

The impact of talent management practices on teacher retention: A case study of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how talent management practices impact teacher retention at Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School. The examined practices in talent management encompass recruitment and selection processes, teamwork and managerial support, performance and career management, salary and compensation, teacher engagement, and the working conditions. This study employs a quantitative methodology utilizing the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis technique. Data collection involved administering questionnaires to educators who had served for at least one year in their current position. The findings demonstrate that performance and career management, along with working conditions, significantly and positively influence teacher retention. Conversely, the factors of recruitment and selection processes, teamwork and managerial support, salary and compensation, and teacher engagement do not significantly impact teacher retention. The results indicate that teachers' retention is primarily affected by internal elements associated with opportunities for self-development and a supportive work environment rather than by administrative or financial considerations. This study aims to offer significant insights for decision-makers in Islamic boarding schools, assisting them in crafting more focused talent-management strategies to retain exceptional educators.

Keywords: talent management, teacher retention, career development, working conditions, Islamic boarding school

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in the advancement of nations. In Indonesia, the education sector has undergone notable advancements since independence, focusing on enhancing the intellectual capabilities of society while equipping qualified human resources to compete on a global scale. In addition to general education, Islamic education holds significant importance, as most Indonesians identify as Muslims. Islamic boarding schools are among the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, and their impact on both religious and social development continues to be profoundly significant. Over time, pesantren have evolved from traditional centers of Islamic studies into contemporary institutions that integrate religious sciences with general education, thus adapting to social and cultural changes while maintaining their religious identities.

The implementation of Law No. 18 of 2019 regarding pesantren officially recognizes the distinctive contribution of pesantren to education, da’wah, and community empowerment. Among modern pesantren, Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah is one of the leading Islamic institutions in Indonesia. Established in 1974, Darunnajah emphasizes the integration of Islamic values into modern education. With its vision of producing competent future leaders (*muttafaqah fiddin*), Darunnajah depends heavily on qualified teachers who are dedicated not only to teaching but also to guiding students’ holistic development (Savitri and Suherman 2018). Therefore, ensuring teacher quality and stability has become a strategic issue for the institution. See Figure 1

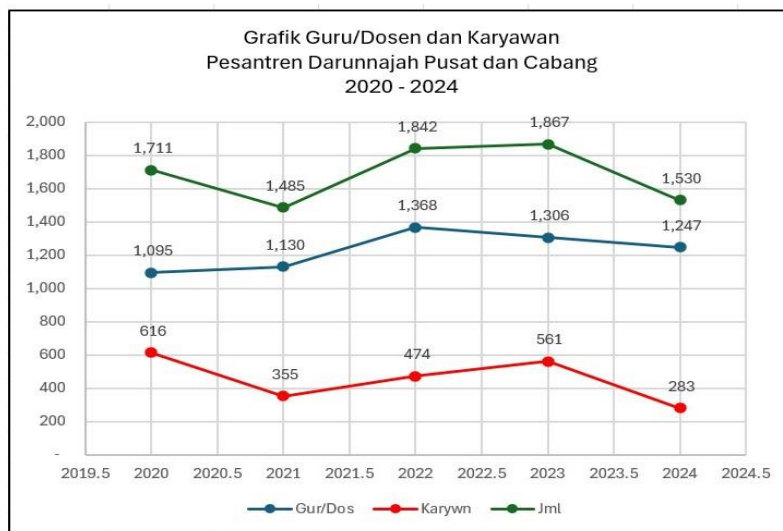


Figure 1. Data on Number of Teachers or Lecturers in the 2010-2024 Academic Year

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

However, Darunnajah faces ongoing challenges in terms of teacher retention. Data from recent years show fluctuations in the number of teachers: from 1,095 in 2020, increasing to 1,368 in 2022, before declining to 1,247 in 2024. Meanwhile, teacher turnover peaked in 2022, with 235 resignations, after 99 in 2021, and later fell to 97 in 2024. Many teachers, particularly those serving compulsory one-year assignments (*guru pengabdian*), leave after completing their services. Contributing factors include job assignments misaligned with expertise, multiple roles reducing teaching quality, limited career development, unsupportive work environments, and compensation that does not match workload. These issues highlight the pressing need to investigate the effectiveness of talent-management practices in improving teacher retention.

Talent management has been increasingly recognized as a strategic approach to human resource management. It is defined as the process of planning, acquiring, developing, and retaining individuals with potential to contribute significantly to organizational success (Savitri & Suherman, 2018). Fitz-enz (2010)

emphasized that effective talent management requires placing the right person in the right position while simultaneously providing opportunities for growth and contribution. Previous research has confirmed that strategic talent management can enhance motivation, commitment, and retention (Glaister et al., 2018). Nevertheless, achieving sustainable retention remains a challenge as organizations must continuously balance expectations, development opportunities, and working conditions (Kumar, 2021).

Although widely acknowledged in corporate settings, the influence of talent management on teacher retention in educational institutions, particularly pesantren, remains largely unexplored. Narayanan et al. (2019) underscored the importance of addressing employees' individual needs in talent management practices to strengthen retention. De Boeck et al. (2018) also highlighted that effective talent strategies align employee growth with organizational objectives, ultimately reducing turnover. However, most previous studies have been conducted in non-educational sectors, leaving a theoretical gap regarding the direct application of talent management to teacher retention in Islamic educational institutions.

Furthermore, teacher retention is not merely an operational issue but also a determinant of educational quality. High turnover disrupts the teaching process, increases recruitment costs and reduces organizational effectiveness (Permadi et al., 2024). Research has shown that effective talent management—covering recruitment, teamwork, career development, compensation, engagement, and working conditions—can be a key driver of retention (Fogarassy et al., 2017). For pesantren like Darunnajah, where the mission combines spiritual education with modern knowledge, understanding which practices most strongly influence teacher retention is practically and academically significant.

Therefore, this study investigates the influence of six dimensions of talent management—recruitment and selection, teamwork and management support, achievement and career management, salary and compensation, teacher engagement, and working conditions—on teacher retention at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah. This research not only addresses the empirical gap but also provides theoretical contributions to the literature on talent management and employee retention in educational settings.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed an explanatory quantitative research design to examine the causal relationships between talent management practices and teacher retention. Such a design was chosen because it allows for hypothesis testing and the validation of theories that have been widely applied in other organizational contexts. By adopting this approach, this study sought to determine whether the same principles of talent management that are effective in corporate environments are also applicable in the unique setting of Islamic boarding schools.

2.2 Setting of the Study

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah, one of the largest Islamic boarding schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. The pesantren oversees a network of over 1,200 educators spanning multiple educational tiers from elementary to tertiary levels. The employment system is unique, with a significant number of teachers being drawn from its alumni, who must commit to a minimum of one year of service following graduation. This specific arrangement offers a valuable context for examining teacher retention challenges, particularly in light of the interplay between religious commitments, institutional culture and professional goals.

2.3 Data and Data Resources

This study utilized two distinct types of data: (1) Primary data collected directly from educators using a structured questionnaire distributed online through Google Forms. A total of 93 educators participated, each having completed a minimum of one year of service, which ensured that the responses

were grounded in real teaching experiences; (2) Secondary data were collected from the Human Resources Department of Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah. The data encompassed figures related to the teacher population, turnover rates from 2020 to 2024, and organizational documents pertinent to talent management practices.

2.4 Data Analysis

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software was used to analyze the data. This approach was selected because it can withstand small sample sizes, non-normal data distributions, and is appropriate for both exploratory and predictive research. (Henseler et al., 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Two steps were taken in the analysis: (1) measurement model evaluation, which evaluated internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted, AVE), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion), and indicator reliability (outer loadings); and (2) evaluation of the structural model, which examined predictive relevance, R^2 values for endogenous constructs, and path coefficients. To verify the stability of the estimates, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was used for significance testing.

This methodical process ensured that the measurement tools and proposed structural relationships were thoroughly assessed, which increased the validity of the study's conclusions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

A total of 135 teachers from Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah participated in this study. Most respondents (60.7%) were female, 80% were between 18 and 25 years old, and 68.1% had completed high school. A total of 92.6% of respondents were teachers at the Tarbiyatul Mu'allimin wal Mu'allimat al-Islamiyyah (TMI), and the majority (86.7%) had less than five years of teaching experience. According to this demographic profile, young teachers with comparatively short tenures comprise the majority of the teaching workforce.

3.1.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model met the validity and reliability requirements. All factor loadings exceeded 0.70, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50 and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70. These results confirm that the constructs were measured appropriately and consistently in this study.

3.1.2 Structural Model

The structural model demonstrated good explanatory power, with an R^2 of 0.77 for teacher retention, indicating that 77% of its variance was explained by the six dimensions of talent management. Among these, career management ($\beta = 0.320$; $p < 0.01$), salary and compensation ($\beta = 0.186$; $p < 0.01$), and working conditions ($\beta = 0.434$; $p < 0.001$) had significant positive effects on the retention of teachers. Recruitment and selection, teamwork and management support, and teacher engagement were not significant predictors (Table 1).

Table 1. Structural Model Results

No.	Path	Coefficient	p- value	Result
1	Recruitment & Selection → Retention	0.001	0.988	Insignificant
2	Teamwork & Support → Retention	0.111	0.389	Insignificant
3	Career Management → Retention	0.320	0.005	Significant

4	Salary & Compensation → Retention	0.186	0.004	Significant
5	Teacher Engagement → Retention	-0.087	0.555	Insignificant
6	Working Conditions → Retention	0.434	0.000	Significant

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Recruitment and Selection

The results demonstrate that at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah, selection and recruitment have no discernible effect on teacher retention. The pesantren's unique employment system, where most teachers are former students who must serve for at least a year after graduation, explains this outcome. Consequently, the impact of official recruitment or selection procedures is diminished because their decision to remain or depart is essentially predetermined. This result contrasts with research conducted in business settings, such as that conducted by [Ratnawati and Subudi \(2018\)](#), who found that open hiring procedures increase employee retention. Nonetheless, it supports the contextual argument made by [Hughes et al. \(2008\)](#), who pointed out that organizational culture and labor market conditions can affect the effectiveness of talent management strategies.

3.2.2 Teamwork and Management Support

Additionally, managerial support and teamwork were not significant predictors of retention. The collectivist culture of pesantren, which already values cooperation and solidarity as part of everyday routines, could be the cause of this outcome. Since teamwork is embedded in the institution's values, it does not create a differentiation in retention outcomes. This contrasts with [Astuti and Dewi \(2019\)](#), who found that managerial support enhances loyalty in business organizations. However, in value-driven institutions, strong baseline teamwork reduces the marginal effects of additional managerial support.

3.2.3 Achievement and Career Management

Achievement and career management significantly affect teachers retention. Teachers who perceive fair appraisal policies and opportunities for career progression are more likely to remain. This supports [Huselid \(1995\)](#), who emphasized the strategic role of human resource practices in sustaining performance and retention, and is consistent with research by [Darmika and Sriathi \(2019\)](#), who showed that career development reduces turnover intention. In Darunnajah, where many teachers begin with short service contracts, career pathways and recognition provide strong motivation for extending tenure.

3.2.4 Salary and Compensation

Compensation is another significant predictor of retention. Although base salaries are relatively modest, additional benefits, such as allowances, housing, or recognition-based rewards, create a perception of fairness. This aligns with the findings of [Pradipta and Suwandana \(2019\)](#) and [Violetta and Edalmen \(2020\)](#), who found that financial rewards reduce turnover intention. The result also supports [Fitz-enz's \(2010\)](#) argument that compensation is a tangible signal of organizational value to employees.

3.2.5 Teacher Engagement

Surprisingly, teacher engagement was not a significant factor in predicting the retention. Despite high engagement scores, many teachers choose to leave after completing their obligatory service. This indicates that engagement alone is insufficient when structural factors, such as career opportunities or compensation, are lacking. This finding contradicts [Shuck et al. \(2016\)](#), who highlighted engagement as a

strong predictor of retention, but is consistent with [Permadi et al. \(2024\)](#), who observed that engagement may not translate into retention in contexts where turnover is driven by institutional rules rather than individual motivation.

3.2.6 Working Conditions

The best indicator of retention was found to be the working conditions. Teachers are more likely to remain in service when they work in collaborative, safe, and supportive environments. This result is in line with the findings of [Kundu and Lata \(2017\)](#), who showed that positive work environments increase employee loyalty, and [Spector \(2022\)](#), who highlighted the significance of job security and recognition in determining retention. Offering cozy and encouraging working conditions is an essential retention tactic for pesantren teachers, where monetary incentives may be scarce.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of talent management strategies on teacher retention at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah. The results showed that not every aspect of talent management has a major impact on retention. In particular, teachers' decisions to stay at the institution were positively and significantly impacted by working conditions, salary and compensation, and achievement and career management. However, teacher engagement, teamwork and management support, and recruitment and selection showed no discernible effects.

These results demonstrate that in a pesantren setting, contextual and practical elements such as career paths, monetary incentives, and encouraging work environments have a greater influence on retention than official selection procedures or team structures. This is in line with Darunnajah's distinctive hiring practices, which include hiring a large number of teachers from alumni who have completed a required service term. The results showed that experiences and opportunities during service have a greater impact on teacher retention than the admissions process.

The findings support what was anticipated in the introduction: although pesantren face similar human resource issues to contemporary organizations, they also have unique cultural and religious traits that influence retention in different ways. This study expands on current talent management theories in a non-corporate educational context by placing the findings within this particular institutional culture.

Practically speaking, the findings indicate that transparent incentive schemes, organized career development programs, and long-term working conditions should be prioritized by pesantren management. These components are essential for ensuring that educators feel appreciated and supported, which promotes sustained dedication.

Beyond the immediate context, this study opens up opportunities for further research into the intersection of organizational culture, religious values, and human resource practices. Future studies may be expanded by incorporating leadership style, organizational commitment, or workload as additional variables, or by applying a qualitative approach to capture teachers' lived experiences more deeply. Such directions would enrich the understanding of teacher retention in pesantren and other faith-based educational institutions.

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Ethical Approval

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles for social science studies. Approval for data collection was granted by the management of Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah. Participation in this study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to completing the questionnaire. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, and their responses were used solely for academic purposes. No personal identifying information was collected, and participants had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

Informed Consent Statement

All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and all responses were kept confidential and used solely for academic research purposes.

Authors' Contributions

DD contributed to the conceptual framework, research design, data analysis, and preparation of the manuscript. EJ contributed to data collection, statistical testing, and interpretation of findings. S contributed to the literature review, theoretical grounding, and critical revision of the manuscript.

Disclosure statement

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the conduct of this research or the publication of its results. All data and interpretations are presented objectively and solely for academic purposes.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons

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