

Strengthening Democratic Education Through Structural Governance Reform in Contemporary Islamic Boarding Schools

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Keywords: Democracy education; Organizational structure; Islamic Boarding School. Article history: Received 2024-09-18 Revised 2024-11-08 Accepted 2024-12-17	Prior scholarly inquiries have investigated leadership dynamics and democratic values within Islamic boarding schools, encompassing contemporary leadership models and routine institutional activities that embody democratic ideals. Nevertheless, empirical exploration concerning organizational development as a foundational framework for democratic education in modern pesantren remains substantially underrepresented in the existing literature. This study is therefore designed to examine and describe the actualization of democratic education through the formation and development of organizational structures in modern Islamic boarding schools. A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted, involving institutional leaders, teaching staff, administrative personnel, and students at one modern Islamic boarding school (pesantren khalafiyah) in Surakarta, Indonesia. The findings reveal that the organizational leadership structure must embrace a democratic and collective governance pattern in order to preclude the concentration of power within any single individual or group. Deliberative processes constitute the cornerstone for both the establishment and operationalization of the organizational system in modern boarding schools. The contributions of this study advance the scientific development of Islamic education by proposing a four-pillar structural model of a democratic modern Islamic boarding school organization, comprising (1) collectively democratic leadership, (2) deliberation-based governance, (3) inclusive and professional leadership attitudes, and (4) merit-based appointment processes. This model is capable of integrating democratic values into institutional practices and educational processes as an innovative contribution to character formation and citizenship education. <i>This is an open-access article under the CC BY-NC license.</i>



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INTRODUCTION

The suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral Church on Sunday, March 28, 2021, perpetrated by a married couple, continues to leave a profound impression on public consciousness in Indonesia (Titahelu, 2024). Only two days thereafter, public anxiety was further intensified by an attack conducted by a woman who assaulted the Indonesian National Police Headquarters using an airsoft gun. In contrast to the preceding incident, the perpetrator in the latter case belonged to the millennial generation, yet the underlying motivation remained analogous, namely jihad undertaken in the name of religion. This phenomenon revives the memory of a series of prior acts of terrorism that similarly implicated alumni of Islamic boarding schools (Fanindy & Mupida, 2021). These recurring incidents raise a fundamental scholarly inquiry into whether deficiencies in democratic governance structures within Islamic boarding schools may constitute a contributing factor to the emergence of intolerant and radical dispositions among their alumni.

Although a prevailing perception once characterized Islamic boarding schools as fertile environments for the dissemination of radical ideologies and intolerant attitudes, this viewpoint has progressively diminished in recent years. Nonetheless, an official statement issued by BNPT, which identified the alleged presence of pesantren propagating radical teachings, has reignited public apprehension (Sukabdi, 2021). Even so, this generalization is not entirely substantiated. A number of empirical studies have demonstrated that pesantren interpret the concept of jihad in broad and contextual terms, consistent with contemporary circumstances, fundamentally distanced from violence, and even contributing positively to the preservation of social harmony. The contrast between prevailing perception and empirical reality raises a fundamental question warranting critical examination, specifically regarding who bears genuine responsibility for the proliferation of acts of terrorism and intolerance.

Islamic boarding schools occupy a pivotal position in countering intolerance by instilling democratic values within their educational communities (Apriliana et al., 2023; Azra, 2015). However, the documented involvement of certain alumni in acts of terrorism underscores the necessity of critically evaluating this role. As the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, pesantren are compelled to develop democratic education in a holistic manner, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions (Polsgrove & Lockyer, 2019). Pedagogical approaches such as the utilization of short stories have demonstrated effectiveness in cultivating values of tolerance among students (Sufanti et al., 2021). Drawing on Zamroni's framework of democratic education, scholars have argued that for democratic education to be comprehensively actualized, boarding schools must establish organizational structures, institutional cultures, and educational processes that authentically reflect democratic principles (Zamroni, 2011; Grau et al., 2017).

Prior research focusing on Islamic boarding schools in the contemporary era has predominantly examined leadership innovations, encompassing visionary, democratic, paternalistic, and spiritual leadership models (Salim et al., 2025). Furthermore, democratic education within Islamic boarding schools is operationalized through daily institutional activities, including teaching and learning processes, social interaction patterns, dormitory life, disciplinary mechanisms, as well as flag ceremonies and national commemorative events (Halomoan, 2023). Complementary studies affirm that Islamic boarding schools inherently embody democratic values and, since their historical inception, have demonstrated an inclusive orientation toward social diversity (Apriliana et al., 2023; Ma'arif, 2019). Accordingly, the democratic culture embedded within Islamic boarding schools requires effective institutional management to cultivate mutual understanding and respect within a pluralistic societal context.

The three aforementioned bodies of research have addressed leadership dynamics and democratic values in Islamic boarding schools, including contemporary leadership styles and daily activities that reflect democratic principles. However, scholarly attention directed toward organizational development as a foundational element of democratic education in modern Islamic boarding schools remains limited. This study aims to address that gap by emphasizing the significance of adaptive, participatory, and value-driven organizational governance. Through systematic institutional

management, transparent evaluation mechanisms, and the inclusive participation of all stakeholders within Islamic boarding schools, democratic education may be systematically embedded within social practices and sustainable institutional structures in the modern era (Sudir, 2025).

Against this backdrop, the present study is guided by the following research question: How does the organizational structure of a modern Islamic boarding school in Surakarta, Indonesia actualize democratic education through its formation process, systemic characteristics, leadership styles, and historical trajectory? Addressing this question advances scholarly understanding of how structural governance reforms within pesantren settings can serve as a mechanism for embedding democratic values in Islamic educational institutions. Islamic boarding schools were historically established as educational institutions founded and owned exclusively by a Kiai, placing all institutional authority in his hands while other parties functioned in subordinate decision-making capacities (Hanafi et al., 2021; Wekke, 2015). This authoritarian mode of leadership is widely observed in traditional Islamic boarding schools and poses significant obstacles to the internalization of democratic education. However, as societal conditions evolved, modern Islamic boarding schools emerged and began implementing more democratic leadership practices, thereby generating substantial opportunities to actualize democratic education within a more holistic institutional environment. This article examines the actualization of democratic education through the formation of organizational structures in modern Islamic boarding schools situated in Surakarta, Indonesia. The study seeks to elucidate the formation process, systemic characteristics, leadership styles, and historical trajectories of organizational structures, all of which constitute essential components in realizing democratic education within modern Islamic boarding school settings.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative paradigm directed toward analyzing and describing social reality and institutional phenomena in detailed and reflective terms, incorporating critical assessment of the phenomena under investigation (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). The research site is a single modern Islamic boarding school (pesantren khalafiyah) situated in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The institution was selected through purposive sampling on the basis of its documented implementation of democratic governance structures within its organizational system. The title refers to "Contemporary Islamic Boarding Schools" in a categorical sense, reflecting the broader institutional type under analysis rather than the number of sites studied. Fieldwork was conducted over a period of six months, from January to June 2021. The study received institutional ethical clearance from the research office of UIN Walisongo Semarang prior to data collection. The data encompass information pertaining to democratic education values as manifested in the organizational formation process, the organizational system, leadership styles, and the historical development of the organizational structure of modern boarding schools in Surakarta, Indonesia.

Data were obtained through purposive sampling from twenty-eight informants across five participant categories, comprising three institutional leaders (the director, deputy director, and foundation chairperson), nine teaching staff members, six administrative personnel, eight students serving in organizational roles, and two external stakeholders affiliated with the boarding school community. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interview methods, documentation review of institutional records and policy documents, and direct field observation over the fieldwork period. Data validity was secured through the triangulation of sources, techniques, and time periods. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures as delineated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. This analytical framework enables systematic identification of recurring thematic patterns related to democratic governance across the four dimensions of organizational structure under examination. Following data collection, conclusions pertaining to the gathered data were formulated within an inductive reasoning framework. The inductive reasoning process commenced with the systematic collection of data, from which the organizational structure of modern boarding schools was assessed against democratic characteristics and principles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section elaborates four principal dimensions, namely the establishment of organizational structure, the organizational structure system, leadership style, and the historical evaluation of the organizational structure of modern boarding schools. These four dimensions function as foundational elements for the actualization of democratic education through the organizational structure of contemporary boarding schools, which in turn directly transmit democratic values to each student. Through this analytical approach, key determinants of the success of Islamic boarding schools in serving as ideological fortifications against radical and intolerant ideologies may be identified.

Establishment of Organizational Structure

Based on the data collected regarding the organizational structure of modern boarding schools, it is discernible that democratic characteristics permeate the structure when examined through a democratic theoretical lens. Consistent with Zamroni's (2011) theoretical framework, democratic organizational characteristics are manifested through the absence of power dominance by any single party or by upper echelons over the remaining components of the organizational structure (Fast & Overbeck, 2022). Modern boarding schools, or Khalafiyah institutions (a term referring to contemporary pesantren that have modernized their curriculum and organizational structures while retaining Islamic educational values, as distinguished from the traditional salafiyah model), operate on a collectively democratic leadership pattern. As expressed by one institutional leader during fieldwork, "Every policy in this institution begins with a consultative meeting. No single person, including the director, has the authority to determine programs unilaterally" (Interview, Director, February 2021). This testimony reflects the operationalization of deliberative principles within the institution's governance architecture. This type of leadership produces two significant impacts on the development of democratic values within the contemporary boarding school environment. In a direct sense, democratic leadership influences the performance of the organizational structure system to function in accordance with democratic values, which in turn carries specific implications for the cultivation of democratic values within each student's social conduct (Jibril Qaralleh, 2021).

This leadership model necessitates a series of negotiations and institutional compromises. Among the most notable is the configuration of modern boarding school leadership itself. Whereas conventional boarding schools are generally led by a Kiai, modern boarding school leadership places a director in the position traditionally occupied by the Kiai. The appointment of a director to lead a contemporary boarding school is intended to maximize the utilization of all potential resources embedded within the organizational structure. Garcia Torres (2019) and Joo (2020) argued that this type of leadership positively influences the satisfaction of all members within the organizational structure while simultaneously fostering democratic values through the cultivation of relational dynamics between directorial roles and member collaboration across the organizational structure.

The director, who serves as the leader of the modern boarding school in the capacity formerly occupied by the Kiai, assumes the fundamental responsibilities of a mu'alim (teacher), murobi (educator), and mursyid (mentor) for members of the organizational structure as well as the entire student body. A boarding school leader must not fulfill merely one or two of these three primary functions. These three roles are regarded as mutually binding and inherently inseparable dimensions of institutional leadership, as their integration has direct bearing on the quality of learning and developmental outcomes (Brown & Flood, 2020).

The democratic organizational structure of modern boarding schools serves as a primary prerequisite for members of the organizational structure to conduct themselves in a democratically consistent manner. This dimension becomes a focal concern for all students enrolled in modern boarding schools. The provision of behavioral models connects and translates theoretical democratic knowledge into practical implementation within the educational process (Badjanova & Ilisko, 2015; Chaharbashloo et al., 2020).

The creation of a democratic boarding school organizational structure confronts a significant obstacle, namely the persistence of nepotistic organizational structures. This type of boarding school

leadership reserves leadership positions exclusively for members of the founding family or the Kiai's family, irrespective of whether those individuals possess the requisite competencies for institutional leadership. This leadership model consequently produces an organizational structure governed by familial interests rather than individual merit. As a result, democratic values are unable to emerge, let alone be transmitted to the broader boarding school community. An organizational structure system that fundamentally contradicts democratic values will inevitably obstruct the cultivation and development of democratic values within the institutional community (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016).

Organizational Structure System

Analysis of the organizational structure system in modern boarding schools reveals characteristics that are congruent with democratic principles, as demonstrated by the development of a deliberative system in policy formulation. Each constituent party within the organizational structure is afforded equal rights to articulate perspectives and contribute ideas. The inclusive participation of diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes constitutes the primary mechanism for fostering democratic values within an educational environment (Mitchell, 2017). A senior teaching staff member corroborated this finding, stating that: *"The weekly coordination meeting is the heart of this institution. Section heads bring the collective voice of their members, and the director genuinely listens and incorporates those views into institutional decisions"* (Interview, Senior Teaching Staff, March 2021).

This participatory dynamic exemplifies the deliberative governance orientation that characterizes the institutional system of the modern boarding school under study.

The potential dominance of the Kiai is mitigated through the formation of a Kiai board or an equivalent advisory board functioning as a board of directors. The advisory board is composed of individuals possessing specific competencies relevant to boarding school affairs, appointed by the modern boarding school to provide perspectives and recommendations to the director. This arrangement represents a form of institutional inclusiveness development as an expression of democratic value cultivation (Alshurman, 2015).

Respect for community diversity constitutes a foundational aspect of constructing a democratic school structure. The organizational structure of modern boarding schools encompasses individuals across diverse age levels, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic conditions. This inclusivity is indispensable if boarding schools genuinely aspire to eliminate values antithetical to democracy within their educational environments (Vervaet et al., 2018). Many organizational structures pursue the formation of democratic arrangements yet disregard multicultural values within their own configurations. This shortcoming is evident in the absence of opportunities for prospective applicants with certain physical limitations to participate in institutional membership.

The multicultural organizational structure in education is also intended to stimulate diverse forms of intellectual contribution. This intellectual diversity is further facilitated by granting members of the organizational structure the freedom to develop and express their thinking (Hornackova et al., 2015). The development of intellectual freedom is pursued through two primary modalities, namely written expression or direct oral communication to the relevant institutional parties, both of which may also be facilitated through contemporary communication technology (Marzbali et al., 2016).

The democratic characteristics embedded in the organizational structure of modern boarding schools are further reflected in the operation of human resource recruitment systems grounded in professionalism and proportionalism. The human resource recruitment system in modern boarding schools commences with the planning of institutional needs, followed by the determination of educational qualification requirements that each applicant must satisfy. Concurrently, the principle of proportionality is applied by admitting new human resources in quantities commensurate with the formations required by the institution. Professionalism in recruitment processes exerts a demonstrable impact on the development of democratic values (Yang & Taylor, 2013).

Beyond these institutional efforts, modern boarding schools actively pursue solutions to the constraints experienced by members of the organizational structure in the development of their intellectual contributions. The first constraint involves the tendency of members to encounter

psychological barriers arising from perceptions of hierarchical distance between upper and lower levels of the organizational structure. The second constraint pertains to persistent concerns among members regarding the potential emergence of preferential or discriminatory responses to the criticisms and suggestions they present.

The primary solution proposed to address these psychological obstacles involves the convening of coordination meetings between section heads and their respective members (Behfar et al., 2016). In the context of these meetings, each section member is entitled to communicate ideas and perspectives to the section head. This mechanism is expected to bridge the structural gap between members occupying lower positions and those at higher levels of the organizational structure. The consolidated perspectives generated through these gatherings are subsequently presented by each section head in weekly meetings convened with the director of the modern boarding school. The ideas articulated by each section head in these forums are grounded in collective rather than individual deliberation, a condition expected to diminish apprehensions regarding preferential or biased responses.

Granting autonomy to each component of the organizational structure is also proposed as a viable resolution to the aforementioned constraints. Each section member is authorized to innovate and improve departmental work processes or to propose approaches for fulfilling the facilities and functions of their respective units. This arrangement enables each section to manage and develop its domain more freely and creatively, while remaining aligned with institutional values, thereby generating a multiplicity of innovations across various sections of the institution (Grau et al., 2017).

Leadership Style

Wahab et al. (2016) characterize school leadership as an essential dimension related to the behavioral dynamics of the organizational structure of educational institutions. Furthermore, leadership style has been demonstrated to exert a significant influence on the developmental trajectory of educational institutions (Tatlah & Iqbal, 2012). The democratic characteristics embodied by the director of modern boarding schools are reflected in the utilization of institutional resources through the dynamic cultivation of interpersonal interactions among individuals within the organizational structure. The development of dynamic interactions conducted by the director of modern boarding schools is grounded in two principal dimensions.

The first dimension pertains to the organizational structure and system of the institution, which must be constructed and developed on the basis of inclusiveness. Inclusive interactions are not products of authoritarian thinking by any single party; rather, the entire system is determined and implemented through processes of mutual agreement. This further indicates that the organizational structure system is not rigid or immutable, rendering it receptive to revisions and transformations from previous configurations (Yoldas, 2015).

The second dimension involves the development of reasoning capacity across diverse parties. The cultivation of interactions among individuals within organizational structures is dynamically pursued through the promotion of reasoning. This process requires multiple parties within the organizational structure to develop their capacity for reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and genuine concern for institutional welfare, as well as a willingness to contribute perspectives grounded in clear intentions and defined objectives. Through this process, a growing sense of responsibility emerges within each member of the organizational structure to collectively pursue institutional goals (Ivanova, 2016).

School leaders provide guidance and conduct evaluations of each member of the organizational structure with the objective of realizing professionalism in institutional performance (Lim & Bishen Singh, 2020). Guidance is operationalized through multiple forms, including general guidance, direct individual guidance, and guidance delivered through seminars and workshops, all of which encourage each member to develop their capabilities in progressively advanced directions. The director's role in cultivating the value of professionalism within the organizational structure is actualized through a system of reward and punishment. Advancement in position is granted to members who demonstrate exceptional performance, while disciplinary measures are applied to those whose performance is

deemed inadequate. Furthermore, a definitive decision regarding dismissal may be issued in cases where a member's professional ethics are assessed as unsatisfactory and prior warnings have been administered. The value of professionalism is also actualized through the provision of all facilities and infrastructural resources required to support the optimal performance of each component of the organizational structure.

A student organization leader observed that *"The director consistently reminds us that our contribution is valued regardless of our position. This encourages every member to work responsibly and innovatively within their respective section"* (Interview, Student Organization Leader, April 2021). Such testimony affirms that the leadership style cultivated within modern boarding schools engenders a sense of collective responsibility and institutional belonging across all hierarchical levels.

The development of democratic values is pursued through the construction of a work system that equilibrates the top-down approach, designed to facilitate the socialization of institutional policies, with a bottom-up orientation aimed at enhancing the attentiveness and active participation of members (Yuan et al., 2021). A collaborative work climate is developed among individuals within each section and across different sections of the Islamic boarding school's organizational structure. This collaborative orientation is internalized within each member, such that each department is perceived as a partner within the structure rather than a subordinate component, functioning synergistically and cohesively with all other units in pursuit of shared institutional ideals.

Historical Evaluation

An examination of the historical trajectory of boarding school establishment reveals that modern boarding schools are generally founded by a Kiai or a family foundation. The foundational conditions of boarding school establishment exert a substantial influence on the patterns of organizational governance that subsequently develop. Consequently, it is not uncommon for numerous relatives of the founding family to occupy positions within the organizational structure of the boarding school.

Modern boarding schools are designed with the aspiration that their organizational structures embody democratic characteristics. This design aims to cultivate within every member of the contemporary boarding school community a sense of belonging and institutional ownership, and to demonstrate exemplary conduct to the broader modern boarding school community, such that a robust work ethic grounded in sincerity and the spirit of continuous learning is nurtured among students. The integrated institutional system ultimately gives birth to and sustains a democratic modern boarding school culture (Sales et al., 2017).

A boarding school that operates its institutional system on the basis of personal ownership is widely regarded as possessing inherent weaknesses in the domain of institutional management. Such institutions typically function through closed, centralized, and familial management approaches, wherein the right of authority over all institutional matters and assets remains the primary prerogative of the boarding school owner. In contrast, ideal institutional management should be founded upon the principles of transparency, accountability, and collective participation (Adji et al., 2023). Institutional management of a boarding school encompasses at minimum three interconnected dimensions, namely program planning, program implementation, and financial administration.

The institutional management of a modern boarding school may be assessed through the process of program planning. Institutional units within the organizational structure conduct their program planning activities in an open and transparent manner, in accordance with the job descriptions of each section and through designated deliberative forums. Planning processes originate at the highest institutional tier, namely the modern boarding school foundation, which formulates programs that the director subsequently implements.

All programs determined by the foundation are executed by the director in collaboration with the organizational structure operating beneath the directorial level. The deputy director oversees the comprehensive implementation of all programs. Each member of the organizational structure prepares reports and evaluations of completed programs, which are subsequently submitted to the office of the president. Both the president and the director are obligated to report to the foundation.

It is, however, necessary to acknowledge a significant limitation within the institutional system of the modern boarding school under examination. Transparency in program reporting and financial management has not yet been fully realized. Evidence of this limitation is reflected in the fact that program and financial reporting flows primarily from the director to the foundation, without extending the accessibility of financial statements to students or student guardians. This condition represents a substantive gap between the democratic ideals professed by the institution and its actual governance practices, particularly with respect to the principle of public accountability. The institution has acknowledged this gap and, according to information obtained during fieldwork, is in the process of developing a more transparent reporting mechanism for the broader institutional community. Notwithstanding this limitation, the family-relational dimension of the boarding school's organizational structure does not, in itself, render the system authoritarian. The present research demonstrates that modern boarding schools uphold and are capable of appropriately internalizing democratic values among members of the organizational structure as well as within the broader student environment, provided that familial governance arrangements are subject to deliberative accountability mechanisms.

Through an in-depth examination of the organizational structure of modern boarding schools, it may be concluded that this phenomenon arises because the family system operated within modern boarding schools is non-absolute in character. This signifies that the organizational structure of the institution is conducted on the basis of democratic values through the development of a system of deliberation, tolerance, and the genuine appreciation of perspectives contributed by all parties (Radkiewicz, 2021). The foregoing observation is neither novel nor surprising when considered in a broader historical context, as comparable phenomena were discernible in the Yogyakarta Sultanate in Indonesia long prior to the identification of similar patterns in modern boarding schools. The Sultanate of Yogyakarta has historically operated with a disposition far removed from authoritarianism, notwithstanding the fact that the system developed within its governance framework is monarchical in nature (Wisowaty & Wahyuni, 2023). Similarly to the modern boarding school under examination, the Sultanate's governance is not absolute, and democratic values have consistently flourished within that institutional environment.

This phenomenon is similarly observable in contemporary modern boarding schools. It may therefore be concluded that democratic values can emerge and develop within monarchical or familial organizational systems, provided that these systems are not operated in an absolute or unconstrained manner. Accordingly, it may be inferred that absolutism constitutes the defining benchmark for assessing whether a system of governance or institutional organization operates in a manner consistent with democratic principles.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding analysis, the organizational structure of modern boarding schools plays a significant and determining role in the actualization of democratic education. Four primary requirements have been identified as essential characteristics of a democratically oriented boarding school organizational structure. First, the form of organizational leadership must adopt a collectively democratic pattern that serves to eliminate the concentration of power within any single party or the upper echelon of the organizational structure. Second, deliberative processes constitute the foundational basis for the establishment and operationalization of the boarding school's organizational structure. Deliberation upholds the appreciation of community diversity by granting autonomy to each constituent party, with the further implication of diminishing concerns regarding preferential or biased treatment among members of the organizational structure. Third, the attitudes of organizational leaders must be grounded in the values of inclusiveness and professionalism and must be accompanied by the active cultivation of reasoning capacities across diverse parties within the institution. The work system that equilibrates top-down and bottom-up orientations serves as the defining characteristic of the boarding school leadership style. Fourth, the organizational structure of modern boarding schools must eliminate the practice of absolute nepotism. Nepotism does not inherently contradict democratic

values, provided that it does not dominate leadership appointments or override merit-based selection processes within the organizational structure of modern boarding schools.

These four primary characteristics collectively constitute the Democratic Organizational Structure Model (DOSM) for Modern Islamic Boarding Schools, as proposed by the present study. The model may be represented as four interdependent structural pillars: (1) Collective Democratic Leadership, in which institutional authority is distributed across deliberative bodies rather than concentrated in a single individual; (2) Deliberation-Based Governance, in which policy formation and institutional decision-making processes are grounded in inclusive consultative practices; (3) Inclusive and Professional Leadership Conduct, encompassing both the cultivation of multicultural awareness and the application of merit-based performance evaluation; and (4) Non-Absolute Relational Structures, in which familial or hereditary affiliations within the organizational structure are rendered compatible with democratic values through deliberative accountability mechanisms. These four pillars operate in a mutually reinforcing manner to foster democratic values among members of the organizational structure, representing an important focus for all students enrolled in modern boarding schools. The proposed model effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation in the domain of democratic education.

Several methodological limitations of the present study merit explicit acknowledgment. First, the single-site design constrains the generalizability of findings to other modern Islamic boarding school contexts across Indonesia or other Muslim-majority societies. Second, the qualitative nature of the study precludes the statistical generalization of results, though it enables in-depth contextual understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Third, the potential for researcher positionality to influence data interpretation cannot be entirely eliminated, notwithstanding the triangulation measures employed to mitigate this risk. Future research should adopt a multi-site comparative design and may benefit from the integration of quantitative measures to assess the degree of democratic value internalization among students across diverse pesantren governance models. Holistic democratic education cannot be separated from the three foundational elements of any educational institution, namely organizational structure, institutional culture, and an educational process characterized by democratic principles. This study remains focused on the organizational structure dimension as one contribution toward holistic democratic education. With respect to organizational structure, an important dimension is the historical context of boarding school establishment, which constitutes an essential factor in determining the developmental trajectory and the institutional systems adopted. This domain therefore presents compelling opportunities for deeper investigation through ethnographic methodologies. Furthermore, the two remaining dimensions also represent fundamental areas warranting further research and scholarly development in pursuit of the objectives of holistic democratic education.

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