

## Internal and external communication patterns at ora aji islamic boarding school yogyakarta

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### ABSTRACT

*Inclusive and rehabilitative Islamic boarding schools such as the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School face complex communication challenges amid the diversity of student backgrounds. This study aims to describe internal and external communication patterns, strategies, and communication barriers that occur in the pesantren environment. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results showed that communication was arranged informally through the student assistance division and facilitated by media such as WhatsApp and HT. Communication strategies are carried out through a personal approach, regular meetings, and social activities with the community. The main obstacle lies in the background of the students and the limited resources of the management. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of an adaptive communication system based on Islamic values and a personal approach in supporting the success of education and rehabilitation programs in inclusive Islamic boarding schools.*

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## Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are one of the main pillars in the Islamic education system in Indonesia (Ning Widhi, Masruroh, and Achmad 2023; Sabiq 2020) and contributes greatly to the formation of character (Lina et al. 2023; Supriyanto 2020) and the religious understanding of the community (Hughes 2015; Robbaniyah 2023). Based on data from the Ministry of Religion (2023), there are more than 30,000 Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia with the number of students reaching millions of people (Stuart 2008; Krishnawati and Nurihsan 2023). However, along with social development and technological advancements (Masyhuri and Musfah 2014; Mursyid 2011; Samsudin 2019), pesantren face great challenges in maintaining the relevance of education and effective communication in the midst of increasingly complex social dynamics. Moreover, pesantren now not only serves students with general backgrounds, but also begins to accept students from various social and psychological conditions, including those who need special assistance and social rehabilitation (Anisa 2023; (2024).

This social change requires pesantren to adapt in internal and external communication patterns in order to be able to respond to the needs of the times without neglecting traditional values (Lacarcel and Huete 2023; Lampos, Mintz, and Qu 2021). According to a study by (Wahyuningsih and Rachman 2020), effective communication adaptation is the main key in maintaining harmonization between religious values and the demands of modernity. However, the reality is that many Islamic boarding schools have not developed adequate communication strategies to face these challenges, resulting in an imbalance between expectations and reality

in the implementation of education. Pesantren that have a dual function, namely as an educational and social rehabilitation institution, require a more complex and contextual communication approach.

This phenomenon is exacerbated by the lack of in-depth studies on communication in inclusive and rehabilitative pesantren which have characteristics that are much different from pesantren in general. Islamic boarding schools such as the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta, which accepts students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and provides social rehabilitation programs, face unique and complex communication challenges. Recent study by (Al Karimah 2020) shows that the communication pattern in this kind of pesantren is not widely understood, even though it is very important for the success of the education and rehabilitation programs that are carried out.

Various studies over the past ten years have highlighted communication in the pesantren environment from various perspectives. For example (Rif'atul Khoiriah Malik 2021) Examine the pattern of interpersonal communication between teachers and students that affect the success of religious learning. Meanwhile, research by (Wazis 2020) highlighting the role of digital communication technology in strengthening da'wah networks in modern Islamic boarding schools. However, most of the research is still limited to conventional pesantren and lacks a spotlight on pesantren with special social characters such as inclusive pesantren that accept students from problematic social backgrounds (Astuti 2023) This confirms the existence of a gap in literature that needs to be answered scientifically.

This research gap shows the lack of an in-depth study of communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools that are rehabilitative and inclusive, such as the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta (Sugiarto, Tiniyyah, and Sulistyorini 2023). The complex social conditions and the use of modern communication technology in this pesantren provide their own dynamics that have not been widely revealed scientifically. Existing research has not explicitly discussed how communication strategies and challenges faced by pesantren in this context, especially in maintaining religious values while accommodating the social needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

Therefore, this study contributes novelty by examining internal and external communication patterns in the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School which has inclusive and rehabilitative characteristics, as well as the use of modern communication technology as part of communication strategies. This study is expected to enrich the communication literature of pesantren organizations and provide new insights on the adaptation of pesantren in an increasingly complex social context, especially in managing the diversity of students' social backgrounds while maintaining traditional Islamic values.

The main purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe the communication patterns, strategies, and communication barriers that arise in the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta. Scientifically, this research is expected to provide benefits in the form of new references for the development of effective communication in modern Islamic boarding schools and at the same time become the basis for more adaptive communication practices in Islamic boarding schools that face social and technological challenges, as well as support the success of education and rehabilitation programs run by Islamic boarding schools with social missions.

## Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to describe in depth the communication structure, strategies, and communication challenges faced by the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School Yogyakarta. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore the meaning, views, and complex social dynamics in the life of the pesantren community through the direct perspective of the perpetrators.

The subjects in this study are the administrators of Islamic boarding schools, students, asatidz, guardians of students, and the surrounding community who have an active relationship with communication activities in the pesantren environment. The main information was obtained through in-depth interviews with resource persons from the

management of the pesantren who have a thorough understanding of the internal and external communication practices that take place.

The research procedure was carried out in several stages, namely: initial observation in the cottage environment to understand the context and patterns of daily activities; in-depth interviews with selected informants; review of the lodge's internal documents; as well as recording the results of field observations during community activities, staff meetings, and the moment of visiting the guardians of students. The researcher also conducted participatory observations to see firsthand the communication interactions that took place in the cottage environment.

The main instrument in this study is a semi-structured interview guideline designed to explore information flexibly, tailored to the conditions and responses of the informant. In addition, observation sheets, audio recording devices, and field notebooks are also used as data recording mediums.

Data collection techniques are carried out through three main methods, namely: semi-structured interviews with key informants, participatory observation of communication activities both formal and informal, and analysis of documents from Islamic boarding schools, such as meeting records and the contents of digital communication groups (such as WhatsApp). All the data obtained was then analyzed using an interactive model from Miles and Huberman, which included the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion withdrawal and verification. Data triangulation was carried out to increase the validity of the research results by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documents.

Through this method, it is hoped that a complete picture can be obtained of the communication patterns applied by the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School, including the ways they manage communication challenges that arise in the context of religious and community-based education.

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Yogyakarta Boarding School Is Not Worth It

Ora Aji Yogyakarta Islamic Boarding School is one of the Islamic boarding schools located on Jl. Werkudara, Tundan, Purwomartani, Kalasan, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, with the postal code 55571 telephone number 0857-1835-1235.

The vision & mission of the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School Yogyakarta, which is to transform the Islamic culture of the Islamic boarding school into the ummah and society, is the main vision and mission of the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School. The transformation is carried out by adhering to the belief that religion is the only testament to obtain Allah's pleasure for the happiness of this world and the hereafter. Strategically, this is achieved by preparing a generation that is pious *wa mutafaqqih fiddin* and a community of students who are religious, insightful and always be *rahmatan lil'alam* for their environment.

The purpose and purpose of the establishment of the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School:

- a. Educating people's lives through the development and development of Islamic boarding schools.
- b. Educating and fostering society to become a pious human being with personality, mastering science and technology, so that they are able to fulfill their duties and obligations in religion, society, nation and state.
- c. Creating a tolerant nationalist spirit in society.

The work program of the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School in general is:

- a. Improving the quality of education and teaching and pioneering new educational institutions in accordance with the development and needs of the community.
- b. Improving service and community service.
- c. Participate in all community activities to strengthen social relationships, both for

the development of the cottage and the community around the cottage.

History of the Establishment of Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School is an Islamic boarding school located in Jl. Werkudara, Tundan, Purwomartani, Kelan District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This Islamic boarding school is under the leadership of a missionary who is very famous in the community, namely Kyai Miftah Maulana Habiburrahman or better known as Guz Miftah. Until this research was carried out, the Ora Aji Islamic boarding school had three levels of educators, namely MTS, MA, to special education for students or adults who want to learn Islam, with the total number of students estimated to reach 250 students from various regions in Indonesia.

The establishment of the Ora Aji Islamic boarding school began from the journey of Gus Miftah who at that time was studying at UIN Sunnan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. He migrated from Lampung to Yogyakarta to study, only armed with prayer and hope. During college, he found obstacles, especially cost barriers. Therefore, he did everything possible to continue his education, starting from trading, becoming a mosque takmir at the Taman Siswa Mosque, and even he once slept anywhere. Guz Miftah is determined that when he succeeds, he will finance the education of underprivileged children.

Starting from the strong determination of Guz Miftah, around 2000 he began to pioneer the construction of a hut and the first part that was built was a mosque. That year was the year he started his da'wah. However, many people consider that the place where Guz Miftah preaches is a dirty and unnatural place. This is because Guz Miftah has a strong principle, namely, "sweeping in dirty places illuminates in dark places" and people see it as something not good.

The origin of the name "Ora Aji" comes from his mindset that humans have low nature, therefore this Islamic boarding school is named "Ora Aji", Ora means no and Aji means value. Meanwhile, the mosque in the Ora Aji Islamic boarding school is called Masjid al-Mbjeaji which means valuable. The strong mindset and principles that he has, the students began to arrive with various kinds of diverse backgrounds, such as from ex-convicts, thieves, gamblers, and drunkards. Guz Miftah believed that there must be light in their hearts to repent and he was able to take advantage of that small point of light, then guide and enlarge that light in their hearts until it became light.

## 2. The Structure of the Communication Organization at the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School

The Ora Aji Islamic boarding school has two dormitory heads who manage everything related to the guardians of students and students called Pak Lurah (male student section) and Bu Lurah (female student section), while the room head is called RT and RW. The background of the use of these two terms is because the Islamic boarding school with a group of students and all the administrators who live in it is described as a small community, therefore the term position in the village is used.

The Ora Aji Islamic boarding school has several divisions or sections, which are as follows:

- a. Secretary
- b. Treasurer
- c. Education and activities division
- d. Student Assistance Division.
- e. Hygiene division.
- f. Security division.
- g. Mosque takmir division.
- h. Consumption or kitchen division.
- i. Media division.

However, of the many divisions that exist, there is no communication division. The resource person said that the one responsible for bridging the communication relationship between guardians of students and students is the student assistance division.

### 3. Internal and External Communication at Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School

There is no written policy governing communication at the Ora Aji Islamic boarding school. However, there are unwritten policies, namely not all administrators have the right and have a full policy to communicate with guardians of students. The one responsible for communication between students and guardians of students is the student assistance division. The communication media used among the administrators of the Ora Aji Islamic boarding school are HT and the WhatsApp application. In addition to forming an internal or combined male and female management chat group and madrasah group, verbal or direct communication is also carried out by holding regular meetings of the male or female management *asatidz* board and joint meetings.

Regular meetings between the *asatidz* administrators are held at the beginning of every month, precisely on the night of Friday Kliwon, while the division meetings are only carried out conditionally. However, in September, October, and November, many meetings or meetings are held due to the many events that must be held. The meeting with the students is held once a month, namely during visitation or *sambangan*. Regarding what the management conveyed to the guardians of the students, it depends on the background of the students to take a personal approach.

The resource person said that there is no special method in communication with guardians of students. However, it is natural that social creatures that are considered are manners when speaking to guardians of students or when conveying with good language or speech so that there is good reciprocity and does not cause danger.

The Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School also establishes harmonious communication with the surrounding community. Islamic boarding schools do not even hesitate to participate in community activities, such as participating in night patrols every Wednesday night and doing community service work every one or two weeks. In addition, there are other approaches, such as conducting a bazaar with the community every weekend, for free basic necessities, making the community as parking managers every time there is an event and the cottage will not take a penny from the parking proceeds.

### 4. Challenges faced in internal and external communication at the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School

Regarding the assistance of students related to violations, internally the management made a large meeting to evaluate and re-communicate things that have not been communicated at a certain time. A problem that will be communicated to the guardian of the student, if it does not pass through the same door or path, it will have a bad effect. So in the internal communication group, one of the administrators will convey to the person in charge of the management regarding the violations that have been committed by the students. Then, based on the report, the person in charge establishes communication with the guardian of the student in connection with the information.

Communication obstacles at the Ora Aji Islamic boarding school also include the poor background of students, such as victims of *broken homes*, orphaned children, and become a big problem when the guardian of the students does not want to take care of their children so that they can continue to care, accommodate, and facilitate their children. Meanwhile, the ability of the management is limited. So the role of the Management is to continue to motivate students to be enthusiastic about learning, even though the amount of pocket money they have is not like other friends.

The resource person said that Guz Miftah was very capable of facilitating the students, but he gave the opportunity to the administrators to try as much as possible *to handle* and protect the students, both economically and psychologically, and so that there was charity from parents who still had the right to finance the child.

So far, there have been no major problems that have disturbed the stability of the management in terms of communication, whether communication with students, administrators, or *asatidz*. The existing problems can still be well conditioned. A personal approach is one of the methods of communication with students that is considered effective.



Therefore, as an administrator, you must have a high level of patience.

5. Strategies carried out to improve and develop communication skills for staff, teachers, and students

a. Communication strategy of Islamic boarding schools between staff

The strategy applied by Islamic boarding schools in building a good and harmonious community is by holding gatherings such as monthly meetings specifically for teacher staff, then holding lectures every Friday night, etc. And of course, the staff or teachers will always be able to coordinate anything and anytime through WhatsApp groups, because the Islamic boarding school facilitates the staff with a mobile phone and 24-hour wifi, so that communication between staff can run smoothly at any time, especially when problems occur in the Islamic boarding school.

In addition to facilitating staff with mobile phones, the boarding school also facilitates staff with HT. The goal is to encourage staff to communicate directly when circumstances are not possible and it is difficult to open a cellphone. It is also useful for staff to communicate with each other when there is a disruption to the mobile phone such as a sudden loss of network, or running out of internet quota, and other unforeseeable disruptions. However, this HT is not given to each staff, but only a few HT to be used as needed.

b. Communication strategy of Islamic boarding schools with the local community

The communication strategy of the Ora Aji boarding school with the community to create harmony, harmony, trust, and religion, namely by holding activities in the form of mutual cooperation, bazaar events, night patrols, etc. The resource person said that there is a night patrol every Wednesday night, then the Islamic boarding school also often distributes basic necessities to the community, even several times Gus Miftah, who is the owner of the Ora Aji boarding school, distributed several gift coupons in the form of Umrah to the community.

The boarding school also holds a bazaar event with the community every akhirussanah, committee, community service and mutual cooperation with the community every 1 or 2 weeks, and also when the boarding school has a big event such as commemorating the anniversary of the boarding school for example, then the community is involved to help each other, which usually at these big events there is a parking lot to be managed by residents so that the boarding school does not take a penny. With these joint activities, it can build harmonious communication between Islamic boarding schools and the local community.

c. Communication strategy of Islamic boarding schools with guardians

With the background of the students being very varied, it is quite difficult to deal with it. The resource person said that by communicating online, namely whatsapp or phone chats, it was declared less than optimal, plus there were several guardians whose parents were abroad so it was difficult and lacking in receiving information. And there are some guardians of students who cannot understand information that is not conveyed directly face-to-face. Islamic boarding schools must be able to understand the personality of the walitrantri and remain in tune with all walsan responses.

The resource person stated that the efforts of the administrators of the Islamic boarding school in maintaining communication with the guardians of the students were also by facilitating the delivery of information to the guardians. Because when information reaches the guardian, the feedback or the impact is sometimes in the form of parental anger or bad and too harsh behavior towards the child which actually hurts the feelings of the student, therefore the administrators of the Islamic boarding school must filter more and even minimize the delivery of information to the guardian of the student.

To build communication so that it is well established and harmonious, the Islamic boarding school also holds a meeting with the guardians of the students, namely every Sunday Kliwon when visiting. The meeting was held one week after the mujahadah there was a formal event when Abah, Gus Miftah as the founder of the boarding school, was in the place

and this meeting was limited to meeting with Abah from 07.00 to asr.

And there are also formal events that are held after the visit during visits, namely socializing for guardians of students related to communication of child development in general, for example bullying. For example, when the child enters for the first time for the mondok, there is a formal event where all ustad or asatid in the field, meet directly with the guardian of the student and the guardian of the student asks questions, then from the Pondok conveys general rules and obligations related to routines at the boarding school or at school. Both in terms of pocket money, tuition fees, visiting time.

d. Communication strategy of Islamic boarding schools to students

The resource person stated that the most accurate method in communicating with students is a personal or individual approach, where the administrators must really understand each individual student, both from their background, physical state, to their psychological and emotional state. So as administrators, they must have a high sense of patience.

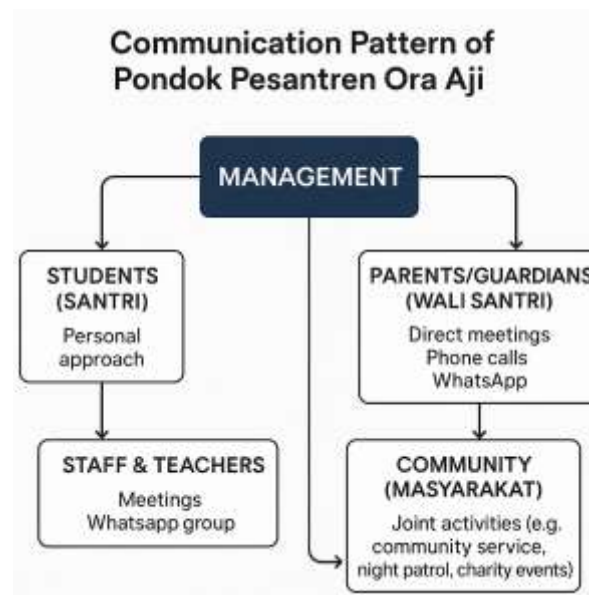


Figure 1 Pattern of Communication Patterns of Undesirable Islamic Boarding Schools

## Conlusion

Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School Yogyakarta is an Islamic educational institution that was established on the initiative of Gus Miftah with the vision of transforming Islamic values into people's lives. This pesantren has a distinctive character that is inclusive and open to various backgrounds of students, including those who have been socially excluded. In its implementation, the internal communication pattern at Pondok Ora Aji runs informally and based on emotional closeness, without a standard written policy. The organizational structure of the pesantren uses terms such as Pak Lurah, Bu Lurah, RT, and RW, which reflect community life on a small scale. Although it does not have a special communication division, the communication function is carried out by the student assistance division which acts as a liaison between administrators, students, and guardians.

On the other hand, external communication of the pesantren is carried out through social media managed by the media division as well as through da'wah and community service activities. Relationships with the surrounding environment are built through an adaptive socio-religious approach, in line with the mission of pesantren to actively contribute to the community. However, the lack of a formally documented communication system is a challenge in itself, especially in maintaining the consistency and effectiveness of the information

conveyed. Therefore, it is important for the Ora Aji Islamic Boarding School to develop a more structured and professional communication pattern to support the sustainability of the pesantren vision in fostering a religious, inclusive, and rahmatan lil 'alamin generation.

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