From Kitab Discipline to Digital Practice: Santri Empowerment at Sukamiskin Pesantren, Bandung, 1993–2022

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Abstract

This article examines how Sukamiskin Pesantren in Bandung reconfigured santri empowerment between 1993 and 2022 while retaining the religious disciplines and authority relations associated with a Sundanese *salafiyah* institution. Rather than treating empowerment as a collection of recent extracurricular programs, it proposes a retrospective historical sequence in which formal schooling, ritual habituation, delegated student government, community service, vocational training, and internal economic practice were progressively connected. The study applies the historical method used in the original research: heuristics, external and internal source criticism, interpretation, and historiography.. The charter records establishment since 1992 and an administrative decision dates from 1993; the precise opening date remains unverified. Institutional history places postwar reconstruction in 1948, but its availability before the cutoff is unverified. Subject to temporal verification of claims dependent on post-cutoff testimony, the findings identify continuity in *kitab kuning*, congregational worship, *wirid*, and the kyai's ultimate authority, alongside changes in pedagogical form. The retrospective accounts describe changes from role simulation to multilingual public performance, from corporal sanctions toward educational and social sanctions, and from typewriting and manual bookkeeping toward digital administration and media production; they also describe more organized arts and economic practice. The timing and extent of these changes remain unverified against pre-cutoff evidence. The article argues that Sukamiskin's distinctive contribution lay in converting participation into graduated responsibility. The provisional interpretation is that empowerment remained morally supervised while participating santri exercised delegated operational roles, mediated between pesantren and society, and gained practical experience.

Keywords: *pesantren; santri empowerment; Islamic education; Bandung; institutional change; social history*

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Introduction

Pesantren have long occupied a dual position in Indonesian history. They are institutions of Islamic learning organized around the moral authority of a kyai, yet they are also social organizations embedded in villages, urban neighborhoods, associational networks, and local economies. The classical components identified in scholarship—kyai, santri, mosque, dormitory, and the study of *kitab kuning*—therefore describe more than a school. They identify a social formation in which knowledge, discipline, residence, and communal obligation are mutually reinforcing.[1] In Priangan, this formation developed through mobile networks of teachers and students and through institutions that mediated between Islamic learning and Sundanese society.[2] Modernization did not simply replace this order. It compelled pesantren to decide which practices constituted indispensable tradition, which institutional forms could be changed, and how graduates might retain religious authority while acquiring competence in an increasingly formalized and technological society.

Sukamiskin Pesantren offers an unusually long institutional perspective on that problem. Its institutional history dates its establishment to 1881 under K.H. Raden Muhammad bin Alqo and describes successive phases of growth, wartime destruction, rebuilding, and curricular expansion.[3] Situated in eastern Bandung, the pesantren was once associated with a more rural social environment but, by the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, stood within a rapidly urbanizing city. Its response included the addition of formal education: a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in 1988 and a Madrasah Aliyah whose charter records establishment since 1992 and whose administrative decision dates from 1993. The pesantren summarized this educational synthesis in the Sundanese maxim *nyantrikeun budak sakola, nyakolakeun budak santri*: give religious formation to schoolchildren and formal schooling to santri.

The period from 1993 to 2022 is therefore historically significant, but its significance requires precision. Some accounts characterize 1993 as the pesantren's "revival," distinguishing it from the postwar reconstruction reportedly undertaken in 1948, for which the availability of cited sources before the relevant cutoff remains unverified. The period 1992–1993 instead relates to the documented establishment and administrative recognition of the Madrasah Aliyah. Treating 1993 as a legal-institutional threshold clarifies the subject of this article: not the rebirth of Sukamiskin, but the development of empowerment practices after formal schooling had become structurally integrated into pesantren life.

Earlier studies illuminate parts of this history without reconstructing that process as a whole. Alinda Nur Fitriani's historical study concerns Nurul Huda Pesantren in Sukamiskin between 1973 and 1993 and thus provides a neighboring institutional history rather than an account of the present pesantren's post-1993

[1] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982), 44–60.

[2] Ading Kusdiana, *Sejarah Pesantren: Jejak, Penyebaran, dan Jaringannya di Wilayah Priangan (1800–1945)* (Bandung: Humaniora, 2014), 6–8; Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), 87–92.

[3] Sukamiskin Pesantren, "Sejarah Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin," accessed March 21, 2025, https://sukamiskin.ponpes.id/sejarah-pondok-pesantren-sukamiskin/.

empowerment strategy.[4] Sinta Nur Auliya Alfatonah analyzes K.H. Imam Shonhaji's contribution to Sukamiskin from 1966 to 2009, placing leadership and institutional development at the center.[5] NG Alif Afifah Ahmad examines *muhadharah* specifically as public-speaking training at Sukamiskin.[6] Muhammad Abdul Rojak, Iing Solihin, and Ahmad Halil Naufal compare kyai leadership at Sukamiskin and Miftahul Falah, emphasizing how leadership shapes pesantren development.[7] A study of empowerment at Hidayatullah Pesantren in Yogyakarta provides a useful comparison but concerns a different institution and social setting.[8]

Taken together, these works leave a clear historiographical gap. They address leadership, institutional growth, public speaking, or a single empowerment model, but not the temporal relationship among Sukamiskin's religious disciplines, student organization, community work, technical adaptation, and economic training across three decades. Their different subjects and periods do not by themselves establish the program chronology proposed here. A comparison across periods can explore how a practice can retain its moral purpose while changing its social technology: a speech exercise can move from simulating a village marriage ceremony to staging a multilingual urban event; a secretary's work can move from a typewriter to a digital database; and discipline can move from physical punishment to Qur'anic, environmental, or financial sanctions.

This article asks how Sukamiskin's strategies for empowering santri changed between 1993 and 2022 and what remained continuous within those changes. Subject to the temporal limitations set out below, it argues that empowerment at Sukamiskin was neither a linear passage from "traditional" to "modern" education nor an assortment of auxiliary skills. It was a historically layered process through which religious discipline was connected to increasing degrees of practical responsibility. The kyai retained ultimate moral and institutional authority, but santri were progressively entrusted with public performance, dormitory government, peer discipline, community service, digital mediation, artistic production, and economic administration. The resulting arrangement may be described as supervised agency: santri acquired consequential roles without severing those roles from the ethical order of the pesantren.

The article makes three contributions. First, it distinguishes the charter's recorded establishment since 1992 from administrative recognition in 1993 and from

[4] Alinda Nur Fitriani, "Perkembangan Pondok Pesantren Nurul Huda Sukamiskin, Bandung 1973–1993" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2019), 73.

[5] Sinta Nur Auliya Alfatonah, "Kontribusi K.H. Imam Shonhaji dalam Pengembangan Pesantren Sukamiskin Tahun 1966–2009" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2017), 90.

[6] NG Alif Afifah A, "Strategi Pondok Pesantren dalam Mengembangkan Kemampuan Public Speaking Santri melalui Kegiatan Muhadharah: Studi Kasus di Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin Bandung" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023), 100.

[7] Muhammad Abdul Rojak, Iing Solihin, and Ahmad Halil Naufal, "Fungsi dan Peran Kepemimpinan Kiai dalam Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren di Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin dan Miftahul Falah Bandung," *MANAZHIM: Jurnal Manajemen dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2021): 83–109, https://doi.org/10.36088/manazhim.v3i1.1072.

[8] Rizqi Respati Suci Megarani, "Strategi Pemberdayaan Santri di Pondok Pesantren Hidayatullah Donoharjo Ngaglik Sleman Yogyakarta" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2010), 98.

postwar reconstruction reported for 1948, without independently establishing the opening date or the pre-cutoff availability of the reconstruction account. Second, it reconstructs empowerment as a sequence of adaptations rather than as a static program list. Third, it places institutional documents alongside retrospective testimony. The 2021 student-management decree, for example, does not by itself prove how authority functioned in daily life, while interviews do not by themselves establish the formal existence of an organizational structure. Read together, they distinguish prescribed arrangements from remembered practice; agreement between them does not by itself establish pre-cutoff availability or implementation.

Method

The research adopts a historical method comprising heuristics, external and internal source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. It does not add an ethnographic or quantitative method that was absent from the original study. Heuristics involved collecting written, oral, material, and visual evidence. Written primary sources include the decree establishing the private Madrasah Aliyah YPP Sukamiskin, no. W1/1/HK.008/506/1993, dated 20 October 1993; the founding charter no. D/W.I/MA/504/93; the pesantren statistical charter no. 011807 of 19 November 2021; the student-management decree no. 113/Pon-Pes-YPPS/PP.06/I/2021 of 20 January 2021; the *Buku Klapper* for 1992–2015; and the 2021/2022 alumni-tracing list. Oral sources comprise interviews with the pesantren leader, staff, student administrators, and alumni whose residence periods span the late 1980s to the 2020s. The historical subject and analytical phases concern 1993–2022. This is not a claim that research or evidence collection was completed by that date. Only claims about events supported by evidence demonstrably available by the cutoff can be treated as established cutoff-compliant findings; later sources are retained with their actual dates as retrospective or post-cutoff material. Claims dependent solely on later sources remain provisional retrospective interpretations, not established cutoff-compliant findings.[9]

External criticism assessed provenance, dates, institutional authorship, signatures, stamps, document form, and the relationship between reproduced records and the archive from which they came. Internal criticism compared what different types of evidence could reasonably support. An establishment charter can identify a legal name and date, but it cannot demonstrate the everyday operation of peer leadership. Conversely, an alumnus can recall disciplinary practice but may compress chronology or interpret past coercion through later values. The interviews were conducted after the study period, mostly between 2024 and 2025. They are therefore retrospective testimony, not contemporaneous observation.[10]

[9] Sukamiskin Pesantren Archive, Decree Establishing the Private Madrasah Aliyah YPP Sukamiskin, no. W1/1/HK.008/506/1993, October 20, 1993; Sukamiskin Pesantren Archive, Charter of MA YPP Sukamiskin, no. D/W.I/MA/504/93, 1993; Sukamiskin Pesantren Archive, Student-Management Decree no. 113/Pon-Pes-YPPS/PP.06/I/2021, January 20, 2021. The reproduced decree cites "31 Juni 2021";

[10] Abdul Aziz, leader of Sukamiskin Pesantren, personal interview, Bandung, November 18, 2024; Viki, administrative staff member, MA YPPS Sukamiskin, personal interview, Bandung, February 11, 2025; Mileandi Indra Regina, alumnus and arts instructor, personal interview, Bandung, December 4,

A cross-reference of various sources reveals a number of inconsistencies that warrant open acknowledgment. The institution's charter records the Madrasah Aliyah's establishment in 1992, while an administrative decision gives 1993. Interview records also reveal inconsistencies in name spellings, cohort information, and dates. For instance, records concerning Robby Rahmat and Muhammad Saepulloh Nugraha display conflicting dates between the main text and the list of sources. As these discrepancies remain unresolved, the information has been retained exactly as it appears in the sources, with the caveat that the dates and their validity require verification against the original interview documents.

Interviews with Toyib and Viki are presented alongside other sources, but their inclusion in the same record does not establish that they formed a single, continuous interview series. Discrepancies in dates were also observed regarding the interview with Sofyan Hadi across different sections of the source material. A similar cautious approach was applied to the narrative concerning the wartime period. Sukamiskin's institutional history dates the Japanese bombing to 1941, whereas some accounts give 1942. Since this event serves merely as context rather than a central element of the study covering the 1993–2022 period, the discrepancy is noted simply as an issue within the sources, without using it as a basis for constructing causal arguments.

Interpretation proceeded chronologically and thematically. Evidence was grouped around institutional consolidation, religious and communicative formation, student government and discipline, community relations, vocational adaptation, and economic practice. These categories were then compared across early (1993–c. 2000), transitional (c. 2000–2010), and later (c. 2010–2022) phases. Historiography synthesizes these comparisons into an analysis of continuity, change, causality, and agency through source collection, verification, analysis, synthesis, and written reconstruction.[11]

Results

Institutional Inheritance and the 1993 Threshold

Sukamiskin's institutional memory begins with K.H. Raden Muhammad bin Alqo's foundation of the pesantren in 1881. The founder's education is described as extending across pesantren networks in Java and Madura and to the Middle East. His institution combined Qur'anic and *kitab* instruction, Sufi practice, residential discipline, and service to the surrounding community. The popular explanation of the

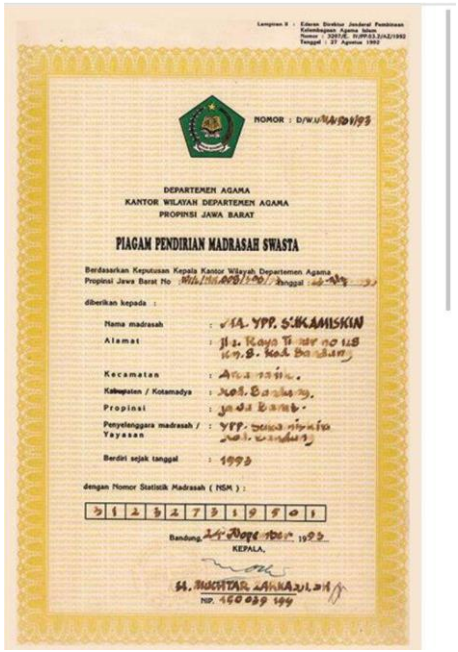
2024; Robby Rahmat, alumnus and former student administrator, personal interview, Bandung, December 7, 2024; Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025; Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025; Sofyan Hadi, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 22, 2025.

[11] Dudung Abdurrahman, *Metode Penelitian Sejarah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2011), 103–117; Sulasman, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2014), 75–149.

name "Sukamiskin" derives it from the Arabic *suq al-misk*, "market of musk," a metaphor for a crowded place from which the fragrance of knowledge spreads.[12]

The pesantren's twentieth-century history included destruction and reconstruction. Sukamiskin's official history dates the Japanese bombing of the compound to 1941, whereas other accounts place the event in 1942. During the revolutionary crisis in Bandung, leaders and santri were displaced, facilities were damaged, and educational activity was interrupted. Reconstruction is reported to have begun in 1948 under K.H. R. Ahmad Haedar Dimyati, who rebuilt the mosque, madrasa, and dormitories and revived *madrasah diniyah*.[13]

The late twentieth century brought a different transformation. A Madrasah Tsanawiyah opened in 1988, followed by a Madrasah Aliyah recorded in its charter as established since 1992. Figure 1 reproduces the surviving Madrasah Aliyah charter. It records the legal name MA YPP Sukamiskin and states that the institution had existed since 1992. A separate regional Department of Religious Affairs decision dated 20 October 1993 supplied official administrative recognition. The dates refer to different documentary statements: 1992 is the establishment year recorded in the charter, and 1993 is the date of administrative recognition. The charter alone does not independently establish the date teaching began.[14]



DEPARTEMEN AGAMA
KANTOR WILAYAH DEPARTEMEN AGAMA
PROPINSI JAWA BARAT

PIAGAM PENDIRIAN MADRASAH SWASTA

Figure 1 Charter of MA YPP Sukamiskin, no. D/W.I/MA/504/93. The document records establishment since 1992; the precise opening date remains unverified

[12] Sukamiskin Pesantren, "Sejarah Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin," https://sukamiskin.ponpes.id/sejarah-pondok-pesantren-sukamiskin/.

[13] Sukamiskin Pesantren, "Sejarah Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin," accessed March 21, 2025, https://sukamiskin.ponpes.id/sejarah-pondok-pesantren-sukamiskin/; Viki, administrative staff member, MA YPPS Sukamiskin, personal interview, Bandung, February 11, 2025.

[14] Sukamiskin Pesantren Archive, Charter of MA YPP Sukamiskin, no. D/W.I/MA/504/93, 1993; Sukamiskin Pesantren Archive, Decree Establishing the Private Madrasah Aliyah YPP Sukamiskin, no. W1/1/HK.008/506/1993, October 20, 1993.

Formal education changed the environment in which empowerment occurred. Santri now moved between a state-recognized curriculum and residential religious instruction. The maxim *nyantrikeun budak sakola, nyakolakeun budak santri* presented the combination as reciprocal. School pupils should receive pesantren formation; resident santri should receive general schooling. The institutional choice did not eliminate the *salafiyah* curriculum. It created a dual schedule and a broader conception of competence, which later permitted technical, organizational, and economic training to be justified as extensions of religious education rather than departures from it.[15]

Religious Discipline and Communicative Capacity

The earliest and most continuous layer of empowerment was religious discipline. Congregational prayer, pre-dawn waking, *wirid*, Qur'anic recitation, *kitab kuning*, and public religious performance structured time and moral evaluation. Interviewees described the five daily prayers and repeated devotional practices as forms of habituation. In these accounts, the routines had a regulatory function: absence from the mosque could be noticed by room leaders or student security personnel. Interviewees described self-regulation as a longer-term aim of these routines; their accounts do not establish the same effect for every santri.[16]

Sukamiskin also preserved collective recitations associated with its traditionalist environment, including *Ratib al-Haddad*, *Hizib Nasr*, *tahlil*, and *al-Barzanji*. These practices formed a repertoire that graduates could later use when asked to lead neighborhood rituals. Religious discipline thus had two temporal directions. It was intended to order santri life during the periods described and to prepare participants for later social functions. The continuity of these practices is important because later technical and organizational changes did not displace the pesantren's definition of a socially useful graduate.

Public-speaking training demonstrates how a continuous objective acquired new forms. In Sukamiskin the exercise was known as *pertamsilan* (a santri training meeting) as well as *muhadharah*. Alumni recalling the 1990s described simulations of offices and ceremonies that santri might encounter in village religious life. Participants played a marriage guardian, bridegroom, religious official, or *penghulu*; practiced Arabic formulas for marriage; delivered a marriage sermon; and rehearsed funerary procedure.[17]

Retrospective accounts associate the 2000s and especially the 2010s with more performative forms of the same exercise; the timing of this transition remains unverified. Student organizers assigned roles for a three-language master of ceremonies in Indonesian, Arabic, and English, alongside Qur'anic recitation, translation, preaching, *hadroh*, or *nasyid*. The weekly event was staged with a more

[15] Viki, administrative staff member, MA YPPS Sukamiskin, personal interview, Bandung, February 11, 2025; Abdul Aziz, leader of Sukamiskin Pesantren, personal interview, Bandung, November 18, 2024.

[16] Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025;

[17] Sofyan Hadi, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 22, 2025; Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025.

explicit program sequence and division of labor. Participants still learned to speak publicly, but they also learned event coordination, audience management, and teamwork. This reported change may be interpreted in relation to Sukamiskin's urban setting and mediated religious communication, although the accounts do not establish that causal relationship. It did not erase role simulation; it shifted the anticipated public from a village ritual setting to a heterogeneous audience.[18]

Memorization underwent a comparable adjustment. Alumni associated the earlier period with intensive memorization of Arabic grammatical verse: *Jurumiyah*, *Imrithi*, and the 1,002 lines of Ibn Malik's *Alfiyah*. Mastery demonstrated command of the linguistic tools required to read Arabic texts. Interviewees associated the period after approximately 2015 with continued grammatical study, especially for specialized students, and greater emphasis on Juz 'Amma and selected Qur'anic chapters for regular school students; the transition date remains unverified. Interviewees explained the change in practical terms: a community can immediately assess the recitation of a prayer leader, whereas advanced grammatical competence is less visible. The new emphasis did not render *nahw* and *sarf* obsolete. It redistributed curricular attention so that a baseline capacity in Qur'anic leadership accompanied the deeper textual track.[19]

Delegated Government and Changing Discipline

The second major strategy was the delegation of daily authority. The reproduced appointment decree and retrospective accounts describe a student organization placing senior santri between the kyai and the resident body. The *lurah pondok* for male students and *roisah* for female students coordinated operations; a *badal* could substitute for teaching functions; room leaders supervised worship, cleaning, and dormitory order; and divisions handled security, secretarial work, activities, and finance. The kyai remained the source of ultimate authority, but the routine exercise of that authority depended on student officeholders.

The 2021 student-management decree provides direct evidence of the formal arrangement. Its text records the appointment of a management body for the 2021–2022 term and links positions to the pesantren's institutional administration. Figure 2 records the prescribed appointment independently of alumni recollection; its dating and implementation still require verification. The cited footnote supports the formal arrangement, but does not identify the interviews supporting the practical dimension: the article's account of officeholders reconciling friendship with enforcement,

[18] Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025; Robby Rahmat, alumnus and former student administrator, personal interview, Bandung, December 7, 2024; Mileandi Indra Regina, alumnus and arts instructor, personal interview, Bandung, December 4, 2024; Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024.

[19] Mileandi Indra Regina, alumnus and arts instructor, personal interview, Bandung, December 4, 2024; Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2024.

schoolwork with late-night meetings, and religious study with care for sick or troubled juniors.[20]



معهدسوق مسك الاسلامى
YAYASAN PONDOK PESANTREN SUKAMISKIN
KOTA BANDUNG
Alamat : Jl. Raya Timur No. 128 Km. 8 RI. 01 Rw. 04 Kel. Sukamiskin Kec. Arcamanik Telp. 022 7212684

SK PENGURUS SANTRI PONDOK PESANTREN SUKAMISKIN

SURAT KEPUTUSAN
KETUA YAYASAN PONDOK PESANTREN SUKAMISKIN
KELURAHAN SUKAMISKIN KECAMATAN ARCAMANIK KOTA BANDUNG
Nomor : 113/PonPes-YPPS/PP.06/I/2021

Tentang

PENGANGKATAN PENGURUS SANTRI PONDOK PESANTREN SUKAMISKIN
KELURAHAN SUKAMISKIN KECAMATAN ARCAMANIK KOTA BANDUNG
MASA KHIDMAT 2021-2022

Ketua Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin Bandung :

Menimbang :
1. Bahwa dalam rangka memperlancar pelaksanaan program Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin Masa Khidmat 2021-2022 dipandang perlu mengangkat Pengurus Pondok Pesantren.
2. Untuk maksud di atas, maka dipandang perlu untuk menerbitkan surat keputusan.

Mengingat :
1. Undang-undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional
2. Undang-undang No. 44 Tahun 1974 Tentang Pokok-pokok Organisasi Departemen Agama RI.
3. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 57 Tahun 1998
4. Keputusan Mentri Kehakiman RI Nomor : AHU-0039961.AH.01.04. tahun 2016 tanggal 12 Oktober 2016 tentang pengajuan dan kedudukan Yayasan

Memperhatikan :
1. AD/ART Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin.
2. Keputusan Rapat Dewan Pembina Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin tanggal 31 Juni 2021.

MEMUTUSKAN

Menetapkan :

Pertama : Mengangkat nama-nama sebagaimana yang tertulis dalam lampiran surat keputusan ini untuk menjadi Pengurus Santri Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin untuk Masa Khidmat 2021-2022.

Kedua : Pengurus Pondok Pesantren dalam melaksanakan tugas mengacu pada Anggaran Dasar dan AD/ART Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin.

Ketiga : Keputusan ini mulai berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dan apabila ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dikemudian hari akan diadakan perbaikan sebagaimana mestinya

Ditetapkan di : Bandung
Pada Tanggal : 20 Januari 2021
7 Jumadil Akhir 1442

Ketua Yayasan
Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin,

KHR. ABDUL AZIS HAEDAR

Tembusan disampaikan kepada :

Figure 2 Student-management decree, no. 113/Pon-Pes-YPPS/PP.06/I/2021, 20 January 2021.

Retrospective accounts suggest that this system could turn participation in dormitory government into graduated responsibility. Room leadership introduced peer supervision; divisional service added specialized administrative work; and the highest student offices required coordination across units and representation before the kyai. Succession through deliberation or limited selection made office temporary and evaluative. A senior was expected to instruct a junior not only in rules but in the tacit practices of approaching teachers, resolving disputes, and managing an event. The organization therefore reproduced itself through both written appointment and inter-cohort mentoring.[21]

Retrospective accounts describe changes in disciplinary practice alongside continuity in organizational hierarchy. Alumni of the late 1980s and 1990s recalled corporal sanctions, including a rattan cane or thick wooden ruler, for serious infractions such as leaving without permission, fighting, or theft. Their testimony

[20] Sukamiskin Pesantren Archive, Student-Management Decree no. 113/Pon-Pes-YPPS/PP.06/I/2021, January 20, 2021; Muhammad Abdul Rojak, Iing Solihin, and Ahmad Halil Naufal, "Fungsi dan Peran Kepemimpinan Kiai dalam Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren di Pondok Pesantren Sukamiskin dan Miftahul Falah Bandung," *MANAZHIM: Jurnal Manajemen dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2021): 108, https://doi.org/10.36088/manazhim.v3i1.1072.

[21] Mileandi Indra Regina, alumnus and arts instructor, personal interview, Bandung, December 4, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2024; Robby Rahmat, alumnus and former student administrator, personal interview, Bandung, December 7, 2024.

often interprets these sanctions through the idiom of *gemblengan*, a hardening or forging of character, and through parental trust in pesantren authority. Historical analysis must distinguish that retrospective explanation from normative approval.[22]

For the later analytical period, interviewees described a shift toward sanctions tied to learning or communal responsibility. Students might be required to memorize or recite Qur'anic passages, clean toilets or the mosque, remove rubbish, or pay a small fine allocated to collective funds. These sanctions could still be coercive, but interviewees associated them with religious practice, environmental service, or financial responsibility; their accounts do not independently establish an institution-wide change. The reported shift may indicate adaptation to changing educational expectations and child-protection norms, although the cited testimony does not independently establish this causal explanation or its timing.[23]

From Rural Service to Urban Social Brokerage

Sukamiskin's empowerment strategy extended beyond the compound through changing forms of service. Alumni associated the 1990s with *Santri Raksa Desa*, a program in which senior santri lived temporarily in rural communities. They taught Qur'anic reading to children and adults, assisted with religious activities, joined communal labor, and, according to testimony, helped with small infrastructure and administrative tasks. The program treated the village as a practical classroom. A santri's credibility depended not only on preaching but on participation in the work and material problems of residents[24]

The evidence for the program is principally oral and does not provide a complete official roster, annual chronology, or measured literacy outcome. Claims of broad numerical impact would therefore exceed the sources. What the interviews support is the program's remembered pedagogical function. Alumni described learning that effective *da'wa* required attentiveness to livelihoods, local conflict, and everyday cooperation. *Da'wa bi-l-hal*—religious guidance through action—became a mode of social learning for the santri as much as a service to villagers.

Retrospective accounts suggest a shift in forms of service as eastern Bandung urbanized; they do not independently establish when the shift occurred or that urbanization caused it. Instead of sending santri chiefly outward to a village, Sukamiskin increasingly used neighborhood rituals and its mosque to connect with a more socially heterogeneous urban population. Santri attended bereavements, helped conduct funeral prayers and *tahlil*, recited *al-Barzanji* at life-cycle ceremonies, and performed *hadroh* at weddings and commemorations. The pesantren mosque

[22] Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025; Sofyan Hadi, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 22, 2025.

[23] Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024; Muhammad Saepulloh Nugraha, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, December 9, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2024.

[24] Sofyan Hadi, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 22, 2025; Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025.

functioned as a shared site for Friday prayer, Ramadan worship, and contact between residents and the student community.[25]

Interviewees summarized the expected social role with the metaphor that a santri should become a *paku*, a nail: structurally useful, firmly placed, and not preoccupied with visibility. The metaphor broadened the range of legitimate futures. Graduates did not need to become clerics to embody pesantren values; they could carry honesty, trust, service, and discipline into trade, administration, public office, or family life. Yet the metaphor also reveals the moral economy of Sukamiskin's empowerment. Agency was valued when it strengthened a collective structure, not when it merely amplified individual distinction.[26]

Technical, Artistic, and Economic Training

Retrospective accounts of administrative work suggest a chronology of changing skills, which remains to be corroborated by dated records. In the 1990s, student secretaries learned to type letters, proposals, and records on manual typewriters. Because errors were costly to correct, former students remembered the machine as training in preparation and accuracy. They also learned the conventions of official correspondence, a competence applicable to village administration and religious organizations.

Retrospective accounts describe secretarial experiences encompassing word processing, spreadsheet usage, database management, email communication, and the digitization of archival documents. Various parties were also involved in media activities, such as poster design, photography, video production, and the live broadcasting of religious events. While the tools employed have evolved, the institutional model demonstrates continuity: *santri* (students) acquire skills through direct involvement in tasks essential to the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). Changes are primarily evident in the technology used, audience reach, and the versatility of these skills across different contexts. Digital production not only supports institutional communication but also serves as a valuable component of the graduates' skill portfolios.[27]

Retrospective accounts describe Islamic arts as moving from recreation toward more organized performance; the timing and extent remain unverified. Alumni recalled *tagoni* or frame-drum performance and classical *gambus* in the 1990s. In the later period, *hadroh*, *marawis*, and *nasyid* became more prominent. Training schedules, costumes, ensemble roles, and external engagements made artistic practice a space for discipline, teamwork, religious communication, and limited income generation.

[25] Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025; Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024.

[26] Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025; Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024;

[27] Robby Rahmat, alumnus and former student administrator, personal interview, Bandung, December 7, 2024; Mileandi Indra Regina, alumnus and arts instructor, personal interview, Bandung, December 4, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025.

Honoraria from outside performances were reportedly divided between organizational funds and participant incentives.[28]

Vocational training for female santri included sewing, clothing design, and make-up. Alumni mentors or instructors with relevant training provided practice connected to graduation, wedding, and formal-event services. These activities are framed as a form of economic empowerment, with interviewees reporting that some graduates applied their skills in small-scale enterprises. The evidence does not support a general success rate, while the testimony describes an institutional attempt to connect religious schooling with income-generating competence. The accounts associate some male santri with multimedia and some female santri with fashion and make-up; female informants also report musical activities.[29]

Retrospective accounts describe economic learning through internal activities. Some senior santri reportedly helped operate a canteen or cooperative, purchased supplies, monitored stock, served other students, and accounted for receipts. Student treasurers maintained cash books and, later, simple spreadsheets; they reported income and expenditure to organizational forums. The annual *Imtihan* bazaar added temporary stalls, fundraising, product preparation, and contact with alumni suppliers. Alumni described these activities as laboratories of trust and risk rather than as independent commercial enterprises.[30]

Table 1. Historical sequence of santri empowerment at Sukamiskin, 1993–2022

Period	Institutional setting	Dominant empowerment forms	Principal evidence
1993–c. 2000	Madrasah Aliyah consolidation within a *salafiyah* pesantren	Role-based *pertamsilan*; intensive grammatical memorization; student dormitory authority; typewriting; *Santri Raksa Desa*; physical discipline remembered by alumni	1993 charter and decision; alumni interviews; institutional history
c. 2000–2010	Leadership transition and growing urban orientation	Public-event speaking; continuity of student government; wider social mediation; movement toward non-physical sanctions	Alumni and staff interviews; leadership studies

[28] Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025; Mileandi Indra Regina, alumnus and arts instructor, personal interview, Bandung, December 4, 2024;

[29] Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025.

[30] Muhammad Saepulloh Nugraha, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, December 9, 2024; Farida Dwi Aryanti, alumna, personal interview, Bandung, December 24, 2024; Muhammad Rhafy Arap Sanjani, senior santri, personal interview, Bandung, January 7, 2025; Sofyan Hadi, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 22, 2025; Totoh Abdul Fatah, alumnus, personal interview, Bandung, January 12, 2025.

c. 2010–2022	Digital administration and denser urban integration	Three-language event management; Qur'anic competence alongside *kitab* tools; educational sanctions; media production; managed arts; vocational training; canteen, treasury, and bazaar practice	2021 management decree; digital and visual records; interviews with administrators and recent alumni

Discussion

Empowerment as Supervised Agency

Julian Rappaport defined empowerment as a process through which people, organizations, and communities gain greater control over matters affecting them, while warning against solutions that reduce people to passive recipients.[31] Sukamiskin's history fits this relational understanding more closely than a simple inventory of "skills." Participation in consequential positions may be interpreted as a form of empowerment: speaking before an audience, leading a room, substituting for a teacher, managing a public event, handling common funds, or representing the pesantren in a neighborhood.

The hierarchy is analytically important. The student-management decree records prescribed offices, but it did not transfer sovereignty from the kyai to the santri. Rather, it created delegated zones of action. The arrangement may be interpreted as empowering insofar as participants exercised responsibility, and as supervised insofar as the kyai retained final authority; the decree alone does not establish these practical effects. This is why "supervised agency" better captures the Sukamiskin case than either "student autonomy" or "authoritarian discipline."

Barry Zimmerman's account of self-efficacy helps explain one individual mechanism in this process: confidence grows through judgments about one's capacity to organize and perform an action.[32] Repeated public speaking, room leadership, bookkeeping, and media work may have supplied mastery experiences; this is an interpretation using self-efficacy theory, not a measured psychological outcome. Yet self-efficacy alone is insufficient for historical interpretation. It explains how an individual may acquire confidence, but not why certain capacities were institutionally valued at particular moments. The movement from village ritual simulation to multilingual event production followed changes in Sukamiskin's social field.

Continuity through Functional Adaptation

Modernization at Sukamiskin did not proceed by replacing religious tradition with secular competence. It proceeded by making new competencies serve old institutional purposes. Digital media was justified as a vehicle for *da'wa* and

[31] Julian Rappaport, "Studies in Empowerment: Introduction to the Issue," *Prevention in Human Services* 3, nos. 2–3 (1984): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1300/J293v03n02_02.

[32] Barry J. Zimmerman, "Self-Efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn," *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2000): 82–91, https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1016.

documentation. A canteen was treated as an arena for trust, collective finance, and service. Public-speaking exercises continued to prepare students for religious authority even when the stage, languages, and audience changed. Interviewees reported greater emphasis on Qur'anic memorization, rather than its first introduction, while describing continued advanced grammatical study.

This pattern supports a broader observation in studies of contemporary pesantren: adaptation often occurs by incorporating technology and vocational practice into an existing moral system rather than by surrendering that system.[33] Sukamiskin's chronology adds historical specificity. The institutional capacity to absorb digital and economic training depended on older pedagogies of participation. Accounts associate spreadsheet accounting with treasurers' work and the ethical language of amanah, but the timing of digital adoption remains unverified.

The same logic connects internal organization to civil society. Wahyuddin Halim has argued that pesantren can function as elements of civil society and as sites of social empowerment.[34] At Sukamiskin, that role was not expressed only through formal advocacy. It appeared in the movement between internal association and public service. Student deliberation, temporary office, communal funds, funeral assistance, neighborhood ritual, and village service taught modes of collective action.

Discipline, Memory, and the Limits of Empowerment

The change in disciplinary practice prevents an uncritical celebration of continuity. Alumni memory often frames physical punishment as appropriate to an earlier generation and credits it with producing resilience. Such testimony is historically valuable because it reveals how authority was understood. It cannot settle whether the practice was harmless. Interviewees describe the pesantren's later use of religious recitation, cleaning, and fines as disciplinary measures.

These accounts permit an interpretation of empowerment and control as coexisting in the reported arrangements. A room leader acquired authority by enforcing a schedule on peers. A treasurer acquired competence through strict accountability. A performer gained confidence through compulsory rotation. These arrangements could expand capacity and impose burdens at the same time. Student officers carried what interviewees described as a double responsibility: they remained students while managing other students. The historical contribution of the case lies partly in making that tension visible.

Economic Practice and Gendered Opportunity

The economic activities fit the concept of social entrepreneurship only in a limited and institutionally specific sense. Scholarship on pesantren-based social entrepreneurship emphasizes economic activity that supports social goals rather than

[33] Imam Alfi, "Strategi Pesantren dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat pada Era Generasi 4.0," *Matan: Journal of Islam and Muslim Society* 2, no. 1 (2020): 26–39, https://doi.org/10.20884/1.matan.2020.2.1.2244.

[34] Wahyuddin Halim, "Peran Pesantren dalam Wacana dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Madani," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 2 (2017): 191–218, https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v22i2.976.

private accumulation.[35] Sukamiskin's canteen, common funds, performance honoraria, fundraising, and *Imtihan* bazaar may be interpreted in that light insofar as interviewees report income circulating back into activities and organizational learning; the ownership of the canteen and allocation of its revenue remain unverified. The available sources, however, do not establish a consolidated enterprise, audited profitability, or long-term alumni outcomes.

The gender distribution of training likewise calls for a qualified interpretation. Sewing and make-up could provide female santri with marketable skills and access to alumni mentors. In that sense they expanded possible livelihoods. Some accounts suggest gendered associations between skills and opportunities, but female informants also describe musical participation. The available evidence does not establish exclusive roles or comparative participation rates and cannot demonstrate a uniform gendered allocation of competence. Pesantren-based empowerment can therefore open economic opportunity without fully unsettling the social assumptions that organize opportunity.

Historiographical Position and Novelty

Prior scholarship on Sukamiskin has emphasized a leader, a single communicative program, or the kyai's developmental role. This article relocates the analytical center from program and personality to the changing distribution of responsibility. K.H. Imam Shonhaji and K.H. Abdul Aziz Haedar remain important agents, but the history also includes senior students, female and male officeholders, alumni mentors, secretaries, treasurers, performers, and neighborhood participants. The 2021 decree is valuable precisely because its text records the prescribed appointment of a student-management body, rather than only the authority of a leader; the attached image does not independently verify the full membership or day-to-day activity of that body.

The comparison also clarifies the concept of empowerment, understood as a learning process that encourages participation and transforms passive learners into active subjects.[36] The available accounts suggest that process and permit an interpretation of active subjecthood as relational; they do not establish uniform outcomes. A santri acquired room authority because other santri recognized an office, because the kyai delegated responsibility, and because institutional routines made the office consequential. The novelty of the case is thus not the discovery that pesantren teach life skills. It is the historical interpretation, subject to temporal verification, that life skills became effective through an institutional chain linking ritual discipline, delegated office, public usefulness, and practical work.

[35] Arian Agung Prasetiyawan and Asep Maulana Rohimat, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Berbasis Pesantren dan Social Entrepreneurship," *Muwazah: Jurnal Kajian Gender* 11, no. 2 (2019): 163–180, https://doi.org/10.28918/muwazah.v11i2.5000.

[36] Saiful Hadi and Zulvy Alivia Hanim, "Konsep Model 'Empowerment Learning' pada Pendidikan Tinggi Keislaman dalam Perspektif Pedagogik Kritis," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2019): 215–226, https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v14i2.2738.

Conclusion

Between 1993 and 2022, the available documentary records and retrospective testimony suggest that Sukamiskin Pesantren developed a layered strategy of santri empowerment without abandoning the religious disciplines that constituted its institutional identity. The article treats 1993 as an administrative threshold for the Madrasah Aliyah, rather than as a verified date of the pesantren's postwar revival: the Madrasah Aliyah charter records establishment since 1992, while administrative recognition dates from 1993; the precise opening date remains unverified.

The principal interpretation, pending evidence available by April 2025 for claims derived from later testimony, is that Sukamiskin transformed participation into graduated responsibility. Congregational worship, *wirid*, Qur'anic recitation, and *kitab kuning* maintained a common moral order. Within that provisional reconstruction, retrospective accounts describe changes in which pertamsilan moved from village-role simulation to multilingual event performance; student government converted dormitory life into leadership practice; sanctions shifted from physical punishment toward learning and communal service; social engagement moved from rural placement toward urban religious brokerage; administration moved from typewriters to digital media; and arts, vocational work, canteen management, treasury, and bazaars became practical arenas of skill and accountability.

The reported arrangements may be interpreted as supervised agency: participating santri described delegated tasks within an institution whose final authority remained with the kyai. This interpretation does not establish unrestricted autonomy or identical experiences for all santri. This formulation is the article's main contribution to the historiography of pesantren empowerment. It explains both continuity and change and avoids equating modernization with secularization. The evidence also requires restraint. Retrospective interviews report remembered practices and meanings, not comprehensive measures of alumni success; economic activities constituted training spaces rather than proof of large-scale enterprise; and the accounts suggest gendered vocational opportunities without establishing their distribution across all santri. Within those limits, the case suggests how a traditional Islamic institution could adapt by reorganizing responsibility while retaining tradition; this is a provisional interpretation rather than an established cutoff-compliant conclusion.

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