



## Strategic Alumni Empowerment for Sustainable Development in Islamic Boarding School

Muhammad Fatchul Irsyad\*, Moh. Hanif Adzhar, Hairul Ma'arif, Sukron Makmun

Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Wasil Kediri, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [fatichulirsyad2@gmail.com](mailto:fatichulirsyad2@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

This study aims to thoroughly examine the strategic efforts in empowering alumni to develop the Islamic boarding school. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Data analysis followed an interactive model, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, with the validity of the data ensured through source and technique triangulation. The results of the study reveal that alumni empowerment is carried out through strengthening the alumni organization, utilizing digital communication and networks, and involving alumni in education, economic, and socio-religious sectors. Alumni play a strategic role as partners of the boarding school in improving the quality of learning, enhancing social networks, and supporting institutional development. Furthermore, the research found that alumni have contributed significantly to the advancement of educational practices, with alumni-led initiatives positively impacting student engagement and curriculum enrichment. The study also indicates that the engagement of alumni in social-economic programs has facilitated the establishment of community-driven projects that promote the welfare of both the alumni and the surrounding community. Practically, it provides strategic recommendations to optimize the role of alumni sustainably. Future research could further explore the impact of alumni empowerment on long-term institutional sustainability and the broader socio-economic development of the Islamic boarding school community.

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## Introduction

Islamic boarding schools hold a strategic position in instilling Islamic values among its students. As non-formal educational institutions, pesantren have a profound impact on shaping the character of students, strengthening their morality, and enhancing intellectual capacity through traditional religious texts, such as *turats book* (Arif et al., 2025; Pathollah & Wassalwa, 2025). Over the years, the institution has grown and evolved, in part due to the active role of their alumni. These alumni, having completed their education at the institution, are often seen as key stakeholders in fostering the growth and development of the institution (Papa et al., 2020; Smart & Hamm, 1993). The strategic value of alumni is highlighted in various studies, which suggest that their contributions are essential in supporting the continuous development of institution (Lussier & Hendon, 2025; Zhang & Chen, 2024). The involvement of alumni, therefore, is not only a natural outcome of their education but a significant factor that influences the long-term sustainability.

Alumni contributions to pesantren are diverse and multifaceted, encompassing both financial and non-financial support (Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Ngoc et al., 2023). Empirical research indicates that alumni tend to exhibit high levels of attention and engagement with their former institutions. This heightened attention, coupled with strong loyalty, often translates into valuable contributions that help secure the future of the institution (Al-hawary, 2022; Stone et al., 2024). Alumni with deep loyalty are frequently instrumental in ensuring the continuity and sustainability of their alma mater, either through direct financial support or by participating in activities that benefit the institution. Such contributions include funding educational initiatives, providing mentorship to current students, and leveraging their networks to enhance the pesantren's reputation and outreach. These contributions, both in tangible and intangible forms, significantly shape the development, reinforcing the argument that alumni play a pivotal role in the strategic empowerment of Islamic boarding schools for sustainable growth and progress (Kooli & Abadli, 2022).

Swanson's (2022) research highlights the critical role of alumni as intermediaries between Islamic boarding schools and the broader community, expanding the social influence of these institutions. This finding is supported by (Burbules et al., 2020)'s study, which reveals that alumni contribute significantly to enhancing the quality of education through teaching activities and curriculum development. Additionally, (Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023) emphasizes the potential of alumni to drive economic independence by collaborating in micro-enterprise initiatives, cooperatives, and financial donations. These insights are consistent with findings from several reputable international studies. For instance, a study by (Al-hawary, 2022) discusses how alumni networks facilitate knowledge sharing and educational improvements in non-formal institutions, while (Situmorang, 2022) argue that alumni involvement can strengthen educational outcomes through mentorship and collaborative projects. Collectively, these studies affirm

the multifaceted contributions of alumni to the empowerment and sustainability through educational, social, and economic channels.

Despite the growing body of research on the role of alumni in supporting Islamic boarding schools, much of the literature still lacks a comprehensive framework for developing the untapped potential of alumni. This gap in the research presents an opportunity that this study seeks to address. While existing studies focus on the contributions and strategic roles of alumni, there remains a need for a structured approach to effectively manage and maximize these contributions. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by introducing the concept of "nurturing" or empowerment as a foundational framework. By emphasizing the active involvement and development of alumni, this study proposes that alumni can be empowered to fully realize and contribute their potential to the growth and sustainability. The significance of this research lies in its ability to provide a comprehensive strategy that not only highlights alumni's roles but also outlines practical measures for harnessing their capabilities to benefit the institution in a sustained and meaningful manner. This research, thus, offers valuable insights into how alumni empowerment can be systematically cultivated to enhance the overall effectiveness of Islamic boarding schools.

The empowerment of alumni presents a compelling area for examination. The involvement and loyalty of alumni have shown to have a positive impact on the development of the pesantren in recent years. Alumni serve as living brochures for the institution, acting as an effective branding and promotional tool, which has contributed to the increase in the number of students over the past few years. Additionally, alumni are identified as key donors and stakeholders. This research aims to analyze the efforts made to empower alumni in developing Islamic boarding school. Specifically, it will focus on identifying the various forms of alumni empowerment, analyzing their contributions and involvement, examining the organizational structure of the alumni network, and assessing the impact of these efforts on the development.

## Methods

The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, which was deliberately chosen due to its strength in providing a structured framework to gain an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena. In this context, the focus was on exploring the efforts of alumni in empowering and developing Islamic boarding school. The case study design allowed the researcher to investigate multiple perspectives and contextual factors surrounding alumni involvement, offering a holistic view of the processes, interactions, and outcomes of their engagement (Cohen et al., 2007). By adopting this approach, the study aimed to capture the nuanced ways in which alumni contribute to the growth and sustainability over time, making the findings rich, contextualized, and grounded in real-life experiences.

The research was conducted at Tanwirul Qulub Islamic Boarding school, Lamongan, East Java. This location was chosen intentionally due to its unique

characteristics that has a long-standing tradition of alumni engagement and intergenerational collaboration. The institution provides an ideal setting to study the mechanisms of alumni empowerment because of its active network of former students who continuously participate in educational, social, and organizational initiatives. The site offered access to both current institutional actors, such as caretakers and management staff, and alumni with diverse backgrounds and experiences, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and impact of alumni involvement within the context.

Data collection in this study was conducted through multiple techniques to ensure richness and triangulation of information (Atenas et al., 2023; Creswell, 2007). First, participant observation was employed by following and engaging in several alumni-led activities, allowing the researcher to witness interactions, routines, and organizational practices first-hand. Second, semi-structured interviews were carried out using an interview guide to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility for respondents to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives. Informants were selected purposively, including the caretaker of the context, administrative staff, the alumni chairman, and several active alumni across different generations.

For data analysis, the study adopted case study framework, which encompasses a systematic five-stage process. Initially, the design of the analysis involved determining the research objectives and identifying the units of analysis. Subsequently, evidence was collected from observations, interviews, and document reviews. The third stage involved data organization and display, presenting the collected information systematically for easier interpretation. This was followed by data condensation and pattern analysis, where relationships, recurring themes, and significant patterns were identified to understand the phenomena of alumni empowerment comprehensively. The final stage consisted of drawing conclusions and reporting, synthesizing findings into a coherent and integrative narrative that reflects the complexity of alumni roles in the pesantren's development.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the data, several validation strategies were employed. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different sources, such as interviews, observations, and document studies, to identify consistencies and discrepancies (Lê & Schmid, 2022; Marx, 2023). These measures strengthened the validity of the study by ensuring that the conclusions drawn were grounded in verified evidence and accurately represented the real-world dynamics of alumni empowerment.

Table 1. the Aspect of Research Methods

Stage	Description	Indicators
Research Design (Qualitative Case Study)	The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain in-depth understanding of alumni. This design allows investigation of complex social phenomena from multiple perspectives within the real-life context.	Justification for case study selection; Ability to explore multiple perspectives; Contextualized

		insights into alumni engagement
Research Location	The study was conducted Tanwirul Qulub Islamic Boarding School. This location was chosen for its active alumni network and intergenerational involvement in pesantren activities.	Accessibility to key informants; Representation of active alumni involvement; Diversity of informants across generations
Data Collection Techniques	Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews guided by an interview protocol, and documentary studies of archival records and alumni activity documentation. Informants were selected purposively, including caretakers, management, alumni chairman, and active alumni across generations.	Number and diversity of informants; Completeness of observational notes; Availability of relevant documents; Adherence to interview guidelines
Data Analysis	Data analysis followed case study framework, including: 1) design of analysis, 2) evidence collection, 3) data organization and display, 4) data condensation and pattern identification, 5) drawing conclusions and reporting. This enabled identification of patterns, relationships, and themes in alumni empowerment.	Clear unit of analysis; Systematic data display; Identification of patterns and themes; Coherent integration of findings
Data Validation (Trustworthiness)	Data validity was ensured through triangulation (comparing interviews, observations, and documents). This step strengthened credibility and accuracy of the findings.	Consistency across data sources; Confirmed interpretations with informants; Documentation of procedures for transparency

## Finding and Discussion

### Finding

The operational definition of this study refers to the collective efforts aimed at enhancing the capacities and opportunities of alumni of Islamic boarding school (Ansari & Muhlis, 2026). These efforts are specifically focused on the empowerment of alumni through organizational strengthening, involvement as educators within the pesantren, and strategic initiatives that promote their roles in the broader development of the community (Ilmah & El Yunusi, 2026). The key components include alumni's active participation in various roles, as well as programs that foster sustainability in both the institution and the community at large. These empowerment strategies are designed to create a long-lasting impact by making alumni key players in driving social change and development through education and active organizational involvement (Virgiawan et al., 2021).

In the first interview with an informant who is an alumnus of the institution, it was revealed that the alumni's involvement as educators at the pesantren plays a vital role in fostering sustainable growth within the institution. According to the informant, alumni are encouraged to return to the institution not only to teach but also to share their practical knowledge and experiences gained outside the pesantren. This initiative helps bridge the gap between traditional teachings and the real-world applications, fostering a deeper understanding among students. The informant further emphasized that the alumni's teaching strategies are aligned with the pesantren's goals of spiritual and academic development, which contributes to the long-term sustainability of the institution educational vision. A second informant, an alumni coordinator, discussed the organizational strengthening initiatives that have been put in place to enhance alumni involvement. This informant shared how the alumni association has evolved into a more structured and active body, offering various professional development programs, mentorship, and networking opportunities. The alumni association also actively collaborates to ensure that alumni are well-positioned to contribute to both educational and community development. By involving alumni in these organizational structures, the institution has fostered a sense of belonging and responsibility that aligns with their mission of sustainable development.

During the observation period, it was evident that the alumni were not only engaged in the educational process as teachers but also actively participated in community outreach programs organized by the pesantren. These programs, which include workshops, vocational training, and social initiatives, are crucial in empowering the alumni while simultaneously benefiting the surrounding community. The pesantren's leadership has strategically aligned its alumni empowerment initiatives with the larger goals of local community development, further embedding the pesantren as a key player in regional growth. From these observations, it can be inferred that the empowerment strategy goes beyond the classroom, reaching into the broader social landscape to create lasting change.

The data collected from both interviews and observations clearly demonstrate that the institution has developed a strategic model for alumni empowerment, which is directly tied to its sustainability goals. Alumni are not merely former students but are seen as integral to the pesantren's mission, both as educators and active participants in various initiatives. This strategic involvement has created a mutually beneficial relationship between the alumni and the institution. It fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, ensuring that the pesantren remains relevant and impactful for generations to come. The alumni's role as mentors and educators, combined with their organizational leadership, is crucial to the pesantren's sustained success.

The data collected from the interviews and observations suggest a clear and organized pattern of strategic empowerment within Islamic boarding school. The first key pattern is the active and purposeful involvement of alumni as educators. These alumni bring valuable external experiences into the pesantren, enriching the students' learning experiences and ensuring the curriculum remains relevant. Secondly, there is a clear focus on organizational strengthening, with the

alumni association playing a pivotal role in both professional development and community outreach. This helps ensure that alumni are not only contributing to the pesantren's internal growth but also to broader social development goals. Finally, the intergenerational collaboration between alumni, current students, and the pesantren leadership creates a cycle of empowerment, where each group contributes to the overall sustainability and development of the pesantren. These patterns underscore the importance of strategic alumni engagement in the long-term success of Islamic educational institutions.

Table 2. Strategic Alumni Empowerment of Islamic Boarding School

<b>Strategic Aspect</b>	<b>Key Information</b>	<b>Description</b>
Alumni as Educators	Alumni return to the pesantren to teach and share practical knowledge from their outside experiences.	Alumni play a crucial role in bridging traditional teachings and real-world applications, enhancing students' understanding of academic and spiritual development.
Alumni Organizational Strengthening	The alumni association has evolved into a structured body offering professional development, mentorship, and networking opportunities.	The alumni association plays a key role in creating long-term connections, providing career guidance, and strengthening ties with the pesantren to ensure sustainability.
Community Development through Alumni	Alumni are actively involved in community outreach programs such as workshops, vocational training, and social initiatives.	These outreach programs empower alumni while simultaneously benefiting the broader community, ensuring the pesantren's role in local development and societal growth.
Strategic Involvement for Sustainability	Alumni's involvement is integrated into both educational and community development goals, ensuring the pesantren's long-term success.	The alumni contribute to the pesantren's sustainability by fostering a sense of shared responsibility and leadership, ensuring the institution remains relevant for future generations.

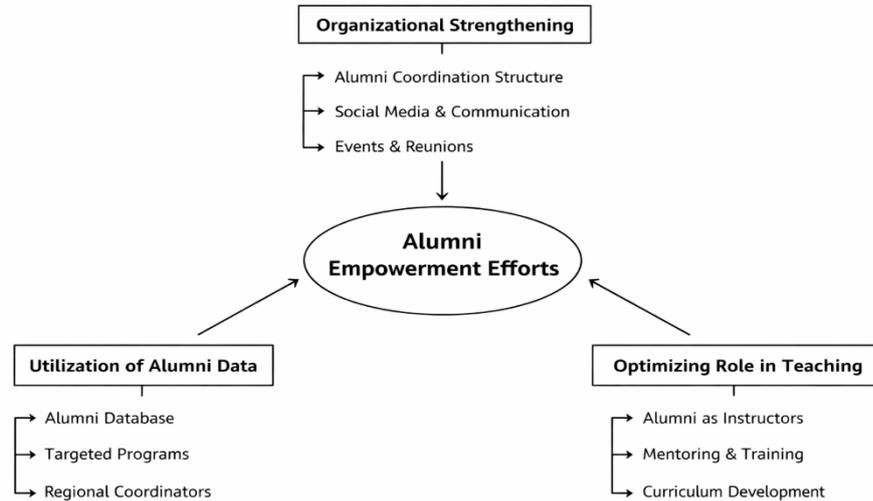
In line with the research findings, this section will present the research findings and discussion to describe the empowerment efforts undertaken to develop the Tanwirul Qulub Islamic Boarding School.

### **Empowerment Efforts with Organizational Strengthening**

The empowerment efforts for alumni have taken various forms, with a primary focus on organizational strengthening, utilization of alumni data, and optimizing their role in the pesantren's teaching process. Over the years, these initiatives have proven to be pivotal in ensuring that alumni continue to contribute meaningfully to the pesantren's mission. From informal gatherings to a well-

structured alumni association, the efforts have resulted in the creation of a thriving community that benefits both the alumni and the pesantren itself. The transformation of alumni involvement has not only increased the sense of unity among former students but also enhanced their ability to contribute to sustainable development goals in their communities.

Figure 1. The Forms Alumni Empowerment



The alumni organization has undergone significant development in recent years, as noted by KH Muklisin, the head of the pesantren. Previously, the alumni organization was informal and its activities were limited to occasional events, typically taking place when the pesantren hosted large gatherings. This approach lacked consistency and long-term vision (Halmaghi et al., 2023; Lingmont & Alexiou, 2020). However, over the past two years, the alumni association has undergone a transformation, with a systematic leadership structure put in place. This organizational shift has included the establishment of positions such as the president, secretary, treasurer, program division, and regional coordinators, which have brought a greater sense of professionalism and clarity to the alumni's role.

One of the most noticeable changes in the alumni organization has been the introduction of a structured leadership team. This new system has helped streamline communication, decision-making, and program implementation, enabling the alumni association to operate more efficiently. The structure is not only a reflection of the growing maturity of the organization but also of the pesantren's commitment to ensuring that alumni have a meaningful and ongoing relationship with their alma mater. The addition of regional coordinators has further strengthened alumni engagement by ensuring that members in different geographic locations can remain connected and active within the association.

The dissemination of information regarding the alumni's organizational structure has been an essential part of this transformation. The association has leveraged social media and communication groups to keep alumni informed about upcoming activities and opportunities (Hariani, 2023; Lee & Jang, 2020). Alumni from various generations can now easily access information about events

and stay connected through their respective class or batch groups. These platforms have become vital tools for building a more cohesive alumni network, allowing members to share resources, ideas, and experiences. The increased use of social media and digital communication has greatly enhanced alumni interaction and facilitated a more dynamic community.

In practical engagement, the alumni association has developed a comprehensive annual work plan. This plan includes various initiatives and events that aim to foster a sense of belonging and continued involvement with the pesantren. Some of the key activities organized by the alumni association include the Haul Akbar (an annual commemoration event), Temu Alumni (reunion gatherings for each batch), and regular study sessions held once a month. These events serve as a platform for alumni to reconnect with their peers, reflect on the pesantren's teachings, and engage in scholarly discussions that contribute to their personal and professional development.

The alumni's role in the pesantren's ongoing activities has also been crucial in sustaining its educational mission. Their involvement in teaching, mentoring, and organizing programs has helped bridge the gap between generations of students and alumni. Alumni who return to the pesantren as educators share their life experiences, both inside and outside the pesantren, providing students with practical knowledge that goes beyond the traditional curriculum. These interactions also enable alumni to stay connected with the pesantren's values and goals, ensuring that the institution remains an influential force in their lives. Through these sustained efforts, the alumni association has become an integral part of the pesantren's long-term strategy for growth and development.

Figure 2. Alumnus Recitation of Turats Book



However, it is important to note that not all alumni are equally involved in the activities of the Islamic boarding school. Umam, a senior alumnus, shared that many older alumni are less engaged due to factors such as distance and lack of access to information. This is particularly true for alumni who live far from the pesantren, making it difficult for them to participate in events or stay updated on the association's activities. Additionally, some alumni are not accustomed to the digital coordination systems that have become central to organizing alumni-

related events. This technological barrier has created an imbalance in the level of participation across different alumni batches, with younger generations who are more familiar with digital tools showing higher engagement. Despite these challenges, the alumni organization has made significant strides in fostering intergenerational communication and cooperation, serving as an effective platform for connecting alumni across diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The involvement of alumni is not only evident in large events but also in the day-to-day operations. Younger alumni, in particular, have become actively involved in regular activities such as helping with the evening study sessions, organizing religious events, and assisting with the digitalization process. These contributions from alumni are essential in creating a sustainable ecosystem where alumni play a hands-on role in maintaining and improving the institution's functions. The younger generation's engagement in these routine activities also allows them to stay connected to the teachings and continue to contribute to its educational and spiritual mission. This growing participation highlights the progressive nature of alumni empowerment, which has already begun to exert a significant influence on the dynamic life.

The utilization of alumni data has emerged as one of the key elements in strengthening the alumni empowerment efforts. According to interviews conducted with the pesantren's leadership, the institution has made strides in building a comprehensive alumni database, although it is not yet fully integrated. KH Muklisin, the head of the Islamic boarding school, acknowledged that many alumni are not yet included in the database due to changes in contact information, relocation, or a lack of connection to the alumni association. However, despite these gaps, the database is already proving beneficial. For example, it has enabled to identify and contact alumni more effectively, making it easier to invite them to events and encourage participation in various activities. The development of the alumni database is still a work in progress, but it serves as a valuable tool in the ongoing efforts to engage and empower alumni in ways that contribute to the pesantren's mission.

Mudhofar, the head of the alumni organization, explained that the existing alumni data has been instrumental in guiding key decisions and organizing strategic initiatives. One of the most significant uses of this data is in fundraising efforts. By understanding the geographical distribution and professional backgrounds of alumni, the pesantren can better target its fundraising campaigns and ensure that they reach the right people. Moreover, the data helps in the selection of regional coordinators, ensuring that alumni in various areas can be better represented and can facilitate local activities. The alumni database also plays a critical role in identifying potential speakers and mentors for educational programs, ensuring that the pesantren's academic and spiritual needs are met with expertise from within the alumni community.

Alumni who live outside the region are particularly valuable to the Islamic boarding school, as they frequently play an important role in promoting the institution to the wider public. Mudhofar emphasized that many prospective students come to the pesantren based on recommendations from alumni who

live in different regions. These alumni serve as ambassadors, helping to spread its reputation and attract new students. This outreach through alumni not only aids the pesantren in increasing its student enrolment but also strengthens the bond between alumni and their alma mater. By leveraging the influence of alumni who are well-established in their local communities, the Islamic boarding school is able to expand its reach and continue to grow in a sustainable manner.

Communication among alumni has become increasingly facilitated by the use of digital networks, which have proven to be essential for maintaining strong ties within the alumni community (Belay et al., 2023). The alumni organization has harnessed the power of digital tools to create various professional networks, such as communities for teachers, Qur'an memorization students, entrepreneurs, and those working in social and religious fields. These networks provide valuable spaces for alumni to exchange information about career opportunities, collaborative projects, and social agendas. The creation of these digital communities has also enabled alumni to stay informed about the latest developments and continue to engage with its mission. Through these networks, alumni can support one another professionally, share resources, and contribute to the ongoing success.

The alumni empowerment initiatives have made significant strides in creating a more engaged, structured, and digitally connected alumni community. Although challenges such as geographic distance and access to information still hinder full participation among all alumni, the overall progress of the alumni organization demonstrates a positive trajectory. The alumni database, along with the digital networks, has allowed the pesantren to optimize its resources and maintain close relationships with alumni across different regions. Furthermore, the active involvement of alumni in both routine and major events has begun to have a noticeable impact on the pesantren's operations, fostering a culture of collaboration that will contribute to the institution's sustainability for years to come. Through these concerted efforts, the Islamic boarding school has not only empowered its alumni but has also ensured that they remain integral to the development.

Figure3. once a month meeting alumni



Umam shared that the alumni network has become a crucial bridge for the pesantren, enabling it to establish collaborations and maintain strong ties with its former students. This network has played an essential role in facilitating

partnerships that support the pesantren's educational needs and social initiatives. Through the alumni network, the Islamic boarding school has been able to secure resources for educational infrastructure and receive social assistance for various community programs. The collaborative efforts between the alumni and the institution highlight the significant value of maintaining strong alumni connections, as they contribute to the institution's ability to enhance both its educational quality and its outreach to the community.

Overall, the utilization of alumni data and networks has been effective, but there is still room for improvement, particularly in the alumni data management system. Although the current system allows for communication and collaboration, Umam emphasized the need for further strengthening and integration of alumni records. By improving the data management process, the pesantren can maximize the potential of its alumni, ensuring that all available resources are fully utilized. A more robust system for tracking alumni information will not only facilitate better coordination and support but also allow the institution to better tap into the diverse talents and capabilities of its alumni, ultimately fostering more sustainable development for the institution.

### **Engaging Alumni Contribution as Instructors at Islamic Boarding Schools**

The contribution of alumni in the field of education has emerged as one of the most tangible forms of empowerment observed in this research. During an interview with KH Muklisin that explained that many alumni return to the pesantren to engage in academic activities. These activities include teaching classical Islamic texts, conducting religious training, offering public speaking workshops, and even taking up roles as administrators. This involvement not only strengthens the educational foundations but also deepens the alumni's connection to the institution, allowing them to give back by sharing their knowledge and expertise. The alumni's role in these academic activities ensures that the institution continues to thrive, offering both traditional and contemporary learning opportunities for students.

In particular, alumni who are professional educators have made substantial contributions by providing additional academic materials and learning modules to enhance the existing curriculum. Their involvement extends to offering academic mentoring, ensuring that students receive the necessary guidance to excel in their studies. This support is especially crucial in educational environment where students may benefit from additional resources to help them navigate both their religious and academic education. By participating in curriculum development and student mentorship, these alumni help to ensure that the pesantren remains a relevant and dynamic educational institution, capable of adapting to the needs of modern learners while preserving its core values.

Mudhofar, the chairman of the alumni association, added another significant initiative: the "*Mentor Santri*" program. This program was designed specifically for final-year students to assist them in preparing for their next phase of life, whether that be continuing their education in higher learning institutions or entering the workforce. The program involves alumni who have established

careers in various fields, including education, information technology, business, and public service. These alumni mentors provide tailored guidance, helping the students navigate their career choices, prepare for university entrance exams, and even offering job placement advice. This initiative serves as an excellent way to bridge the gap between the pesantren's academic environment and the real-world challenges that students will face after graduation.

Another area where alumni have significantly contributed is in the digitalization of education. The involvement of alumni in this area has been particularly impactful, as they have helped the institution embrace modern technology to support the learning process. Alumni with expertise in digital platforms have assisted in managing the pesantren's social media accounts, which are now important tools for communication, marketing, and engagement with the broader community. The alumni have played a pivotal role in helping students understand basic technology and digital skills. As the world continues to shift toward more technology-driven environments, equipping students with fundamental digital literacy is essential. Alumni with technical backgrounds have taken on the responsibility of teaching students how to use digital tools effectively, ensuring that they are not left behind in an increasingly digital world.

Finally, alumni have made significant contributions to the development of extracurricular curricula that are highly relevant to modern education. They have helped design programs such as journalism, video editing, and graphic design, all of which align with the current job market's demands. By involving alumni in curriculum development for these extracurricular subjects, the institution has been able to offer students opportunities to gain practical skills that will serve them well in their careers. These programs not only enrich the students' academic experience but also help them become more competitive in a rapidly changing world. The integration of digital skills into the curriculum ensures that the pesantren remains an institution that prepares its students for the demands of both the spiritual and professional worlds. Through these ongoing contributions, alumni continue to play a crucial role in ensuring that the pesantren adapts to modern educational needs while remaining true to its foundational values.

Figure 4. Alumni as Instructor In Qur'an Learning



### **Empowerment Strategy with Maintaining the Continuity of Relationships**

The alumni empowerment strategy has been carefully designed as an effort to maintain the continuity of relationships between the pesantren and its alumni, while also optimizing the potential of alumni to support both the development and community empowerment (Tiittanen et al., 2021). This strategy recognizes that alumni involvement goes beyond mere participation in ceremonial activities. Instead, it seeks to actively engage alumni in the fields of education, social development, and economic contributions (Handri et al., 2024). By doing so, the institution and its alumni organization aim to develop a strategy that is participatory, sustainable, and adaptable to the changing times, ensuring that the alumni remain a vital resource for the institution and the surrounding community.

Mudhofar, the head of the alumni organization elaborated on the main strategy for alumni empowerment, emphasizing the importance of strengthening the alumni organization as a platform for coordination and communication. He explained that the alumni organization must serve as a bridge between the pesantren and alumni scattered across various regions. According to him, "We strive to build a clear organizational structure, update alumni data, and create regional coordinators so that communication can be more effective." This structural framework is essential for ensuring that alumni are well-connected with the institution, allowing for better coordination of events, initiatives, and ongoing engagement. Additionally, the use of technology, particularly social media groups, has been highlighted as an important strategy for disseminating information quickly, facilitating discussions, and encouraging broader alumni participation.

The strategic approach to alumni empowerment, however, goes beyond organizational aspects, as emphasized by Umam, who highlighted the importance of incorporating values and role modelling into the process. He argued that alumni empowerment strategies must be grounded in the core values of Islamic education. He stated that alumni need to feel that their involvement is part of their continued dedication and service to the institution. This perspective places a

strong emphasis on spiritual and ethical commitments as the foundation of alumni engagement (Khan et al., 2020). According to Umam, the institution can empower its alumni by providing clear avenues for service, such as becoming administrators, overseeing religious activities, or mentoring and educating current students. In this way, alumni not only contribute to the pesantren's development but also feel valued and recognized for their meaningful roles in advancing the institution's educational mission.

On the other hand, Hasan, representing the younger generation of alumni, shared a more modern perspective on alumni empowerment, stressing the need for strategies to adapt to the changing characteristics and needs of today's world. He noted that younger alumni tend to contribute more directly to the pesantren by taking on active roles such as becoming administrators, teaching students, and advancing knowledge. His observations suggest that younger alumni are eager to take hands-on leadership positions, where they can directly influence the educational and social environment. This shift in the way younger alumni view their involvement reflects broader generational differences and underscores the necessity of creating empowerment strategies that resonate with their needs and aspirations, while maintaining the pesantren's core values.

The findings from this research indicate that alumni empowerment is developing gradually through an organic process that is based on social relationships. One of the key elements that has determined the success of this empowerment is the strengthening of the alumni organization itself. The establishment of a clear leadership structure, role distribution, and regular programs, such as the commemorative event, alumni reunions, and periodic study sessions, has successfully re-established the emotional bond between alumni and the institution. These events are more than just traditional gatherings; they serve as crucial touchpoints for alumni to reconnect with their roots, engage in meaningful discussions, and reflect on their shared experiences. Through these regular interactions, the alumni organization has proven to be an effective means of sustaining long-term connections.

This development aligns with the participation theory of learning, which argues that community engagement increases when structured and meaningful opportunities for participation are provided. In the context, the alumni organization functions as such a space—offering not just a formal mechanism but a genuine platform for alumni to actualize their identities and contributions (Toytok & Kapusuzoglu, 2016). The opportunities provided by the alumni organization are designed to help alumni feel that their roles are vital and that their involvement is rooted in the pesantren's ongoing educational mission. This structured participation strengthens the sense of belonging and ensures that alumni continue to contribute to the pesantren's growth, both in tangible and intangible ways.

And the alumni empowerment strategy has successfully created a participatory, adaptive, and sustainable framework for alumni involvement. Through the development of a clear organizational structure, active communication strategies, and the inclusion of values and service-oriented roles,

the pesantren has cultivated a strong alumni network (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2005). This network not only supports the pesantren's educational mission but also empowers alumni to take on leadership roles that directly benefit the institution and the broader community. By continuously adapting to the changing needs of alumni, the institution ensures that its alumni remain a vital resource, contributing to its ongoing success and societal impact.

Although the alumni database is not yet fully complete, the available data has been effectively utilized to strengthen networking, garner support, and promote the institution within the broader community. The alumni network has proven to be an essential social bridge, connecting the pesantren with external stakeholders and helping build relationships that support the institution's growth. This aligns with Robert Putnam's concept of social capital, which emphasizes that networks, trust, and shared norms create collective benefits. In this case, alumni have played a significant role in driving the influx of new students through their recommendations, as well as facilitating social and religious collaborations. This demonstrates that alumni are not only a human resource but also a relational resource, linking the pesantren with the wider world, and fostering meaningful connections that can lead to social and educational advancement.

This finding aligns with the theory of social capital, as discussed by Putnam, who argues that social networks, built on trust and shared values, can generate tangible benefits for communities. In this case, the alumni network serves as a prime example of how such networks can facilitate the flow of information and resources between the pesantren and the external community. Recommendations from alumni, for instance, have been identified as a key factor in attracting new students to the pesantren. Additionally, these alumni serve as a bridge to form partnerships with external organizations, enhancing the pesantren's impact beyond its immediate environment. The relational value that alumni provide extends beyond traditional educational functions and plays a critical role in fostering the pesantren's long-term sustainability and growth.

Furthermore, alumni are not only involved as guest teachers but also take on roles as mentors, administrators, and facilitators for the skill development of students, including digital literacy. This involvement emphasizes the growing role of alumni in ensuring that the institution adapts to modern challenges while remaining true to its traditional values. These alumni engagements contribute to the educational development by directly participating in teaching, student guidance, and extracurricular activities. This mirrors the findings of (Cleary-Holdforth et al., 2022), who argue that alumni play a strategic role in improving the quality of education when they are actively involved in the learning and mentoring process. Their involvement ensures that the educational process is not confined to the classroom but extends into real-world experiences that help students navigate both their religious education and modern societal demands.

The active involvement of younger alumni in the digitalization efforts also indicates the pesantren's adaptability to the demands of modernity. By embracing technology, the institution has been able to enhance its educational offerings without compromising its core values (Aboramadan et al., 2020). This integration

of digital tools into the pesantren's operations allows for greater accessibility and flexibility in learning, enabling students to engage with content outside of the traditional classroom setting. This finding also highlights the evolving role of alumni in modernizing the approach to education while ensuring that it remains relevant in an increasingly digital world. The blend of modern technology with traditional teachings exemplifies a balanced approach that respects the educational heritage while preparing students for the demands of the future.

In terms of practical implications, the research suggests several concrete steps that can be immediately implemented and its alumni organization. First, it is recommended that the pesantren and alumni organization develop a digital-based alumni database, such as through Google Forms, which should be updated every six months by regional coordinators. This would ensure that the database remains accurate and functional, enabling better communication and more effective engagement with alumni. The use of digital tools for data management also aligns with modern trends in organizational management and ensures that the alumni database is accessible and easily updated, making it a valuable resource for both the alumni and the pesantren.

Second, the alumni program should be divided into clear categories based on specific contributions such as education, economy, and media. This would allow alumni to choose roles that align with their expertise and available time, ensuring more targeted and meaningful involvement. By categorizing alumni contributions, the institution can create a more structured approach to alumni engagement, ensuring that each alumnus can participate in a way that maximizes their skills and knowledge. Additionally, having a clear categorization system would allow for more efficient organization and tracking of alumni contributions, making it easier to assess the impact of their involvement in various initiatives.

Lastly, it is essential to schedule alumni activities in advance and centralize communication through a single official channel. By doing so, the institution can avoid last-minute planning and ensure that alumni are well-informed and can plan their participation accordingly. Centralized communication would also streamline the process of sharing updates about alumni events, thus increasing the likelihood of participation. Timely and structured communication is a crucial aspect of keeping alumni engaged and fostering a sense of community, ensuring that alumni feel valued and connected to the pesantren. In comparison to existing literature, the findings of this study align with the ideas of social capital and participatory engagement. The research confirms that alumni are not just a passive resource but are actively contributing to the pesantren's development, both in terms of education and social outreach. However, unlike some previous studies that focus predominantly on the structural aspects of alumni involvement, this research highlights the relational value of alumni networks and their direct impact on the pesantren's growth and community engagement. The practical recommendations provided in this study also extend the existing literature by offering concrete, actionable steps that can improve alumni engagement and ensure its sustainability.

The theoretical implications of this study suggest that alumni empowerment is not solely about providing financial or material resources; it also involves fostering a sense of social responsibility and active engagement among alumni. This study contributes to the broader discourse on social capital and participatory development by showing how alumni networks can be mobilized as a powerful tool for educational and community development. The findings also reinforce the importance of creating structured, meaningful opportunities for alumni involvement, as these can lead to stronger, more sustainable outcomes for both the alumni and the institution.

## Conclusion

The empowerment of alumni plays a strategic role in the development of Islamic boarding school. Through the strengthening of the alumni organization, the institution is able to consolidate the potential of its graduates as a sustainable and strategic resource. A well-managed alumni network, supported by digital communication, facilitates coordination, information exchange, and collaboration across regions and professions, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the alumni association. Alumni involvement in education contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching quality and institutional development, while their engagement in the economic sector fosters the pesantren's financial independence through productive ventures and financial support. Additionally, alumni play a vital role in social and religious activities, helping to expand the pesantren's outreach efforts and solidifying its social legitimacy. As active partners in the development, alumni not only provide financial support but also contribute through teaching, mentoring students, and enhancing the institution's reputation, ensuring that the impact is deeply felt within the wider community.

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