

# The Transformation of Public Elementary School Governance in a Pesantren Community: A Study of Hybrid Educational Governance at SDN Potoan Daja, Pamekasan, Madura

Afandi

Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan

Email: afandiarrajy@gmail.com

---

Corresponding Author: **Afandi**

---

Article history: Received: Oktober-27-2025 | Revised: Desember-25-2025 | Available

Online: Januari-2-2026

---

## ABSTRACT

The governance of public elementary schools (SDN) in regions dominated by pesantren culture faces institutional pressures that differ from those of public elementary schools in general; however, the patterns of adaptation have not been extensively studied empirically. This study analyzes the transformation of governance at SDN Potoan Daja, Pamekasan, Madura, through the lens of hybrid educational governance. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed; data were collected through participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving the school principal, teachers, the school committee, parents, community leaders, pesantren figures, and village officials during the period of April–October 2025. Analysis was conducted interactively using data reduction, thematic categorization, and continuous field verification. The research findings indicate that the governance of SDN Potoan Daja has evolved through a fusion of the state's formal bureaucratic system and the pesantren's socio-cultural mechanisms. The integration of religious activities into school culture, the involvement of pesantren leaders in decision-making, and the strengthening of participatory relationships between the school and the community have proven to build social legitimacy that cannot be achieved through formal regulations alone. The low level of community interest in public elementary schools is not due to a rejection of formal education, but rather concerns about the loss of religious values. When public elementary schools integrate pesantren culture into their governance, community trust increases. This study confirms that a hybrid educational governance perspective is more appropriate for understanding the dynamics of primary education governance in religious areas than a formal bureaucratic approach. These findings contribute to the development of a community-based education governance model and serve as a reference for SDN management policies in areas with a pesantren context.

**Keywords:** Hybrid Educational Governance; Basic Education Governance; Pesantren Communities; Institutional Adaptation.

## INTRODUCTION

The governance of basic education is changing and this change is not merely about administrative efficiency. Across the globe, countries are now being called upon to build school management systems that truly grow out of the social and cultural roots of their communities. (UNESCO, 2021) clearly emphasizes that the education of the future requires governance that is inclusive, adaptive, and community-based. Consequently, the concept of educational governance is shifting from a rigid bureaucratic model toward a collaborative approach that involves the state, society, and local communities simultaneously.

In Indonesia, these challenges are even more complex. Geographical, cultural, and social diversity mean that each region faces its own unique issues. In the mountains of Papua, public elementary schools must contend with geographical isolation and the influence of traditional culture, which shapes how communities view education (Afriansyah, 2022). On Alor Island, the issues are different: inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of teachers, and low student participation, as most students come from fishing families (Maulana, 2022). One common thread is clear the governance of public elementary schools cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context in which the school is situated.

Nationally, the situation is also far from encouraging. The 2022 PISA scores placed Indonesian students' reading literacy at 359 and mathematics at 366 both still below the OECD average (OECD, 2023). More than just a matter of quality, this disparity is also evident in regions with strong socio-religious characteristics. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology notes that the success of basic education governance depends heavily on schools' ability to understand and adapt to their social environment.

Pamekasan, Madura, is one of the most striking examples of this challenge. Here, the pesantren is not merely an educational institution it is the social hub of the community. It is no wonder that many parents prefer madrasahs or pesantrens for their children, causing a number of public elementary schools to lose enrollment. SDN Potoan Daja is feeling this pressure firsthand. It is located just about 700 meters from Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum Banyuwang one of the largest and oldest pesantren in Pamekasan with over 10,000 students yet its classes average fewer than 10 students. Interestingly, observations revealed that this school has actually managed to turn the situation around. Public interest has increased after the public elementary school adapted its management practices to incorporate the values of the pesantren. This finding makes SDN Potoan Daja an empirical case worthy of further study through the framework of hybrid educational governance.

The tensions arising here are not without cause. Public elementary schools, as state institutions, operate within the logic of formal bureaucracy administrative standards, regulations, and accountability. Meanwhile, the pesantren community operates according to a different logic. This includes religious legitimacy, the authority of the kiai, and culturally strong patronage relationships. When these two systems collide without room for negotiation, conflict becomes almost inevitable. (Triwiyanto dkk., 2024) note that weak collaboration between schools and the community, limited supervision, and low institutional adaptability remain the primary challenges facing SDNs in Indonesia. (Musya'adah, 2021) adds that the integration of pesantren values into public elementary schools has largely occurred informally relying on personal connections between school principals, community leaders, and religious leaders, rather than on structured policies. The researchers confirm this, noting that the success of SDN Potoan Daja hinges on direct communication between the school principal and pesantren leaders, rather than on formal regulations.

On the other hand, this is precisely where the untapped potential lies. Pesantren are not merely religious educational institutions they are institutions that shape moral values, social culture, and community leadership. Values such as respect, collectivism, deliberation, and the

exemplary conduct of religious leaders constitute a very tangible form of social capital. (Thoha & Hannan, 2022) observe that the modernization of education in Maduran pesantren has given rise to a hybrid governance model that blends the state's formal system with local culture. (Hasyim & Chair, 2024) expand on this picture by demonstrating how the transformation of pesantren during the era of decentralization has produced an adaptive institutional model one that does not discard tradition, yet also does not reject modernity. based on the results of observations, SDN Potoan Daja has been implementing hybrid governance practices de facto through joint religious activities, the involvement of pesantren figures in school oversight, and the adaptation of the local content curriculum.

From the existing literature review, three research gaps are evident. First, previous studies have addressed the transformation of pesantren and school management reform separately, thus failing to explain how public elementary schools (SDN) undertake institutional adaptation within pesantren communities (Hasyim & Chair, 2024); (Arif dkk., 2024). Second, research on the integration of pesantren values into formal schools has only touched on aspects of character education and school culture, not yet addressing hybrid educational governance practices and authority negotiations between state bureaucracy and local socio-religious structures (Musya'adah, 2021); (Hasan, 2025). Third, studies on the enthusiasm of the pesantren community toward formal education have almost entirely focused on the secondary level while the dynamics of public elementary schools (SDN) within pesantren environments, particularly in Madura, remain largely unexplored (Ilham, 2020); (Salamah, 2018). Findings from field observations provide a valuable starting point but have not yet systematically examined the framework of hybrid educational governance.

This study aims to fill that gap. By analyzing the transformation of governance at SDN Potoan Daja through the lens of hybrid educational governance, this study examines three key aspects: how public schools adapt amidst the dominance of pesantren culture; how the relationship between the state education bureaucracy and local socio-religious authorities is formed; and how the challenge of low community engagement is addressed in daily practice. As an empirical follow-up, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the study of community-based educational governance while also serving as a reference for more contextually appropriate policies for other public elementary schools operating in pesantren environments.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. This choice is not merely a methodological convention this approach is indeed the most appropriate for capturing the dynamics of the transformation of SDN governance within the context of a pesantren community, which possesses distinctive social, cultural, and power dynamics. Governance here is not understood solely as a formal administrative system, but as a lived practice that is constantly negotiating with the surrounding socio-religious structures.

The research took place at SDN Potoan Daja, Palengaan Subdistrict, Pamekasan Regency, Madura, from April to October 2025. This location was not chosen at random. Its location in the heart of the pesantren community directly adjacent to the Darul Ulum Banyuwanyar Islamic Boarding School makes it an ideal social setting to observe how the state's formal education system interacts with the dominant pesantren educational culture. The low number of students compared to the surrounding pesantren institutions actually reinforces the value of this case as a representative subject of study.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling that is, chosen based on the depth of their involvement and knowledge regarding school management and the social life of the pesantren community. They included school principals, teachers, school committees, parents,

community leaders, pesantren leaders, and village officials. From that starting point, the researcher also used snowball sampling to reach additional informants who had relevant information about social relationship patterns, decision-making processes, and school adaptation strategies. Sampling was halted when data saturation was reached when new informants no longer provided information that was substantially different from what had already been collected.

Data was collected through three methods: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observation involved the researcher's direct presence in the school and community environments observing daily activities, patterns of interaction among stakeholders, and the social relationships formed between the school and the pesantren community. The interviews were designed to be semi-structured so that informants could freely explain their experiences and views without being constrained by overly rigid questions. Meanwhile, the documentary study included school profiles, student data, work programs, activity archives, and administrative reports relevant to the research focus.

As the primary instrument, the researcher was present in the field throughout the research process. Social adaptation was carried out gradually this was important, given that the pesantren community places great emphasis on ethics, respect for religious figures, and interpersonal closeness. The researcher's attitude and manner of communication were carefully managed to ensure that the data obtained was truly natural, rather than simply responses tailored to the researcher's presence.

Data analysis proceeded interactively from the first day in the field through to the drawing of final conclusions. Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were transcribed and then condensed to focus on the most relevant information. From there, the data were categorized into five themes: governance transformation, school–pesantren relations, decision-making patterns, management challenges, and adaptation strategies. Each category is presented in a descriptive narrative, and conclusions are drawn gradually while continuously verified against findings in the field.

Data validity is ensured through three mechanisms: source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and direct confirmation with key informants. Source triangulation involves comparing information from various sources, while methodological triangulation involves cross-checking the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Confirmation is sought to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is fully consistent with the informants' lived experiences.

The entire research process was conducted with strict adherence to ethical standards. The identities of the informants were kept confidential, consent was obtained prior to each interview, and the social and cultural norms of the pesantren were respected throughout the research. Before beginning fieldwork, permission was first obtained from the school administration, community leaders, and pesantren administrators as a sign of respect for the social structure in place there.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Transformation of Governance at SDN Potoan Daja in the Pesantren Community**

The governance of SDN Potoan Daja did not emerge in a vacuum. It developed through a long process of adaptation, strongly shaped by the pesantren culture that surrounds it. School management here is not merely a matter of meeting the administrative standards of formal education it must also take into account the social legitimacy and religious values of the local community. This is clearly evident in the school's daily life: the recitation of the Qur'an before classes begin, the practice of congregational prayer, regular religious study sessions, and dress codes aligned with pesantren norms.

This pattern reflects something deeper than mere technical adjustments. This is what is known as hybrid educational governance a blend of formal educational bureaucracy and the socio-cultural mechanisms of local communities. Within this framework, public elementary schools no longer function solely as an extension of the state in the field of education, but have transformed into social institutions that must earn the cultural trust of their surrounding communities. The principal plays a dual role as a mediator between the demands of formal educational bureaucracy and the socio-religious expectations of the pesantren community. The effectiveness of school management, in this context, is largely determined by the leader's ability to maintain a balance between formal regulations and local cultural values.

This was reflected in the principal's remarks during the observation: *"We can't just follow the Department's rules. If the community doesn't trust us, this school will close. So we have to attend the religious study sessions, we have to invite the clerics to talk about the school, and we have to show that this school is also part of the pesantren."* This statement underscores that adaptive leadership is not merely a strategic choice, but a prerequisite for the school's institutional survival.

This finding aligns with (Hasan, 2025), who demonstrates that educational governance in Indonesia particularly within the pesantren context operates through a pluralistic system of authority shared between the state and religious communities. (Thoha & Hannan, 2022) add that the modernization of education in Madura pesantren communities has given rise to a hybrid governance model that blends the state's formal system with local culture a pattern clearly evident at SDN Potoan Daja, where the principal actively involves pesantren leaders, the school committee, and community members in every decision-making process.

Community involvement has proven to be one of the key pillars of this school's sustainability. A parent interviewed stated: *"We didn't want to send our children to school here at first. But now it's different, because this school is like a small Islamic boarding school. There is Quran recitation, there is congregational prayer, and the teachers also respect the religious leaders."* The principal consistently maintains communication with boarding school administrators and community leaders at every stage of program planning and evaluation. This relationship fosters a genuine sense of ownership, where the public elementary school is no longer viewed as a state institution separate from the life of the boarding school, but rather as an organic part of the village education system.

Theoretically, these findings challenge the assumption that a formal bureaucratic management approach is sufficient for understanding school administration in religious settings. (El Assaad, 2022) asserts that hybrid governance in education actually emerges when formal state institutions are willing to adapt to local social structures in order to maintain the effectiveness of public services. The success of SDN Potoan Daja, therefore, is not merely a matter of administrative quality but rather a matter of the ability to build social legitimacy and cultural affinity with the pesantren community.

### **Potoan Daja Elementary School as a Space for Integrating Formal Education and Pesantren Culture**

SDN Potoan Daja has transcended its role as a typical formal educational institution. This school serves as a meeting point between the national education system and pesantren culture a place where academic functions and the transmission of religious values go hand in hand. The school's involvement in the village's social and religious activities, its collaboration with pesantren in Quranic education, and the cultivation of Islamic character in daily school life are tangible evidence of this integration.

The low level of interest among the pesantren community in public schools has not been due to a rejection of formal education. The root of the problem is the concern that religious values will be eroded. The principal articulated this shift plainly: *"Parents are starting to want to send their children to school here because they see that our students also study the Quran and pray in congregation it's*

*not much different from what happens at the pesantren.*” This statement underscores that the social legitimacy of SDN Potoan Daja is not built solely on academic achievement, but rather on the alignment of its values with the pesantren culture that thrives within the community.

One of the senior teachers reinforced this point: *“We used to have few students. Now the numbers have grown. Parents come in person to ask when registration opens. This is because they see that our school offers religious study sessions and Islamic activities. They feel safe here.”* Enrollment data for new students shows a gradual upward trend since 2022 as the school has strengthened its integrated religious education program.

(Zaenurrosyid & Sholihah, 2025) explain that educational institutions based on a hybrid system have a greater capacity to foster social closeness with religious communities, precisely because they integrate formal and religious values simultaneously. (Romlah dkk., 2025) also found that the transformation of modern Islamic education in Indonesia is largely determined by an institution’s ability to manage the balance between educational modernity and local cultural-religious identity. Both of these findings are consistent with the pattern observed at SDN Potoan Daja.

From the perspective of rational decision-making theory, parents’ choice of this public elementary school indicates that educational decisions are never solely about academics. Social, moral, and religious factors also play a role. The school’s religious image, in this case, serves as a very tangible form of social capital.

Interestingly, the collaboration between schools and Islamic boarding schools does not take place within a hierarchical relationship. Neither party subordinates the other. A pesantren leader interviewed stated: *“We support this school because this school supports our values. If the children can read, write, and do math and still study the Quran that’s the best. We don’t have to choose one over the other.”* The pesantren benefits because the school strengthens the community’s academic foundation, while the school gains social legitimacy through its closeness to the pesantren community.

**Table 1. Summary of Research Findings Based on Five Analysis Themes**

<b>Tema</b>	<b>Temuan Utama</b>	<b>Implikasi</b>
Governance Transformation	SDN is developing a hybrid educational governance model by gradually integrating pesantren values into the school culture	The formal bureaucratic model is inadequate; a community-based collaborative approach is more relevant
The Relationship Between Schools and Islamic Boarding Schools	A dialogic and mutually supportive relationship, not a subordinate one; the principal acts as an institutional mediator	Adaptive leadership is key to a school’s social legitimacy in a religious environment
Decision-Making Patterns	Strategic school decisions involve Islamic boarding school leaders, the school committee, and village officials in an informal yet consistent manner	Community participation strengthens a sense of ownership and ensures the school’s sustainability
Management Challenges	The low level of public interest is not due to a rejection of formal education, but rather to concerns about the loss of religious values	The integration of local values is a strategic approach that has proven effective in building public trust.
Adaptation Strategies	Integrated religious activities (Quran recitation, congregational prayer, regular religious study sessions)	Public school policies in religious areas should be context-specific and flexible, not uniform

	serve as a hallmark of the school's identity within the pesantren community	
--	---	--

*Source: Field data, 2025*

Strengthening basic education in areas with Islamic boarding schools cannot be achieved through a one-size-fits-all policy. The experience of SDN Potoan Daja demonstrates that integrating local values and engaging the religious community are key to enhancing the school's social legitimacy, strengthening community participation, and expanding access to basic education.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the transformation of governance at SDN Potoan Daja was not the result of top-down policy changes, but rather the outcome of lengthy social negotiations and cultural legitimacy built in collaboration with the pesantren community. The school cannot function merely by following the bureaucratic channels of formal education. It must integrate religious values into the school's daily culture, involve pesantren leaders in educational management, and build truly participatory relationships with the community. It is the gap between the academic orientation of the state education system and the expectations of the pesantren community which places a strong emphasis on the formation of religious character that drives the school to find its own path: a governance model that is adaptive, collaborative, and capable of standing in two worlds at once meeting national administrative demands while earning local social trust.

Theoretically, this study offers a different perspective. Its focus is not on pesantren or madrasahs, as has typically been the case in previous research, but rather on public elementary schools (SDNs) situated within pesantren communities an area that has received little attention to date. The hybrid educational governance approach has proven far more capable of capturing the dynamics of elementary education governance in religious areas than a rigid formal bureaucratic approach. The success of SDN Potoan Daja rests on its ability to build a bridge between the national education system and local socio-cultural values and this model offers new insights into how public schools can adapt meaningfully within the pesantren context.

This study has limitations that must be acknowledged. The single-case study conducted at one public elementary school in Pamekasan limits the generalizability of the findings to pesantren that differ in character, scale, or geographic location. Cross-regional comparative research is needed to test the extent to which this pattern of hybrid governance applies more broadly.

Two important implications from this study deserve to be highlighted. From a pedagogical perspective, strengthening basic education in pesantren settings cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all approach. Learning must be rooted in the community's context and values. Teacher capacity building must also shift from merely administrative training or abstract curriculum implementation toward community-based training which fosters social communication, an understanding of local culture, and the ability to teach adaptively.

From a policy perspective, it is time for the government to develop a more flexible governance model for public schools in religious communities. The involvement of local communities and Islamic boarding school leaders is not merely an afterthought it is a proven strategy: it strengthens the schools' social legitimacy, expands access to education, and fosters an education system that is truly responsive to the unique needs of local communities.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Afriansyah, A. (2022). Refleksi Dua Puluh Tahun Pembangunan Pendidikan di Tanah Papua (2001-2021). *Jurnal Masyarakat Indonesia*, 48(1), 63–77.
- Arif, M., Dorloh, S., & Abdullah, S. (2024). A systematic literature review of Islamic boarding school (Pesantren) education in Indonesia (2014–2024). *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*. <https://ejournal.uit-lirboyo.ac.id/index.php/tribakti/article/view/5330>
- El Assaad, N. (2022). *Shaping public service delivery: A hybrid governance approach in the Lebanese public education sector* [University of Malta]. <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/93861>
- Hasan, M. F. (2025). Educational authority and regulatory legitimacy: Comparing normative systems in pesantren and public schools in Indonesia. *Legal Pluralism and Critical Social Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/27706869.2025.2556586>
- Hasyim, M., & Chair, A. (2024). Transforming pesantren: Adaptive strategies in the context of educational decentralization in Indonesia. *Tadris: Jurnal Keguruan dan Ilmu Tarbiyah*, 9(2), 211–228. <https://doi.org/10.24042/tadris.v9i2.19531>
- Ilham, A. (2020). *Minat Masyarakat Menyekolahkan Anaknya di SMP Negeri 32 Rejang Lebong*. Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup.
- Maulana, R. (2022). *Kesenjangan Mutu Pendidikan di Wilayah Timur Indonesia* (hlm. 1–5). Universitas Padjajaran.
- Musya'adah, U. (2021). Integrasi pesantren pada sistem pendidikan formal di Sekolah Dasar Negeri (SDN). *Jurnal Keislaman dan Pendidikan*, 13(2), 101–118.
- OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 Results: Factsheets Indonesia*. [https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2022\\_CN\\_IDN.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2022_CN_IDN.pdf)
- Romlah, R., Warisno, A., Muslim, A. B., & Hidayah, N. (2025). Navigating tradition and modernity in the strategic management and transformation of Madrasah Aliyah in multicultural Indonesia. *International Journal of Management in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMIE.2025.145945>
- Salamah, A. (2018). *Minat Masyarakat Menyekolahkan Anak (Studi Kasus Pada MTs An-Nur Sp3 Bangun Jaya Kecamatan Balai Riam Kabupaten Sukamara)*. Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya.
- Thoha, M., & Hannan, A. (2022). Modernization of education governance based on accelerative paradigm among pesantren communities in Madura, Indonesia. *Ulumuna*, 26(2), 412–438.
- Triwiyanto, T., Kusumaningrum, D., & Sumarsono, R. (2024). Hambatan implementasi sistem manajemen akuntabilitas di sekolah dasar negeri. *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 14(3), 210–224. <https://doi.org/10.24246/j.js.2024.v14.i3.p210-224>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*. UNESCO Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.54675/ASUD6989>
- Zaenurrosyid, A., & Sholihah, H. (2025). Moral governance and discipline in hybrid tahfidh pesantren: A study of millennial Qur'an memorizers at school and pesantren. *Santri: Journal of Pesantren and Fiqh Sosial*. <https://doi.org/10.35878/santri.v6i1.1585>