

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND RESILIENCE OF DAWAR ISLAMIC SCHOOL AND ITS ROLES TO SUPPORT SANTRI ALUMNI'S SOCIOECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Pargito¹, Akbarudin Arif², Haryani Saptaningtyas³

^{1,2,3} Program Studi Penyuluhan Pembangunan, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

[Akbaroedin.akbar@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:akbaroedin.akbar@staff.uns.ac.id)

*corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received 2025

Revised 2025

Accepted 2025

Keywords

Islamic boarding school;

social capital;

independence;

resilience;

Dawar Islamic School

ABSTRACT

The role of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia extends beyond religious education, functioning as agents of socio-economic transformation. This article explores the process of socio-economic independence among graduates of Dawar Islamic Boarding School in Boyolali, Central Java, with particular attention to the dynamics of social capital, graduate networks, and resilience in facing post-boarding challenges. This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The SLR analysis draws on national and international publications related to student empowerment, the economics of Islamic boarding schools, and social capital theory to outline the research landscape and reinforce the theoretical foundation. The findings indicate that graduates' success in achieving independence is shaped not only by the practical skills gained during their education but also by the strength of their social networks, collective norms, and adaptive abilities in accessing economic opportunities. Dawar Islamic Boarding School demonstrates a strategic role in integrating religious instruction with collective work habits, equipping graduates with essential values, competencies, and community-relevant networks. These insights enrich discussions on the contributions of traditional Islamic boarding schools to strengthening civil society and confirm that post-boarding independence results from the interplay of spiritual formation, accumulated social capital, and adaptive strategies in navigating socio-economic realities.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, having proven their resilience over time. Historically, Islamic boarding schools have not only functioned as centers for the transmission of Islamic knowledge (tafaqquh fiddin) but also as strongholds of cultural defense and centers for community empowerment (Dhofier, 1982). Amid the current globalization and economic modernization, Islamic boarding schools are required to adapt without losing their fundamental identity. The most significant challenge for graduates of Islamic boarding schools today is no longer simply mastery of classical Islamic texts but also the ability to



DOI : <https://doi.org/10.24076/5r1rba14>

Pargito et.al., *Social Capital and Resilience of Dawar Islamic School and Its Roles to Support Santri Alumni's Socioeconomic Independence* (2025)

transform spiritual and intellectual values into socio-economic independence in a competitive society.

Many graduates of Islamic boarding schools experience “cultural shock” when reintegrating into society. They are confronted with the reality of the job market, which demands formal skills and extensive networks, which are often not the main focus of traditional Islamic boarding school education. This phenomenon raises a crucial question: how are Islamic boarding school graduates able to survive, adapt, and even achieve economic success?. The answer to this question often lies not in the formal curriculum, but in the invisible assets formed during the Islamic boarding school education process, namely social capital and resilience.

The Dawar Islamic Boarding School (Ponpes) in Boyolali, Central Java, represents a unique case as a boarding school rooted in the Salafi tradition but open to modern dynamics. Dawar Islamic boarding school is known for equipping its students not only with religious knowledge but also with a work ethic, discipline, and a spirit of togetherness. Graduates from this boarding school are spread across various sectors, ranging from entrepreneurship, professional careers, to community leadership. Their success stories reveal patterns of empowerment worthy of scientific analysis, particularly regarding how intensive interactions within ‘kawah candradimuka’ the Islamic boarding school can produce independent and empowered individuals. In this context, social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000) becomes an important analytical framework to understand how networks, norms, and trust become strategic capital for the economic independence of graduates.

Based on the background regarding the challenges faced by Islamic boarding school graduates in adapting to the modern economy, this study formulates several key questions to analyse how the Dawar Boyolali Islamic Boarding School institutionally shapes and accumulates social capital among its students, identifies the most influential dimensions of social capital (networks, trust, and norms), and examines the manifestation of the concept of ‘fighting spirit’ is manifested through the strategies employed by graduates to cope with the challenges encountered in the post-boarding school period. Ultimately, this study aims to construct a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between educational experiences at Islamic boarding schools, the strengthening of social capital, and the achievement of graduates’ socio-economic independence.

Islamic boarding schools are traditional educational institutions that play a dual role as centres for the transmission of Islamic knowledge (*tafaqquh fiddin*) and agents of social change. Structurally, Dhofier (1982) identifies five basic elements of Islamic boarding school; these are *kiai* (the head or religious leader of an Islamic boarding school), students, boarding school (the building), mosque, and teaching of classical texts which form a distinctive environment. However, the role of Islamic boarding schools goes beyond its physical elements; it operates as a ‘total institution’ according to Goffman's (1961) concept, in which all aspects of *santri* life are strictly regulated and directed towards character building (*akhlakul karimah*) and collective discipline. The intensity of this 24-hour communal life creates a unique social ecosystem, training students in interaction, negotiation, and compliance with shared norms, which are important foundations for social capital.

In the context of adapting to modernity, Islamic boarding schools have undergone significant evolution. Azra (2012) argues that Islamic boarding schools are no longer anti-modernity, but rather are undergoing ‘indigenisation’ or adaptation that integrates general education, vocational training and entrepreneurship, without sacrificing Islamic values.



This change positions Islamic boarding schools as strategic agents that produce human resources who not only have ritual piety, but also social and economic productivity. In other words, Islamic boarding schools are transforming into institutions that consciously equip graduates to become ethical entrepreneurs or professionals, ensuring that their educational output is relevant and competitive amid contemporary economic challenges.

Social capital is a crucial theoretical framework that explains the success of Dawar Islamic boarding school graduates, defined as resources inherent in interpersonal relationships. This concept is understood through the lens of three key thinkers: Pierre Bourdieu (1986) claims that social capital as an 'aggregate of actual or potential resources' acquired through institutional networks. For Bourdieu, social capital is an asset that can be exchanged to access other forms of capital (such as economic capital) and is part of an individual's strategy to improve their position in the social sphere. Furthermore, Coleman (1988) adapts a functional view, emphasising that social capital is embedded in the structure of relationships and functions through three main forms: Obligations and Expectations (reciprocity), Information Channels, and Effective Norms and Sanctions that promote cooperation.

Meanwhile, Putnam (2000) popularises this concept in the context of civil society and distinguished two types of social capital that are highly relevant to Islamic boarding school graduates. First, Bonding Social Capital, which refers to exclusive bonds within homogeneous groups, such as the bonds between fellow students that create strong internal solidarity and trust. Second, Bridging Social Capital, which refers to inclusive bonds that connect graduates with groups outside their community (e.g., government, non-Islamic boarding entrepreneurs). In the context of Dawar Islamic Boarding School graduates, the bonding capital formed in the dormitory becomes a foundation of strong trust and solidarity, which is subsequently mobilised into bridging capital to access economic opportunities, capital, and information in the wider market.

Although social capital provides resources and opportunities, the effective utilisation of these resources is highly dependent on individual capacity and agency, which in this study is referred to as grit. Grit acts as the 'engine' that transforms the potential of social capital into concrete action. Psychologically, resilience can be linked to the concept of grit, defined by Duckworth (2016) as 'the passion and perseverance for long-term goals.' The strict and challenging routines in Islamic boarding schools indirectly train this grit, producing individuals who do not give up easily in the face of difficulties.

In addition, the fighting spirit of graduates is also rooted in spirituality and resilience. Islamic teachings on *tawakal* (surrender after trying), patience, and sincerity provide a mental framework for graduates to manage failure or trauma, viewing setbacks as tests and learning processes. Another factor is Internal Locus of Control, where although students firmly hold on to the concept of destiny (*qadar*), Islamic teachings also emphasise the importance of *ikhtiar* (maximum effort). This combination fosters the belief that success is the result of persistent hard work and God's blessing, empowering graduates to be proactive, take risks, and persistently build economic independence from the ground up.

Furthermore, The findings of this study are expected to make a significant theoretical contribution by enriching the study of social capital in the context of non-formal Islamic education and elaborating on the concept of 'fighting spirit' as a bridging variable. Practically, it will provide input to Islamic boarding school administrators for designing an ecosystem of independence, and in terms of policy, it will serve as an important reference



for the government in formulating community-based religious economic empowerment programmes.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The selection of SLR as the primary method. It was a strategic decision based on the need to synthesize existing study findings on Islamic boarding schools, entrepreneurship, and social capital in a systematic and transparent manner, which is an important prerequisite in the development of science (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). This method aims not only to build a strong theoretical foundation (prior to potential in-depth field research) but also to effectively identify research gaps that have not been addressed by previous literature.

The SLR protocol consisted of five standard stages: First, formulating research questions focused on the institutional mechanisms of Islamic boarding schools, the relationship between social capital and economic outcomes, and the role of non-economic factor. Second, developing a search strategy using a combination of Boolean keywords (e.g., 'Islamic boarding school' AND 'social capital') in reputable international (Scopus, Web of Science) and national databases. Third, establishing strict selection criteria (including the time range 2005-2025 and a socio-economic focus) to ensure the relevance of the articles. Fourth, the data selection and extraction process followed the PRISMA flow to ensure transparency. Fifth, data analysis and synthesis were conducted through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to code recurring patterns and produce a coherent narrative synthesis. This ensured that the conclusions drawn were not merely based on assumptions, but were supported by empirical evidence accumulated from various study contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic boarding schools as a 'Kawah of Candradimuka' for Building Social Capital

A synthesis of the literature consistently highlights the role of Islamic boarding schools as 'Kawah Candradimuka' which intensively shapes dense bonding social capital among students. This type of social capital, which refers to bonds within homogeneous groups, is the foundation that distinguishes Islamic boarding school graduates in the socio-economic arena. The communal environment, which is limited and structured 24 hours a day, is often academically analogous to the concept of a total institution (Goffman, 1961), creating mutual dependence and deep solidarity.

The main mechanism for the formation of this social capital lies in three pillars. First, compulsory dormitory life. Living together in limited conditions forces students to develop a deep sense of mutual understanding and solidarity, which in the boarding school tradition is called *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). Hakim, Zikrifah, Rahma Melati, Tresnawati, Karti, & Kresnapatty (2025) emphasise in their study that the relationships formed in the dormitories go beyond ordinary friendships; they are spiritual and communal bonds that often last a lifetime and become a source of emotional and material support after leaving the boarding school.

Second, the existence of Roan Culture or Collective Community Service. Shared practices such as cleaning the environment, cooking, or building facilities collectively instil a work ethic and explicit norms of reciprocity. Students learn that collective success is more valuable than individual interests. This is a direct implementation of Coleman's (1988) dimension of social capital regarding obligations and expectations, where collective norms produce effective sanctions to ensure cooperation and investment in social relationships.



The third pillar is the vertical relationship between the Kiai and the students. Charismatic Kiai figures act as central node in the network (Granovetter, 1973). The Kiai not only provides religious teachings, but also functions as a spiritual, social, and sometimes economic patron. This vertical network is important because the 'blessing' and advice of the Kiai often function as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), providing legitimacy and initial access for graduates when they start a business or pursue a career. Hasan (2017) shows that these relationships facilitate the integration of graduates into wider society, as recommendations from the Kiai often carry very high social value, opening opportunities that are closed to others. Thus, through this institutional mechanism, Islamic boarding schools effectively accumulate dense social capital, which is then ready to be transformed.

The Dynamics of Graduates Social Capital in the Economic Arena

The social capital accumulated in Islamic boarding schools is not a static asset; it is a dynamic resource that is ready to be converted. After graduation, graduates networks (often organised into formal associations such as IKAPPI) become a vital platform for transforming bonding capital (strong ties among graduates) into bridging capital (ties with outsiders) that is essential in the economic arena (Putnam, 2000). This transformation occurs through three main dimensions.

First, the network functions as a channel for information and opportunities. The informal graduates network facilitates the effective dissemination of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973), where non-redundant information (such as job vacancies, new business opportunities, access to suppliers, or introductions to potential investors) flows quickly and efficiently. Successful graduates tend to act as social brokers, 'attracting' their juniors to join, partner with, or work under them. This function is vital as a 'shortcut' for graduates, especially those from disadvantaged economic backgrounds or remote areas, to overcome the limited formal access often encountered.

Second, Trust as a driver of Economic Transactions Second, The inherent and high level of trust among graduates, which is formed by the value of trustworthiness instilled from an early age, significantly reduces transaction costs (Fukuyama, 1995). Business agreements among graduates can often be made through gentlemen's agreements without the need for complicated and costly formal contracts. Furthermore, Hakim (2025) in his research shows that graduates trust also acts as a 'collective brand'; products or services offered by Islamic boarding school graduates are associated with honesty and ethical quality, giving them a comparative advantage in the Halal market, which is highly sensitive to values.

Third, Collective Norms as a Guide to Business Ethics. Values such as ta'awun (mutual assistance), prohibition of riba (interest), and the obligation of zakat (philanthropy) become norms that guide graduates' business practices. This approach ensures that graduates economic activities are not solely profit-oriented, but also benefit-oriented. This community-based business ethics creates a sustainable and philanthropy-based business model, ensuring that individual success contributes back to communal welfare.

Manifestations of Fighting Spirit: From Tirakat (spiritual discipline and meditation) to Adaptive Strategies

Social capital is an external resource, but its effectiveness depends on strong individual agency, conceptualised as fighting spirit. This concept bridges social assets with tangible economic outcomes, and manifests itself in three main forms of behaviour among



graduates. First, Spiritual Resilience in Facing Failure. Case studies in the literature often highlight that student entrepreneurs experience repeated failures (Boulven, Abdullah, Bahari, & Ramli, 2018). However, they demonstrate remarkable resilience. Their spiritual framework (derived from the teachings of tawakal (surrender after trying), patience, and sincerity) allows them to interpret failure not as an end, but as a divine test (ibtīlā') and part of the learning process. The practice of tirakat (self-restraint, fasting, or waking at night) required during their time at the boarding schools effectively trains mental endurance and long-term patience, a form of deep psychological training.

Second, the 'Economic Jihad' Ethos as Intrinsic Motivation. Graduates often frame their economic struggles as a form of 'jihad in the way of Allah' with noble aims, not merely for personal wealth accumulation, but to empower the ummah and their families. This intrinsic motivation is in line with the concept of Grit introduced by Duckworth (2016), namely 'passion and perseverance for long-term goals.' This ethos encourages alumni to work harder, more persistently, and more disciplined than their competitors who may only be motivated by material incentives. The jihad ethos transforms work into a form of worship.

Third, Creativity within Limitations (Bricolage). Boarding school education, especially the traditional model, teaches students to live frugally and use resources efficiently. This habit of living with limitations fosters creative and innovative abilities in utilising available resources—a phenomenon known in entrepreneurship studies as bricolage (Dawa, Mulira, & Aruo: 2025). Graduates are adept at starting businesses with small capital, utilising communal assets (loans from alumni, waqf), and gradually building their businesses without relying on formal bank loans. This ability to adapt and innovate within limitations is vital for Dawar Islamic boarding school graduates to survive and thrive amid fierce economic competition.

Discussion: Synergy between Social Capital and Fighting Spirit

The findings from this SLR conclusively show that the socio-economic independence of Dawar Islamic Boarding School graduates is not the result of a single factor, but rather the organic product of a holistic educational ecosystem that simultaneously shapes character and social relationships. The model that emerges is a synergistic one, in which social capital and fighting spirit function as complementary partners.

Social capital provides opportunities and resources (information, access, initial support), while resilience provides the internal capacity and motivation to seize, execute, and persevere in the face of these opportunities. Without resilience, the graduate network risks becoming merely a nostalgic group without tangible economic output. Conversely, Without social capital, a graduate's persistence will face a much more difficult and isolating path, as they must start without sufficient trust and access. Furthermore, this study enriches Putnam's (2000) theoretical understanding. In the context of religious-based institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, strong bonding capital does not prove to be an obstacle (exclusive) to forming bridging capital.

In contrast, strong internal solidarity becomes a safe moral and material foundation for alumni to venture into the outside world (Portes, 1998). Graduates community has function as an 'anchor' that keeps them bound to communal values and Islamic business ethics, as well as a 'sail' that helps them navigate the seas of economic competition. It is this synergy between spirituality (fighting spirit), community (social capital), and the market



(independence) that explains the transformative success of graduates of Dawar Islamic boarding school.

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth synthesis of the literature, it can be concluded that the socio-economic independence of Dawar Islamic boarding school graduates, as well as graduates of similar institutions, is the product of a holistic synergy between social capital and resilience forged within a communal educational ecosystem. Islamic boarding schools function as total institutions (Goffman, 1961) that effectively accumulate bonding capital through dormitory life and roan culture, reinforced by vertical patronage relationships with the Kiai (Hasan, 2017; Coleman, 1988). This social capital later transforms into bridging capital after graduation, with alumni networks serving as essential channels for information, business opportunities, and trusted transactional relationships (*amanah*) (Hakim, 2025; Fukuyama, 1995). Uniquely, this study demonstrates that such dense bonding capital is not exclusive but instead provides a moral and material foundation that enables graduates to navigate the wider world, challenging certain classical theoretical interpretations (Putnam, 2000; Portes, 1998). This synergistic model is amplified by a fighting spirit rooted in spirituality, manifested in grit (Duckworth, 2016) and spiritual resilience, which enables alumni to interpret failure as a test (*ibtilā'*) rather than an endpoint—an attitude cultivated through *tirakat* practices (Boulven, Abdullah, Bahari, & Ramli, 2018). While social capital supplies opportunities and resources, this fighting spirit contributes capacity, intrinsic motivation ("Economic Jihad"), and creative adaptability within constraints (*bricolage*) (Dawa, Mulira, & Aruo, 2025) to pursue these opportunities with persistence and discipline. Thus, the success of Dawar Islamic Boarding School graduates reflects the institution's ability to integrate spiritual character formation with the development of relevant social and psychological assets, confirming that their socio-economic transformation emerges from a unique combination of religious values, trusted community structures, and strong individual agency.

Acknowledgement

This research was conducted with self-funding. The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all resource persons and everyone who contributed to the smooth implementation of this study. Their insights, time, and support were invaluable in completing this research successfully.

REFERENCES

- Azra, A. (2012). *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi di Tengah Tantangan Milenium III*. Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group.
- Boulven, M. A., Abdullah, S. B., Bahari, A., & Ramli, A. J. (2018). Model of Islamic Social Entrepreneurship: A Study on Successful Muslim Social Entrepreneur in Malaysia. *MATEC Web of Conferences* 150(1):05093.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.



- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(1), S95–S120.
- Dawa, S., Mulira, F., & Aruo, F. (2025). Entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurial success among female entrepreneurs in resource-constrained settings: a qualitative study. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 1–30.
- Dhofier, Z. (1982). *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai*. Jakarta: LP3ES.
- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. New York: Scribner.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. New York: Free Press.
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- Hasan, N. (2017). The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Agency, and Commodification in the Post-Authoritarian Indonesia. *Contemporary Islam*, 11(3), 229-259.
- Hakim, L., Zikrifah, A., Rahma Melati, T., Tresnawati, D., Karti, K., & Kresnapatty, D. (2025). The Role of Pesantren in Economic Empowerment of the Ummah: A Qualitative Descriptive Study in Indonesia. *El-Kahfi | Journal of Islamic Economics*, 6(01), 108-120.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1-24.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review. *British Journal of Management*, 14(3), 207-222.

