

EVP STRATEGY FOR ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS: BALANCING FORMAL RECOGNITION AND CHARISMATIC LEGITIMACY FOR RETENTION

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Abstract

Harmonization between formal recognition and charismatic legitimacy is crucial to addressing the challenges of educator retention, in order to ensure the sustainability of professional human resource management without neglecting the traditional values and spirituality typical of the Islamic boarding school environment. This study aims to analyze a unique and effective Employee Value Proposition (EVP) strategy in Islamic boarding schools to improve the retention of qualified educators, especially amidst the increasing demands for professionalism that prioritize formal qualifications. Using a qualitative approach with a case study type. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with Kyai, administrators, and educators from various.. Data analysis using interactive models and data examination using triangulation. The results show that the EVP at Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School is effective through a dual-factor harmonization model. This strategy balances Formal Recognition with Charismatic Legitimacy as the Essential Motivating Factors for retention. Harmonization is supported by EVP Segmentation and the role of Harmonious Alumni, which binds core talent to spiritual commitment. This redefines retention in value-based institutions by combining external professionalism and internal charismatic authority. This research contribution offers a conceptual model of the Dual-Factor EVP of Islamic Boarding Schools that harmoniously integrates the values of spirituality (charisma) and local culture (khidmah) into a contemporary Human Resource Management framework, providing practical and strategic guidance for community-based educational institutions to manage and retain superior talent amidst value disruption and intense competition.

Keywords: *Employee Value Proposition; Charismatic Legitimacy; Educator Retention.*



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis Strategi Employee Value Proposition (EVP) yang unik dan efektif di lingkungan pesantren guna meningkatkan retensi sumber daya pendidik berkualitas, terutama di tengah meningkatnya tuntutan profesionalisme yang mengedepankan kualifikasi formal. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam dengan Kyai, pengurus, dan pendidik dari berbagai generasi, serta analisis ekstensif terhadap dokumen kepegawaian dan regulasi internal pesantren. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa EVP di Pesantren Darussalam Blokagung efektif melalui model harmonisasi dual-faktor. Strategi ini menyeimbangkan Formal Recognition dengan Charismatic Legitimacy sebagai Faktor Motivator Hakiki retensi. Harmonisasi didukung oleh Segmentasi EVP dan peran Alumni Harmonisa, yang mengikat core talent pada komitmen spiritual. Ini mendefinisikan ulang retensi di lembaga berbasis nilai dengan mengombinasikan profesionalisme eksternal dan otoritas karismatik internal. Kontribusi penelitian ini menawarkan model konseptual Dual-Factor EVP Pesantren yang mengintegrasikan secara harmonis nilai-nilai spiritualitas (karisma) dan budaya lokal (khidmah) ke dalam kerangka Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia kontemporer, memberikan panduan praktis dan strategis bagi lembaga pendidikan berbasis komunitas untuk mengelola dan mempertahankan talenta unggul di tengah disrupsi nilai dan persaingan ketat.

Kata Kunci: *Employee Value Proposition; Legitimasi Kharismatik; Retensi Pendidik.*

INTRODUCTION

The structural dualism between formality-based recognition of educator quality (Formal Recognition) and spiritual authority-based recognition (Charismatic Legitimacy) is the core challenge for Islamic boarding school management (Anwar et al., 2025; Buanaputra et al., 2022; Huda, 2024). This dualism arises because Islamic boarding schools, as communal-spiritual educational institutions, now operate under the demands of professionalism and recognition that prioritize objective qualifications (Quality in Fact), such as academic degrees and certifications, which are bargaining chips in the modern job market (Ro'fah & Absor, 2025). However, internally, the value of an educator as an inheritor of tradition and a moral role model is still measured by charismatic authority, exemplary behavior, and devotion (khidmah), which reflects quality in perception (Abdurrahman et al., 2022; Badrun, 2023; Mujahid, 2021). This condition forces Islamic boarding schools to implement educational resource management that cannot choose one, but must manage both recognition systems in parallel (Badrun, 2024; Ikhwan & Yuniana, 2022; Yamin, 2023). Failure to balance the two can result in the loss of superior talent seeking formal recognition outside, or the loss of the

moral/charismatic strength that is at the heart of retention within the pesantren itself.

The retention and commitment of educators is highly dependent on the success of Islamic boarding schools in building a "Transcendent Psychological Contract" that goes beyond material work agreements (Abdi et al., 2025). This is evidenced by the finding that the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) strategy in Islamic boarding schools does not rely solely on financial incentives. This is due to the strong culture of *khidmah* (sincere devotion) and deep-rooted spirituality, which creates a stronger moral and spiritual bond for educators than rational economic incentives (Ismail et al., 2024; Nasruddin, 2025). This transcendent bond involves the promise of rewards in the afterlife, recognition of socio-spiritual status within the community, and direct closeness to the *Kyai*, who is considered a source of blessings. Therefore, for educators who choose to serve in Islamic boarding schools, their commitment is long-term and deeply rooted in religious values, making it a unique social phenomenon that distinguishes educator management in Islamic boarding schools from corporate or public schools.

The limitations of formal recognition (including remuneration and certification) which only function as a hygiene motivation factor for educators in Islamic boarding school environments (Ikhwan, Rohmad, et al., 2025; Kadir & Umiarso, 2023; Minan et al., 2025; Roqib, 2021). Formal qualifications and material incentives (salary) have been shown to be important in preventing dissatisfaction or reasons for educators to leave to seek other employment, in line with Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; O'Sullivan, 2022). However, these factors alone are not enough to motivate educators or create deep and lasting loyalty. The true motivation (motivator factor) and long-term binding force comes from non-material Charismatic Legitimacy (Roth & Saunders, 2023). Formal recognition is needed as a functional requirement in a modern system, but the social system of Islamic boarding schools has a higher commitment strengthening mechanism, placing spiritual and charismatic values as the main drivers of retention and dedication.

External demands for recognition and professionalism serve as agents of social change that force Islamic boarding schools to reform the structure and assessment of their educational resources (Faizin, 2024; Rahmah & Prasetyo, 2022). In facing these demands, Islamic boarding schools can no longer rely solely on charismatic authority; they are obliged to provide objective evidence (Quality in Fact) of the competence of their educators (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Karim et al., 2025). This places double pressure on management, as they must adapt to state standards, including requiring educators to have a master's degree and a teaching certificate, while

maintaining the authenticity of the charismatic legitimacy that binds the community. Therefore, this social change is not simply about administrative fulfillment, but rather about ongoing negotiations between the traditional education system and global demands (Achmadin et al., 2024; Arifin, 2022; Maryati et al., 2023). This process creates "hybrid" educators who must be both formally competent (worldly) and spiritually steadfast.

Regarding the central and functional role of Kyai (Caregivers) as the highest instrument for managing educator resources in educator retention strategies (Mukarromah et al., 2024; Rohmawati, 2024). In the social context of Islamic boarding schools, the Charismatic Legitimacy possessed by Kyai is socially accepted as a source of absolute legitimacy and moral authority (Fitria, 2025; Robaeah et al., 2023). Spiritual closeness or direct recognition from the Kyai (such as promotion or social status) has been proven to be a fundamental motivator and long-term bond for educators. This means that key retention decisions, rewards, and status recognition are not always governed by formal HRD policies, but rather through socio-spiritual networks centered on the Kyai's charisma. The Pesantren Dual-Factor EVP Model emphasizes that in a spiritually based communal system, charismatic leadership is an effective and efficient management mechanism, with a retention impact that far exceeds the administrative policies of the educational institution.

The literature review on educators in Islamic boarding schools underlines the fundamental discourse regarding the dualism of educator quality: between formal and objective quality (Quality in Fact) and cultural and subjective quality (Quality in Perception) (Sudir & Munawir Yusuf, 2025; M. B. N. Wajdi et al., 2023). Although quality management studies (such as those developed by Sallis and Juran) emphasize the need for technical standards and customer (student/guardian) satisfaction, the pesantren context shows significant anomalies in retention factors (Haqpana, 2024; Inayah, 2024). Previous research, including the work of Abdurrahman Wahid, has consistently highlighted that material recognition or formal certification has limited influence on loyalty (Salsabilla et al., 2025; Situmorang, 2022). On the contrary, the charismatic authority of the Kyai is the main institutional force that gives rise to transcendent organizational commitment through the values of service and spiritual-based psychological contracts (Wahab & Umar, 2024; F. Wajdi et al., 2022). This phenomenon is in line with Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, where Formal Recognition (salary, certification) only acts as a Hygiene Factor—merely preventing dissatisfaction—while Charismatic Legitimacy (moral and spiritual recognition) functions as an Essential Motivator that binds educators in the long term.

The fundamental novelty of this research lies in the development of a conceptual model of the Dual-Factor EVP of Islamic Boarding Schools. Significantly different from typical studies of educator resource management, which tend to focus on financial factors or standardized formal qualifications, this research explicitly examines the intersection of objective and spiritual-communal criteria. Its primary contribution is the examination of the complex harmonization and interaction between Formal Recognition (measurable qualifications and remuneration, representing Quality in Fact) and Charismatic Legitimacy (spiritual authority and social recognition, representing Quality in Perception). This innovation is achieved through the explicit integration of established Western management theories, such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, with the deeply rooted local spirituality and cultural dimension of Islamic boarding schools, namely the value of *khidmah*. By providing an analytical framework that combines these formal and transcendent dimensions, this research offers a deep, accurate, and highly contextualized understanding of educator talent retention strategies in communal value-based institutions, filling a crucial gap in the global literature on educator resource management in religious organizations.

The Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School in Banyuwangi is a relevant case study location because this institution factually represents the complexity of the dualistic talent management challenges outlined. Blokagung is known as a large Islamic boarding school with a strong Salafiyah tradition and the centrality of absolute Kyai charisma, which serves as a strong basis for Charismatic Legitimacy and the value of *khidmah* (Quality in Perception). On the other hand, this Islamic boarding school also manages formal educational institutions (schools, madrasas, and even universities) that demand high professionalism, accreditation, and Formal Recognition (academic degrees and certifications) as proof of Quality in Fact. This dynamic creates a perfect research laboratory: Blokagung must actively balance the need to maintain traditional spiritual wisdom with the demands of modernization and professionalism. An in-depth analysis at this location will empirically reveal how the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) strategy is implemented to prevent dual talent leakage and present a tested model of harmonization between spiritual tradition and formal criteria, making this research finding not only contextually unique but also has broad policy implications for other multigenerational Islamic boarding schools.

The urgency of this research arises from the strategic dilemma and dualistic talent management challenges currently faced by the majority of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia. In the current context, Islamic boarding schools are at a crossroads between the demands of external educator recognition and

professionalism—which demand Formal Recognition (such as academic degrees and certifications) as proof of Quality in Fact—and the necessity to maintain spiritual integrity, the charismatic authority of the Kyai, and the value of service as the core of retention (Quality in Perception). If the tension between these two criteria is not strategically harmonized through the Dual-Factor EVP, Islamic boarding schools risk experiencing a dual talent leakage: the loss of highly qualified formal educators who seek financial and professional recognition in external institutions, while simultaneously losing authoritative spiritual educator figures who feel the value of their service is reduced to mere bureaucracy. Therefore, this research is very urgent because it provides an operational model that serves as a critical guide for Islamic boarding school management to formulate fair, sustainable, and adaptive educational policies, ensuring that modernization does not erode the cultural and spiritual foundations that are the main pillars of the institution's sustainability. Therefore, this study aims to analyze a unique and effective EVP Strategy in the Islamic boarding school environment to increase the retention of quality educational resources, especially amidst the increasing demands for professionalism that prioritize formal qualifications.

RESEARCH METHODS

The use of a qualitative approach with a single case study is crucial in this research because the phenomenon under study—namely the harmonization of Formal Recognition and Charismatic Legitimacy as factors in educator retention—is complex, contextual, and imbued with profound cultural-spiritual values. Qualitative methods allow researchers to not only measure variables but also to deeply explore "how" and "why" Pesantren Darussalam Blokagung successfully manages this dualistic dilemma, which is impossible to capture through standardized quantitative metrics. The single case study provides the opportunity to conduct rich data mining (thick description) regarding internal dynamics, educators' perspectives on the value of khidmah, the central role of Kyai as a source of charismatic legitimacy, and the internal negotiation process between external demands of professionalism and pesantren traditions. Thus, this approach ensures strong contextual validity, resulting in a Dual-Factor EVP Pesantren model that is not only theoretical, but also operational and based on unique social realities in the field.

The following data collection techniques are complementary and absolutely necessary to capture the depth of the dualistic phenomenon at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School: in-depth interviews are the primary tool for uncovering the aspects of quality in perception and charismatic legitimacy. Through

interviews with kyai, senior educators, and millennial educators, researchers can explore subjective understanding, motivation for service, and the content of the transcendent and unwritten psychological contract. Furthermore, participant observation is essential for verifying and understanding charismatic legitimacy in everyday contexts, for example, how the kyai's authority significantly influences the learning process, retention decision-making, and social interactions, data that would not be detected through formal questionnaires. Meanwhile, documentation studies serve as a capture of objective Quality in Fact and Formal Recognition data, such as accreditation guidelines, educator academic qualification data (degrees/certifications), and formal remuneration structures. By integrating these three methods, this study is able to triangulate rich data, ensuring that the resulting EVP harmonization model is empirically valid, from both formal/objective and cultural/subjective perspectives.

The interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana is highly relevant in this context for several fundamental reasons. First, it is iterative and simultaneous, which is crucial when dealing with rich and complex data from multiple sources (in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation). Data analysis is not conducted linearly after all data is collected, but rather begins with the initial data collection, allowing researchers to continuously and mutually influence data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing in the field. Second, this interactive framework is highly effective in addressing dualistic phenomena (Formal vs. Charismatic). Data obtained from Formal Recognition (documents) and Charismatic Legitimacy (interview narratives) can be systematically managed to identify emerging patterns, categories, and subthemes, particularly in identifying causal connections between Quality in Fact and Quality in Perception on retention. Third, this model allows for ongoing verification and triangulation of findings. Every initial interpretation (temporary conclusion) from Blokagung can be immediately re-tested with new observational or documentation data, thus ensuring that the resulting Dual-Factor EVP Pesantren model has high contextual and empirical validity.

The use of triangulation techniques is crucial in this research because the phenomenon being studied is dualistic and multilevel, involving objective data (Formal Recognition) and interpretive data (Charismatic Legitimacy). Triangulation is necessary to strengthen the validity and credibility of the findings. By combining in-depth interviews (for perspectives and values of service), participant observation (to observe the practice of Charismatic Legitimacy in daily interactions), and documentary studies (for Formal Recognition data such as qualifications and accreditation), researchers can verify the consistency of information from various

perspectives. For example, what is stated in formal documents regarding retention criteria must be cross-checked with what is perceived and practiced by senior educators and Kyai. This cross-validation process ensures that the resulting Dual-Factor EVP model of the Pesantren is an accurate, comprehensive, and unbiased representation, successfully bridging the gap between the reality of structured management and the deep-rooted spiritual culture in Blokagung..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Dominance of Kyai's Dawuh in Key Retention and Educator Placement

The research findings show that although the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School has formal educational units (schools and universities) that demand high qualifications (Formal Recognition), the main determinant of educator retention in strategic and leadership positions is not salary or certification, but rather "Dawuh Kyai" (Kyai's orders/instructions). This Dawuh serves as the highest manifestation of Charismatic Legitimacy. Educators who are placed or asked to stay through the Kyai's dawuh tend to demonstrate a transcendent and long-term Organizational Commitment, setting aside financial incentives outside the Islamic boarding school. This proves that at the core talent level, Quality in Perception (spiritual bond) is far more effective as a retention factor than Quality in Fact (material incentives). This is as stated by Ustadz Anas Saeroji, deputy head of education and teaching, as follows:

"Of course there are considerations of formal qualifications, diplomas, certifications, these are mandatory because of the demands of professionalism. However, the final decider is the Dawuh Kyai. He looks not only at intellectual intelligence, but at inner readiness and sincerity in serving. 'You are here, as a teacher, this is your job' - once the Kyai dawuh, it is finished. All formal technical considerations follow."

The interview excerpt explicitly demonstrates the duality of the educator retention and placement system. Although the Islamic boarding school operates within a formal educational framework that demands compliance with external bureaucratic standards such as qualifications, diplomas, and certification (Formal Recognition for professionalism), these factors are merely minimal, technical requirements. The ultimate decision-maker for retention and placement in strategic positions is the "Dawuh Kyai," which is based on an internal assessment of the educator's spiritual readiness and sincerity of service. (Karim et al., 2025; Hafidloh, 2025 ; AlQadrie, 2022) This proves that Charismatic Legitimacy which is realized through "Dawuh Kyai" has bargaining power and authority that far exceeds and

integrates Legal-Rational Legitimacy (formal system), placing Quality in Perception (spiritual bond and inner commitment) as the most dominant capital and retention factor for core talent in Islamic boarding schools (Ikhwan et al., 2025 ; Siregar & Yusron, 2024). Pay attention to the following picture of teacher retention in Islamic boarding schools.

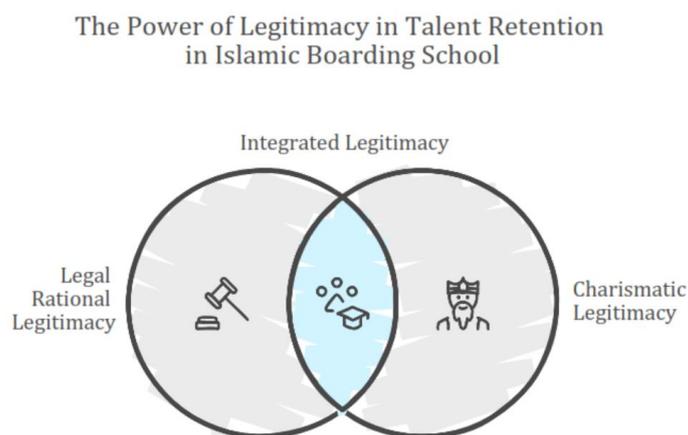


Figure 1. Core of Educator Retention at Darussalam Blokagung

The figure visualizes the unique teacher retention model in Islamic boarding schools, where the success of retaining Core Talent is highly dependent on the intersection and interaction of two main factors: Formal Recognition and Charismatic Legitimacy. Formal Recognition reflects external bureaucratic standards (such as diplomas and certifications) that must be met by formal education units, while Charismatic Legitimacy, represented by spiritual readiness and sincerity of service (referring to the Dawuh Kyai), is the dominant internal force (Badrun, 2024; Ikhwan & Yuniana, 2022). This model shows that in the Islamic boarding school environment, strategic educator retention is not achieved only through formal/material recognition, but rather through combining formal authority with deeper spiritual ties, making Charismatic Legitimacy the core of long-term commitment (Abdurrahman et al., 2022; Faizin, 2024; Mau, 2024).

Employee Value Proposition Segmentation for Teachers Based on Work Unit

Darussalam Islamic Boarding School Blokagung implicitly applies different EVP Segmentation strategies for two main groups of educators. The Formal Educator Group (under the auspices of schools/universities) is offered an EVP that emphasizes Formal Recognition: support for teacher certification, opportunities to continue studying, and relatively competitive remuneration (although not corporate-level). Meanwhile, the Asatidz Diniyah/Senior Group (under the auspices

of pondok) is offered an EVP that emphasizes Charismatic Legitimacy: closeness to the Kyai, public recognition (high social status in the community), and opportunities for service. This segmentation is factual because it allows the Islamic boarding school to recruit and retain talents motivated by different factors: rational-professional and spiritual-communal, preventing talent leakage by offering "value" that aligns with the priorities of each educator. This explanation is as stated by Ustadz Abdul Basit, Head of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, Uimsya Blokagung, as follows:

"As an educator in a formal unit, my primary motivation is professionalism. I want a doctorate, and I need formal recognition. I'm here because there's a clear career path and adequate remuneration to support myself and my family. This is my professional work."

The interview excerpt reflects the mentality of educators at the formal unit of the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School, who are strongly oriented towards Formal Recognition values, identifying themselves as professionals driven by career and material needs. The primary motivations for educators are advanced academic achievement (doctoral) and the need for formal recognition (certification/diploma), both of which require a work environment with a clear career path and adequate remuneration.(Assem et al., 2023; Chiemeka-Unogu, 2021) Thus, for this segment of educators, the EVP of Islamic boarding schools must at least meet competitive rational-professional standards in the job market, where their presence is maintained by measurable incentives (Quality in Fact) as a support for life and professional development (Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022; Wahab, 2024). For more details on educator retention factors, see the following table.

Table 1. Key Retention Factors for Educators at Darussalam Blokagung

Category of Educator	Retention Factor (EVP)	Achieved Results
Professional and Career Needs	Advanced Academic Development (Doctoral Studies) and Clear Career Paths	<i>Formal Recognition (Legal-Rational Recognition)</i>
Material Needs and Welfare	Adequate Remuneration and Fulfillment of Living Needs	<i>Quality in Fact (Measurable Material Incentives)</i>
Work Orientation	Professionalism and Competitiveness in the Job Market	Rational-Professional (Extrinsic Motivation)

The table underlines that the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) strategy for the Formal Educator segment in Islamic boarding schools is dominated by the values of Formal Recognition and Quality in Fact (Mulang, 2021). Retention of this group is driven by a rational-professional orientation, where their commitment is maintained by measurable extrinsic incentives, such as support for achieving the highest academic degree (S3), the need for certification, and the guarantee of adequate remuneration to support a clear lifestyle and career development. In other words, for formal educators, the role of Islamic boarding schools is seen as a professional occupation that must meet labor market standards to ensure individual sustainability and advancement (Efendy et al., 2023; Maduningtias et al., 2022; Nuryaman et al., 2025).

Integration of the Service Index in the Dual-Criteria Performance Evaluation of Educators

The performance appraisal system for educators in Blokagung is dual-criteria, where Formal Recognition and Charismatic Legitimacy are harmonized through an unwritten "Khidmah Index." Factual evidence suggests that formal evaluations (e.g., PBM grades, attendance, and lesson plans) account for only 60-70% of promotion decisions. The remainder is determined by subjective assessments by the Kyai or representatives (Core Management) regarding loyalty, willingness to sacrifice, and obedience (Khidmah Index). This Khidmah Index serves as a corrective mechanism to ensure that educators with high factual qualifications do not neglect the core values of the pesantren. Thus, the harmonization of Fact and Perception is implemented through an assessment process that combines objective metrics and character/spiritual assessments.

"We don't want educators who are just smart in class but disobedient to the Kyai, or vice versa. A well-thought-out promotion decision is the result of a harmony between objective assessments (Facts) from formal units and subjective/spiritual assessments (Perceptions) from the Core Management representing the Kyai."

Based on that statement is a policy statement that concisely explains the essence of the dual-criteria performance evaluation system at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School. It firmly rejects the unilinear model of teacher resource management, whether based solely on formal competency (Fact) or solely on spiritual loyalty (Perception) (Ikhwan, Zukhrufin, et al., 2025; Mustain & Bakar, 2025). On the contrary, pesantren emphasize that mature promotion decisions and strategic positioning must arise from the harmonization of both dimensions:

objective assessments (such as academic performance metrics from formal units) must be balanced with subjective/spiritual assessments (through the unwritten Khidmah Index that reflects obedience and loyalty to the Kyai) (Wahono et al., 2023). This implies that in the pesantren environment, Charismatic Legitimacy acts as a filtering and controlling mechanism that ensures that high qualifications do not neglect the core values of the pesantren, so that only fully integrated talents (professional and spiritual) are recognized (Grinev, 2024). The following is a picture that explains the balanced recognition of talent in Islamic boarding school educators.

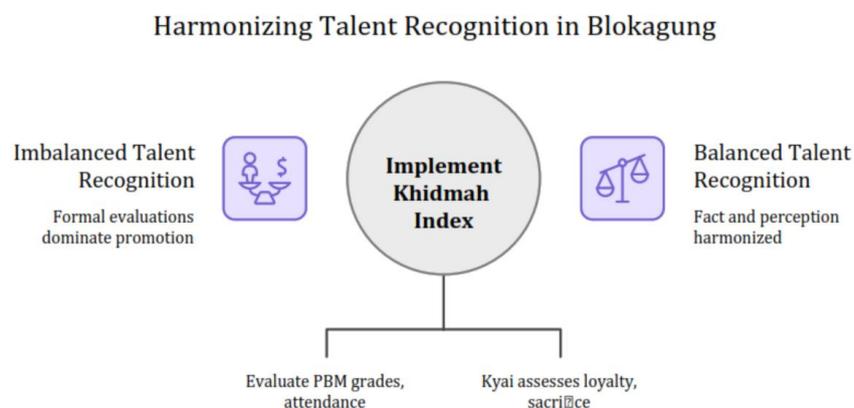


Figure 2. The Power of Balanced Talent Recognition

The figure visualizes an optimal talent recognition model in a religious environment, centered on the creation of Integrated Talent—qualified individuals aligned with core values. This model asserts that full recognition occurs only when two key dimensions are balanced: the first is Objective Competencies (Fact), which refers to measurable professional skills (Formal Recognition), and the second is Spiritual Loyalty (Perception), which encompasses inner devotion and loyalty to core values (Charismatic Legitimacy) (Anastasiou et al., 2024). Thus, the power of talent recognition lies in the system's ability to reject partial recognition and promote only those who simultaneously meet the demands of professional expertise and spiritual commitment (Badrun, 2024; Fatahillah et al., 2023; Huda, 2024).

Islamic Boarding School Alumni as Agents of Educator Harmony

It was found that the key to successful EVP harmonization lies in placing senior alumni with high Charismatic Legitimacy in managerial positions. These alumni possess sufficient Formal Recognition (academic degrees) to negotiate with external demands (accreditation) but also possess a deep understanding of Charismatic Legitimacy (having an inner bond with the Kyai). They serve as a "bridge" that

translates formal policies into the language of spiritual obedience and translates the Kyai's dawuh into structured operational policies, thereby reducing potential conflict and creating widespread acceptance of the dual-factor EVP model. As Ustadz Komarudin explained, the following senior alumni:

"Conflict arises when one party feels their values are being ignored. Senior alumni like us, who are respected in both camps (formal and pondok), are able to create broad acceptance. We ensure there is no talent leakage because we offer a harmonized EVP: 'Come professional for recognition, but the intention remains lillah and obedient to Kyai.'"

Based on that statement concisely interprets the crucial role of Senior Alumni in managerial positions as Harmonious Agents in the Islamic boarding school's dual EVP strategy. The success of talent retention and prevention of leakage is considered very effective because Senior Alumni are able to bridge and mediate two different value groups—the demands of external professionalism (seeking formal recognition) and the demands of internal spirituality (intention to Allah and obedience to Kyai) (Auliyah et al., 2025; Siregar & Yusron, 2024). By becoming respected figures on both sides, they successfully crafted a harmonized EVP, integrating professional goals with spiritual motivations. This ensured that neither party felt their values were being ignored, fostering widespread acceptance of the dual-criteria policy and strengthening long-term commitment to the pesantren. The following table illustrates the key roles of alumni in harmonizing education at the pesantren.

Table 2. Key Role of Senior Alumni as Agents of Educator Harmony

Key Elements	Senior Alumni Role Description	Impact on Educator Retention	Harmonized Concept
Dual Status	A respected figure in both camps (has high Formal Recognition and Charismatic Legitimacy)	Creating Wide Acceptance of dual-criteria (formal and spiritual) policies.	<i>Formal Recognition (External)</i>
Mechanism of Action	Able to bridge and mediate two different value groups (professional vs. spiritual).	Packaging a Harmonized EVP; no party (formal or Islamic educators) feels their values are ignored.	<i>Charismatic Legitimacy (Internal)</i>
Focus on Harmonization	Integrating professional goals (seeking formal recognition) with spiritual motivation (intentions for Allah and obedience to Kyai).	Preventing Talent Leakage and Strengthening Educators' Long-Term Commitment.	<i>Integrated Talent (Fact + Perception)</i>

The table illustrates that Senior Alumni at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School function as highly effective Harmonious Agents in the dual EVP strategy, thanks to their status as respected figures in both camps (having formal legitimacy and charisma). Their key role is to bridge the demands of Objective Competencies (professionalism and recognition) with Spiritual Loyalty (intention to Allah and obedience to the Kyai), which is the core of Integrated Talent. By packaging this dual-criteria policy, they ensure that the values of both educator segments are not neglected, thus successfully creating broad acceptance of the balanced management model, ultimately preventing talent leakage and strengthening long-term commitment to the Islamic boarding school (Darwanto et al., 2024; Faizin, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The unique and effective Employee Value Proposition (EVP) strategy to increase the retention of quality teaching resources at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School is not a single model, but rather a Dual-Factor Harmonization Model that successfully integrates and balances Quality in Fact (through Formal Recognition) and Quality in Perception (through Charismatic Legitimacy). Amidst the increasing demands for professionalism, the Islamic boarding school strategically uses Formal Recognition (certification, qualification) as a Hygiene Factor to prevent dissatisfaction and maintain accreditation, while the Dominance of Kyai's Dawuh and the unwritten Khidmah Index function as Essential Motivator Factors and determinants of retention in key positions. This strategy is realized through EVP Segmentation that offers different values to formal educators and *asatidz diniyah*, and is strengthened by Alumni as Structural Harmony Agents that bridge bureaucracy and charisma. Thus, Islamic boarding schools have successfully prevented dual talent leakage by ensuring that core talent is bound not only by professional recognition, but especially by spiritual and transcendent Organizational Commitment, a finding that redefines talent retention in value-based educational institutions.

A limitation of this research is its in-depth single case study nature at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School. Therefore, the findings regarding the Dual-Factor Harmonization Model may not be directly generalizable to all Islamic boarding school typologies in Indonesia, particularly those with distinct charismatic or bureaucratic characteristics. Furthermore, the study's focus on internal teacher retention and EVP limits exploration of the impact of this dual-factor model on external outcomes, such as the quality of student learning outcomes or the competitiveness of alumni in the job market. Therefore, future researchers

are strongly recommended to conduct a multi-site comparative study (cross-case analysis) comparing pure Salaf Islamic boarding schools with very modern Islamic boarding schools (khalaf) to test the robustness of the resulting model. Furthermore, further research could adopt a mixed-methods approach, namely developing a quantitative scale based on the dimensions of Kyai Dawuh Domination and the Khidmah Index to statistically measure the strength of Charismatic Legitimacy, thereby enriching the analysis of the effectiveness of this Essential Motivator Factor.

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