





POLICY CONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: THE SALAFIYAH CURRICULUM

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Article Info

Received: Aug 09, 2025

Revised: Oct 21, 2025

Accepted: Nov 30, 2025

OnlineVersion: Dec 17, 2025

Abstract

Research on the policy construction and implementation of the Salafiyah Curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is essential for understanding how Islamic educational institutions adapt to modern demands while maintaining traditional values. A qualitative approach was employed using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed through three stages, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the policy construction for implementing the Salafiyah Curriculum at Sa'adatuddarein is based on the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 18 of 2014 Article 1 Paragraphs 1 and 4. This policy supports the school's vision and mission to develop students who possess strong religious knowledge while remaining adaptive to social and technological changes in the globalization era. The curriculum is implemented by integrating the Salafiyah and Khalafi systems, combining the formal education curriculum with the traditional Islamic boarding school curriculum. This integration forms a holistic educational model where academic and religious activities are interconnected. The study confirms that the integration of curriculum and leadership policies at Sa'adatuddarein represents a strategic adaptation to globalization without neglecting Islamic educational values. The implications suggest that Islamic boarding schools can enhance their relevance and competitiveness by developing policies and curriculum models that balance tradition and modernity. These findings may serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in designing contextual, sustainable, and quality-oriented learning systems in the global era.

Keywords: Digital Era, Islamic Education Policy, Salafiyah Curriiculum



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INTRODUCTION

After Indonesian independence, Islamic education was not immediately incorporated into the national education system. The dualistic paradigm inherited from the colonial government remains deeply rooted in the Indonesian education sector. This dualistic education system consists of a secular education

and teaching system in public schools, and an Islamic education and teaching system that grew and developed within Muslim communities, both in isolated, traditional forms and a combination of the two (Hidayati et al., 2023). Islamic education is an ongoing effort and process of instilling knowledge (education) between teachers and students which is intended to enhance noble morals. The instillation of Islamic values in a person's soul, feelings, and thoughts, as well as the creation of harmony and balance are the main characteristics of Islamic education (Chanifah et al., 2021). Policies on education, especially Islamic education, can be found in most national education systems in various educational institutions in Indonesia, because the majority of the country's population is Muslim (Mansir, 2022; Kosim et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, there are various types of educational institutions, one of which is Islamic boarding school education (Arif, at al., 2024; A. I. Muttaqin, 2025). The initial function of Islamic boarding schools was as a medium of Islamization combining three main elements; Worship to instill faith, Tabligh to spread Islamic teachings, and Knowledge and Practice to be applied in daily life in society (Kosim et al., 2023; Nurkhin et al., 2024; Saleh, 2025). As an indigenous Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools have demonstrated their success in maintaining their existence (Zubaidi & Ridlo, 2023). Islamic boarding schools are the oldest Islamic educational institutions that have made a significant contributions to the growth and development of Islam in the archipelago, while also serving as a catalyst for the establishment for various other Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia (Malisi & Mohad, 2024; Fajarudin, 2024; Budiman, 2025). However, reform and reconstruction of Islamic education and its institutions appear to be a necessity, especially considering global developments that require every Islamic educational institution to continue to continually improve itself so as not to be left behind its followers in Indonesia (Mu'ti, 2023; Falaqi et al., 2025). Education provided by Islamic boarding schools or madrasas always faces various serious problems that originate from internal factors, such as Islamic boarding school management, as well as external factors such as the government and the general public who are stakeholders in the Islamic boarding school itself (Arief, 2022).

Social changes arising from the impact of globalization and the resulting new challenges are unavoidable. Pesantren are required not only to teach classical religious sciences, but also to incorporate the use of digital technology (Bulhayat, 2025). As social institutions, Islamic boarding schools have made a significant contribution to the spiritual development of Muslims, as society demands solutions to the various problems they face (Rohman et al., 2023; Suresman et al., 2025). Islamic educational institutions (pesantren) require strategic technological planning to adopt a proactive approach, rather than merely reacting, in response to the rapid advancement of technology. The era of technological disruption demands that Islamic educational institutions further strengthen their ideology through proactive pedagogical and managerial strategies. The adoption of technology requires structured programs and evaluations, rather than a reactive approach. However, the development of Islamic boarding schools has tended to be reactive. Meaningful change requires careful planning and in-depth study of the problems facing society, in which Islamic boarding schools should actively participate (Falaqi et al., 2025).

Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools are very interesting to study because of their existence in the midst of globalization and their role as one of the pillars and hopes of society for the continuity of Islamic education (Hidayati & Humam, 2021; Suresman et al., 2025). Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School, as the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, has a different scientific tradition compared to other Islamic educational institutions (Rohman et al., 2023; Widodo, 2023). One of the main characteristics that distinguishes Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools from other Islamic educational institutions is the teaching of Islamic classical texts known as yellow books (kitab kuning) in their curriculum. Yellow books hold a special place in the Islamic boarding school curriculum (Lestari, 2022; Zuhri, 2023).

The use of yellow books in traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is very prominent and has become an integral part of the pesantren curriculum. Amidst the tide of modernization, these types of pesantren tend to re-maintain the teaching of yellow books despite changes in educational policy that focus on religious teachings and the teaching of yellow books (Kosim et al., 2023; Millie, 2025). Abdurrahman Wahid noted that the main characteristic of traditional Islamic boarding school education (Salafiyah) is the process of conveying knowledge that focuses on textual understanding of certain books or texts (Asy'ari, 2016). The term "Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School" is included in the legal provisions of the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, which states that Islamic boarding schools that provide Islamic boarding school education through the study of yellow books can be referred to Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools. Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 18 of 2014 concerning the Muadalah Education System in Islamic Boarding Schools, Article 1 Paragraph 4 states that yellow books are Islamic books in Arabic that serve as

references in the Islamic scientific tradition in Islamic boarding schools. From an educational perspective, there are two types of Islamic boarding schools that can be identified, namely Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools and Khalafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools (Amiruddin, A., Asyari, G., Damanik, K. S., & Avira, 2024; Hidayati, 2025). Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools are Islamic boarding schools that still maintain the teaching of classical books (yellow books) as the main source of education by using traditional learning methods that support it (Nurstalis et al., 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the Khalafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools are Islamic boarding schools that has included general subjects in its madrasah or established a public school within the Islamic boarding school environment (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Wahdi; Asari, Hasan; Arsyad, 2024).

Based on these facts, Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools continue to have a strong influence on almost all aspects of life in Muslim society. As expressed by Asy'ari, (2016), Islamic boarding schools have their own unique advantages and curricula, which are essentially designed and developed by the boarding school administrators themselves. Therefore, the existence of a specialized curriculum in Islamic boarding schools gives the impression that full authority rests with the boarding school leadership, in this case the Kiai (Muhtarom, 2022; Hakim, 2025). The Kiai as a leader in the Islamic boarding school is not only responsible for developing the Islamic education curriculum, establishing regulations and rules, designing an evaluation system, and implementing teaching related to the sciences taught in the Islamic boarding school, but also has a role in establishing relations with the wider community (Supriyono et al., 2025; Hasan, 2025). This view is not excessive, because the authority to make policies in the Islamic boarding school environment is basically in the hands of the Kiai (Muttaqin, 2020; Karim et al., 2022).

In the modern era, the function of Islamic boarding schools, as formulated in the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, is preparing their students to be able to contribute to Indonesian independence and face various challenges, obstacles, and developments of the times (Aji, 2023; Suresman et al., 2025). With its distinctive "religiously oriented" character, Islamic boarding schools are able to build a strong foundation in religious education (Taufiq, 2024; Priatmoko, 2025). The students are not only equipped with an understanding of Islamic teachings, but also the ability to spread and defend Islamic teachings (Hamidah & Chasannudin, 2021; AR, Sugianto & Sulhan, 2023). Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School is a long-established Islamic educational institution in Jambi Province. This Islamic boarding school is categorized as a traditional Islamic boarding school with a curriculum focused on classical texts (yellow book) as the core of religious teachings. Learning activities include memorizing verses, reading and understanding their meaning, and comprehensively studying the contents of the texts as part of a non-formal education system. The development of knowledge through the study of kitab kuning focuses on Nahwu and Sharaf, and employs the sorogan and bandongan learning methods in its teaching process.

In implementing the Salafiyah curriculum, the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School faces various challenges in formulating ideal policies relevant to the context of the globalization era. First, the Islamic boarding school must determine whether to maintain its traditional character and preserve the purity of the Salafiyah curriculum. Second, the issue of the identity of Islamic educational institutions arises; the education law, which provides recognition and equality for Islamic educational institutions, has opened up opportunities for various forms of Islamic education. However, choosing between these options has the potential to obscure the identity of Islamic education itself. Third, there is a need to strengthen the internal institutional aspects and management of Islamic boarding schools. In line with the currents of globalization, Islamic education is required to strengthen and empower its institutions. Islamic education must be based on the principles of independence, professionalism, credibility, and accountability.

Several previous studies have highlighted various aspects of Islamic boarding school education, but their focuses have varied. For example, research conducted by Arif, (2020), which places more emphasis on the success of Islamic boarding schools in maintaining the existence and tradition of Islamic knowledge, while research conducted by Kosim et al., (2023), discussed the relevance of Islamic education in the context of national policy. Furthermore, Falaqi et al., (2025), highlighted the challenges of modernization and globalization that force Islamic boarding schools to continue to adapt. While these studies provide important insights into the role, characteristics, and challenges of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), a research gap remains regarding how Salafiyah curriculum policies are formulated and implemented contextually in traditional Islamic boarding schools. Previous research has focused more on historical aspects, religious values, or the challenges of modernization in general, without specifically addressing policy construction and implementation. The importance of this research is

underscored by the need to strengthen the policy system and implementation of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) curriculum to ensure its relevance in the era of globalization. Within the context of national policy, Islamic boarding schools face the challenge of demonstrating competitiveness without losing their classical Islamic identity. Therefore, understanding how Salafiyah curriculum policies are formulated and implemented effectively will provide a strategic contribution to the development of future Islamic education models.

This research problem-solving approach was employed through a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on policy analysis and implementation practices for the Salafiyah curriculum at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School. This approach is expected to produce a conceptual model that can assist other traditional Islamic boarding schools in managing a turats-based curriculum with modern management. Thus, this research aimed at constructing the policies used in the implementation of the Salafiyah Curriculum, and the implementation of the Salafiyah Curriculum at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School, Jambi Province.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lim, 2025) to uncover the process of policy construction and implementation of the Salafiyah Curriculum at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School, within the context of digital technology transformation. This approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of the policy formulation process, implementation practices, and experiences of educational actors within a specific institutional context. The study was conducted at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School in Jambi City. Eleven participants were purposively selected (Bouncken et al., 2025; Gill, 2020) based on their roles in the formulation and implementation of curriculum policies. One was the pesantren leader (policy formulator/supervisor), four were teachers teaching yellow books (implementers), and six were active students (curriculum recipients). All participants participated voluntarily through informed consent.

Primary data were collected through (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024): (1) in-depth semi-structured interviews with leaders, teachers, and students, designed to explore the rationale for policies, pedagogical practices, and learning experiences; (2) non-participatory observation of yellow book learning sessions to record knowledge transmission practices, forms of pedagogical interaction (sorogan, bandongan, halaqah), and digital technology integration; and (3) analysis of institutional documents (curriculum, syllabus, internal guidelines, meeting archives, and digital artifacts). All interviews were recorded (with permission) and transcribed verbatim. The collection process was carried out until sufficient data richness was achieved for thematic analysis (data saturation at the substantive theme level).

Data analysis was conducted using NVivo, which provides systematic capabilities for organizing, tracing, and mapping relationships between thematic categories (Paulus, 2023). Transcripts, observation notes, and documents were imported into NVivo software for data management and structured coding analysis. The analysis followed the following stages: (a) open coding to identify initial units of meaning; (b) axial coding to group codes into analytical categories that map relationships between actors, institutional structures, and technological pressures; and (c) selective coding to form central themes that explain the mechanisms of policy construction and patterns of adaptation of pedagogical practices. Query features, matrix coding, and visualization models were used to test the consistency of findings and illustrate the network of relationships between actors and concepts. The analysis combined an inductive-deductive approach. Initial codes emerged from the data but were also tested against the research conceptual framework.

The validity of the findings was enhanced through (Ahmed, 2024; Leung, 2015): method triangulation (interviews, observations, documents), source triangulation (leaders, teachers, students), member checking (confirming the summary of findings with several key informants), and peer debriefing with colleagues. All analytical decisions and data audit trails were documented to ensure dependability and confirmability. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of qualitative research. All participants provided informed consent, their identities were disguised using codes, and data was stored on a secure device. The researchers ensured that internal information from the Islamic boarding school was not published without permission and would not negatively impact the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Policy Construction in Salafiyah Curriculum

Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School, located in Jambi City, is an Islamic educational institution that has been established for extended period in Jambi Province. In implementing its curriculum, Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School remains committed to preserving longstanding traditions with a traditional atmosphere. They implementing a curriculum based on classical texts (yellow books) which are the core of teaching activities at Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School.

Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School consistently maintains the identity of traditional learning while striving to integrate it with national education standards. The findings also indicate that the curriculum is designed progressively and in accordance with regulations, thus enabling a balance between the preservation of tradition and the demands of modern education, as shown in the table below 1.

Table 1. Research findings in tabular form

Findings Aspects	Findings Descriptions	Significance
Preserving Islamic Boarding School Traditions	The curriculum, based on the yellow books, is the core of learning, following traditional patterns and a progressive sequence of classical texts.	Demonstrates how Islamic boarding schools maintain their Salafi educational identity.
Integration with the National Formal Curriculum	The curriculum is aligned with the standards of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as Formal Islamic Education (PMA No. 31/2020).	Demonstrates efforts by Islamic boarding schools to integrate tradition with national formal education.
Progressive and Structured Education System	The material is delivered in a progressive and structured manner, equivalent to formal elementary and secondary levels.	Answers questions about learning structures and the equality of formal education.
Balance of Tradition and Modernity	Islamic boarding schools maintain traditional paradigms while adapting the curriculum to be relevant to modern times.	Illustrate curriculum reconstruction in response to the dynamics of the times.
Compliance with Education Regulations	The curriculum is developed according to the unique characteristics of Islamic boarding schools and Ministry of Religious Affairs regulations, with the yellow books remaining the primary reference.	Demonstrates the legality and legitimacy of Islamic boarding school curricula.

The Salafiyah Curriculum Policy at Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School can be examined in detail, highlighting five main aspects identified in the study. First, the preservation of pesantren tradition, where the curriculum based on kitab kuning remains the core of learning, following traditional patterns and a progressive sequence of classical texts, demonstrating how the pesantren maintains its Salafi educational identity. Second, integration with the formal national curriculum, which adapts learning materials to the standards set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as formal Islamic education regulations (PMA No. 31/2020), reflecting the pesantren's efforts to combine tradition with national education. Third, a progressive and structured education system, where materials are delivered gradually and aligned with the levels of formal primary and secondary education, addresses questions regarding the learning structure and equivalence with formal schooling. Fourth, the balance between tradition and modernity, whereby the pesantren maintains its traditional paradigm while adapting the curriculum to remain relevant to contemporary demands, reflects curriculum reconstruction as a response to global dynamics. Fifth, compliance with educational

regulations, where the curriculum is developed in accordance with the unique characteristics of the pesantren and the regulations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with kitab kuning remaining the primary reference, reinforces the legality and legitimacy of the pesantren curriculum. Overall, the Salafiyah Curriculum Policy at Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School successfully integrates the preservation of tradition, adherence to regulations, and adaptation to modernity, thereby creating an educational model that is both relevant and sustainable.

Referring to regulations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School also implements the same curriculum as those in Madrasas and other standardized schools. Other formal educational institutions run by Islamic boarding schools, besides madrasas and schools, have curricula developed by their respective organizers or by the Islamic boarding schools themselves (Budiman, 2025).

Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School also implements a Formal Islamic Education system that refers to the Minister of Religion Regulation (PMA) Number 31 of 2020. Formal Islamic Education is an Islamic boarding school-based education that is organized in a formal education path in accordance with the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools, which is based on the teaching of yellow books, in a progressive and structured manner (Yusuf & Imawan, 2021; Nuzula et al., 2025). This demonstrates a change in the educational system at this Islamic boarding school. On the one hand, it demonstrates the pesantren's adaptation and intention to update, reconstruct, or integrate the traditional (Salafiyah) curriculum with specific reforms in response to modernity. On the other hand, it also demonstrates a desire to maintain or even return to the traditional paradigm. Thus, the changes occurring in the Islamic boarding school education system are essentially a process toward creating an integrated education.

The practices mentioned above were obtained through documents obtained by the author, referring to Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation Number 18 of 2014 concerning the Muadalah Education System in Islamic boarding schools, Article 1, paragraphs 1 and 4. Article 1, paragraph 1, states that the Muadalah Education Unit in Islamic boarding schools is an Islamic religious education unit organized by and located within the Islamic boarding school environment. It develops a curriculum in accordance with the unique characteristics of the Islamic boarding school, based on Islamic books (yellow book) or Islamic dirasah, with a structured and progressive Muallimin educational model, which is equivalent to elementary and secondary education within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Meanwhile, Article 1, paragraph 4 states that yellow book are Arabic-language Islamic books that serve as references for Islamic scholarly traditions in Islamic boarding schools.

The Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School's policy in implementing the Salafiyah curriculum is integrating the national curriculum with the traditional (salafiyah) curriculum. This pesantren adapts to the provisions stipulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, while maintaining the distinctive character of the pesantren through the teaching of yellow book. The implementation of the Formal Diniyah Education and Muadalah Education systems demonstrates the efforts of Islamic boarding schools to build education that is more structured, progressive, and relevant to current developments, without abandoning the roots of Islamic scientific traditions.

In line with the above policy, the curriculum policy structure at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School also emphasizes the study of classical Islamic books, where the curriculum must be delivered to students with an organized understanding in accordance with the fields applied in the educational institution (Qorib, 2025). One of the curricula implemented at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School is the study of classical Islamic texts, commonly known as "yellow books" due to their yellow paper color, particularly the works of scholars who adhere to the Shafi'i school of thought. All of this learning is formal, delivered within a traditional Islamic boarding school environment (Rizzan & Ria Kurniawaty, 2025). Abdurrahman Wahid once stated that the traditional school curriculum (Salafiyah madrasah) follows a class system where the curriculum is still based on the progression and sequence of ancient texts in a chain.

The policy construction of the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School in implementing the Salafiyah curriculum is developed through an integrative approach between national policy and the traditions of Islamic boarding school education. This Islamic boarding school adapts to the regulations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture through the implementation of Formal Diniyah Education and Muadalah Education, but still maintains its Salafiyah identity based on the teaching of yellow books. Thus, the curriculum policy at Sa'adatuddarein reflects an effort to harmonize between educational modernization and the preservation of traditional Islamic boarding school

values, resulting in an educational system that is structured, progressive, yet remains firmly rooted in the tradition of classical Islamic scholarship.

Implementation of the Salafiyah Curriculum

The implementation of the Salafiyah curriculum at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School is based on the tradition of classical Islamic scholarship, which emphasizes mastery of the yellow books as the primary source of learning. This curriculum covers various Islamic disciplines, including the Qur'an with its tajwid and tafsir, aqidah and kalam science, fiqh with ushul fiqh and qawaid al-fiqh, hadith and musthalah al-hadith, and Arabic language which includes grammar (nahwu and sharaf), balaghah, ma'ani, bayan, and the science of 'arudh (prosody). In addition, lessons in Islamic history, logic (mantiq), Sufism, and morals are also integral parts of the learning system.

Abdurrahman Wahid also noted that the main characteristic of traditional Islamic boarding school education (Salafiyah) is the focus on literal understanding of the yellow books (Widodo, 2023). The Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School complies with the legal provisions in Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, which states that Islamic boarding schools that provide Islamic boarding school-based education through the study of the yellow book (classical Islamic texts) can be called Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools.

In the teaching and learning process, the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School uses a method known as "manhaj," based on the results of an interview with the head of the Islamic boarding school: "Manhaj" refers to the structured method or curriculum we follow in our learning process. This method involves a systematic approach to studying various Islamic sciences, using specific books or texts traditionally recognized for their depth and authenticity in their respective fields. This method ensures that students receive a comprehensive and thorough education in Islamic studies" (Interview with the Head of the Islamic Boarding School).

Manhaj is a learning method that uses certain books in the field of Islamic studies (Kusuma Ningsih et al., 2025; Jamhari & Asrori, 2022). These books are studied in depth before students move on to more advanced texts. Therefore, completion of the educational program is not measured by time or mastery of specific topics in the syllabus, but by completing the study of the designated books. The standard competency for graduates of the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School is the ability to understand, internalize, practice, and teach the contents of certain prescribed books. This competency is reflected in the gradual mastery of the books, from light to heavy, from easy to difficult, from thin to thick. These books are usually yellow books or kutub al-salaf (classic books of the salaf). They are called yellow books because they are generally printed on yellow paper (Jailani et al., 2022; Izmi, 2023). This statement is based on an interview with the head of the Islamic boarding school:

"Using the yellow books provides students with a direct connection to the rich heritage of Islamic scholarship. These texts convey not only knowledge but also methods for understanding and interpreting Islamic teachings. Students learn to engage critically with the texts, understand their historical context, and apply their teachings to contemporary issues. This deep engagement builds a strong intellectual foundation as well as spiritual discipline." (Interview with the head of the Islamic boarding school).

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, in addition to the term "yellow book", there is also the term "Classical Book", which is used to refer to the same text. These books generally lack of harakat (punctuation) and are sometimes referred to "kitab gundul". The "yellow book" as the "static" epistemic heritage of Islamic boarding schools is a key characteristic of Islamic boarding school scientific literacy (Adib, 2022). In the Islamic scientific tradition, the classification of these books is based on the period of writing or the format in which they were written (Millie, 2025; Saleh, 2025). Although the material taught is repeated sequentially, the arrangement aims to deepen and broaden the students' understanding, resulting in a more solid mastery of the content. This is one of the characteristics of the teaching and learning process at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School, based on the result of interview with one of the boarding school teachers:

"Classical and yellow books are essential components of our program. Classical books refer to traditional Islamic literature that covers a broader range of disciplines and is often older and thicker than yellow books, which consist of traditional, yellow-bound textbooks that have long been the foundation of Islamic education. These books are crucial for providing students with a deep, comprehensive, and historical understanding of Islamic sciences." (Interview with a pesantren teacher).

The yellow book is a classic literature that has long served as foundation of Islamic education in Indonesia, demonstrating its effectiveness in providing profound and historical understanding (Izmi, 2023; Lestari, 2022). Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School also integrates innovative approaches by teaching popular texts in depth to enhance the effectiveness of student learning. The teaching methods at Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School can be classified as traditional, which follows the long-standing practices of Islamic boarding schools, or what can be called the original teaching methods of Islamic boarding schools.

In addition, there are also modern teaching methods (reform). The reform method is the result of innovation within the Islamic boarding school community, integrating methods developed in modern society, although it does not always adopt the modern system found in formal schools or madrasas (Rohman et al., 2023). Among the traditional teaching methods commonly applied at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School are the sorogan method (reading and repetition), the bandongan method (group discussion), the wetonan method (individual reading), the musyawarah or bahtsul masa'il method (consultation and discussion), and the memorization method.

As a traditional Islamic boarding school, Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School has a curriculum based on yellow book as the main content of religious education. These texts are taught through various methods, including memorizing verses, understanding their pronunciation and meaning, and reading the entire text as part of a non-formal education system. According to Mu'minin, et al., (2024), The traditional Islamic boarding school education system focuses solely on teaching Islamic studies yellow book as the core curriculum and excludes general knowledge. The Islamic boarding school curriculum is determined independently by the kiai and does not adopt the National Curriculum. Progress in reading yellow book at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School is achieved through learning nahwu (Arabic grammar) and sharaf (Arabic morphology) using the sorogan and bandongan teaching methods.

In the development process at this Islamic boarding school, both in terms of curriculum and institutional matters, authority rests with the kiai. However, it is not uncommon for all competent parties to be involved in the development and decision-making process. Furthermore, the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School implements several stages in its curriculum development process. This statement is based on interviews with Islamic boarding school teachers:

“First, we develop a curriculum that matches to the students' abilities and relevant to current developments. The main kiai, the leadership council, teachers, and senior students collaborate on the curriculum development through annual meetings where everyone can freely express their opinions. Second, we develop lesson plans to guide the teaching process. These plans ensure the teaching and learning process runs smoothly and serve as a reference for teachers when conducting lessons. Third, we implement the lesson plans by carrying out all planned activities. Fourth, we evaluate the material taught to the students from beginning to end. This evaluation helps determine the extent to which the students have understood the material presented” (interview with teacher).

The curriculum in Islamic boarding schools emphasizes the importance of the involvement of various parties, including the caretakers (kiai), leadership councils, teachers, and students in the curriculum development process so that it is relevant to the needs of students and the socio-cultural context (Adjnun, 2020). Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School implements two interrelated Salafiyah curricula: the Islamic Boarding School Curriculum and the Textual Study of Classical Islamic Text Curriculum. In the Islamic Boarding School Curriculum, daily worship activities are conducted collectively in accordance with policies established by the kiai, teachers, caretakers, the board of trustees, and the boarding school management. This means that daily, weekly, and monthly activities must be carried out regularly.

The Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School curriculum offers two forms of evaluation: written and oral. Written evaluation follows the traditional educational system with daily quizzes, midterms, and final exams. Oral evaluations are administered concurrently with the midterms and final exams, where students stand before a religious teacher (ustadz), teacher, or kiai to read and explain the contents of assigned books. In the Textual Study of Classical Islamic Text Curriculum at the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School, book study is conducted using various methods. First, there is the "bandongan" method, a teaching method in which students sit around the kiai who reads a particular book while the students listen and take notes. Bandongan is a traditional teaching method used to teach religious knowledge and other subjects. This method is called traditional because it is characterized by monologues, a top-down

approach, and indoctrination (Afifullah, 2021; Khairunnisa, 2025). With the sorogan and bandongan methods, students can master the book gradually and in depth, while simultaneously building discipline and critical thinking skills.

Second, there is the "sorogan" or "Qira'atul Kutub" method. Sorogan is an individual teaching method in which students face the kiai directly using the text they are studying. The kiai reads and explains the lesson verse by verse, while the students listen and approve (*ngesah* in Javanese) the contents of the book by making notes in their notebooks. The term "sorogan" comes from the Javanese word "sorog," which means to offer. This indicates that the students present their books before the kiai, and sometimes the students themselves read the book before the kiai, while the kiai listens and provides corrections if there are any reading errors. According to Sari, W. A. S., & Fikriyah, (2022), The sorogan method is considered a highly effective learning method in the yellow book education process at Islamic boarding schools, as its implementation is based on the primary objectives of accuracy in reading, accuracy in understanding the content, and accuracy in expressing the content of the reading. The application of the sorogan method in Islamic boarding schools prioritizes strong emotional relationships and in-depth observation between educators and students.

Third, there is the "bahtsul masail," "munadharah," or "deliberation" method, a forum for middle-level students to discuss and find solutions based on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to everyday social problems. At the Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School, this forum is known as the LBM (Lembaga Bahtsul Masail or Legal Discussion Institute). The management and teaching staff of the Islamic boarding school have made various efforts to improve the quality of education by integrating the old system with modern elements, while maintaining the classical curriculum, the curriculum that has been implemented by the boarding school since its founding. By deepening their study of the Yellow Book, it is hoped that graduates of this institution will become independent and able to immediately contribute to society in their respective regions.

The subjects taught include, first, Arabic Grammar (*Ilmu Nahwu*); The books used in this discipline include *Qowaidunnahwiyah*, *Matan Jurumiyah*, *Muhtasar*, *Kawakibut Durriyah*, *Qotar*, *Alfiyah Ibn Malik*, *Sarah Ibn Aqil*, *Amsilatul Jadidah*, *Matnul Bena'*, *Matnul Izzi*, *Matnul Maksud*, and *Kitabul Marrah Arwah Ilmu Balaghah*. The books used for Balaghah studies include *Kawaidul Lughoh*, *Jawharul Maknun*, *Ballaghotun Wadihah*, and *Jawahirul Balaghah*. Second, Islamic Sciences (*Diniyah Sciences*); this includes *Fiqh* (Islamic Law), *Usul Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Law), *Hadith*, *Usul Hadith* (Principles of Hadith), *Tafsir* (Quranic Interpretation), *Usul Tafsir* (Principles of Interpretation), *Tauhid* (Monotheism), and *Tasawuf* (Sufism). Third, *Qhoiri Diniyah*; These include *Mantek*, *Taregh*, *Arut*, *Palak*, and English.

This Islamic boarding school implements several curricula based on levels or stages, as explained by the head of the Islamic boarding school:

"Regarding the formal education curriculum, Islamic boarding schools only implement it at the elementary school level (Ibtida'iyah). At the junior high school level (Tsanawiyah), there is a collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture through the implementation of the National Curriculum (SLTP). Formal education is only provided during the day after students have completed morning lessons. Formal education in the Islamic boarding school curriculum is not the main focus, given the overlapping curriculum due to the students' busy schedules. It is conceivable that they only have about half an hour of free time, while the rest is used for studying and participating in Islamic boarding school activities" (Interview with the Head of the Islamic Boarding School).

Islamic boarding schools face challenges in integrating national formal education into the traditional Islamic boarding school system, while the secondary level (*Tsanawiyah*) only cooperates and has a large burden. According to Niam & Arafah, (2024), One of the challenges of integrating the formal curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is the extremely demanding timeframe due to the boarding school's activities. When the Islamic boarding school curriculum (Islamic principles and yellow books) is integrated with the formal junior high school curriculum, a specific learning structure and clear time allocation are required to avoid overlap. (Ridwan, 2025) stated that integrating the curriculum of Islamic boarding schools and junior high schools requires a specific allocation of time - without such allocation, overlap and study burden may occur.

Based on observations, Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School continues to maintain the traditional curriculum that has been implemented since its establishment, namely the study of classical texts complemented by supporting materials on contemporary developments. The educational levels

offered include Awaliyah Diniyah, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah for both male and female students, Tsanawiyah, and Aliyah. Since 2019, the pesantren has implemented the Islamic Formal Education (PDF) system at the secondary and upper levels, demonstrating the integration of the traditional curriculum with modern formal education. This change reflects a process of renewal and adaptation while preserving the traditional characteristics of the pesantren, resulting in an integral education where students are able to master classical religious knowledge while simultaneously addressing social demands and technological developments.

This integration demonstrates that the pesantren is able to balance the continuity of tradition with educational innovation, presenting an educational model that is both relevant and adaptive to contemporary dynamics. The implemented curriculum also reinforces the legality and legitimacy of the pesantren as a traditional Islamic educational institution, while serving as an example for other pesantren in managing a classical text-based curriculum while adapting to modern demands. Although this study is limited to a single pesantren, the findings provide strategic insights into the management of the Salafiyah curriculum and the potential development of educational policies that preserve religious identity while remaining responsive to societal changes.

CONCLUSION

Sa'adatuddarein Islamic Boarding School has developed a Salafiyah curriculum policy that preserves the tradition of kitab kuning-based education as the core of its learning system. This curriculum policy was formulated through collaboration between the pesantren leadership, teachers, and students, and was aligned with the standards of Formal Diniyah Education (PMA No. 31/2020) as well as regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, demonstrating the pesantren's effort to integrate tradition with the demands of modernity. The curriculum is implemented through traditional methods such as sorogan, bandongan, and bahtsul mas'ail, alongside innovative approaches. The learning materials include the Qur'an, tajwīd, tafsīr, creed, fiqh, hadith, Arabic language, balāghah, history, logic, Sufism, and ethics, all taught in stages and evaluated through oral and written examinations to ensure comprehensive mastery. The findings indicate that the pesantren has successfully harmonized the Salafiyah curriculum policy and its implementation with the national formal education system without losing its traditional identity. Based on qualitative analysis, these results suggest an integrative model that combines classical tradition with modernity, which can be further developed as a new concept for curriculum management in other pesantren. The implication is that this model of curriculum development and implementation may serve as a reference for other Islamic boarding schools seeking to balance classical traditions with modern demands, thereby enhancing the relevance and competitiveness of Islamic education in the global era.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank all our research partners for their cooperation and participation. We also extend our appreciation to the Islamic boarding school leadership for granting permission to conduct this research, as well as to the teachers and students who shared information through interviews, enabling this research to be successfully completed.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Authors 1–2 drafted the article and author 3 developed the instrument and was responsible for carrying out the research, while authors 4 contributed to analyzing the research data.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the generation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies.

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