



Student Organization for Enhancing Competence in Reading Classical Islamic Texts (*Kitab Kuning*)

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Abstract: This study investigates how the organization of students contributes to improving competence in reading kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts) in two high-performing Islamic boarding schools, namely Maktuba Bata-Bata and Puncak Darussalam, Pamekasan, Indonesia. While previous studies have primarily examined leadership, curriculum management, and instructional strategies independently, limited attention has been given to organizing students as an integrated managerial process encompassing student organization, delegation of instructional responsibilities, and teacher coordination. Employing a qualitative multiple-case study design, data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving kiai, administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, supported by source triangulation and member checking to ensure trustworthiness. The findings reveal that competency-based student grouping, structured learning progression, homogeneous and heterogeneous learning communities, competency-based delegation of teachers' responsibilities, dormitory-based Total Learning Environment, multidimensional teacher mediation, collaborative coordination, ethical communication, and exemplary leadership collectively establish an integrated organizational system that significantly enhances students' competence in reading kitab kuning. The study further proposes the Ethical-Prophetic Managerial Convergence (EPMC) Theory, which explains that sustainable educational quality in Islamic boarding schools emerges through the convergence of formal managerial authority and spiritual authority. The theory extends educational management literature by demonstrating that organizational effectiveness in faith-based educational institutions depends not only on managerial professionalism but also on the integration of ethical leadership, spiritual legitimacy, and collaborative organizational culture. The findings provide both theoretical and practical contributions for strengthening organizational management in Islamic boarding schools while preserving the authenticity of classical Islamic scholarly traditions.

Keywords: Islamic Boarding School, Educational Management, Student Organization, Kitab Kuning, Ethical-Prophetic Managerial Convergence Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have long been recognized as one of the most influential educational institutions in Indonesia, serving not only as centers for Islamic learning but also as institutions responsible for preserving classical Islamic intellectual traditions. Among the most distinctive characteristics of pesantren education is the transmission of *turath* (classical Islamic scholarship) through the study of *kitab kuning* (classical Arabic texts), which remains the primary indicator of scholarly competence among santri (students). Unlike formal educational



institutions that increasingly emphasize standardized curricula and vocational competencies, pesantren continue to prioritize mastery of classical Islamic literature as the foundation for developing religious authority, intellectual maturity, and moral character (Dhofier, 2011). However, maintaining this tradition in contemporary educational settings requires an effective organizational system capable of facilitating increasingly diverse student characteristics while preserving the authenticity of Islamic scholarly transmission.

The growing complexity of learning *kitab kuning* presents substantial pedagogical and managerial challenges. Classical Arabic texts generally contain sophisticated grammatical structures, semantic nuances, and contextual interpretations that demand intensive instructional guidance. Consequently, students' success is determined not merely by instructional methods but also by how educational resources are systematically organized to create effective learning environments. Recent studies have increasingly emphasized that educational management significantly influences student achievement by optimizing organizational structures, leadership practices, delegation mechanisms, and collaborative learning cultures (Hallinger, 2020; Bush, 2021). Within Islamic educational institutions, these managerial dimensions become even more essential because educational authority is closely connected to religious legitimacy and traditional values.

The importance of organizational management in Islamic boarding schools has attracted growing scholarly attention. Previous research has demonstrated that leadership, institutional culture, and instructional supervision substantially contribute to improving educational quality in pesantren (Fauzi, 2021; Wardi & Ismail, 2021). Similarly, Fitriani (2018) argued that differentiated curriculum management enables pesantren to accommodate students' varying competencies through structured learning pathways. Nevertheless, most previous studies primarily focused on curriculum implementation, leadership styles, or instructional strategies, while the organizational processes through which santri are systematically grouped, supervised, coordinated, and guided remain relatively underexplored.

Organizing students represents one of the four fundamental functions of management proposed by Henri Fayol, encompassing the distribution of authority, division of labor, coordination, communication, and delegation to achieve organizational objectives efficiently



(Fayol, 1949). In educational organizations, organizing extends beyond administrative arrangements, involving the strategic allocation of learners into learning communities, supervision systems, mentoring relationships, and collaborative structures that facilitate continuous academic development. This perspective aligns with contemporary educational management theories emphasizing that organizational effectiveness depends on how institutions integrate human resources, leadership, communication, and learning environments into coherent educational systems (Bush, 2021).

Within pesantren education, organizing santri possesses unique characteristics compared to formal schools. Organizational arrangements are embedded not only in academic structures but also within dormitory life, religious practices, peer mentoring, and everyday social interactions. The integration between living spaces and instructional activities creates what may be described as a comprehensive learning ecosystem where educational supervision extends beyond classroom boundaries. Such arrangements potentially enable continuous learning, immediate feedback, moral supervision, and sustained academic assistance throughout students' daily activities. This holistic educational environment distinguishes pesantren from many conventional educational institutions and may explain why some pesantren consistently produce graduates with exceptional competence in reading classical Islamic texts.

Among numerous pesantren in Indonesia, Pondok Pesantren Maktuba Bata-Bata and Pondok Pesantren Puncak Darussalam in Pamekasan Regency represent particularly interesting cases. Both institutions have gained widespread recognition for producing graduates with outstanding competencies in *kitab kuning* literacy despite operating within relatively similar geographical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. Public trust toward these institutions continues to increase because their graduates consistently demonstrate high levels of mastery in classical Islamic scholarship and frequently achieve national as well as international academic recognition.

Although both pesantren employ similar instructional approaches, including accelerated learning methods such as *Nubdzatul Bayan*, they demonstrate superior learning outcomes compared with many institutions implementing comparable pedagogical models. This phenomenon suggests that instructional methods alone cannot sufficiently explain differences in student achievement. Rather, the organizational mechanisms through which students are grouped,



supervised, coordinated, and supported may constitute the principal determinant of learning effectiveness. This observation highlights an important managerial issue that has received limited empirical attention within Islamic educational research.

Another distinctive characteristic observed in both pesantren is the implementation of an integrated learning environment in which dormitories function as small learning communities supervised directly by qualified *ustadz*. This arrangement transforms residential spaces into continuous educational environments where academic consultation, character formation, and religious mentoring occur simultaneously. Such integration reflects an advanced organizational strategy that combines instructional supervision with students' daily social interactions, allowing immediate intervention whenever learning difficulties emerge.

Furthermore, both institutions demonstrate sophisticated delegation mechanisms involving the distribution of educational authority from the *kyai* to instructional supervisors and dormitory mentors. Rather than merely assigning administrative responsibilities, delegation functions as a mechanism for preserving instructional consistency and maintaining the authenticity of Islamic scholarly traditions. Simultaneously, coordination among *ustadz* is supported through intensive communication, shared educational values, and collective responsibility for student development. These organizational practices closely resemble Fayol's principles of unity of command, scalar chain, and esprit de corps while remaining deeply embedded within pesantren traditions.

Despite increasing scholarly interest in pesantren management, significant research gaps remain. First, existing studies generally examine leadership, curriculum management, or instructional innovation independently, with limited attention to organizing santri as an integrated managerial process. Second, previous research rarely investigates how delegation, coordination, and student organization collectively influence competency development in *kitab kuning* learning. Third, comparative studies involving two high-performing salaf pesantren operating within similar socio-cultural environments remain scarce, limiting the development of contextually grounded management theories applicable to Islamic boarding schools.

Addressing these gaps, this study investigates the organizational management of santri in two outstanding pesantren in Pamekasan Regency, namely Pondok Pesantren Maktuba Bata-Bata and Pondok Pesantren Puncak Darussalam. Specifically, the study explores three interrelated



dimensions: (1) the process of organizing santri, (2) delegation of authority and responsibilities among *ustadz*, and (3) coordination mechanisms supporting students' competency in reading *kitab kuning*. By comparing two institutions operating under similar external conditions but demonstrating distinctive organizational characteristics, this research seeks to identify organizational mechanisms contributing most significantly to successful learning outcomes.

The novelty of this study lies in proposing organizing santri as the primary managerial engine underlying successful *kitab kuning* learning rather than viewing instructional methods alone as determinants of educational effectiveness. Moreover, the study integrates classical management theory with indigenous pesantren organizational culture, thereby extending educational management literature beyond conventional school settings. The resulting conceptual framework is expected to contribute to both management theory and Islamic education by providing evidence-based organizational practices that can be adapted by other pesantren seeking to improve students' competencies while preserving traditional Islamic scholarly values.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a multiple-case study design to investigate the organization of *santri* in improving competency in reading *kitab kuning* at Pesantren Maktuba Bata-Bata and Pesantren Puncak Darussalam, Pamekasan, Indonesia. The qualitative approach was selected because it facilitates an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and the meanings they attribute to organizational practices within their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was grounded in the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, which assumes that social reality is constructed through interactions among individuals and their social environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). A multiple-case study design enabled comparison between two pesantren with different educational management models while examining the same organizational phenomenon.

The research was conducted at Pesantren Maktuba Bata-Bata and Pesantren Puncak Darussalam in Pamekasan Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Both institutions were selected purposively because they have developed distinctive organizational systems that support students' competency in reading *kitab kuning*. Participants consisted of *kiai*, administrators, *ustadz*, *santri*,



and parents who possessed substantial knowledge of pesantren management and instructional practices. Purposive sampling was applied to identify information-rich participants, while snowball sampling expanded participant recruitment until data saturation was achieved (Patton, 2015). The researcher functioned as the primary research instrument through prolonged engagement and direct interaction with participants in the natural research setting.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observation focused on student organization, delegation of authority, teacher coordination, and learning activities implemented through the Tanzil, Nubdzah, Takhassus, Manhal, and IICP programs. Interviews explored participants' perspectives regarding organizational management and educational practices. Documentary evidence included institutional profiles, organizational structures, curriculum documents, learning schedules, meeting reports, evaluation records, and institutional archives. Data from all sources were coded systematically to facilitate organization and retrieval during analysis.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), involving data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were coded and categorized to identify recurring themes associated with student organization, delegation of authority, and teacher coordination. Analytical categories were organized into thematic matrices and descriptive narratives to facilitate cross-case comparison. Verification involved continuous comparison among interviews, observations, and documentary evidence until consistent interpretations were established across both research sites.

Trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability following the framework proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement, member checking, source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and peer debriefing. Transferability was supported by providing detailed contextual descriptions of both pesantren. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of the research procedures, while confirmability was ensured by grounding all interpretations in empirical evidence collected from interviews, observations, and institutional documents.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Organizing Students to Enhance Classical Islamic Text (Kitab Kuning) Reading Competence

The organization of students to improve competence in reading *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) demonstrates that effective educational management extends beyond administrative coordination to encompass strategic human resource allocation that optimizes students' intellectual development. Both Maktuba Islamic Boarding School and Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School implement systematic organizational approaches, albeit through different mechanisms. Maktuba employs a competency-based placement test to classify students according to their academic readiness, whereas Puncak Darussalam combines students' competencies with their learning preferences and interests. These approaches reflect the *organizing* function of educational management by aligning students' abilities with instructional demands, thereby minimizing disparities in learning capacity and facilitating more effective knowledge transfer between teachers and students. Such practices are consistent with Fayol's management principles, which emphasize appropriate personnel placement as a prerequisite for organizational efficiency and educational effectiveness (Fayol, 1949; Tanzeh, 2011).

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, competency-based student placement embodies the principle that education should nurture learners according to their individual capacities rather than impose uniform academic expectations. This approach resonates with Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of *Kodrat Alam* (natural disposition), which advocates educational practices that guide rather than constrain learners' inherent potential. Likewise, Hasyim Asy'ari, in *Adabul 'Alim wal Muta'allim*, emphasizes that educators should carefully consider students' intellectual maturity before introducing more advanced learning materials. Consequently, placement based on competence represents not merely an administrative procedure but an ethical commitment to educational justice and learner-centred instruction. This philosophy is further reinforced by the Islamic concept of *at-tadbir* (systematic management), which is derived from the Qur'anic portrayal of Allah as the supreme regulator of all affairs (Qur'an 32:5). Accordingly, educational institutions are expected to establish orderly, accountable, and



professionally managed learning environments that reflect these principles of divine order and stewardship (Ramayulis, 2017; Hasyim Asy'ari, 2017).

The two institutions also differ in the organization of their curricular structures. Maktuba implements a sequential four-level curriculum consisting of At-Tanzil, Nubdzah, Takhassus, and Manhal, each representing progressively advanced stages of *kitab kuning* mastery. This hierarchical structure illustrates Fayol's principle of *division of work*, enabling systematic specialization and rigorous quality control throughout students' academic progression. Conversely, Puncak Darussalam offers both a Regular Programme and an International Islamic Class Programme (IICP), integrating traditional Islamic scholarship with international language proficiency. Although structurally distinct, both curricular models pursue a common institutional objective of producing graduates who possess strong foundations in Islamic scholarship while remaining responsive to contemporary global demands. Furthermore, the staged curriculum reflects the Islamic pedagogical principle of *tadarruj* (gradual learning), whereby knowledge acquisition occurs progressively to ensure sustainable intellectual development. This approach also aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's *Trikon* philosophy, which advocates balancing educational continuity with adaptation to changing societal contexts (Dewantara, 1977; Fayol, 1949).

Differences are equally evident in student grouping strategies. Maktuba adopts homogeneous grouping, placing students with comparable academic abilities within the same learning cohort. This arrangement enables instructors to deliver lessons at an appropriate pace, reduces cognitive disparities, and promotes a psychologically secure learning environment in which students actively participate without excessive competitive pressure. Homogeneous grouping therefore contributes to greater instructional efficiency while enhancing students' mastery of classical Islamic texts. In contrast, Puncak Darussalam employs heterogeneous grouping through a peer-tutoring system, whereby senior students mentor their junior counterparts. This collaborative model not only facilitates academic support but also cultivates leadership skills, social responsibility, and mutual cooperation among students. The peer-tutoring system exemplifies Fayol's principle of *Esprit de Corps*, emphasizing organizational cohesion and teamwork, while simultaneously reflecting the Islamic value of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance). Moreover, the learning-by-teaching process reinforces senior students' conceptual understanding



while strengthening institutional solidarity and sustaining the transmission of Islamic scholarly traditions across generations (Fayol, 1949; Ramayulis, 2017).

Overall, the organizational practices implemented by both Islamic boarding schools demonstrate that successful management of *kitab kuning* learning depends not only on curriculum quality but also on systematic organizational strategies that integrate modern management theory with Islamic educational values. Competency-based placement, structured curricular progression, and complementary grouping models collectively create an adaptive, learner-centred educational environment that promotes both intellectual excellence and character development. These findings indicate that Islamic boarding schools can effectively implement professional educational management without compromising their spiritual identity. Consequently, the integration of contemporary management principles with Islamic pedagogical philosophy provides a sustainable model for enhancing students' competence in classical Islamic scholarship while preparing graduates to address the challenges of an increasingly globalized society (Tanzeh, 2011; Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Delegation of Instructional Responsibilities to Enhance Students' Competence in Reading Classical Islamic Texts

The delegation of instructional responsibilities in Maktuba and Puncak Darussalam Islamic boarding schools reflects a strategic transformation from traditional community-based educational practices toward a professional human resource management system. Teaching responsibilities are no longer assigned solely on the basis of seniority or informal authority but are distributed according to academic expertise and disciplinary specialization. This approach represents the application of the right person in the right position principle, ensuring that every component of the *kitab kuning* curriculum is facilitated by educators possessing appropriate pedagogical competence and subject-matter expertise. Such competency-based delegation enhances instructional quality, strengthens organizational accountability, and promotes sustainable educational effectiveness through systematic human resource management (Bush & Middlewood, 2013; Yukl, 2020).

The implementation of formal qualification standards further reinforces instructional quality by requiring educators responsible for specialized learning units to possess relevant academic credentials and demonstrated mastery of Islamic scholarship. This policy reflects contemporary



educational leadership, in which professional competence constitutes the foundation of instructional authority. Rather than functioning merely as administrative requirements, academic qualifications establish organizational credibility while ensuring that knowledge transmission is both academically rigorous and pedagogically sound. Within the Islamic educational tradition, this practice corresponds to the principle that authority should be entrusted to individuals possessing appropriate expertise, thereby preserving the authenticity of scholarly transmission while minimizing instructional errors. Consequently, competency-based delegation simultaneously promotes institutional professionalism and safeguards the integrity of Islamic intellectual heritage (Northouse, 2022; Bush, 2020).

Both institutions further strengthen instructional delegation by extending teachers' responsibilities beyond classroom instruction through a residential mentoring system. Teachers supervise students within dormitory units, transforming boarding facilities into continuous learning environments where academic, moral, and social development occur simultaneously. This arrangement creates a holistic educational ecosystem in which formal instruction is integrated with students' daily experiences, allowing educators to monitor learning progress, identify academic challenges, and provide immediate pedagogical support. Such an approach reflects distributed leadership, whereby educational responsibilities are shared across multiple learning contexts rather than confined to formal classrooms. The integration of instructional supervision with residential life enhances student engagement while fostering stronger interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners (Spillane, 2006; Day & Sammons, 2016).

The residential mentoring model also exemplifies effective instructional leadership through close supervision and continuous guidance. By assigning each teacher responsibility for a limited number of students, both boarding schools establish manageable supervisory relationships that facilitate individualized support and sustained academic monitoring. Such proximity encourages trust, increases students' motivation, and enables educators to address learning difficulties before they become significant obstacles. Moreover, teachers function not only as instructors but also as mentors, counsellors, and ethical role models who cultivate students' intellectual growth alongside their personal and spiritual development. This integrated mentoring system contributes significantly to improving students' competence in reading *kitab kuning* while simultaneously



strengthening character formation and institutional culture (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hallinger, 2011).

An equally significant aspect of instructional delegation is the autonomy granted to teachers as multidimensional mediators between classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary social realities. Rather than serving exclusively as transmitters of textual knowledge, educators are encouraged to contextualize classical Islamic texts within modern intellectual, cultural, and societal contexts. Such professional autonomy encourages innovation while preserving the authenticity of traditional scholarship. From the perspective of transformational leadership, this delegation empowers teachers to stimulate critical thinking, inspire creativity, and facilitate meaningful learning experiences without compromising theological principles. Consequently, *kitab kuning* is presented not merely as a historical corpus but as a dynamic intellectual resource capable of addressing contemporary challenges through contextual interpretation (Northouse, 2022; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Overall, the delegation of instructional authority implemented in both Islamic boarding schools demonstrates the successful integration of contemporary educational leadership with Islamic educational philosophy. Competency-based teacher assignment, distributed instructional leadership, residential mentoring, and professional autonomy collectively establish an adaptive organizational system that enhances educational quality while preserving the authenticity of Islamic scholarly traditions. By combining professional management principles with ethical and spiritual educational values, these institutions have developed a sustainable leadership model that promotes instructional excellence, organizational accountability, and holistic student development. This integrated approach prepares students not only to master classical Islamic texts but also to apply their knowledge critically and responsibly within an increasingly complex global society (Bush, 2020; Yukl, 2020).

Coordination among Teachers to Enhance Students' Competence in Reading Classical Islamic Texts

Effective coordination among teachers constitutes a fundamental component of instructional management in both Maktuba and Puncak Darussalam Islamic boarding schools. The findings indicate that coordination extends beyond administrative communication and functions as a



mechanism for preserving instructional consistency, maintaining methodological integrity, and ensuring the continuity of classical Islamic scholarship. A clearly defined chain of authority connects institutional leaders, senior teachers, and junior instructors, allowing pedagogical decisions to be implemented consistently across instructional levels. Such coordination safeguards the authenticity of established teaching methodologies while enabling systematic knowledge transmission without compromising educational quality. This hierarchical yet collaborative structure reflects organizational coordination that supports coherent instructional practices and institutional sustainability (Mintzberg, 1979; Bolman & Deal, 2021).

The institutionalization of clear communication channels also strengthens instructional accountability by ensuring that all educators operate within a shared pedagogical framework. Rather than restricting professional initiative, the hierarchical structure provides organizational clarity that minimizes conflicting instructional practices and promotes consistency in curriculum implementation. Teachers understand their respective responsibilities while remaining accountable to institutional standards established by senior educational leaders. Such coordination reflects the principles of organizational alignment, in which effective communication, clearly defined responsibilities, and mutual accountability contribute directly to instructional quality and organizational effectiveness. Consequently, the preservation of methodological continuity becomes a collective organizational responsibility rather than an individual instructional effort (Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2016).

Horizontal coordination among teachers further reinforces instructional quality through collaborative decision-making and professional dialogue. Teachers regularly engage in consultation, curriculum discussions, and collective problem-solving to ensure consistency in learning objectives, instructional methods, and student assessment. This collaborative culture reflects the characteristics of a Professional Learning Community (PLC), where continuous communication promotes shared expertise, professional trust, and collective responsibility for student learning outcomes. Such collaborative interactions enable teachers to refine instructional practices while maintaining consistency in the interpretation and teaching of classical Islamic texts. Furthermore, respectful communication and mutual professional support contribute to



organizational cohesion, thereby strengthening institutional credibility and enhancing students' confidence in the instructional process (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Stoll et al., 2006).

The coordination system is further strengthened through the establishment of a shared organizational culture characterized by ethical communication, mutual respect, and collective commitment. Rather than emphasizing hierarchical authority alone, teachers cultivate collaborative relationships founded upon trust, empathy, and shared educational values. This organizational climate encourages open communication while minimizing interpersonal conflict, thereby facilitating the successful implementation of instructional innovations and curriculum development. Research on organizational culture consistently demonstrates that educational institutions characterized by strong collaborative cultures achieve higher levels of instructional effectiveness because professional relationships support continuous learning and organizational improvement. Consequently, ethical communication functions not only as a social value but also as a strategic organizational resource that enhances institutional performance (Schein & Schein, 2021; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018).

An equally important dimension of coordination is the consistent demonstration of exemplary professional behaviour by teachers. Instructional coordination is reinforced through shared commitment to punctuality, discipline, professional appearance, and ethical conduct, all of which establish common behavioural standards throughout the institution. Rather than relying primarily on formal supervision, both boarding schools encourage behavioural consistency through professional modelling, allowing students to internalize institutional values by observing teachers' daily practices. Such modelling strengthens students' respect for academic authority while fostering disciplined learning habits that support mastery of *kitab kuning*. This approach aligns with social learning theory, which emphasizes that behavioural modelling constitutes one of the most effective mechanisms for transmitting professional and moral values within educational settings (Bandura, 1986; Sergiovanni, 2007).

Overall, teacher coordination in Maktuba and Puncak Darussalam demonstrates that instructional excellence depends upon the integration of organizational communication, collaborative leadership, professional learning communities, and shared organizational culture. Vertical coordination ensures methodological consistency, horizontal collaboration promotes



collective professional learning, and exemplary conduct reinforces institutional values through everyday educational practice. Together, these dimensions establish an adaptive instructional management system that preserves the authenticity of classical Islamic scholarship while responding effectively to contemporary educational challenges. The findings suggest that sustainable improvement in students' competence in reading *kitab kuning* is achieved not only through curriculum development but also through coordinated leadership, collaborative professionalism, and a strong organizational culture that collectively supports high-quality teaching and meaningful student learning (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Fullan, 2016).

Conceptual Model

The synthesis of the nine research propositions generated a theoretical framework referred to as the Ethical–Prophetic Managerial Convergence (EPMC) Theory. This theory explains how Islamic boarding schools sustain and strengthen students' competence in reading *kitab kuning* by integrating contemporary management principles with the ethical and spiritual foundations of Islamic education. Rather than positioning managerial professionalism and religious traditions as competing paradigms, the EPMC Theory conceptualizes both as complementary elements that collectively enhance institutional effectiveness, instructional quality, and educational sustainability. The model argues that preserving the authenticity of classical Islamic scholarship requires educational organizations to integrate formal organizational mechanisms with the ethical values embedded in the *pesantren* tradition.

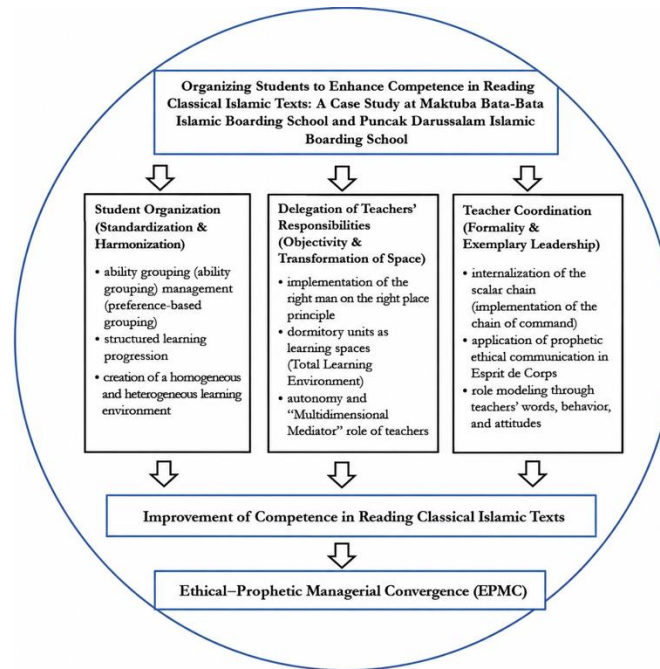


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework Ethical-Prophetic Managerial Convergence*

The proposed theory is founded upon the convergence of two complementary dimensions of institutional authority. The first is formal organizational authority, which includes competency-based human resource management, standardized operating procedures, organizational hierarchy, professional qualifications, and systematic instructional management. These managerial mechanisms ensure organizational stability, accountability, consistency, and quality assurance throughout the educational process. The second dimension is spiritual authority, represented by the values of *sanad* (scholarly transmission), *barakah* (spiritual blessing), ethical leadership, prophetic communication, and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct). The findings indicate that neither dimension alone is sufficient to ensure sustainable educational quality. Instead, long-term institutional resilience emerges through the integration of managerial rationality and spiritual legitimacy within a unified educational management system.

A distinctive contribution of the EPMC Theory lies in its transformation of the boarding school into a Total Learning Environment. Learning is no longer confined to formal classrooms but extends into students' residential life, where educational, social, moral, and spiritual development occur simultaneously. Within this comprehensive learning ecosystem, teachers perform multidimensional roles that extend beyond subject instruction. They function as



Multidimensional Mediators, facilitating the integration of classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary social realities while simultaneously serving as mentors, role models, counsellors, and facilitators of students' holistic development. This expanded instructional role enables the preservation of traditional Islamic scholarship while ensuring its continued relevance in addressing contemporary educational and societal challenges.

The EPMC Theory further proposes that educational effectiveness is achieved through the simultaneous interaction of three interconnected managerial dimensions. The first dimension, Student Organization, emphasizes standardization and instructional harmonization through competency-based grouping, structured learning progression, and adaptive learning environments. These organizational strategies enable students to receive instruction that corresponds to their academic readiness while promoting systematic mastery of classical Islamic texts. The second dimension, Delegation of Teachers' Responsibilities, focuses on competency-based teacher assignment, professional autonomy, and the transformation of residential spaces into comprehensive learning environments. Through this dimension, teachers are empowered to implement innovative instructional approaches while maintaining the authenticity of Islamic scholarly traditions. The third dimension, Teacher Coordination, integrates organizational communication, collaborative professionalism, ethical interaction, and exemplary leadership to ensure instructional consistency, organizational cohesion, and continuous professional collaboration among educators.

The interaction of these three managerial dimensions establishes an integrated instructional system that directly contributes to improving students' competence in reading *kitab kuning*. Rather than operating independently, student organization, teacher delegation, and teacher coordination function as mutually reinforcing organizational processes that collectively strengthen instructional effectiveness. Their integration creates a coherent educational environment characterized by academic rigor, organizational accountability, ethical leadership, and collaborative professionalism. Consequently, improvements in students' literacy competence emerge not merely from curriculum design but from the effective orchestration of organizational structures, human resource management, instructional leadership, and institutional culture.



From a theoretical perspective, the Ethical–Prophetic Managerial Convergence (EPMC) Theory extends existing educational management literature by demonstrating that organizational effectiveness in Islamic boarding schools cannot be fully explained through conventional management theories alone. Instead, sustainable educational quality depends upon the convergence of organizational capability, professional management, knowledge transmission, ethical leadership, and spiritual authority. By integrating formal organizational systems with prophetic educational values, the EPMC Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how faith-based educational institutions maintain instructional excellence while preserving their religious identity amid rapid social transformation. The theory therefore provides a novel contribution to educational management scholarship by illustrating that organizational resilience within Islamic educational institutions is achieved through the continuous integration of professional governance and spiritual legitimacy into a unified management system.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that improving students' competence in reading *kitab kuning* is fundamentally influenced by the effectiveness of organizational management rather than by instructional methods alone. The findings indicate that organizing students through competency-based grouping, structured curricular progression, and adaptive learning communities creates instructional environments that accommodate students' diverse academic needs while preserving the authenticity of classical Islamic scholarship. Furthermore, the delegation of instructional responsibilities based on professional competence, combined with the transformation of dormitory units into Total Learning Environments, enables teachers to function not only as instructors but also as mentors, facilitators, and multidimensional mediators who support students' academic, moral, and spiritual development. Effective teacher coordination through collaborative communication, shared professional responsibility, and exemplary leadership further strengthens instructional consistency and organizational cohesion, thereby creating a sustainable educational ecosystem that continuously supports students' mastery of *kitab kuning*.

The principal theoretical contribution of this research is the development of the Ethical–Prophetic Managerial Convergence (EPMC) Theory, which offers a new perspective on



educational management within Islamic boarding schools. Unlike conventional educational management models that primarily emphasize organizational efficiency and administrative effectiveness, the EPMC Theory demonstrates that sustainable educational quality is achieved through the convergence of two complementary dimensions of authority: formal managerial authority, represented by competency-based management, organizational structures, standardized procedures, and professional governance; and spiritual authority, represented by *sanad*, *barakah*, prophetic communication, ethical leadership, and *uswah hasanah*. The interaction of these dimensions is operationalized through three interconnected managerial components—student organization, delegation of teachers' responsibilities, and teacher coordination—which collectively establish an integrated management system capable of maintaining instructional quality while preserving the religious identity of pesantren. Consequently, this study enriches educational management theory by introducing an organizational framework that integrates modern managerial principles with indigenous Islamic educational values.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide an evidence-based organizational model that can be adapted by Islamic boarding schools seeking to strengthen students' competence in reading classical Islamic texts without sacrificing their traditional identity. Educational policymakers and pesantren administrators may adopt competency-based student organization, professional teacher delegation, collaborative instructional coordination, and dormitory-based learning ecosystems as strategic approaches for improving educational quality. Nevertheless, this study is limited to two salaf pesantren located in Pamekasan Regency; therefore, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings to other institutional contexts. Future research is recommended to examine the applicability of the EPMC Theory across different types of pesantren, Islamic higher education institutions, and faith-based schools using comparative, mixed-method, or quantitative research designs to further validate and refine the proposed theoretical model.

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