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Exploration Of Islamic Boarding School Leadership In Achieving Financial Independence: Through Optimizing The Potential Of Asset-Based Community Development

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Abstract

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach places the community's internal assets as the primary foundation for realizing participatory and sustainable development. Based on this perspective, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the ABCD approach in building the independence of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School through optimizing various assets owned by the Islamic boarding school community. The study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving Islamic boarding school caretakers, institutional managers, administrators of the Islamic Boarding School-Owned Enterprises (BUMPES), and various elements of the Islamic boarding school community. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the ABCD approach is able to form an empowerment ecosystem that integrates economic, social, spiritual, and cultural dimensions in the development of Islamic boarding school institutions. Optimization of human assets is realized through the active involvement of students and alumni in the management of various business units, while social assets are strengthened through collaboration between the Islamic boarding school, alumni, the community, and institutional partners. Meanwhile, spiritual and cultural assets serve as an ethical foundation that directs all economic activities to remain oriented towards the values of blessing, welfare, and sustainability. The findings of this study confirm that asset-based development can strengthen the institutional independence of Islamic boarding schools by

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positioning the community as a key actor in the change process. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) through the context of Islamic boarding schools as institutions capable of integrating human, social, spiritual, and cultural capital in building an adaptive, participatory, and sustainable empowerment model.

Keywords: Asset-Based Community Development; Islamic Boarding School Independence; Community Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary socio-economic dynamics, many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are faced with structural challenges in achieving sustainable financial independence (Rahman & Mala, 2025; Sutton et al., 2023). Dependence on conventional funding sources such as student contributions, community donations, and government assistance that are fluctuating and short-term still dominates the financing pattern in most Islamic boarding schools (Aripin & Nugraha, 2025). This dependence creates institutional economic vulnerability, especially when Islamic boarding schools have to face external pressures in the form of national economic instability, fluctuations in the number of students, or reduced intensity of support from regular donors (Jayachandran, 2022; Sharma et al., 2023). As a result, the economic foundation of Islamic boarding schools becomes less adaptive to changes in the macroeconomic environment and increasingly complex social dynamics.

On the other hand, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) truly possess enormous and multidimensional community potential (Nurkhin et al., 2024; Setiawati et al., 2025). Their social structures, involving students, alumni, the surrounding community, and extensive institutional networks, constitute a form of social capital with strategic value in developing an independent and competitive economic system. The culturally and spiritually cohesive social environment of Islamic boarding schools can truly become a productive ecosystem for strengthening a community-based economy (Hidayati et al., 2025). However, this potential is often not managed optimally, directed, and systematically due to limited leadership capacity in strategically managing community resources, including planning, coordination, and empowerment. As a result, this truly constructive social energy often operates latently, not yet manifested in the form of real and sustainable economic independence.

More specifically, the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is the primary focus of this research because it represents a transformative dynamic in developing economic potential and

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strengthening institutional financial independence. These efforts are reflected in the optimization of productive internal business units and the expansion of external collaborative networks oriented towards the economic sustainability of Islamic boarding schools. This phenomenon demonstrates that Islamic boarding school leadership is not merely understood as a managerial capacity to direct, coordinate, and influence the community of followers, but also as a manifestation of transcendental charisma grounded in moral integrity, steadfast character, and a spiritual vision oriented towards collective well-being. Thus, leadership in the context of Islamic boarding schools can be interpreted as a process of socio-religious transformation, in which substantive and civilized Islamic values are dynamically internalized in the economic, social, and educational practices of the Islamic boarding school community.

By implementing a visionary, participatory, and adaptive leadership model to the dynamics of changing times, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are able to affirm their existence not merely as centers of spiritual and moral development but also as agents of sustainable socio-economic transformation (Boeske, 2023; Deng et al., 2023). This leadership style reflects a strategic orientation grounded in transcendental values while simultaneously being responsive to the contextual needs of modern society. This inclusive and innovative leadership fosters a culture of creativity, collective independence, and an ethos of social productivity, making Islamic boarding schools entities not only spiritually and culturally relevant but also institutionally resilient in facing the complexity of global challenges and the increasingly rapid flow of modernization (Bagga et al., 2023; Liden et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2021).

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach emphasizes leveraging the strengths, potential, and assets already present within the community as a starting point for development, rather than addressing the community's shortcomings or deficits. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this paradigm has philosophical coherence with empowerment values based on local wisdom and Islamic spirituality, which emphasize the importance of autonomy, mutual cooperation, and collective blessings. However, the effectiveness of implementing the ABCD approach in Islamic boarding schools is largely determined by the capacity of transformational leadership, which not only acts as a spiritual figure and moral protector, but also as a catalyst for socio-economic change. A pesantren leader is required to have the ability to build cross-sector collaborative networks, initiate social innovation, and systematically and strategically map and mobilize community assets, so that existing latent potential can be converted into real strength for the realization of the independence and sustainability of the pesantren.

The economic independence of Islamic boarding schools has also been extensively studied

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by several previous researchers. Abdullah, (2024) explained in his research that the success of Islamic boarding schools in achieving economic independence is greatly influenced by the leader's ability to combine religious values with a spirit of social entrepreneurship. Active and visionary leaders are crucial factors in building networks and empowering the potential of the Islamic boarding school community.

Furthermore, research by Yusuf dan Fathiyyah & Khusna, (2024) confirms that a transformational leadership style has a significant influence on strengthening Islamic boarding school economic management. Visionary and inspiring leaders are able to encourage innovation, expand collaborative networks, and increase community loyalty, supporting the Islamic boarding school's financial independence.

Furthermore, research conducted by Nel, (2024) shows that the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach can shift the community paradigm from dependence to independence by mapping its social, economic, and cultural assets. Through participatory workshops, community asset mapping, and reflective dialogue, communities begin to recognize their own potential, such as agricultural skills, traditional social networks, and local knowledge about natural resource conservation.

Based on a review of several previous studies, it appears that discussions on Islamic boarding school leadership and the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach are still conducted separately, each with its own analytical approach. Therefore, this research seeks to present new ideas by combining the concepts of Islamic boarding school leadership and the ABCD approach within a single, integrated framework. The focus is on exploring Islamic boarding school leadership that promotes community empowerment based on spiritual values and local wisdom, in order to strengthen the financial independence and economic sustainability of Islamic boarding schools.

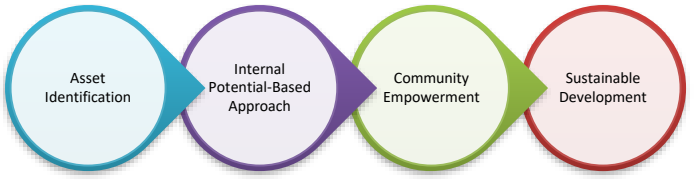
From the several explanations that have been explained previously, it can be concluded that the purpose of this study is to introduce a model of Islamic boarding school leadership based on the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. This model offers a solid framework in stimulating reflection, collaboration, and socio-economic innovation through an approach oriented to the strengths and assets of the community. By integrating the potential of students, alumni, the surrounding community, and institutional networks, this model is expected to be able to build a conceptual understanding and leadership practices that are not only spiritual, but also transformative and productive. Thus, this study seeks to present a leadership model rooted in Islamic values and local wisdom, as implemented at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding

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School, to realize an independent, adaptive, and competitive institution in the context of sustainable economic development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study describes the implementation of research procedures in exploring Islamic boarding school leadership to realize financial independence through optimizing community potential based on the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School (Najiburrahman et al., 2024).



Through this approach, the research seeks to comprehensively present empirical data and dynamics to clearly define the problem. The ABCD approach was chosen because it emphasizes the strengths and assets of the Islamic boarding school community, rather than its weaknesses, making it relevant in describing the strategy of Islamic boarding school leadership in building sustainable economic independence.

This research employed a qualitative case study method, focusing on an in-depth study of a single institution: the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. The case study was conducted to understand the phenomenon of leadership in a real-world context, specifically how Islamic boarding school leaders are able to manage the internal and external potential of the Islamic boarding school community in achieving financial independence. This approach allows researchers to holistically explore the value systems, strategies, and leadership practices that develop within the Islamic boarding school environment, from a spiritual, social, and economic perspective.

The data collection technique in this study was conducted in a circular manner using three main approaches: (1) Participant observation to directly observe leadership practices and the economic activities of the Islamic boarding school; (2) In-depth interviews conducted with the Islamic boarding school caretaker, the Deputy Head of the Islamic boarding school, the Head of BUMPES, and members of the Islamic boarding school community; and (3) Documentation.

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Meanwhile, data analysis in this study was carried out through; data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification (Saleha et al., 2022).

Data analysis obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation was then thoroughly synthesized to ensure the data's original value was not lost. This process yielded a comprehensive picture of the leadership system and managerial methods adopted by Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in developing its community's potential and internal assets. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of a community-empowerment-based Islamic boarding school leadership model, while also serving as a practical reference for other Islamic boarding schools in building financial independence through the ABCD approach.

DISCUSSION

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach emphasizes optimizing a community's internal strengths and potential as the primary foundation of the development process. Unlike the needs-based approach, which focuses on identifying community deficiencies and needs, ABCD is based on the assumption that each community possesses a variety of strategic assets that can be optimally utilized. These assets include human resources, social capital, institutional networks, local economic resources, and deeply rooted cultural values. Thus, the development process is positioned not as an effort to overcome dependence on external assistance, but rather as a process of strengthening collective capacity through the recognition, management, and sustainable utilization of community assets.

Through the asset mapping stage, communities are encouraged to identify, inventory, and organize all their potential as a basis for designing participatory, inclusive, and sustainable development strategies. This process enables communities to understand their available internal capacities and thus optimize various resources independently. From an ABCD perspective, community assets are not limited to tangible resources such as land, buildings, and infrastructure. They also encompass intangible assets of strategic value, including local leadership, social capital, institutional networks, community solidarity, local knowledge, and deeply rooted spiritual and cultural values within the community. Recognition and utilization of these assets contribute to a sense of ownership, increased community participation in every development process, and the development of a community identity that is independent, adaptive, and resilient in the face of various challenges and changes in the external environment.

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is understood not only as a set of

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empowerment methods but also as a holistic, contextual development paradigm oriented toward strengthening the community's internal capacity. This approach positions the community as the primary actor in the development process, enabling every change initiative to build on the community's inherent potential, experience, and resources. Therefore, ABCD is highly relevant for the development of community-based institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, villages, and community-based schools, as it encourages active participation, collaboration, and institutional independence. Through the inside-out development perspective, social transformation is seen as a process that grows from the awareness and internal strength of the community, resulting in a more inclusive, equitable, adaptive, and sustainable empowerment ecosystem.

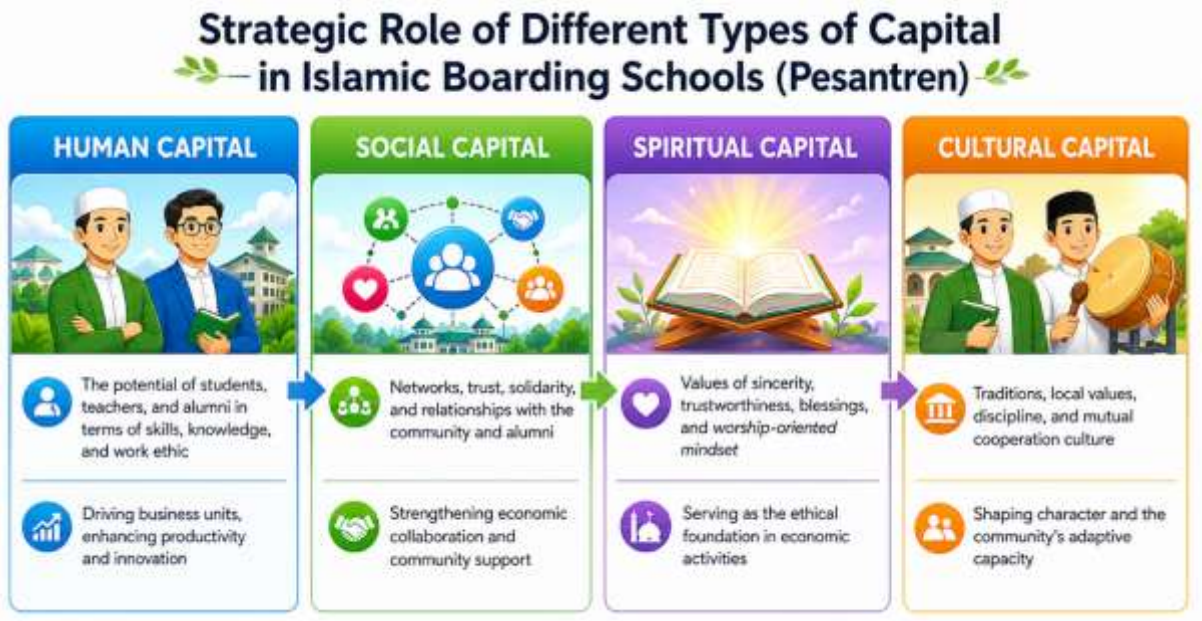
Asset



Within the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) framework, Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) defines assets as the totality of resources, capacities, and potential inherent in a community that can be utilized to improve shared well-being (Amanda & Darwis, 2024; Hidayat et al., 2025). This paradigm emphasizes that every community, no matter how small, possesses internal strengths that can serve as the foundation for sustainable development. Therefore, development orientation no longer relies on shortcomings (a needs-based approach) but instead focuses on recognizing and optimizing existing potential (an assets-based approach).

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Moh. Zuhri Zaini, the caretaker of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, explained that in the institutional context of Islamic boarding schools, assets are understood not only as material economic resources but also encompass human capital, social capital, spiritual capital, and cultural capital, which integratedly form the ecosystem of Islamic boarding school life. These four asset dimensions interact and collaborate in strengthening the independence of Islamic boarding schools, while increasing institutional capacity as educational, social, and economic institutions based on community empowerment.



First, human capital encompasses the full potential of students, teachers, and alumni as the primary asset in the development of Islamic boarding schools. According to Saiful Anam, Head of the Islamic Boarding School-Owned Enterprises (BUMPES), students and alumni play a strategic role in managing various Islamic boarding school business units, such as cooperatives, printing presses, and grocery stores. This involvement is oriented not only toward mastering technical skills but also toward fostering a work ethic grounded in Islamic boarding school values. This demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools function not only as institutions that produce religious individuals but also as developing productive, adaptive, and innovative human resources to support their economic independence.

Therefore, Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School implements a sustainably designed economic system focused on strengthening the institution's financial independence. This system is implemented through integrated business management, from meeting the school's logistical

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needs, coordinated by Mandiri Logistik, to product distribution and marketing through internal and external store networks, such as NJmart. Muhammad Syafi'i, Marketing Coordinator, explained that this strategy not only serves as a mechanism for strengthening institutional economics but also serves as a learning tool for instilling entrepreneurial values in the students. The students' direct involvement in various economic activities provides practical experience that strengthens managerial competencies, fosters a professional work ethic, and enhances their ability to adapt to evolving market dynamics.

The findings of this study align with those of Arifin (2026), who emphasized that the economic success of Islamic boarding schools is significantly influenced by the quality of their human resources, particularly in integrating three key dimensions: religious competence, social entrepreneurship, and transformative leadership. Therefore, the economic model implemented at Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School not only serves as an instrument for strengthening the institution's financial independence but also serves as a means of developing the character of students so they can grow as independent, productive, and competitive agents of change.

Second, social capital serves as a primary foundation for strengthening cohesion, solidarity, and cooperation within the Islamic boarding school environment. The values of mutual cooperation, intercommunity trust, and extensive alumni networks serve as social forces that support the sustainability of the community-based economic system. Fahri Suryana, a staff member of the Development Bureau, explained that the support of the surrounding community and alumni for the Islamic boarding school's various economic activities is very high. This participation is realized through involvement in marketing Islamic boarding school products, developing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) within the Islamic boarding school environment, and partnerships with various external institutions. One form of this collaboration is collaboration with companies such as POMI and PLTU (Power Plant) in developing a greenhouse program. Furthermore, alumni have formed the Redwahk community, which focuses on community economic empowerment and the study and analysis of government economic policies. These findings indicate that Islamic boarding schools have developed as social hubs capable of strengthening relationships between institutions, alumni, the business world, and the community. This condition aligns with the findings of Astutik et al. (2025), who stated that social capital within Islamic boarding schools acts as a primary catalyst in driving the success of community-based development through strengthening networks, collaboration, and community participation.

Third, spiritual capital is the most distinctive asset and the primary identity of Islamic

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boarding schools. The values of sincerity, trustworthiness, and blessings (barakah) serve as the ethical foundation for every economic activity undertaken. Based on field observations, all Islamic boarding school economic activities, from managing the student shop to the drinking water business, always begin with a collective prayer and an intention to serve as a form of internalizing spiritual values. This practice demonstrates that the economic orientation of Islamic boarding schools is not solely directed at achieving material profit, but also at the sustainability of moral and spiritual values as the foundation of business management. Imdad Rabbani, Deputy Head I, explained that the work ecosystem within the Islamic boarding school environment is built on a system that possesses a strong ruhul jihat (spirit of struggle) based on two main pillars: the Santri Trilogy and the Santri Five Awarenesses. These two concepts serve not only as value guidelines but also as a normative framework for shaping the character, work ethic, and devotional orientation of students in all aspects of life at the Islamic boarding school.

The Santri Trilogy represents three fundamental pillars that every Islamic student (santri) must possess. First, knowledge, which encompasses comprehensive knowledge, both in Islamic and general fields, as a foundation for fulfilling their roles in society. Second, faith, which encompasses a strong belief in Allah SWT as a spiritual foundation that guides every attitude, behavior, and activity in life. Third, good deeds (good morals), which encompasses the ability to actualize knowledge and faith through concrete actions guided by moral values, etiquette, and morality in daily life.

Meanwhile, the Five Awarenesses of Santri encompass the development of more practical values as guidelines for daily life. First, religious awareness, which encompasses a commitment to worship and devoting oneself to Allah SWT in every aspect of life. Second, knowledge awareness, which encompasses the spirit to continuously pursue, develop, and apply knowledge for the benefit of this world and the hereafter. Third, organizational awareness, which encompasses the ability to work together, uphold discipline, and carry out responsibilities in institutional life. Fourth, community awareness, namely the readiness to play an active role, adapt, and make positive contributions to social life. Fifth, national and state awareness, namely an attitude of love for the homeland, maintaining unity, and actively participating in the development of the nation and state.

Thus, the Santri Trilogy and the Five Santri Awarenesses are not only a set of normative values, but have also been internalized as the foundation of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School's vision and mission, developing individuals who are knowledgeable, faithful, and have noble morals, and capable of making real contributions to the life of society, the nation, and the

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state. This finding aligns with Windianingsih's (2025) view, which asserts that spirituality in the Islamic boarding school economic system serves as an ethical compass that maintains integrity, accountability, and responsibility in the management of community assets.

Fourth, cultural capital within the Islamic boarding school environment is manifested through the values of local wisdom and tradition, which inherently shape the work ethic, discipline, and collective solidarity among the students. These values not only represent the cultural identity of Islamic boarding schools but also serve as a foundation that strengthens the institution's ability to adapt to various social and economic dynamics. In this context, Hilman Zidni, Deputy Head of the Islamic Boarding School Bureau, explained that the tradition of simple living and collective work culture is deeply rooted in the lives of students. He explained that students are accustomed to managing various activities, both small and large, while upholding the spirit of mutual cooperation, which is continuously instilled at every level of education as part of the development of the Islamic boarding school's distinctive character.

Based on this reality, the need arose to institutionalize the leadership potential of students, which had previously remained latent. The realization that leadership is not formed instantly, but rather through a focused learning process and experience, underpinned the establishment of the Development Division as a strategic platform for strengthening students' leadership capacity. This division serves as a medium for actualizing leadership potential through the development of organizational capabilities and institutional governance. Through this approach, students are not only encouraged to participate actively but also gain the space and institutional legitimacy to contribute to building a more structured, effective, and sustainable organizational system.

One implementation of this effort is the establishment of the Student Communication Forum (FKS), a regional-based organization that accommodates students' social tendencies to interact with others from similar geographic backgrounds. Fahri Suryanata, the Development Division Administrator, explained that the formation of the FKS was based on observations indicating the limited leadership capacity of some students. Therefore, the FKS was designed as a contextual leadership learning space, leveraging cultural proximity and shared origins as capital to strengthen solidarity, coordination, and organizational capacity. Thus, the FKS serves not only as a forum for social interaction but also as a strategic instrument in developing student leadership rooted in local wisdom and oriented toward sustainability.

Based on the overall analysis, it can be confirmed that the implementation of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School reflects a development paradigm oriented toward strengthening the community's internal

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potential. The development orientation no longer relies on identifying various limitations, but rather on optimizing existing assets as the primary capital for realizing institutional independence. The synergy between human capital, social capital, spiritual capital, and cultural capital creates a resilient, productive Islamic boarding school ecosystem that is adaptable to various social and economic dynamics. In this context, students not only serve as beneficiaries but also as key actors actively involved in the development of the Islamic boarding school economy, grounded in Islamic values and ethics.

Strengthening an integrated economic system, fostering strong social solidarity, internalizing spiritual values, and preserving collective culture are essential foundations for building the institutional independence of Islamic boarding schools. Furthermore, the establishment of the Student Development and Communication Forum (FKS) Division demonstrates a deliberate effort to develop the leadership potential of students through a systematic and sustainable learning process. Thus, Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School has not only successfully optimized its assets as a source of community strength, but has also been able to build an asset-based empowerment model that encourages the development of independent, adaptive, and competitive human resources, thus strengthening the role of Islamic boarding schools as centers of community empowerment amidst ongoing social change.

Based

From the perspective of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), the term "based" emphasizes that every development process must begin with the identification, recognition, and optimization of the community's existing assets. According to Mathie and Cunningham (2003), communities possess various internal assets, such as knowledge, skills, social networks, and local potential, which can serve as the primary foundation for driving sustainable change (Syofyan et al., 2025). This approach shifts the orientation of development from one that relies on external support to one that strengthens the internal capacity of communities as the primary actors in development. Therefore, development is understood as a participatory empowerment process, in which communities actively participate in planning, implementing, and maintaining the sustainability of social change based on their inherent potential.

In the institutional context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the "based" principle reorients the development paradigm from a top-down approach to a bottom-up one, by positioning students, alumni, and the surrounding community as key actors in the planning, implementation, and development of various Islamic boarding school economic programs. This

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approach emphasizes that all internal resources possessed by Islamic boarding schools, including human capital, social networks, and collective spiritual values, are strategic assets that serve as the foundation for building sustainable financial independence.

Moh. Jasri Ahyak, Chairman of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School Foundation, explained that the asset-based paradigm has been effectively implemented in the Islamic boarding school's institutional governance system. According to him, efforts to build Islamic boarding school independence are carried out by instilling a collective awareness among students and alumni that the institution's primary strength lies not in dependence on external assistance, but rather in the ability to optimize potential, resources, and various internal assets held collectively. The implementation of this paradigm is realized through various educational and productive empowerment programs, such as micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) training and empowering students to manage various business units and economic sectors within the Islamic boarding school. This involvement includes managing agriculture, animal husbandry, and various other economic activities under the auspices of the foundation through the Islamic Boarding School-Owned Enterprise (BUMPES) as the Islamic boarding school's business entity. Furthermore, student participation is fostered through various innovative programs, including the development of a greenhouse aimed at supporting sustainable agricultural practices while strengthening environmentally-based entrepreneurial capacity.

Various Islamic boarding school business units, from drinking water production and student shop management to agricultural land utilization, are developed based on the principles of participatory collaboration and internal asset optimization. All resources—human, material, and social—are managed in an integrated and synergistic manner to support business sustainability. This approach not only reflects the Islamic boarding school's commitment to developing social entrepreneurship but also emphasizes its role as an institution capable of building sustainable economic independence, competitiveness, and the collective values fostered within the Islamic boarding school community.



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This statement indicates that the value of independence has been internalized in the organizational culture of Islamic boarding schools, aligning with the principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), which emphasizes the transformation from dependency to self-reliance. This finding also aligns with research by Abdullah (2024), which asserts that the success of Islamic boarding school economic development is greatly influenced by the community's ability to optimize and manage internal potential collaboratively, participatively, and sustainably.

Furthermore, the Head of BUMPES explained that every business unit development process always involves students and alumni as an integral part of the Islamic boarding school community. This involvement aims to ensure they not only act as beneficiaries but also have a sense of ownership in every program implemented. According to him, each stage of business development is built on collective awareness, participation, and commitment, not solely through structural instructions. These field findings demonstrate that implementing a bottom-up approach can increase community participation while strengthening a sense of belonging, solidarity, and social responsibility within the Islamic boarding school environment.

An asset-based approach, which relies on optimizing internal potential, also encourages the development of institutional resilience capable of adapting to various social and economic dynamics. With the strength of its assets, Islamic boarding schools can adapt to various changes without neglecting the identity and fundamental values that underpin their institutions. This condition is reflected in the ability of Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School to maintain economic stability amidst various challenges, such as fluctuating prices of basic necessities and changes in government policy. This adaptability is supported by strong social and spiritual capital, which serve as the primary foundation for maintaining the economic sustainability of Islamic boarding schools.

From a theoretical perspective, the paradigm shift from dependence to independence, as developed in the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, not only reflects changes in the technical aspects of development but also epistemological ones. Islamic boarding schools are positioned as spaces that foster awareness that sustainable development must stem from community strength and initiative (grassroots awareness), rather than solely relying on structural interventions (Setiawan & Windayanti, 2025). In this context, Islamic boarding school leadership acts as a facilitator, fostering critical consciousness among community members, enabling them to recognize, manage, and develop their potential to collectively face various challenges.

Based on the research results, it was found that the construction of community-based independence at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is built on three fundamental values that

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serve as the main foundation for institutional development: barakah (blessing), maslahah (mutual benefit), and tawazun (balance). These three values not only serve as a normative foundation but also serve as a reference for planning, managing, and developing various Islamic boarding school economic activities. All empowerment programs are implemented while adhering to the principles of Islamic economic ethics, prioritizing social sustainability, and providing tangible benefits to both the Islamic boarding school community and the surrounding community. These values align with the principle embedded in Islamic boarding school tradition, namely "al-muhafadhatu 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah," which implies maintaining good old traditions while adopting new innovations that bring greater benefit. This principle serves as the epistemological foundation for encouraging institutional transformation that remains grounded in the identity and core values of the Islamic boarding school. From an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective, the findings of this study indicate that the development process at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School relies on optimizing various internal assets, including human resources, social networks, institutional culture, and spiritual values that are deeply rooted in the life of the boarding school. Optimizing these assets allows the boarding school to develop an empowerment model that is more authentic, contextual, and aligned with the socio-cultural characteristics of the local community. Within this framework, the boarding school is no longer positioned as an object of development, but rather as a subject that actively initiates and drives social change. This development model further emphasizes the strategic role of the boarding school, not only as an educational institution and fostering religious values, but also as an institution that contributes significantly to the social and economic development of the community. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that independence built through optimizing the internal strengths of the community has a higher level of adaptability, justice, and sustainability compared to development models that rely on assistance or intervention from external parties.

Community

From the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective, communities are viewed as key actors with a central role in driving the process of change and development. The concept of community in this approach emphasizes that the success of a program is not solely determined by external support but is also significantly influenced by strong social relationships, a sense of togetherness, and the collective capacity of community members to manage and develop their potential (Wahib & Susanto, 2024). Each community is understood to possess

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diverse assets, including human resources, social networks, knowledge, and local values, which can be optimized as key assets in supporting sustainable development and empowerment.

Unlike development paradigms focused on providing assistance, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach positions empowerment as a process for identifying, developing, and strengthening the community's internal capacity. From this perspective, communities are positioned not as parties solely requiring external intervention, but as key actors with the ability to direct the development process based on their own potential and strengths. Therefore, the community plays an active role in every stage of development, from planning and implementation to evaluation of various empowerment programs, thus creating a participatory, independent, and sustainable development process.

From the perspective of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), the community within the Islamic boarding school ecosystem is understood as a social network comprised of various elements bound by shared values, goals, and collective responsibility. This community involves not only students and caregivers but also administrators, teaching staff, alumni, the surrounding community, and various external partners who maintain relationships with the Islamic boarding school. The interconnectedness of these elements forms social capital that plays a strategic role in supporting the sustainability of education while strengthening the economic development of the Islamic boarding school.

The caretaker of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School explained that the success of a pesantren's development is largely determined by the synergy and collaboration of all elements within it. He stated that a pesantren cannot develop optimally if it relies solely on the role of one party. It requires the active involvement of students, alumni, administrators, and the community as part of a mutually supportive and complementary system. Students are prepared to become individuals capable of benefiting the community, while alumni are expected to continue contributing to the pesantren's progress after completing their education. This statement demonstrates that the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School builds its institutional strength by strengthening collective awareness, collaboration, and shared responsibility among all components of its community.

This collective awareness is realized through various community strengthening efforts, one of which is the establishment of alumni networks and student organizations that serve not only as a forum for social interaction but also as a means of capacity building and economic empowerment. Saiful Anam, a member of the Nurul Jadid BUMPES (Education and Community Empowerment Agency) administrator, explained that alumni are not viewed simply as graduates

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who have completed their service at the pesantren, but as strategic assets with experience, networks, and competencies that can be optimized to support the institution's progress. Therefore, various alumni organizations and internal forums have been developed to serve as spaces for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective potential development. This is reflected in the existence of alumni organizations such as P4NJ and the Redhawk community, which play a role in strengthening networks, developing economic studies, and encouraging the development of various sustainability-oriented business ideas.

The relationships between elements within the Islamic boarding school community form a mutually reinforcing collaborative pattern in the development of various productive business units. Alumni contribute through their experience, networks, and economic cooperation, while the surrounding community plays a role in providing resources and expanding market access. Meanwhile, students, along with Islamic boarding school administrators, are actively involved in the management of various business units, upholding the values of discipline, honesty, responsibility, and a spirit of mutual cooperation. This synergy between components creates an empowering ecosystem that strengthens business sustainability and supports the realization of Islamic boarding school economic independence.

The active involvement of all community elements enables Islamic boarding schools to function not only as religious educational institutions but also as centers for social and economic empowerment based on optimizing internal potential. This is reflected in the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, where various business units, such as printing, cooperatives, and agribusiness, are managed collaboratively, prioritizing the values of togetherness, responsibility, and mutual benefit. This finding aligns with the view of Setyawan et al. (2025), who stated that active community participation in the development process can foster more sustainable innovation because it is rooted in local values and the social strengths of the community.

Thus, the collaboration between students, alumni, Islamic boarding school administrators, and the community creates an inclusive, adaptive, and resilient Islamic boarding school ecosystem that is able to face various dynamics and changes over time. This synergy also strengthens a sense of belonging among community members, while encouraging economic independence that remains grounded in spiritual values, social solidarity, and the principles of sustainability.

Development

From the perspective of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), the term "development" refers to a community development process that is not solely oriented toward

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economic growth but also encompasses social transformation aimed at creating independent, empowered communities capable of sustainably managing their lives. This approach views communities as the primary subjects of development, possessing diverse assets, including human resources, local potential, and social capital, that can be identified, developed, and optimized sustainably. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) and Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) emphasize that the success of community development is largely determined by the community's ability to optimize internal assets, strengthen collective participation, and generate innovations aligned with local characteristics (Satria et al., 2025). Therefore, the concept of development in ABCD is not only oriented toward improving material well-being but also fostering collective awareness, strengthening cultural identity, and increasing community capacity to sustainably face various dynamics and challenges. In Islamic boarding schools, the concept of development has a more comprehensive scope because the development process is not only directed at economic improvement but also oriented towards preserving the spiritual, social, and cultural values that form the main foundation of Islamic boarding school life. This development is implemented through the integration of economic productivity with the principles of benefit, blessing, and welfare for the community. Sitompul et al. (2025) explain that development from an Islamic perspective does not separate economic activity from social responsibility. Therefore, the success of a business is measured not only by financial achievement but also by its ability to provide tangible benefits for improving the welfare and strengthening the capacity of the Islamic boarding school community.

Fiqih Jazil, a full-time officer at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School Development Bureau, explained that every development program at the Islamic boarding school always begins with identifying its existing potential. According to him, the development process does not stem from limitations but rather from the internal strengths of the Islamic boarding school, including human resources, alumni networks, and available institutional assets. This statement shows that development at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School applies the principle of inside-out development, namely an approach that places the community's internal potential and capacity as the starting point in driving change before utilizing support from external parties.

The implementation of this approach is reflected in various development strategies implemented by Islamic boarding schools. One approach is to increase human resource capacity by providing entrepreneurship training, strengthening managerial competencies, utilizing technology, and teaching economic management based on Islamic values. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools are developing various productive business units, such as cooperatives, printing

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presses, retail stores, livestock farms, and the agribusiness sector, as a means of optimizing their economic assets. The development of these various business units is not only aimed at strengthening the financial independence of Islamic boarding schools but also serves as a learning platform for students to develop an independent character, entrepreneurial skills, and practical experience in business management.

In addition to strengthening the economic aspect, the development process of Islamic boarding schools is also supported by the implementation of increasingly professional institutional governance. This is realized through more structured administrative management, a clear division of tasks, a continuous evaluation system, and the application of accountability principles in every program implemented. Furthermore, alumni involvement through various organizational networks helps expand partnership opportunities and strengthen the economic development of Islamic boarding schools. This collaboration demonstrates that the social capital formed through inter-community relationships plays a strategic role in accelerating the transformation process and strengthening Islamic boarding school institutions.

Research results show that the application of the asset-based development concept has enabled the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School to develop not only as a religious educational institution but also as a center for social and economic empowerment. Through this approach, the Islamic boarding school is able to transform various internal potentials into productive forces that benefit both its members and the surrounding community. The existence of various business units, high community involvement, and strengthened social networks demonstrate that the development process is based on the principles of collectivity, participation, and sustainability, rather than solely on individual interests.

Thus, the development concept from an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools have a strong capacity as agents of social transformation. Through systematic internal asset management based on Islamic values, Islamic boarding schools are able to respond to the dynamics of modernization without neglecting their spiritual identity and character. This development model reflects a balance between economic, social, and religious dimensions, thus enabling community independence oriented toward sustainability, justice, and the common good.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that Islamic boarding school independence can be achieved through a development process that relies on optimizing the community's internal strengths, as a key

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principle of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). The results show that Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is able to optimize its various assets, including human resources, social networks, spiritual values, and institutional culture, as a foundation for building sustainable social and economic transformation. Optimizing these assets allows the Islamic boarding school not only to maintain its role as a religious educational institution but also to develop as a center of empowerment that involves students, alumni, administrators, and the community in various productive activities. These findings demonstrate that community-based development does not have to begin with identifying shortcomings but can begin with recognizing, developing, and utilizing the community's inherent potential. Practically, this research demonstrates that strengthening community capacity, collective participation, and internalizing local values are strategic factors in building an independent, adaptive, and resilient institution that can withstand various social and economic changes. The main contribution of this research lies in the development of an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective by positioning Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as spaces for community empowerment with unique characteristics through the integration of human, social, spiritual, and cultural capital into the development process. This research shows that the success of Islamic boarding school development is determined not only by the effectiveness of business unit management, but also by the institution's ability to build collective awareness, strengthen a sense of belonging, and foster a culture of collaboration among all community members. Thus, this research enriches the body of asset-based empowerment studies by presenting a model of Islamic boarding school development that makes religious values the foundation of social transformation and strengthening economic independence. However, this research still has limitations because it was only conducted in one Islamic boarding school, so the results obtained cannot fully describe the practice of asset-based development in various types of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Furthermore, the use of a qualitative approach does not allow for a more comprehensive measurement of social and economic impacts quantitatively. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the scope of research objects by involving various Islamic boarding schools with different characteristics and integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches (mixed methods) in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding as a basis for formulating effective, adaptive, and sustainable Islamic boarding school empowerment models and policies.

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