

DIROSAT
Journal of Education, Social Sciences & Humanities
Journal website: https://dirosat.com/

ISSN : 2985-5497 (Online) Vol. 4 No. 4 (2026)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58355/dirosat.v4i4.292 pp. 906-922

Research Article

Continuity and Adaptation in the Transformation of Pesantren Education in West Sumatra: A Historiographical Study

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Received : August 01, 2026 Revised : September 20, 2026
Accepted : October 13, 2026 Available online : November 26, 2026

How to Cite: Lisata, L., & Iswantir M. (2026). Continuity and Adaptation in the Transformation of Pesantren Education in West Sumatra: A Historiographical Study. *DIROSAT: Journal of Education, Social Sciences & Humanities*, *4*(4), 906–922. https://doi.org/10.58355/dirosat.v4i4.292

Abstract. Research on pesantren education and its historical foundations in West Sumatra has examined surau, madrasah, pesantren, institutional modernization, scholarly networks, and local socio-religious change. However, findings on particular institutions and periods have not been sufficiently synthesized to explain how continuity and adaptation operate simultaneously. This article analyzes the continuity of Islamic educational traditions, identifies forms of institutional and pedagogical adaptation, and explains their relationship in the transformation of pesantren education in West Sumatra. It adopts a historiographical approach and qualitative literature synthesis. Its unit of analysis is the representation of historical developments in accessible scholarly publications, rather than institutions observed directly. The corpus was examined through source criticism, thematic extraction, coding, cross-case comparison, and interpretive synthesis. Four cases provide the basis for comparison: MTI Canduang, PPMTI Batang Kabung, Pondok Pesantren Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan, and MTI Tabek Gadang Padang Japang. The analysis identifies continuity in religious orientation, knowledge transmission, teacher-student relations, scholarly networks, and educational functions. Adaptation appears in institutional reorganization, classroom-based instruction, curriculum,

pedagogy, facilities, and responses to political disruption. The article proposes selective adaptation as a mechanism through which institutions retain, modify, or integrate educational elements, and layered transformation as a configuration of change across institutional dimensions. These categories are interpretive and limited to the literature examined. They do not constitute a universal theory of pesantren development.

Keywords: Continuity, Selective Adaptation, Islamic Education, Pesantren, Historiography.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in West Sumatra has developed through institutions that connect religious learning with the social life of local communities. The surau has served as a place of worship, instruction, knowledge transmission, and the formation of scholarly relationships. Its role therefore extends beyond the delivery of religious lessons. The surau connects teachers, students, families, and communities, while contributing to Minangkabau religious and cultural identity. Historical studies of the surau explain its educational and social role in the formation of Islamic scholarly traditions in the region (Yunas, 2005; Eldarifai & Samad, 2024; Andoni et al., 2026).

The development of Islamic education did not follow a single institutional path. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reformist ideas, the colonial education system, political change, and new social demands influenced educational practices. Some institutions moved from halaqah-based learning to classroom instruction and more formal curricula. Alfurqan (2020) explains this development in a broader context, while Satria (2019a) examines the transition from surau to madrasah between 1900 and 1930. These studies demonstrate the significance of modernization, but they do not support the assumption that all institutions followed the same developmental sequence (Satria, 2019a).

MTI Canduang illustrates gradual institutional change. Educational activities associated with Surau Baru Canduang began in 1907. The institution adopted a classroom system in 1926 and formalized its madrasah organization in 1928. This transition changed teaching methods, educational levels, and institutional facilities. At the same time, the institution retained its Shafi'i orientation and Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah identity (Cahyani & Naldi, 2020). This case shows that institutional reorganization can take place without eliminating all inherited religious commitments.

PPMTI Batang Kabung followed a different institutional trajectory. Its history describes the development of halaqah activities at Surau Gadang into a madrasah organization and later a pesantren. Reported changes include classroom instruction, the addition of general subjects, the development of teaching staff, extracurricular activities, and educational facilities (Sudirman & Salam, 2023). This case enables an analysis of adaptation across several dimensions, rather than curriculum change alone.

Continuity also depends on relationships that extend beyond an institution's formal structure. Research on Pondok Pesantren Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan highlights teacher-student networks associated with Syekh Haji Ali Imran Hasan during 1970–2010. These networks supported knowledge transmission and the continuation of scholarly relationships (Mulis & Caniago, 2018). Research on halaqah in Minangkabau also identifies scholarly transmission as an important element in the region's educational history (Satria et al., 2022).

Historical change can also occur through disruption, rather than through uninterrupted development. MTI Tabek Gadang Padang Japang experienced educational disruption because of political and security conditions. Learning activities temporarily stopped, but the institution endured and later resumed educational activities (Hariadi, 2014). This case extends an analysis that has often focused on modernization and institutional growth. It draws attention to institutional resilience, adjustment, and recovery under difficult conditions.

Recent historiographical studies have broadened discussion in this field. Rahma et al. (2025) examine pesantren transformation in relation to social and religious dynamics in Minangkabau, while Yanti and Iswantir (2025) analyze the historiography of madrasah education and social change. Putera et al. (2026) reconstruct the historiography of the surau, ulama, and the transformation of Islamic education. Dalvi and Iswantir (2026) examine the educational ecosystem from surau to higher education. Gusli et al. (2025) discuss the historiography of Islamic schools and Minangkabau social dynamics, while Gucandra et al. (2025) revisit narratives of Islamic educational modernization. Alfurqan et al. (2025) use historical documents and oral history to examine the surau as a space of religious difference and mediation. These studies show that transformation and continuity have already received attention in previous research.

The analytical problem addressed in this article is more specific. Previous studies have presented evidence on institutional history, modernization, curriculum, scholarly networks, and social change. However, these findings remain dispersed across institutions, periods, and analytical dimensions. This article brings four cases together through a common comparative framework. It addresses three questions: (1) How does the historiography examined describe the continuity of Islamic educational traditions? (2) What forms and contexts of adaptation appear in the literature? (3) How does the relationship between continuity and adaptation explain the configuration of educational transformation across the four cases? The article contributes a comparative synthesis limited to the selected corpus, rather than claiming to establish a universal model.

Conceptual Framework

Continuity

Continuity refers to the persistence of particular educational elements amid historical change. It does not mean that an institution preserves all practices, organizational arrangements, or teaching methods in their original form. An institution may change its curriculum, classroom structure, facilities, or administrative organization while retaining its religious orientation, scholarly authority, teacher-student relations, or educational function. Research on pesantren change shows that institutional modernization can occur alongside the maintenance of religious identity (Mas'udi, 2024; Taqiyuddin et al., 2025).

This article analyzes continuity through five indicators: religious orientation; the transmission of Islamic knowledge; teacher-student relations; scholarly networks; and educational functions within society. These indicators provide an analytical basis for comparing the cases. They do not imply that every case demonstrates all five elements to the same degree.

Adaptation and Selective Adaptation

Adaptation refers to an institution's response to changes in its social, political, educational, and organizational environment. In the literature examined, adaptation includes the adoption of classroom instruction, the addition of general subjects, the reorganization of educational levels, the development of facilities, and responses to political disruption. Studies of Islamic educational modernization in Minangkabau document varied responses to new educational forms and institutional pressures (Yasmansyah & Iswantir, 2021; Susanti et al., 2025).

The term selective adaptation describes a process in which an institution retains some elements, changes others, and integrates selected new elements. It does not mean that institutional leaders always make fully planned or uniform choices. Selective adaptation is an interpretive category for explaining the varied responses documented in the literature. Studies of the surau and reform show that local actors may negotiate change rather than simply accept or reject modernity as a whole (Azwar et al., 2020; Alfurqan et al., 2025; Salma & Salam, 2026).

Transformation as a Layered Configuration

Transformation refers to a change in the configuration of an educational institution. It is broader than modernization because it may include reorganization, integration, continuity, disruption, and recovery. An institution's organizational structure may change rapidly while its religious orientation remains relatively stable. Its curriculum may develop while teacher-student relationships continue to carry inherited scholarly practices.

The term layered transformation describes change across several dimensions that do not necessarily occur at the same speed or intensity. The dimensions used in this article include institutional organization, curriculum, pedagogy, religious orientation, and scholarly networks. Selective adaptation is understood as a response mechanism, while layered transformation describes the resulting configuration of change. These categories emerge from a comparative reading of the selected literature and should not be treated as universal causal laws.

Analytical Relationship

The analytical relationship in this article can be summarized as follows: historical contexts and pressures shape institutional responses; institutions retain, change, or integrate particular elements; continuity and adaptation operate simultaneously; and their interaction produces a new educational configuration. This sequence guides the interpretation of historical representations. It does not suggest that every institution follows a fixed or linear process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a historiographical approach and qualitative literature synthesis. It does not present new interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, or direct observations. Its object of inquiry is how scholarly publications represent the historical development of Islamic education in West Sumatra. Four institutional cases provide the basis for comparison: MTI Canduang, PPMTI Batang Kabung, Pondok Pesantren Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan, and MTI Tabek Gadang Padang Japang.

The research corpus consists of scholarly publications on surau, madrasah, pesantren, the history of Islamic education, curricula, teacher-student networks, and socio-religious change in West Sumatra or the broader Minangkabau context. In this study, the articles by Cahyani and Naldi (2020), Sudirman and Salam (2023), Mulis and Caniago (2018), and Hariadi (2014) serve as the principal historiographical sources for reconstructing the published representations of the respective cases. The term principal sources here refers to publications that form the direct analytical corpus, not to primary historical sources. Primary historical sources include archives, manuscripts, letters, institutional records, and contemporaneous testimonies. This study did not examine such materials directly. When the publications examined quote or report historical documents, the information is treated as evidence mediated by the publication's authors. Other publications serve as contextual and comparative sources. The corpus includes historical research, qualitative studies, and historiographical studies that state their focus, methods, analysis, and findings.

Sources were selected according to four criteria: thematic relevance to Islamic education; geographical relevance to West Sumatra or Minangkabau; historical information related to continuity, adaptation, or transformation; and traceable bibliographic information. Sources were excluded if they lacked substantive relevance, provided no usable historical information, or merely repeated claims without contributing to the research questions. This study does not claim to be an exhaustive systematic review because the research records do not contain a reproducible database-search protocol, a complete screening log, or a PRISMA flow diagram.

The analysis proceeded in five stages. First, source criticism examined authorship, publication context, focus, and source traceability. Second, data extraction recorded information on institutional history, religious orientation, curriculum, pedagogy, networks, and socio-political context. Third, thematic coding grouped information according to continuity and adaptation. Fourth, cross-case comparison identified similarities, differences, and distinctive historical pressures. Fifth, interpretive synthesis formulated the categories of selective adaptation and layered transformation.

Interpretive validity was strengthened through comparison across publications and by limiting claims to evidence reported in the selected literature. The analysis distinguishes historical institutions from representations of those institutions in published research. It therefore produces analytical rather than statistical generalizations. The findings cannot establish the current conditions of each institution or prove causal relationships beyond the historical evidence presented in the cited studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Background: From Surau to More Structured Education

The surau forms an important part of the historical background of Islamic education in West Sumatra. It provides space for religious instruction, knowledge transmission, scholarly relationships, and community life. Yunas (2005) documents the educational role of Surau Syaikh Burhanuddin in Pariaman. Studies of surau institutional characteristics also show that surau practices vary and may continue in formal or non-formal forms (Eldarifai & Samad, 2024). The surau should therefore not be understood as a single institutional type with a uniform history across the region.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, educational institutions responded to intellectual and political changes. The shift toward classroom systems and more formal curricula became one visible form of change (Alfurqan, 2020; Satria, 2019). Historical accounts also show that the relationship between surau and madrasah involved negotiation, institutional adaptation, and different responses among local actors. Research on the relationship between surau and tarekat emphasizes the importance of religious networks in traditional Islamic education (Satria et al., 2022).

Comparative Findings across Four Institutional Cases

Institutional case	Historical representation	Documented continuity	Documented adaptation
MTI Canduang	Surau-based educational activities from 1907; classroom system from 1926; formal madrasah in 1928	Shafi'i orientation and Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah identity	Classroom system, educational levels, methods, and facilities
PPMTI Batang Kabung	Halaqah at Surau Gadang developed into a madrasah and pesantren	Islamic educational aims and institutional identity	Classroom instruction, general subjects, teaching staff, extracurricular activities, and facilities
Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan	Study of teacher-student networks associated with Syekh Haji Ali Imran Hasan during 1970–2010	Knowledge transmission and teacher-student scholarly relationships	The source does not provide sufficient evidence to identify curricular or organizational adaptation
MTI Tabek Gadang Padang Japang	Educational activities were disrupted by political and security conditions	The institution continued to exist despite the interruption of educational activities	Educational activities resumed; the details of adjustment or recovery are not adequately explained

Table 1. Comparative synthesis of four institutional cases. This table summarizes findings from the cited studies and does not replace direct examination of institutional archives.

MTI Canduang: Institutional Change with Religious Continuity

The case of MTI Canduang shows a sequence of institutional changes alongside continuing religious orientation. Educational activities associated with Surau Baru Canduang began in 1907. The adoption of classroom instruction in 1926 and formalization as a madrasah in 1928 changed the institution's learning organization and educational structure. Cahyani and Naldi (2020) report that the institution maintained its Shafi'i orientation and Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah identity during this process. Satria (2019b) also documents the socio-historical reform of MTI Canduang through an analysis of manuscripts and historical documents.

This case demonstrates the distinction between organizational form and religious orientation. The adoption of classroom instruction does not necessarily require an institution to abandon its inherited religious commitments. The available evidence supports the limited interpretation that, in Cahyani and Naldi's account, institutional reorganization occurred alongside religious continuity. This case does not prove that all surau-based institutions followed the same pattern.

PPMTI Batang Kabung: Reorganization and Curriculum Expansion

The historical account of PPMTI Batang Kabung describes its development from halaqah activities at Surau Gadang toward a madrasah and pesantren organization. Reported changes include classroom instruction, the addition of general subjects, the development of teaching staff, extracurricular activities, and educational facilities (Sudirman & Salam, 2023). These changes indicate adaptation in organizational, curricular, pedagogical, and material dimensions.

This case also shows why transformation should not be reduced to the replacement of religious education with general education. The available account describes the addition and reorganization of educational elements. It does not demonstrate that religious learning disappeared. The interpretation should therefore focus on curriculum expansion and institutional reorganization, rather than assuming the total replacement of one curriculum by another.

Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan: Scholarly Networks and Knowledge Transmission

Mulis and Caniago (2018) examine teacher-student networks associated with Syekh Haji Ali Imran Hasan at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan during 1970–2010. This case shifts attention from institutional buildings and formal curricula to relationships that transmit knowledge. Scholarly networks can connect teachers, students, and institutions across generations. The continuation of these relationships helps explain continuity when visible educational organizations change.

This interpretation is consistent with research identifying halaqah as a center of Islamic scholarship in Minangkabau (Satria et al., 2022). It also relates to research on the reproduction of the Shafi'i intellectual tradition and religious authority in contemporary pesantren (Noviarita et al., 2026). However, this article uses these broader studies as contextual support, not as direct evidence for every aspect of Nurul Yaqin's development.

MTI Tabek Gadang: Disruption, Institutional Resilience, and Recovery

Hariadi (2014) explains the development of MTI Tabek Gadang Padang Japang in relation to political and security conditions. Educational activities experienced disruption, but the institution endured. This case shows that institutional continuity does not always depend on uninterrupted teaching and learning. In a particular historical context, continuity is reflected in the institution's survival and the resumption of educational activities after disruption.

This case complicates linear narratives of modernization. Transformation may include disruption, adjustment, and the resumption of educational activity, rather than only continuous institutional expansion. The available evidence supports an interpretation of resilience in this historical case, but it does not explain the entire recovery process in detail or justify generalizing the same response to all pesantren.

Continuity as a Set of Educational Elements

The cross-case synthesis identifies five elements of continuity. The first is religious orientation. MTI Canduang provides the clearest documented example through the continuation of its Shafi'i and Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah orientation (Cahyani & Naldi, 2020). Other institutions may have maintained religious aims, but the available sources do not provide equally detailed evidence for every case.

The second element is knowledge transmission. Research on Nurul Yaqin places teacher-student relations and scholarly networks at the center of the institution's development (Mulis & Caniago, 2018). Studies of halaqah and surau also highlight their role in transmitting Islamic knowledge (Mukhtar et al., 2025; Yunas, 2005).

The third element is the institution's educational function. All four cases are represented as institutions providing Islamic learning, although their organizational arrangements changed. The fourth element is the teacher-student relationship, which may continue when classroom organization changes. The fifth is the institution's relationship with broader scholarly networks and society. The selected literature documents these latter elements to varying degrees. More direct archival research is needed to reconstruct them comprehensively.

Adaptation across Institutional Dimensions

Institutional adaptation includes the transition from surau-based learning toward more structured madrasah or pesantren organizations. MTI Canduang and PPMTI Batang Kabung demonstrate different forms of institutional reorganization. Their histories show that formalization and classroom organization can change how institutions manage and deliver educational activities (Cahyani & Naldi, 2020; Sudirman & Salam, 2023; Salma & Salam, 2026).

Curricular adaptation appears through the addition of general subjects and the expansion of educational activities. The available evidence supports the interpretation that curriculum change occurred through addition and adjustment. It does not support the assumption that all institutions adopted the same curriculum or that religious subjects lost their central position. Broader studies of pesantren curricula and management also describe negotiation between inherited educational commitments and contemporary institutional demands (Mas'udi, 2024; Taqiyuddin et al., 2025; Rohim et al., 2026).

Pedagogical adaptation includes the shift from halaqah to classroom-based learning in the Canduang and Batang Kabung cases. This change affected teaching organization and learning structures, as reported in the publications examined. By contrast, research on Nurul Yaqin documents teacher-student relations and knowledge transmission more clearly than changes in formal pedagogy. Nurul Yaqin is therefore used as evidence of continuity in scholarly networks, not as direct evidence of a transition in teaching methods (Mulis & Caniago, 2018; Cahyani & Naldi, 2020; Sudirman & Salam, 2023).

Political and social disruption can affect the continuity of educational activities. MTI Tabek Gadang experienced disruption followed by the resumption of educational activities, but the available publication does not explain the institution's recovery strategies or stages in detail (Hariadi, 2014). Broader historical studies show that Minangkabau educational actors responded to reform and tradition in varied ways (Andoni et al., 2026; Alfurqan et al., 2025). This evidence supports an understanding of adaptation as context-dependent, rather than as uniform acceptance of an external model.

Continuity and Adaptation as Mechanisms of Transformation

The four cases show that continuity and adaptation do not always operate as opposing forces. An institution may retain its religious orientation while reorganizing its learning system. It may expand its curriculum while maintaining its Islamic educational aims. It may also experience political disruption while preserving its institutional identity. These patterns support an understanding of transformation as a change in configuration, rather than a linear movement from tradition to modernity.

Selective adaptation explains the mechanism through which institutions retain, modify, or integrate educational elements. Layered transformation explains the resulting configuration of change across institutional organization, curriculum, pedagogy, religious orientation, and scholarly networks. This distinction matters. The first term explains how institutions respond in different ways, while the second explains the dimensions and configuration of change.

These two categories also clarify the limits of the article's argument. They are interpretive tools developed from four selected cases and the literature used for context. They are not universal laws and do not establish a single causal sequence. A different corpus or additional archival evidence may reveal other forms of continuity and adaptation.

Dimension	**Continuity**	**Adaptation**	**Illustrative case evidence**
Religious orientation	Inherited religious commitments	Selective reinterpretation or accommodation	MTI Canduang
Institutional organization	Educational aims and identity	Formalization and reorganization	MTI Canduang; PPMTI Batang Kabung

Dimension	Continuity	Adaptation	Illustrative case evidence
Curriculum	Islamic knowledge as a core component	Addition of general subjects and activities	PPMTI Batang Kabung
Pedagogy	Teacher-student relations and knowledge transmission	Transition from halaqah to classroom instruction	MTI Canduang; PPMTI Batang Kabung
Scholarly networks	Teacher-student relationships and knowledge transmission	Evidence of network expansion or reorganization is insufficient	Nurul Yaqin
Institutional resilience	Institutional existence after disruption	Educational activities resumed; the recovery process is not detailed	MTI Tabek Gadang

Table 2. Analytical dimensions of continuity and adaptation. The examples refer only to dimensions documented in the cited case studies.

Five Patterns of Continuity and Adaptation across the Four Cases

The comparison of the four cases reveals five analytical patterns. These patterns are not intended as developmental stages that every institution must pass through. Each pattern summarizes the configuration of evidence available for a particular case. Missing information in a publication is not treated as proof that an element never existed.

Analytical pattern	Indicator	Supporting case and evidence	Evidence limitation
1. Continuity with limited adaptation	Religious orientation persists while organizational forms and teaching methods change.	MTI Canduang: education began in 1907, classroom instruction was adopted in 1926, and the madrasah was formalized in 1928; the Shafi'i and Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah orientations remained documented (Cahyani & Naldi, 2020).	The clearest evidence concerns Canduang. This pattern cannot be generalized to all madrasahs or pesantren.

Analytical pattern	Indicator	Supporting case and evidence	Evidence limitation
2. Institutional reorganization	Changes in organizational form and educational governance from surau/halaqah arrangements toward madrasah or pesantren structures.	MTI Canduang and PPMTI Batang Kabung demonstrate changes in organizational form and learning systems (Cahyani & Naldi, 2020; Sudirman & Salam, 2023).	The two cases have different trajectories and chronologies. Their processes should not be treated as identical.
3. Integration of established and new educational elements	New elements are added without evidence that all previous educational elements were replaced.	PPMTI Batang Kabung: classroom instruction, general subjects, teaching staff, extracurricular activities, and facilities developed in the institution's history (Sudirman & Salam, 2023).	The source supports addition and reorganization but does not quantify the proportions of religious and general curriculum.
4. Continuity through scholarly networks	Teacher-student relationships and knowledge transmission remain important dimensions of educational continuity.	Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan: a study of teacher-student networks associated with Syekh Haji Ali Imran Hasan during 1970–2010 (Mulis & Caniago, 2018).	The source supports network continuity and knowledge transmission. It does not sufficiently establish detailed curricular, organizational, or network expansion changes.
5. Institutional resilience amid disruption	The institution continues to exist and educational activities resume after disruption.	MTI Tabek Gadang Padang Japang: educational activities were disrupted by political and security conditions, but the institution endured and activities later resumed (Hariadi, 2014).	The source does not adequately detail the stages, actors, strategies, or mechanisms of recovery. The article therefore does not claim a detailed revitalization process.

The five patterns demonstrate variation rather than a linear sequence. The first and second patterns appear in Canduang's institutional changes; the second and third are supported by the Batang Kabung case; the fourth emphasizes the scholarly networks of Nurul Yaqin; and the fifth summarizes the limited evidence of MTI Tabek Gadang's survival after disruption. This classification is an interpretive synthesis based on the publications examined, not a claim that all five patterns apply to every case.

Historiographical Model

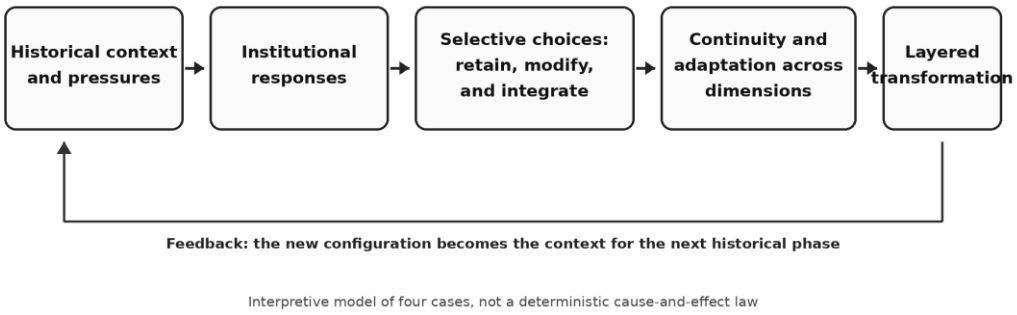


Figure 1. Recursive interpretive model of continuity, selective adaptation, and layered transformation.

The model is recursive because a new educational configuration becomes part of the context for subsequent institutional decisions. It is layered because each dimension may change at a different pace. Institutional organization may change more rapidly, while religious orientation or scholarly relationships remain relatively stable. The model serves as an interpretive tool for reading the four cases, not as a universal causal law.

Positioning the Study in Relation to Previous Research

Previous studies have documented the history of the surau, the modernization of Islamic education, the development of particular institutions, and the role of scholarly networks. Satria (2019a) and Alfurqan (2020) provide broad historical accounts of institutional change. Cahyani and Naldi (2020), Mulis and Caniago (2018), Sudirman and Salam (2023), and Hariadi (2014) provide case-level evidence. These studies provide the historical basis for the comparison in this article.

Recent research further complicates linear narratives of decline or the replacement of tradition. Azwar et al. (2020) examine changes in the cultural role of the surau within the national education system. Alfurqan et al. (2025) use primary historical documents and oral history to analyze religious diversity and mediation around the surau. Gucandra et al. (2025) explain the selective responses of several senior figures to modernization. Putera et al. (2026) reconstruct the historiography of the surau and ulama, while Dalvi and Iswantir (2026) examine the broader educational ecosystem from surau to higher education.

This article does not claim that previous studies ignored continuity or adaptation. Its contribution is more limited: it compares four institutional cases through a common analytical framework and distinguishes selective adaptation from layered transformation. This comparative synthesis clarifies how different forms of change can occur alongside different forms of continuity. The contribution remains limited to the selected historiographical corpus.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the transformation of pesantren education in West Sumatra did not follow a simple transition from tradition to modernity. The four cases reveal varied relationships between continuity and adaptation. Traditional elements persisted while institutions adjusted their organizational forms, learning systems, curricula, and educational development to their respective historical contexts.

At MTI Canduang, continuity in religious orientation occurred alongside institutional change through the adoption of classroom instruction and the establishment of a madrasah (Cahyani & Naldi, 2020). PPMTI Batang Kabung demonstrates a shift from halaqah to classroom instruction, together with the addition of general subjects and extracurricular activities, without eliminating its Islamic educational function (Sudirman & Salam, 2023). At Pondok Pesantren Nurul Yaqin Ringan-Ringan, teacher-student networks were an important element in the institution's development and continuity (Mulis & Caniago, 2018). The history of MTI Tabek Gadang shows that political and security disruptions can temporarily halt educational activities without necessarily ending the institution's existence (Hariadi, 2014). The sources examined do not explain the entire recovery process in detail.

The comparison confirms that continuity and adaptation can occur simultaneously, but not always in the same dimensions. An institution may retain its religious orientation while changing its organization and learning system. Another may sustain continuity through scholarly networks or preserve its educational function during historical disruption. Transformation should therefore be examined through relationships among dimensions, rather than only through changes in institutional names, status, or forms.

This article offers a relational historiographical synthesis through two analytical categories. Selective adaptation explains the process through which institutions retain, adjust, or integrate particular elements in response to change. Layered transformation describes the configuration of change across institutional organization, curriculum, pedagogy, scholarly networks, religious orientation, and educational functions. These categories help explain variation across the four cases without placing them within a single developmental pattern. They are interpretive findings from the selected cases, not general laws for all pesantren.

This study has limitations. The analysis relies on academic publications and the historiographical representations they contain. The depth of information varies across cases. Some dimensions, particularly changes in pedagogy and the recovery process after disruption, lack sufficient supporting evidence. The findings provide analytical generalizations limited to the four cases and the literature examined. Further research should examine archives, institutional documents, manuscripts, and oral historical sources directly.

Based on these findings, historians of Islamic education should examine the origins, contexts, and limitations of each source and distinguish documented evidence from interpretation. Future comparative research should expand the number of cases and the time span while applying consistent analytical dimensions. Pesantren and madrasah managers should also document institutional histories, organizational changes, curricula, learning activities, teacher networks, and responses to crises. Such documentation can preserve institutional memory and support more accurate historical research.

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