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NEGOTIATING AUTONOMY AND STATE REGULATION IN PESANTREN MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF PESANTRENBAITUL ARQOMPOLINGGONA

Rahmad Rafid, Titiek Rohanah Hidayati and Saefruiddin

1. Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Darul ‘Ulum Lamongan.

Corresponding Author: Rahmad Rafid

| ABSTRACT

This study examines the negotiation between institutional autonomy and state regulation in the management of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), using a case study of Pesantren Baitul Arqom Polinggona in Kolaka Regency, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, limited observations, and document analysis involving pesantren leaders, institutional managers, and educators. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, complemented by a quantizing qualitative data approach, in which themes derived from qualitative data were systematically counted and presented as frequencies and percentages to strengthen empirical interpretation.

KEYWORDS

Institutional Autonomy, State Regulation, Islamic Boarding School Management

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Abstract :

This study examines the negotiation between institutional autonomy and state regulation in the management of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), using a case study of Pesantren Baitul Arqom Polinggona in Kolaka Regency, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, limited observations, and document analysis involving pesantren leaders, institutional managers, and educators. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, complemented by a quantizing qualitative data approach, in which themes derived from qualitative data were systematically counted and presented as frequencies and percentages to strengthen empirical interpretation. The findings reveal that state regulation primarily operates through administrative and legal mechanisms. Direct intervention in religious leadership and substantive curriculum remains limited. The pesantren responds through selective administrative adaptation, policy reinterpretation, and preservation of kiai authority. These findings indicate that the state–pesantren relationship is not characterized by domination, but rather by a form of *negotiated governance* that is contextual and dynamic. This study concludes that pesantren autonomy is not eliminated by state regulation, but instead redefined as a relational and negotiated institutional capacity. Theoretically, this research contributes to governance studies in Islamic education by highlighting pesantren as active institutional actors in educational governance. Practically, the findings suggest the need for more flexible and context-sensitive education policies that acknowledge the distinctive character of pesantren institutions.

Introduction:-

Pesantren are Islamic educational institutions that have played a strategic role in the history and development of education in Indonesia. As community-based educational institutions, pesantren have grown and developed through strong socio-religious relationships between kiai, santri, and the community (Trisnani., et.al, 2026). The main characteristic of pesantren lies in their high level of institutional autonomy, where scientific authority, leadership, and traditional educational management are in the hands of kiai and the pesantren community (Anwar, 2021). This management pattern makes pesantren relatively independent from state intervention and able to adapt contextually to the social and religious needs of the community. In its development,

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pesantren not only function as institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, but also as arenas for the formation of values, social ethics, and religious identity. Pesantren play an important role in building individual and community independence, as well as being social actors that contribute to community development. The distinctive socio-cultural character of pesantren distinguishes them from modern formal educational institutions, which are generally managed through a state bureaucratic system with strict administrative standards. However, the relationship between Islamic boarding schools and the state has undergone significant changes in line with the increasing role of the state in the management of Islamic education. The enactment of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools marks a new phase of integration of Islamic boarding schools into the national education system (Siregar, M. T. I., & Romadhon, M. R., 2025).

Through this regulation, the state officially recognizes Islamic boarding schools as part of the national education system. It also establishes a normative framework governing institutional governance, curriculum, funding, and accountability mechanisms. From a public policy perspective, this recognition is seen as an affirmative step to strengthen the position of Islamic boarding schools and ensure their institutional sustainability. A number of studies show that the integration of pesantren into the national education system provides legal legitimacy and broader access to state resources, including funding support and institutional development (Azra, 2017; Madjid, 2019). From the state's point of view, this policy also serves as an instrument to ensure the quality standards and accountability of Islamic education. However, on the other hand, the inclusion of Islamic boarding schools into the state regulatory regime has structural implications that cannot be ignored. Various critical studies indicate that state regulations have the potential to encourage the bureaucratization of Islamic boarding schools, where modern administrative logic begins to influence leadership and management patterns that were previously cultural and charismatic in nature, as demonstrated in the study by Mustofa et al. (2025) entitled *Islamic Educational Policy Analysis on Facilitating Islamic Boarding School Development Under the Local Regulation*.

This study describes the implementation of national regulations on the development of Islamic boarding schools at the local level (Pekalongan), including opportunities and obstacles in the implementation of the Islamic Boarding School Law and the integration of religious and general curricula. Empirical data through interviews and case studies show that the implementation of regulations opens up space for infrastructure and curriculum facilitation, but administrative challenges remain as institutional accountability demands increase. Similarly, Kairin et al. (2025) found that entitled *Integration of Islamic Boarding Schools and Public Schools: Analysis of Regulations and Policies Based on Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools*. This study reviews the legal framework for the integration of Islamic boarding schools in the context of the national education system. An analysis of the Pesantren Law provides an overview of the policy implications for pesantren autonomy when collaborating with public schools, including issues of legality, curriculum autonomy, and bureaucratic obstacles. Another study by Zahwa et al. (2025) highlights that Zahwa A. Pasya et al. (2025) entitled *Integration of Pancasila Education in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Juridical Review of the National Education System Law*. This study discusses the legal implications of integrating Pancasila education into the pesantren learning system based on the National Education System Law. The findings show that although there is room for integration, the source of conflict between pesantren autonomy and national curriculum requirements needs to be addressed through policy interpretations that are sensitive to the character of pesantren.

In summary, the three previous studies show a consistent pattern: state regulation brings opportunities for strengthening pesantren institutions, but at the same time creates bureaucratic pressures that have the potential to limit pesantren autonomy. However, these studies still leave gaps in our understanding of how pesantren actively negotiate state regulations in their daily management practices. Therefore, the study "Negotiating Autonomy and State Regulation in Islamic Boarding School Management: A Case Study of the Baitul Arqom Polinggona Islamic Boarding School" positions itself as a continuation and enrichment of previous studies by focusing on the dimensions of negotiation, adaptation, and institutional strategies of Islamic boarding schools in responding to state regulations. Thus, this study not only reinforces empirical findings regarding the impact of state regulations on Islamic boarding schools, but also offers a new perspective on Islamic boarding schools as active actors in Islamic education governance. This approach provides a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic education governance studies as well as a practical contribution to the formulation of policies that are more sensitive to the autonomy and unique characteristics of Islamic boarding schools.

The relationship between Islamic boarding schools and the state, therefore, cannot be understood dichotomously as a relationship of domination or subordination alone. Instead, the relationship is dynamic and negotiable, especially in the daily practice of institutional management. Pesantren as institutional actors are not passive in facing state regulations, but actively interpret, adapt, and, to a certain extent, negotiate the policies that are implemented (Rizqi, R. M., Maulana, A. R., Pratama, A., & Yudra, M. D., 2025). These negotiation practices are an important arena for understanding how pesantren autonomy is maintained or redefined in the context of state regulations. However, most research on pesantren and Islamic education policy still focuses on normative policy analysis or macro studies of the relationship between the state and Islam. These studies have not explored the empirical dimensions at the institutional level, particularly regarding how Islamic boarding schools respond to and implement state regulations in management practices. As a result, understanding of pesantren transformation tends to be abstract and fails to capture the internal dynamics of pesantren as educational organizations. This research gap highlights the

need for empirical studies that directly capture the practice of negotiation between pesantren autonomy and state regulation. Such analysis is important for understanding pesantren not only as objects of public policy, but as active subjects in educational governance. Without a contextual empirical approach, educational policy risks ignoring the social, cultural, and institutional complexities of pesantren.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the negotiation between pesantren autonomy and state regulation through a case study of Pesantren Baitul Arqom Polinggona, Kolaka Regency. This pesantren was chosen because it represents pesantren in non-metropolitan areas that actively interact with national education policies, while facing resource constraints and a social context that differs from pesantren in urban areas. This context provides an analytical opportunity to understand how state regulations are adapted in specific institutional conditions. This study views state regulations as social practices articulated through interactions between pesantren actors and policy structures. By examining aspects of institutional management, such as leadership, decision-making, curriculum management, and accountability mechanisms, this study seeks to reveal the strategies used by pesantren in negotiating regulations without losing substantive autonomy. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical and contextual approach to examining the relationship between pesantren autonomy and state regulation at the institutional level. This study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge on Islamic education management, while also contributing theoretically to the development of a more inclusive concept of Islamic education governance that is sensitive to the diversity of educational institutions. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for the formulation of education policies that not only emphasize regulatory aspects but also respect the autonomy and sustainability of Islamic boarding schools as community-based educational institutions. However, previous studies have not sufficiently explored how pesantren actors actively negotiate state regulations in their everyday institutional management practices at the micro level.

Research Method:-

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (Adji, 2024), which aims to analyze the negotiation between pesantren autonomy and state regulation in institutional management practices. This approach was chosen because the state-pesantren relationship is a complex, contextual, and dynamic social phenomenon, requiring a deep understanding of the perspectives of actors and institutional practices. The research was conducted at the Baitul Arqom Polinggona Islamic Boarding School, Kolaka Regency, which was selected purposively because it represents Islamic boarding schools in non-metropolitan areas that actively interact with national education policies. The research focuses on pesantren management practices as the main arena for negotiations between state regulations and institutional autonomy.

The research subjects included Islamic boarding school leaders, institutional managers, and educators involved in decision-making and curriculum management. Informants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) direct involvement in institutional decision-making, (2) experience in implementing state-related policies, and (3) a minimum of two years of engagement in pesantren management. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observation focusing on administrative practices and daily managerial activities. Interviews were used to explore the perceptions and strategies of Islamic boarding school actors in responding to state regulations, while observation and documentation were used to strengthen understanding of managerial practices and policy contexts. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and thematically through the stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The theoretical frameworks of governance, institutional autonomy, and education policy were used as analytical lenses in interpreting empirical findings. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as member checking. This study also adhered to research ethics principles by maintaining the confidentiality of informants and using data responsibly.

To strengthen the transparency of the analysis, this study applies a quantitative approach to qualitative data, namely converting the results of qualitative thematic coding into descriptive frequencies and percentages (Siregar, T, 2025). This process is carried out after thematic analysis of interviews, observations, and documents, by calculating the occurrence of themes in informants and relevant units of analysis. This approach is not intended to produce statistical generalizations, but rather to provide a proportional picture of empirical trends and strengthen analytical arguments. The use of quantification allows for the integration of numerical evidence in qualitative case studies without obscuring the contextual depth of the data. The unit of analysis consisted of recurring themes identified from interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents. Each theme was coded and counted across informants. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of informants mentioning a theme by the total number of informants ($n = 12$). To ensure reliability, coding consistency was maintained through iterative review and cross-checking between data sources (triangulation),

Result and Discussion:-

Result

Although the number of informants is relatively small ($n = 12$), the use of percentages in this study is intended to provide a proportional representation of thematic patterns rather than statistical generalization.

State–Pesantren Governance Relations in Management Practices

The results of the study show that the presence of the state in the management of the Baitul Arqom Polinggona Pesantren is mainly manifested in administrative and institutional legality aspects. Of the 12 key informants, 83.3% said that state regulations were most clearly felt through the management of institutional legality, while 75.0% highlighted administrative reporting obligations as the main form of interaction with the state. Organizational structure standardization was mentioned by 58.3% of informants, while intervention in substantive curriculum was only acknowledged by 33.3% of informants. Direct intervention in kiai leadership was relatively rare (8.3%).

The distribution of these findings shows that state regulation operates primarily as a mechanism of indirect governance, focusing on formal accountability rather than substantive control over pesantren educational practices. Managers' perceptions of the state-pesantren relationship also varied. A total of 41.7% of informants viewed the relationship as a conditional partnership, while 33.3% saw it as pragmatic administrative compliance. A small number of informants assessed the regulations as bureaucratic pressure (16.7%) or a dominant state relationship (8.3%), indicating that there was no single dominant perception.

Table 1. Forms of State Presence in Pesantren Management

Forms of State Regulation	Number of Informants	Percentage (%)
Institutional legal status	10	83.3
Administrative reporting obligations	9	75.0
Standardization of organizational structure	7	58.3
Limited curriculum intervention	4	33.3
Intervention in <i>kiai</i> leadership	1	8.3

The state has a strong presence in administrative matters, but substantive intervention remains limited and not dominant.

Table 2. Managers' Perceptions of the Relationship between the State and Islamic Boarding Schools

Perceptions of the State–Pesantren Relationship	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Conditional partnership	5	41.7
Pragmatic administrative compliance	4	33.3
Bureaucratic pressure	2	16.7
State-dominant relationship	1	8.3

There is no single consensus, reinforcing the argument that governance is an arena for negotiation. The finding that the strongest state presence is felt in the aspects of institutional legality (83.3%) and administrative reporting (75.0%) shows that state regulation operates primarily at the symbolic and procedural levels of governance, rather than the substantive level. The state builds compliance through formal-legal administrative mechanisms, while the pedagogical space and core leadership remain relatively untouched. This pattern indicates that state control over Islamic boarding schools does not take place through direct intervention, but rather through what can be called regulatory steering, namely the regulation of institutional direction without deep penetration into daily educational practices. The low level of intervention in kiai leadership (8.3%) reinforces the argument that the charismatic authority and cultural legitimacy of kiai remain a boundary that is relatively impenetrable by the state. In the context of governance, this shows that pesantren maintain a zone of substantive autonomy, even though they are subject to the state's formal regulatory framework. Thus, the state-pesantren relationship does not reflect complete domination, but rather a configuration of power that is segmented based on managerial domains.

The diversity of perceptions among pesantren administrators regarding the relationship between the state and pesantren (Table 2) confirms that governance is not experienced uniformly by pesantren actors. The absence of a single dominant perception indicates that state regulations are interpreted situationally, depending on the position of the actor, bureaucratic experience, and institutional capacity. This finding rejects the assumption that education policy works in a linear and uniform manner, and affirms governance as an arena of interpretation and negotiation.

Institutional Autonomy Negotiation Strategies

In responding to state regulations, Baitul Arqom Polinggona Islamic Boarding School implemented various institutional autonomy negotiation strategies. Selective administrative adaptation was the most common strategy, mentioned by 75.0% of

informants. This strategy is realized through the fulfillment of formal requirements without fundamentally changing the leadership patterns and organizational culture of the pesantren. In addition, 58.3% of informants reinterpreted the curriculum policy by partially and contextually integrating the national curriculum. The maintenance of the kiai's authority as the center of strategic decision-making was mentioned by 66.7% of informants, confirming the role of the kiai as a key actor in determining the limits of state regulation acceptance. A small number of informants (25.0%) revealed limited or passive resistance, especially in administrative practices that were considered irrelevant to the needs of the pesantren. The curriculum implementation pattern shows a hybrid tendency. A total of 50.0% of educational activity units adopted a partial integration model, 40.0% implemented flexible contextual adaptation, and only 10.0% approached full adoption of the national curriculum. These findings indicate that the national curriculum functions as a reference framework rather than an instrument of complete control.

Table 3. Institutional Autonomy Negotiation Strategy

Negotiation Strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Selective administrative adaptation	9	75.0
Reinterpretation of curriculum policy	7	58.3
Preservation of <i>kiai</i> authority	8	66.7
Limited / passive resistance	3	25.0

The dominant strategy is accommodative-strategic, not resistant.

Table 4. National Curriculum Implementation Patterns

Implementation Patterns	Number of Units	Percentage (%)
Partial integration	5	50.0
Flexible contextual adaptation	4	40.0
Near-full adoption	1	10.0

Demonstrating hybrid curriculum governance, without claiming full state dominance. The dominance of selective administrative adaptation strategies (75.0%) indicates that pesantren compliance with state regulations is instrumental and strategic, rather than normative. Pesantren fulfill formal requirements as a means of obtaining legitimacy and institutional sustainability, without fully internalizing the logic of state bureaucracy into the organizational culture of pesantren. Adaptation in this context is not a sign of weakening autonomy, but rather a form of institutional power to control the impact of regulations. The maintenance of kiai authority (66.7%) as the main strategy confirms that charismatic leadership remains the center of gravity in pesantren management. The kiai functions as a gatekeeper who determines the extent to which state regulations are accepted, adapted, or ignored. Thus, the negotiation of autonomy does not take place at an abstract level but is mediated by leadership figures who have religious and social legitimacy. The hybrid curriculum implementation pattern (50.0% partial integration and 40.0% contextual adaptation) indicates that the national curriculum is treated as a normative reference, not as an absolute operational framework. Pesantren use interpretive flexibility to align policy demands with internal scientific traditions. This shows that curriculum autonomy is not eliminated, but rather negotiated through practices of selection and reinterpretation.

The Impact of Regulations on the Management and Sustainability of Islamic Boarding Schools

State regulations have an ambivalent impact on the management and sustainability of Islamic boarding schools. A total of 66.7% of informants assessed that regulations increase the legal legitimacy of Islamic boarding schools, while 58.3% stated that regulations add to the administrative burden. The perception that regulations encourage improvements in institutional governance only appeared in 41.7% of informants, while 33.3% considered that regulations have the potential to reduce the autonomy of Islamic boarding schools. In terms of institutional sustainability factors, kiai leadership received the highest perception score (average 4.4), followed by community support (4.1) and management flexibility (3.8). Compliance with regulations (3.5) and access to state funding (3.3) were considered important but not dominant factors. This data shows that the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools is more supported by social capital and internal leadership than by regulatory compliance alone.

Table 5. Perceptions of the Impact of State Regulation

Impacts of State Regulation	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Enhancing legal legitimacy	8	66.7
Increasing administrative burden	7	58.3
Promoting improvements in governance	5	41.7
Reducing institutional autonomy	4	33.3

The effects of regulation are not singular, but ambiguous and contextual.

Table 6. Determinants of Pesantren Sustainability

Sustainability Factors	Average Score
<i>Kiai</i> leadership	4.4
Community support	4.1
Management flexibility	3.8
Compliance with regulations	3.5
Access to state funding	3.3

Sustainability is determined more by social capital and leadership than by regulation alone.

Table 7. Synthesis of Findings and Theoretical Contributions

Conservative Quantitative Findings	Theoretical Contributions
75% selective administrative adaptation	Governance as a negotiated process
66.7% preservation of <i>kiai</i> authority	Relational institutional autonomy
58.3% increase in administrative burden	Risk of bureaucratic overload
Leadership > regulation (4.4 vs. 3.5)	Redefinition of pesantren sustainability

Findings regarding increased legal legitimacy (66.7%) accompanied by increased administrative burdens (58.3%) reveal the ambivalent nature of state regulations. Regulations serve as both a source of reinforcement and pressure. On the one hand, regulations provide formal recognition that expands Islamic boarding schools' access to state resources; on the other hand, regulations create an administrative load that has the potential to divert institutional energy from pedagogical functions to bureaucratic functions. The average score for sustainability factors shows that *kiai* leadership (4.4) and community support (4.1) are more decisive than regulatory compliance (3.5) and access to state funding (3.3). These findings confirm that social capital and cultural legitimacy remain the main foundations for the sustainability of pesantren. State regulation plays a secondary supporting role, not a primary determinant.

Discussion:-

Negotiative Governance in Islamic Boarding School Education

These findings reinforce and expand the perspective of governance in Islamic education by showing that policy implementation does not work through uniform hierarchical control mechanisms. This finding extends governance theory by demonstrating that state regulation in faith-based education is mediated through negotiated administrative practices rather than direct institutional domination. The dominance of administrative aspects (83.3% legality; 75.0% reporting) over substantive intervention shows that the state plays more of a formal regulatory role than a pedagogical control role. This positions Islamic boarding schools not as passive objects of policy, but as actors with the capacity to strategically manage governance relations. Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the governance approach that views education policy as an interactive process rather than a one-way control instrument (Qomariyah, E., & Rustam, A. S, 2024). The state does have regulatory power, but the effectiveness of that power is highly dependent on the capacity of local institutions to interpret and implement policies. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, governance works through negotiated compliance, where compliance is built through administrative compromise, not pedagogical domination. These findings expand the theory of Islamic education governance by showing that community-based institutions have significant agency in responding to public policy. Pesantren are not merely objects of regulation, but actors that actively manage power relations with the state.

Redefining Institutional Autonomy in Islamic Boarding Schools

Quantitative data on selective administrative adaptation strategies (75.0%) and the maintenance of *kiai* authority (66.7%) show that the autonomy of Islamic boarding schools has not been lost due to regulation, but rather redefined in a more relational form. This finding expands the theory of institutional autonomy by showing that autonomy operates as a negotiated institutional capacity, shaped by regulatory involvement rather than isolation from the state (Sentanu, 2024). Autonomy in this context lies in the ability of Islamic boarding schools to determine the limits of adaptation, particularly in leadership and curriculum. Thus, autonomy is not synonymous with rejection of regulation, but rather with the ability to manage regulation without losing institutional identity. Empirical data show that pesantren autonomy cannot be understood as a condition free from regulation, but rather as a relational capacity to regulate distance from the state. Autonomy is realized through the ability to determine the limits of adaptation, particularly in the areas of leadership and core curriculum. Thus, autonomy is not lost in the regulatory process, but undergoes a transformation of form. This finding challenges the classic dichotomy between

autonomy and regulation. Instead of negating each other, the two operate simultaneously in a hybrid governance configuration. Islamic boarding schools remain autonomous, but that autonomy is exercised in a continuously negotiated space.

Policy Implications and Institutional Sustainability

The findings that legal legitimacy (66.7%) and administrative burden (58.3%) appear simultaneously confirm the ambivalent nature of state regulation. This finding expands the analysis of education policy by suggesting that the effectiveness of regulations depends more on institutional capacity and contextual sensitivity than on formal compliance. The sustainability of Islamic boarding schools, which is more influenced by the leadership of the kiai (score of 4.4) and community support (4.1), shows that Islamic boarding school education policy needs to consider social capital as a key variable. Regulations that ignore this dimension risk creating administrative burdens without significant improvements in educational quality. From a policy perspective, the results of this study indicate that a uniform regulatory approach risks producing inefficiency and latent resistance. Islamic boarding schools with different social characteristics, managerial capacities, and scholarly traditions require a more flexible policy approach. Therefore, the concept of differentiated governance becomes relevant, namely policies that provide room for adaptation based on institutional characteristics (Huraerah, A, 2022). Regulations that are sensitive to the context of Islamic boarding schools will not only reduce the administrative burden but also strengthen institutional sustainability and the quality of Islamic education. In this framework, the state acts as a facilitator and strategic partner, not merely an administrative supervisor.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of governance theory, particularly in the context of Islamic education and community-based educational institutions. The findings of this study expand the understanding of governance theory by showing that educational governance does not always work through top-down state control mechanisms, but also through situational and actor-centered institutional negotiation processes. Thus, this study extends governance theory by emphasizing the importance of cultural dimensions, local leadership, and religious values in shaping educational governance practices. In addition, this study also contributes to the discourse on institutional autonomy by showing that autonomy is not absolute, but rather relational and negotiable. Pesantren autonomy is not lost within the framework of state regulation, but is redefined through selective adaptation practices. These findings enrich the literature, which has tended to position autonomy and regulation as two opposing poles, by offering an alternative perspective that the two can operate simultaneously within a hybrid governance framework.

Furthermore, through the approach of quantifying qualitative data, this study also contributes methodologically by showing how qualitative data on perceptions, experiences, and institutional practices can be translated into quantitative indicators that maintain the substantive meaning of field findings. This approach is relevant to studies of educational governance that seek to bridge the depth of qualitative analysis with the precision of quantitative analysis. From a policy perspective, this study has important implications for the formulation and implementation of Islamic education policy in Indonesia. The research findings show that a uniform regulatory approach has the potential to ignore the diversity of pesantren characteristics and may actually weaken institutional innovation capacity. Therefore, this study recommends that state policy towards pesantren be designed with a more flexible and contextual approach, based on the principle of differentiated governance. The relevant ministries, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, need to develop a model for guiding Islamic boarding schools that is not only oriented toward administrative compliance, but also toward strengthening the managerial and leadership capacities of these schools. Policies that provide room for interpretation for Islamic boarding schools in implementing national standards will be more effective in maintaining a balance between public accountability and institutional autonomy. For pesantren administrators, the results of this study can serve as a basis for strategic reflection in responding to state regulations in a more proactive and planned manner. Negotiations with the state should not be understood as a threat to the identity of Islamic boarding schools, but rather as an opportunity to strengthen institutional legitimacy without losing the basic character of Islamic boarding school education. Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of theory and methodology, but also provides a strong empirical basis for the formulation of Islamic education policies that are more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable.

Conclusion:-

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of negotiation between the institutional autonomy of Islamic boarding schools and state regulations in the context of Islamic education management, using the case study of the Baitul Arqom Polinggona Islamic Boarding School. Based on empirical findings, this study concludes that the relationship between Islamic boarding schools and the state is not antagonistic or completely subordinate, but rather forms a pattern of negotiated governance that is contextual, adaptive, and selective. The results show that Islamic boarding schools maintain substantive autonomy in core aspects such as religious leadership, diniyah curriculum, and pedagogical values, while at the same time making administrative and structural adaptations to state regulations, particularly those related to accreditation, reporting, and institutional standardization. The quantitative findings included in the results section show that most of these adaptation practices are perceived by pesantren actors not as a form of restriction, but as a pragmatic strategy to obtain formal legitimacy and access to public

resources. Furthermore, this study found that negotiations between autonomy and regulation did not take place uniformly, but were influenced by leadership factors, institutional capacity, and the local socio-political context. Pesantren with strong leadership and extensive social networks tend to have greater bargaining power in interpreting and implementing state policies. Thus, the state-pesantren relationship in Islamic education management is better understood as a dynamic process that is constantly undergoing adjustments, rather than a static or hierarchical relationship. Overall, this study confirms that Islamic boarding schools remain autonomous educational actors, but this autonomy is exercised within a governance framework that is increasingly connected to the national regulatory system. This conclusion enriches our understanding of how community-based educational institutions negotiate with the state in the context of modern education governance.

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