the pesantren built the Gedung Satelit, Gedung Al-Azhar, sanitation facilities in the girls’ complex, and renovated Gedung Al-Maidah and the football field. In 2010–2011, development continued with the rehabilitation of several buildings, the construction of a girls’ dining hall, the leadership office, and other supporting facilities. In 2012–2013, the pesantren built two-storey classroom buildings with twelve classrooms each in the boys’ and girls’ complexes, expanded Masjid Ar-Rahmah, established Balai Kesehatan Pesantren, and built a hall as a center for student activities (Darussalam, 2012). In subsequent years, infrastructure development continued through the construction of teachers’ housing, dormitories, sanitation facilities, and other educational facilities.

The expansion phase was also marked by the growth of waqf assets. In 2011, the pesantren owned approximately six hectares of waqf land. By 2021, the total waqf land had expanded to more than fourteen hectares. This increase shows the growing participation and trust of the community in the pesantren’s sustainability. The waqf assets were used not only for educational infrastructure but also as the basis for pesantren business units in agriculture, animal husbandry, trade, printing, transportation services, and telecommunication services. These business units became part of the pesantren’s strategy to develop economic independence and support increasing operational needs.

Table 4. Growth of Waqf Assets

Year	Waqf Land Area
2011	Approximately 6 hectares
2021	More than 14 hectares

The expansion phase was not only quantitative but also qualitative. Darussalam paid greater attention to teacher development through certification programs, Multaqa At-Tarbawi, and various teaching training programs involving academics and educational practitioners (Darussalam, 2010b). These programs strengthened teacher competence in teaching methodology, Arabic language instruction, classroom management, and character education. This indicates that pesantren development was not merely oriented toward the growth of student numbers and buildings but also toward improving human resources.

The strengthening of academic culture also became visible during this period. Since 2010, teachers have actively written and published their ideas through Buletin FIGUR (Forum Ilmiah Guru), which was published regularly. The bulletin became an intellectual

space for teachers to develop literacy, academic discussion, and educational reflection (Darussalam, 2011). This development shows that Darussalam sought not only to produce students with strong religious understanding but also to build an educational environment that encouraged scholarly culture among teachers.

Summary of Transformation Patterns

The transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam from 1986 to 2021 can be summarized into three major phases: pioneering, consolidation, and expansion. Each phase shows a distinct pattern of development.

Table 5. Phases of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Transformation

Phase	Period	Main Characteristics	Transformation Pattern
Pioneering	1986–1995	Establishment of TMI, early leadership consolidation, adoption of Gontor system, limited student growth	Formation of institutional identity
Consolidation	1996–2008	Establishment of girls' pesantren and Darul Aitam, growth of students and teachers, learning system improvement, infrastructure development	Institutional strengthening
Expansion	2009–2021	Establishment of Waqf Board, rapid student growth, digital media use, waqf asset expansion, units, teacher development	Modernization and institutional expansion

Discussion

Transformation as Institutional Adaptation

The transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Kersamanah from 1986 to 2021 reflects a dynamic process of institutional adaptation in response to changing social, educational, and organizational demands. Viewed through Talcott Parsons' structural-functional perspective, the transformation demonstrates how pesantren as social institutions survive and develop through adaptation while maintaining functional stability and institutional continuity.

Parsons argues that institutions must continuously adapt to changing environments to preserve their core functions and maintain social equilibrium (Parsons, 2013). This perspective is highly relevant for understanding the transformation of Darussalam. Over the course of thirty-five years, Darussalam evolved from a relatively small pesantren with limited facilities into a large modern Islamic educational institution with significant regional influence. This transformation was not merely quantitative but reflected a systematic institutional adaptation across multiple dimensions.

The findings show that Darussalam's transformation occurred through three major phases: pioneering, consolidation, and expansion. Each phase represented a distinct pattern of adaptation. During the pioneering phase, the pesantren focused on institutional identity formation and the adoption of an educational model inspired by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. During the consolidation phase, institutional strengthening became the main focus through organizational expansion, teacher development, and infrastructure growth. During the expansion phase, adaptation became more complex through governance restructuring, digital transformation, economic development, and educational quality enhancement.

This finding confirms that pesantren transformation is not a linear process but an adaptive institutional response to internal and external pressures. As argued by Scott

(2014), institutional survival depends on the ability to maintain legitimacy while responding to changing environmental demands. Darussalam's development illustrates this principle clearly.

Negotiating Tradition and Modernity in Pesantren Education

One of the most important findings of this study is that the transformation of Darussalam was characterized by the successful integration of tradition and modernity in Islamic education. Rather than abandoning traditional pesantren identity, Darussalam developed a hybrid educational model that combined classical Islamic scholarship with modern educational management.

The adoption of the Gontor educational system significantly shaped Darussalam's institutional transformation. This system introduced structured management, disciplined boarding education, language mastery, student organization, and integrated character formation. However, Darussalam did not fully replicate the Gontor model. Instead, it adapted the system while preserving the study of *kitab kuning* as a core component of pesantren education.

This finding supports Dhofier (2011), who argues that pesantren transformation often occurs through selective adaptation rather than total institutional replacement. Pesantren modernization in Indonesia generally does not eliminate traditional Islamic learning but reconfigures it within new institutional structures.

The findings also align with Lukens-Bull (2001), who emphasizes that modernity and tradition in Islamic education should not be viewed as opposing categories. Instead, pesantren often negotiate both dimensions simultaneously. Darussalam provides a strong example of this phenomenon. Its educational transformation shows that modernization can coexist with traditional religious authority and classical Islamic scholarship.

The continued presence of *kitab kuning* studies, discipline, and religious character formation indicates that Darussalam maintained its pesantren identity despite institutional modernization. This demonstrates that successful pesantren transformation depends not on abandoning tradition, but on adapting traditional values to contemporary educational realities.

Organizational Expansion and Institutional Sustainability

The establishment of the Waqf Board in 2009 marked a critical turning point in Darussalam's institutional transformation. This development signaled a shift from leadership centered on charismatic individuals toward a more structured and collective governance system.

This transition is important because institutional sustainability in pesantren often depends heavily on leadership continuity. Many pesantren face stagnation or decline when institutional management remains overly dependent on individual authority. Darussalam addressed this challenge by institutionalizing governance through the Waqf Board.

From Parsons' perspective, this development reflects stronger institutional integration and structural stability. Institutional sustainability depends on effective coordination between organizational structure, leadership, resources, and institutional goals. The Waqf Board strengthened Darussalam's capacity to manage rapid growth while maintaining institutional coherence.

The expansion of waqf assets from approximately six hectares in 2011 to more than fourteen hectares in 2021 further illustrates the strengthening of institutional capacity. Likewise, the development of pesantren business units in agriculture, animal husbandry, trade, transportation, and telecommunication demonstrates that economic independence became a key pillar of institutional sustainability.

This finding supports Qomar (2006), who emphasizes that pesantren transformation increasingly requires professional management, economic strengthening, and institutional governance to remain competitive in modern educational environments. Darussalam's transformation demonstrates that organizational sustainability has become a central dimension of modern pesantren development.

Darussalam and the New Model of Modern Pesantren

The transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam represents a broader shift in the development of pesantren in contemporary Indonesia. Darussalam reflects the emergence of a new model of pesantren characterized by institutional modernization, educational integration, organizational professionalism, and economic sustainability.

This model differs from traditional pesantren that primarily focused on religious learning and charismatic leadership. At the same time, it also differs from modern educational institutions that often prioritize formal academic systems while weakening pesantren identity. Darussalam demonstrates an alternative model that combines both strengths.

The rapid growth of student enrollment, digital media adaptation, expansion of educational facilities, strengthening of academic culture, and increasing economic independence indicate that pesantren transformation today extends beyond curriculum reform. Transformation now includes institutional governance, public communication, resource management, and strategic adaptation to broader social change.

This finding supports Azra (2012) and Ziemek (1986), who argue that pesantren in Indonesia continue to transform as adaptive Islamic institutions capable of responding to modernity without losing their core religious identity. Darussalam's experience illustrates that pesantren can remain socially relevant by integrating Islamic values, educational quality, and institutional innovation.

The principal contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that pesantren transformation is best understood as a multidimensional process involving adaptation, continuity, modernization, and institutional sustainability. Darussalam's transformation confirms that pesantren remain dynamic Islamic institutions capable of balancing tradition and innovation in response to changing societal needs.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the transformation of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Kersamanah from 1986 to 2021 reflects a dynamic and multidimensional process of institutional development shaped by adaptation, continuity, modernization, and sustainability. The transformation occurred through three major phases: the pioneering phase (1986–1995), the consolidation phase (1996–2008), and the expansion phase (2009–2021). Each phase represents a distinct pattern of development that contributed to the strengthening of Darussalam as a modern Islamic educational institution.

During the pioneering phase, the primary focus was the formation of institutional identity through the adoption of the Tarbiyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyyah (TMI) system inspired by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. In the consolidation phase, institutional strengthening became increasingly visible through the expansion of educational programs, the growth of student enrollment and teachers, and the development of educational infrastructure. In the expansion phase, Darussalam experienced rapid growth through governance restructuring, digital adaptation, infrastructure development, the expansion of waqf assets, and the strengthening of economic independence.

The findings demonstrate that the transformation of Darussalam was not merely a quantitative expansion but a broader institutional transformation involving three major dimensions: institutional transformation, educational transformation, and social transformation. Despite significant modernization, Darussalam maintained its core pesantren identity through the preservation of Islamic values, discipline, classical Islamic scholarship, and character formation. This indicates that pesantren modernization does not necessarily require the abandonment of traditional educational values, but rather their strategic integration into contemporary institutional systems.

From the perspective of Talcott Parsons' structural-functional theory, the transformation of Darussalam illustrates how pesantren as Islamic institutions maintain relevance through adaptive responses to social and educational change while preserving institutional stability. The ability of Darussalam to balance tradition and innovation became the key factor behind its long-term sustainability and institutional growth.

The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that pesantren transformation in contemporary Indonesia should be understood as a multidimensional process involving educational adaptation, organizational restructuring, governance strengthening, and institutional sustainability. The case of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam provides an important model for understanding how modern pesantren can remain socially relevant, educationally competitive, and institutionally sustainable without losing their religious identity. This study therefore contributes to broader discussions on pesantren studies, Islamic education, and the transformation of Islamic institutions in modern Indonesia.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to his beloved parents for their prayers, support, motivation, and sacrifices that have always been given in every process of compiling this article. The author would also like to express his gratitude to Mr. Ajid Thohir as the first supervisor and Mrs. Fathia Lestari as the second supervisor who have provided direction, input, and guidance during the process of compiling the article as part of the final assignment. In addition, the author also expresses his appreciation to the extended family of the Darussalam Garut Islamic Boarding School who have always provided support, experience, and togetherness in every academic journey of the author as part of the Islamic boarding school alma mater.

References

- Abdullah, M. A. (2017). *Islamic studies in higher education in Indonesia: Challenges, impact and prospects*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press.
- Ajang, S. (2026a). "Perkembangan lembaga Pendidikan Pesantren Darussalam 1995-2010." Wawancara.
- Ajang, S. (2026b). *Sejarah Cikal Bakal Darussalam*. Wawancara.
- Azra, A. (2012). *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan modernisasi di tengah tantangan milenium III*. Kencana.
- Bruinessen, M. V. (1995). *Kitab kuning, pesantren, dan tarekat*. Mizan.
- Darussalam, S. P. (1999). MIKDAR, *Perkembangan dan Kemanjuaan Pesantren Darussalam*. Alqa Print, 18.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2003). MIKDAR, *TMMI Kembali ke Enam Jam Pelajaran*. Alqa Print, 8.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2006a). MIKDAR, *Pembenahan Proses KBM di TMI Darussalam*. Alqa Print, 7.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2006b). MIKDAR, *Poskestren Darussalam*. Alqa Print, 38.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2007). MIKDAR, *Pengajuan Penyetaraan TMI dengan Universitas Al-Azhar Mesir*. Alqa Print, 9.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2009). MIKDAR, *Tarbiyyatul Mua'llimin / Mua'llimat Al-Islamiyyah (TMI)*. Alqa Print, 24.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2010a). MIKDAR, *Badan Wakaf Pondok Pesantren Darussalam*. Alqa Print, 45.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2010b). MIKDAR, *Peningkatan Kualitas Guru*. Alqa Print, 21.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2011). MIKDAR, *Peningkatan Kualitas Guru*. Alqa Print, 19.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2012). MIKDAR, *Pembangunan Sarana*. Alqa Print, 61.
- Darussalam, S. P. (2015). MIKDAR, *Aktivitas TMI*. Bilbarkah, 13.
- Dhofier, Z. (2011). *Tradisi pesantren: Studi pandangan hidup kyai dan visinya mengenai masa depan Indonesia* (Revised ed.). LP3ES.
- Fuady, S. (2024). Educational modernization and innovation in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. *International Journal of Innovative Educational Research*, 1(3), 52–71.
- Geertz, C. (1960). *The religion of Java*. Free Press.
- Gottschalk, L. (1986). *Mengerti sejarah*. UI Press.
- Gumilar, S. (2019). *The Islamic Scholars' Movement in Garut, Contents 1998-2007 West Java, Indonesia, Contents*. 29–42.
- Hasan, Adang & Devi, M. (2026). *Perkembangan pondok Pesantren Darussalam*. Wawancara.
- Huda, M. (2025). Modernization of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia. *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan*, 23(1), 45–62.
- Ilyas, M. (2022). Education transformation model of traditional pesantren in Indonesia. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(4), 667–682.
- Joko Waluyo. (1966). MIKDAR (*Pesantren Putri "Darussalam sebagai Prospektif Pendidikan Wanita*). Alqa Print, 13.
- Kuntowijoyo. (2005). *Pengantar ilmu sejarah*. Bentang.
- Lukens-Bull, R. (2000). Teaching morality: Javanese Islamic education in a globalizing era. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 3, 26–47.
- Lukens-Bull, R. (2001). Two sides of the same coin: Modernity and tradition in Islamic

- education in Indonesia. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 32(3), 350–372.
- Madjid, N. (1997). *Bilik-bilik pesantren: Sebuah potret perjalanan*. Paramadina.
- Mastuhu. (1994). *Dinamika sistem pendidikan pesantren*. INIS.
- Muharrom, D. (2026). *Sejarah Cikal Bakal Pesantren Darussalam*. Wawancara.
- Mujamil, Q. (2007). *Pesantren: Dari transformasi metodologi menuju demokratisasi institusi*. Erlangga.
- Moleong, L. J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nerla Misriani Saleh, A. H. (2010). *Eksistensi Pondok Pesantren Cipari Garut Pada MasaKepemimpinan K.H. Amin Bunyamin Tahun 1977-2010*. 3, 18.
- Nisa, D. (2024). Pesantren transformation in the digital era. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 101–118.
- Parsons, T. (2013). *The social system* (Routledge. (ed.)). Routledge.
- Qomar, M. (2006). *Pesantren: Dari transformasi metodologi menuju demokratisasi institusi*. Erlangga.
- Renier, G. J. (1997). *Metode dan manfaat ilmu sejarah*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Roqib, M. (2021). Increasing social class through Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 12(2), 305–329.
- Scott, W. R. (2014). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas, interests, and identities* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Siregar, Y. D. (2026). The transformation of pesantren education from the new order to the digital era. *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 17(1), 33–49.
- Steenbrink, K. A. (1986). *Pesantren, madrasah, sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam kurun modern*. LP3ES.
- Suntiah, R., Saadah, S., Darajat, & Aldi, U. (2026). The transformation of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia: From surau to pesantren in the digital era. *Al-Afkar Journal for Islamic Studies*, 9(1), 781–792.
- Thohir, A., & Sahidin, A. (2019). *Filsafat sejarah: Profetik, spekulatif, dan kritis*. Prenada Media.
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2012). *Perubahan sosial dan pendidikan*. Rineka Cipta.
- Wahid, A. (2001). *Menggerakkan tradisi: Esai-esai pesantren*. LKiS.
- Waluyo, J. (1997). *MIKDAR (Computer Darussalam)*. Alqa Print, 3.
- Yasmadi. (2005). *Modernisasi pesantren: Kritik Nurcholish Madjid terhadap pendidikan Islam tradisional*. Ciputat Press.
- Ziemek, M. (1986). *Pesantren dalam perubahan sosial*. P3M.