

THE ROLE OF DARUL FALAH ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN AEK SONGSONGAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Pesantren Darul Falah in transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to understand the changes in Islamic education within the local community after the establishment of the pesantren. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation involving pesantren leaders, teachers, students, and community members. The results show that before the establishment of Pesantren Darul Falah, Islamic education in Aek Songsongan was still informal and not institutionally organized, mainly conducted through traditional Quranic learning and small religious gatherings. The presence of the pesantren brought significant changes by introducing a more structured and systematic educational system, improving religious understanding, and strengthening the moral and spiritual development of the community. In addition, the pesantren also contributed to increasing community participation in religious activities and improving achievements in religious competitions. Although the pesantren initially faced challenges related to public perceptions of the boarding school system, over time it gained trust and support from the community. Therefore, Pesantren Darul Falah plays an important role not only as an Islamic educational institution but also as an agent of educational and socio-religious transformation in Aek Songsongan.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Islamic education is one of the important elements in the process of forming the character, morality, and religious identity of the community. In the social life of the Muslim community, Islamic education is not only understood as a means to transmit religious knowledge, but also as a process of fostering spiritual, moral, and social values that are the basis for building a harmonious and ethical life. Through Islamic education, the values of Islamic teachings can be inherited sustainably from one generation to the next so that they are able to form a society that has religious awareness and commitment to Islamic values in daily life. In the context of Indonesian society, Islamic

education has a very strategic position because its existence does not only take place in formal educational institutions, but also develops through various non-formal and traditional educational institutions that have been firmly rooted in people's lives. One of the Islamic educational institutions that has a big role in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia is Islamic boarding schools. Pesantren is known as an Islamic educational institution that has distinctive characteristics, including a boarding *system*, the leadership of kiai as a central figure, and the teaching of Islamic sciences sourced from classical books or what is often referred to as the yellow book. (Hendrizal et al., 2024)

Historically, pesantren have played an important role in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. In addition to functioning as a place to learn religious knowledge, pesantren also play a role in moral development, regeneration of ulama, and the spread of Islamic da'wah in the community. Through various educational and religious activities held, pesantren help shape the religious culture of the community while strengthening Islamic values in social life. Therefore, pesantren are not only seen as educational institutions, but also as socio-religious institutions that have a wide influence on the dynamics of people's lives. The development of the times marked by social, economic, and technological changes has encouraged various Islamic educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools, to make adjustments to the increasingly complex needs of society. In the face of these changes, Islamic boarding schools not only maintain the long-developed tradition of Islamic education, but also carry out various forms of innovation in the education system and institutional management. This transformation can be seen through curriculum development, the application of more varied learning methods, and the integration between religious education and general education. The adaptation process shows that pesantren is a dynamic educational institution and has the ability to adapt to the times without abandoning its Islamic identity. In many cases, pesantren are even able to play the role of agents of social change that contribute to improving the quality of Islamic education and strengthening the religious life of the community. Through educational activities, da'wah, and various socio-religious activities, pesantren often become centers for community development that are not only oriented to the spiritual aspect, but also to the development of a better social life. (Nashrullah et al., 2023; Primarni et al., 2022)

The role of pesantren in the transformation of Islamic education can be seen more concretely in the context of the local community. One example is the existence of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in the Aek Songsongan area. This Islamic boarding school is one of the Islamic educational institutions that has an important role in the development of Islamic education in the area. Prior to the establishment of the Islamic boarding school, the practice of Islamic education in the community generally took place in the form of informal activities, such as recitation at mosques, suraus, and learning to read the Qur'an traditionally carried out by local religious leaders. Although these activities have an important contribution in maintaining the continuity of the community's religious traditions, the education system that took place at that time tended to be institutionally unstructured. Learning activities are generally carried out simply with limited methods and do not have a sustainable education system. This condition causes the process of fostering the younger generation in the field of Islamic education has not run optimally, especially in the aspect of deepening Islamic knowledge and forming religious character more systematically. (Ni'am & Arafah, 2024)

The Darul Falah Aek Songsongan Islamic Boarding School was founded by H. Abdullah Kadir Ahmad AS Shaulaty. The beginning of the establishment of this pesantren began with his initiative to establish the Al-Qur'an Education Park (TPA) on August 11, 2010 and then developed into a more comprehensive Islamic educational institution, until July 15, 2011. The establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School then became one of the important moments in the development of Islamic education in Aek Songsongan. The presence of this pesantren provides an alternative to an education system that is more organized and structured compared to the Islamic education pattern that previously developed in the community. Through various educational programs organized, pesantren not only provide a space for learning Islamic sciences in more depth, but also play a role in fostering morals, discipline, and character formation of students. In addition to carrying out educational functions for students, the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School also plays an active role in the socio-religious life of the surrounding community. Islamic boarding schools are involved in various da'wah activities, community recitations, and religious activities that aim to improve people's religious understanding and practices. Thus, the existence of pesantren not only has an impact on

the internal environment of educational institutions, but also influences changes in Islamic education patterns and the religious life of the surrounding community.

A number of previous studies have shown that pesantren have a significant role in the process of transforming Islamic education and social change in society. (Abdullah & Muawaroh, 2024), for example, explains that pesantren can function as socio-religious agents that are able to integrate Islamic scientific traditions with community empowerment efforts. Through various educational and social activities carried out, pesantren can contribute to building people's religious awareness while strengthening their social capacity. Other research conducted by showed that pesantren have adaptive abilities in dealing with changes in education policies and the demands of modern society. Pesantren are able to adopt various innovations in the education system without losing their traditional identity as an Islamic educational institution. In addition, the research also emphasizes that educational reform in Islamic boarding schools can be carried out through curriculum development, improvement of the quality of institutional management, and integration between traditional values and modern educational needs. Although these studies have examined the transformation of pesantren education, most studies still focus on the dynamics of pesantren on a broader scale or on the institutional aspects of pesantren in general. The research specifically highlights how the role of pesantren in transforming Islamic education at the local community level is still relatively limited. In fact, studies at the local level are very important to understand how the interaction between pesantren and the community can affect the development of Islamic education and religious practices in daily life. (Azizah & Kumala, 2025; Djuwairiyah et al., 2024)

Based on these conditions, research on the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in Aek Songsongan is important to be carried out. This research is limited to 2011-2024 and is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how the existence of Islamic boarding schools plays a role in transforming Islamic education in the community, as well as how the process of these changes occurs in the social and cultural context of the local community. Thus, this study aims to analyze the condition of Islamic education in Aek Songsongan before the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, explain the role of Islamic boarding schools in transforming Islamic education in the community, and identify the various challenges faced in the transformation process. The results of this research are expected to make an academic contribution to the study of Islamic education, especially related to the role of pesantren as agents of educational and social transformation at the local community level.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type to understand in depth the phenomenon of Islamic education transformation that occurred in the Aek Songsongan community after the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the experiences, views, and meanings of informants towards changes in Islamic education in the region. The research was carried out in Aek Songsongan with a focus on the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School and the surrounding community. The research informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on the consideration that they have information relevant to the focus of the research. The informants in this study include pesantren leaders, ustaz or educators, students, and local community leaders.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The interviews were used to obtain information about the condition of Islamic education before the establishment of the Islamic boarding school, the role of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in the process of transforming Islamic education, and the various challenges faced. Observations are carried out to directly observe educational activities and religious activities in the pesantren environment and the surrounding community. Meanwhile, documentation is used to complete data through various documents related to pesantren activities. The data obtained was analyzed using a qualitative data analysis model which includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The analysis process is carried out continuously during the research so that it can produce a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The Condition of Islamic Education in Aek Songsongan Before the Establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the community around the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, information was obtained that the condition of Islamic education in the Aek Songsongan area before the establishment of the Islamic boarding school was still at a simple stage of development and had not been institutionally organized. Religious education activities at that time generally took place informally and were carried out on a limited basis by the community through individual learning with reciting teachers in the surrounding environment. According to the informant's information, at that time the Aek Songsongan area was still classified as a relatively quiet area with a population that was not too large. The limited social conditions of the community also affect the development of educational and religious life in the region. Religious activities related to the Islamic learning process have not developed systematically as those found in formal educational institutions or Islamic boarding schools. The community in general obtains religious education through direct relations between students and teachers in a small and limited scope. (Setiawati et al., 2025)

The process of learning Islam at that time was usually carried out in the house of the recitation teacher or in places of worship such as mosques and suraus. The learning activity emphasizes more on teaching the basics of Islam, especially the ability to read the Qur'an, the introduction of hijaiyah letters, and basic understanding of daily worship. The learning method used is still traditional and simple, namely with a direct teaching system between teachers and students without any division of education levels or a structured curriculum system. In addition, the education system that developed at that time did not have a clearly organized learning pattern. There is no systematically designed curriculum or continuously planned learning program. Reciting learning activities take place flexibly and depend on the willingness of the recital teacher and the community's initiative to participate in the activity. Thus, the process of Islamic education that took place at that time was more personal and not integrated in an educational institution that had a structured learning system. (Jaber et al., 2025)

This condition also shows that Islamic education in Aek Songsongan in the period before the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School relied more on the role of religious leaders or recitation teachers in the community. These recitation teachers have an important role in guiding the community to learn the basics of Islamic teachings even with limited learning facilities and systems. Their existence is one of the factors that allows people to continue to obtain Islamic religious education even though there are no formal and organized religious educational institutions. On the other hand, the informal education pattern has limitations in terms of learning coverage and educational continuity. Because reciting learning activities are carried out individually or in small groups, the opportunity for people to obtain a more in-depth Islamic education is relatively limited. In addition, the absence of a structured education system also causes the process of fostering the younger generation in the religious field to not run optimally, both in terms of mastering Islamic science and in the formation of religious character. (Permadi et al., 2025)

These findings show that before the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, Islamic education in Aek Songsongan was still in the form of simple non-formal education and had not developed institutionally. Nevertheless, the practice of education that takes place through Qur'an recitation and learning activities still has an important role in maintaining the sustainability of the community's religious traditions. Through these activities, the community still has access to learn Islamic teachings, even though the scope of learning is still limited. Such an Islamic education condition then became one of the important backgrounds for the emergence of the need for more structured Islamic educational institutions in the region. The presence of educational institutions such as pesantren is seen as able to provide a more organized learning system, provide sustainable educational programs, and expand opportunities for people to obtain Islamic religious education in a more in-depth manner. Therefore, the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in Aek Songsongan can be understood as a form of response to the community's need for a more systematic and targeted Islamic educational institution. Thus, the results of this study show that the condition of Islamic education in Aek Songsongan before the establishment of the Darul Falah

Islamic Boarding School was still simple, informal, and did not have a structured education system. This situation then became one of the factors that opened up space for Islamic boarding schools to play a role in developing and transforming Islamic education in the region. (Rahmawati et al., 2024; Zain et al., 2024)

The Role of Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in Transforming Islamic Education in Aek Songsongan

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the management of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, information was obtained that the existence of the pesantren has a very significant role in the process of transforming Islamic education in the Aek Songsongan area. The presence of pesantren not only contributes to changes in the religious learning system, but also has a wide influence on the social dynamics and religious life of the surrounding community.

Prior to the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, the practice of Islamic education in the Aek Songsongan community was generally still going on in a simple and informal form. The religious learning process is more carried out individually through direct interaction between the community and the recitation teachers in the surrounding environment. In addition, religious learning activities are also carried out through taklim assemblies or recitations which are held on a limited basis in mosques, suraus, and community houses. This kind of educational pattern does play a role in maintaining the continuity of religious learning in the community, but the learning process that takes place still does not have a structured system and has not been organized in a formal educational institution. (Shodiq, 2023)

Such educational conditions show that religious learning at that time was more dependent on the initiative of individuals and small groups in society. The absence of organized Islamic educational institutions causes the process of religious formation to take place in a limited and unsustainable manner. In other words, people do have access to religious learning, but the opportunity to obtain Islamic education in a more in-depth and systematic manner is still relatively limited. The situation began to change after the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in the Aek Songsongan area. The presence of Islamic boarding schools makes a considerable contribution in building a more structured and institutionalized Islamic education system. Pesantren not only provide a space for the community to learn Islamic teachings more deeply, but also present a more organized education system with learning programs that are designed in a sustainable manner. (Muhardi, 2025)



Figure 1. The Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School environment in Aek Songsongan.

Through the existence of Islamic boarding schools, the process of Islamic education that previously took place individually and unorganized began to develop into a more systematic learning system. Pesantren provide a learning curriculum, more targeted teaching methods, and educational activities that are carried out regularly and continuously. With a clear education system, religious learning no longer takes place sporadically, but is carried out through a planned and continuous coaching process. In this context, the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School plays a role as an educational institution that is able to organize and develop Islamic religious learning more systematically in the community. Pesantren provides a conducive educational environment for students to study various Islamic disciplines

in more depth. In addition, pesantren also function as a center for moral and spiritual development which plays a role in shaping the religious character of students and the surrounding community. (Malisi et al., 2024)

The role of pesantren in transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan can also be seen from the increasing quality of religious activities that develop in the community. One of the indicators that shows these changes is the increase in community achievements in various religious competition activities, especially in the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) event. Based on the informant's information, before the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, the Aek Songsongan area was relatively rarely known in MTQ competition activities. In fact, the local community almost never gets a prominent achievement in the competition. However, after the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, the condition began to undergo significant changes. Pesantren actively coaches students and the community in various branches of the MTQ competition. The coaching covers various fields, such as Qur'anic calligraphy, Qur'anic fahmil, and various other branches of competitions related to understanding and appreciating the Qur'an. Through coaching that is carried out in a structured and sustainable manner, several participants from the Aek Songsongan area have achieved achievements in various MTQ competitions, even reaching the national level. This achievement is not only a source of pride for the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, but also has a positive impact on the image of the Aek Songsongan region in the field of religious activities. Areas that were previously rarely known in MTQ activities are now starting to be taken into account in various religious competitions. This shows that the existence of Islamic boarding schools not only plays a role in improving the quality of Islamic education, but also contributes to developing the potential of the community in the religious field. (Bulhayat, 2025; Hasyim & Chair, 2024)

In addition to contributing to the field of education and religious achievements, the existence of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School also brings positive changes in the social life of the community around the Islamic boarding school. The community showed a fairly high enthusiasm for the various activities organized by the pesantren. This can be seen from the increasing participation of the community in participating in study activities, Islamic studies, and various educational programs organized by Islamic boarding schools. The participation of the community shows that the pesantren not only functions as an educational institution for the students who live in it, but also acts as a center of social and religious activities for the surrounding community. Through various educational activities, da'wah, and social activities held, pesantren play a role in building religious culture in the community and strengthening religious life in the Aek Songsongan area. More than that, the interaction between Islamic boarding schools and the community also creates mutually supportive relationships in the development of Islamic education. Pesantren not only provide religious guidance to the community, but also obtain social support from the community in various activities carried out. This harmonious relationship between pesantren and the community is one of the important factors in the success of pesantren in carrying out its role as an agent of Islamic education transformation.

Thus, the results of this study show that the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School has a very important role in transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan. This transformation can be seen from the change in the education system from previously informal to more structured and institutionalized, the improvement in the quality of religious guidance in the community, and the growth of community participation in various educational and religious activities. The presence of Islamic boarding schools ultimately not only contributes to the development of Islamic education, but also strengthens the social and religious life of the people in the Aek Songsongan area.

The Challenges of Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in the Process of Islamic Education Transformation in Aek Songsongan

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the management of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, it is known that the process of transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan is inseparable from the various challenges faced in the early days of the establishment of the Islamic Boarding School. As with the process of social change in general, the presence of a new educational institution in the community often takes time to gain wide acceptance from the surrounding community. One of the main challenges faced in the early days of the establishment of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School was related to the public's perception of the pesantren education system.

At first, some people still had views that did not understand the concept of pesantren-based education, especially related to the boarding education system or mondok which is a characteristic of pesantren educational institutions. Some people question why the religious learning process must be carried out by settling in Islamic boarding schools for a certain period of time. (Abdullah & Muawaroh, 2024)

This view arose because people at that time were more accustomed to simple and informal patterns of religious learning, such as learning to recite to religious teachers in the surrounding environment or participating in recitation activities at the taklim assembly. In this context, the pesantren education system that requires students to live in the pesantren environment is considered something new and different from the previous habits of the community. Therefore, in the early stages of the establishment new of the Islamic boarding school, not a few people viewed the pesantren education system as a form of learning that was quite difficult for the students. In addition, the obligation to live in Islamic boarding schools in the education process also raises concerns among some people. Some parents are hesitant to send their children to study at Islamic boarding schools because they have to be separated from their families for a certain period of time. This condition is one of the initial challenges for the pesantren in introducing the education system that they apply to the surrounding community.

However, over time, the public's perception of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School began to undergo significant changes. Through various educational activities and religious guidance that are carried out consistently, pesantren are slowly able to show the real benefits of the applied education system. The community began to see that pesantren not only provided theoretical religious education, but also instilled moral values, discipline, and character development to the students. The change in public perception is also influenced by the real results seen from the educational process carried out in Islamic boarding schools. The students who study at the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School show positive developments in the aspects of religious understanding, religious behavior, and moral formation. This then fosters public trust in the existence of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions that are able to better nurture the younger generation. (Nasution et al., 2022)

Along with the increasing public understanding of the benefits of pesantren education, the level of public acceptance of the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School is also growing. If in the early days of the establishment of the pesantren the community still showed doubts about the pesantren education system, then in the next stage of development the community actually provided considerable support for various activities organized by the pesantren. This support can be seen from the increasing number of people who are interested in sending their children to Islamic boarding schools. In addition, the community also showed high enthusiasm in participating in various religious activities organized by Islamic boarding schools, such as recitations, da'wah activities, and various other religious coaching programs. This shows that pesantren have gradually succeeded in building positive relationships with the surrounding community. The change in the attitude of the community shows that the process of transformation of Islamic education carried out by the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School is not only related to the aspect of education, but also involves the process of social and cultural change in the community. Pesantren not only plays a role as an educational institution for students, but also as an agent of change that is able to shape public awareness about the importance of structured and sustainable religious education.

Thus, it can be concluded that the main challenge faced by the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in the process of transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan is mainly related to the initial perception of the Islamic boarding school education system. However, through continuous coaching efforts and tangible results shown by the educational process in Islamic boarding schools, the views of the community are slowly changing. In the end, the pesantren was not only able to overcome these challenges, but also succeeded in gaining the trust and support of the community in efforts to develop Islamic education in the Aek Songsongan area.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School has an important role in transforming Islamic education in Aek Songsongan. Before the establishment of Islamic boarding schools, Islamic education in the community was still informal and institutionally organized. The presence of Islamic

boarding schools then presents a more structured, planned, and sustainable education system so that it is able to improve the quality of religious learning and build community character. In addition, Islamic boarding schools also play a role in increasing the religious activities and achievements of the community and strengthening religious life in the surrounding environment. Although at first it faced challenges in the form of public doubts about the boarding education system, over time the pesantren managed to gain the trust and support of the community. Thus, the Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School not only functions as an educational institution, but also as an agent of Islamic and socio-religious education transformation in Aek Songsongan.

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