

The Crisis of Leadership Succession in Nahdlatul Ulama: An Institutional Analysis of the Uncertainty of Leadership Transition, Duplication in Leadership Training, the Transmission of Identity, and Imbalances in the Organizational Structure

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Abstract

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) possesses extensive organizational networks, human resources, and a large socio-religious constituency, making cadre regeneration essential for organizational sustainability. However, several challenges indicate that the regeneration system has not functioned optimally. This study aims to analyze the crisis of cadre regeneration in Nahdlatul Ulama from an institutional perspective, focusing on four issues: unclear cadre transition among autonomous bodies, duplication of cadre education, inheritance of identity without organizational participation, and disparities in organizational structures between Java and regions outside Java. This research employed a qualitative library research approach. Primary data were obtained from the Constitution and Bylaws (AD/ART) of Nahdlatul Ulama and its autonomous organizations, while secondary data were collected from relevant literature and supporting documents. Data were analyzed using content analysis. The findings reveal that the NU regeneration system has achieved structural institutionalization but has not yet reached systemic integration. As a result, cadre mobility remains fragmented, cadre education tends to be repetitive, organizational participation is not effectively reproduced across generations, and cadre development remains uneven across regions. The novelty of this study lies in proposing an integrated regeneration model based on a sustainable cadre pipeline, competency recognition, family-based regeneration, and affirmative policies for strengthening cadre development outside Java. These findings contribute to strengthening organizational sustainability and leadership succession within Nahdlatul Ulama.

Keywords: Nahdlatul Ulama; Cadre Regeneration; Institutional Analysis; Identity Reproduction; Organizational Structure

Abstrak

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) memiliki jaringan organisasi yang luas, sumber daya manusia yang besar, serta basis konstituen sosial-keagamaan yang kuat, sehingga regenerasi kader menjadi aspek penting bagi keberlanjutan organisasi. Namun demikian, sejumlah persoalan menunjukkan bahwa sistem regenerasi kader belum berfungsi secara optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis krisis regenerasi kader di Nahdlatul Ulama dari perspektif kelembagaan dengan memusatkan perhatian pada empat persoalan, yaitu ketidakjelasan transisi kader antar-badan otonom, duplikasi pendidikan kader, pewarisan identitas tanpa

partisipasi organisasi, serta kesenjangan struktur organisasi antara wilayah Jawa dan luar Jawa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan. Data primer diperoleh dari Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga (AD/ART) Nahdlatul Ulama beserta organisasi-organisasi badan otonomnya, sedangkan data sekunder dihimpun dari literatur yang relevan dan berbagai dokumen pendukung. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis isi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sistem regenerasi kader NU telah mencapai tahap pelembagaan secara struktural, tetapi belum mencapai integrasi secara sistemik. Akibatnya, mobilitas kader masih terfragmentasi, pendidikan kader cenderung berulang, partisipasi organisasi belum berhasil direproduksi secara efektif lintas generasi, dan pengembangan kader masih berlangsung secara tidak merata antardaerah. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada usulan model regenerasi terintegrasi yang berbasis pada alur kader berkelanjutan, pengakuan kompetensi, regenerasi berbasis keluarga, serta kebijakan afirmatif untuk memperkuat pengembangan kader di luar Jawa. Temuan ini berkontribusi terhadap penguatan keberlanjutan organisasi dan suksesi kepemimpinan dalam Nahdlatul Ulama.

Kata Kunci: Nahdlatul Ulama; Regenerasi Kader; Analisis Kelembagaan; Reproduksi Identitas; Struktur Organisasi

Introduction

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is the largest Islamic civil society organization in Indonesia, with an extensive institutional network, substantial human resources, and a broad grassroots constituency distributed across the country. The scale of NU's institutional network is reflected in the existence of 548 branch executive boards (PCNU), more than 7,000 subdistrict representative councils (MWCNU), and approximately 61,000 village-level branches throughout Indonesia (Staquf, 2026). The sustainability of an organization of this magnitude depends not only on the intergenerational transmission of its religious traditions but also on the effectiveness of its cadre development system in ensuring leadership succession and organizational continuity. Cadre development can be understood as a systematic process of preparing new members to continue an organization's mission, with its principal function being to produce cadres capable of assuming responsibility for the organization's future struggles and leadership (Ikhsan, 2024). It therefore constitutes a strategic instrument for equipping members with the ideological, intellectual, and organizational capacities required to sustain the organization's vision and mission. The effectiveness of cadre development is consequently an important indicator of institutional resilience and organizational sustainability.

NU implements its cadre development system through a range of autonomous bodies that correspond to the age groups and characteristics of their respective constituencies. These include the Nahdlatul Ulama Student Association (Ikatan Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama, IPNU), the Nahdlatul Ulama Female Student Association (Ikatan Pelajar Putri Nahdlatul Ulama, IPPNU), the Ansor Youth Movement (Gerakan Pemuda Ansor), Fatayat NU, Muslimat NU, and various other institutions and organizations operating within the NU organizational environment. The existence of these autonomous bodies suggests that NU has developed a conceptually tiered cadre system intended to ensure organizational and leadership continuity. The cadre development process generally includes recruitment, the internalization of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah and NU organizational values, leadership

competency development, and leadership succession (Miftah, 2025). Nevertheless, empirical conditions indicate that the existing system has not fully addressed the increasingly complex challenges of organizational regeneration in the contemporary era.

One major problem within NU's cadre system concerns the overlapping age boundaries among its autonomous bodies, which prevent cadre transition from operating in a clear and linear manner. Normatively, IPNU and IPPNU permit membership up to the age of 27 (IPNU, 2019), whereas GP Ansor accepts members from the age of 20 (Hatala et al., 2025), as does Fatayat NU (Maimunah et al., 2022). These regulations create a considerable age overlap between 20 and 27 years. Cadres who are already eligible to join GP Ansor or Fatayat NU may therefore remain formally registered and actively involved in IPNU or IPPNU. Consequently, highly capable cadres within this productive age group tend to remain in student organizations because they continue to possess structural legitimacy and access to familiar spaces for organizational participation. At the same time, GP Ansor and Fatayat NU require cadres from the same age group to strengthen leadership succession and organizational continuity.

This overlap means that cadre development does not necessarily progress sequentially from IPNU or IPPNU to GP Ansor or Fatayat NU. Instead, the autonomous bodies may compete for cadres within the same age range. As a result, leadership regeneration in youth organizations is frequently delayed because the supply of cadres from student organizations does not transition optimally. Meanwhile, student organizations remain dominated by senior cadres who, in terms of age and organizational maturity, should have entered the subsequent stage of the cadre development system.

NU's cadre system also faces the problem of duplicated cadre education across autonomous bodies. Cadres who have completed several levels of training within student organizations are often required to repeat substantially similar materials when entering another autonomous body. Topics concerning Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, NU organizational identity, leadership, and organizational management are frequently reintroduced without any formal mechanism for recognizing competencies acquired through previous training. As a consequence, cadre education risks functioning primarily as an administrative requirement rather than as a progressive process of capacity development. This condition may generate institutional inefficiency and reduce cadres' motivation to continue participating in organizational training and self-development.

Another equally important issue is the limited intergenerational transmission of organizational participation within Nahdliyin families. A frequently observed phenomenon is that many families successfully transmit NU religious identity and cultural traditions to younger generations but do not transmit active organizational involvement. Many NU, Muslimat, Ansor, and Fatayat officials have children who possess a strong Nahdliyin identity but do not participate actively in NU cadre organizations. This situation indicates that the transmission of cultural identity has not been accompanied by the transmission of institutional commitment. Consequently, the number of individuals identifying culturally and religiously with NU may continue to increase without a corresponding increase in the number of organizational cadres prepared to assume future leadership responsibilities.

The challenges of cadre regeneration become more complex when considered in relation to disparities in organizational development between Java and regions outside Java. As an organization that originated and developed in Java, NU continues to concentrate a substantial proportion of its cadre resources, cadre development activities, and organizational structures on the island. By contrast, several regions outside Java continue to encounter considerable constraints in establishing organizational structures at the grassroots level. Difficulties in forming village-level branches and subdistrict-level councils indicate that the distribution of cadres and the strengthening of organizational capacity have not occurred evenly across regions. Such disparities may have significant implications for NU's long-term sustainability, particularly given its status as a national organization seeking to maintain an extensive institutional presence throughout Indonesia.

Previous studies on NU have generally focused on its socio-religious roles (Yani et al., 2026), its contribution to religious moderation (Muslim & Werdiningsih, 2023), the transformation of Islamic boarding schools or pesantren (Alhaq & Suparto, 2025), and its contribution to democracy and nation-building (Aprilia et al., 2025). Other studies have examined cadre development within specific NU-affiliated organizations, including IPNU, GP Ansor, the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, PMII), and Fatayat NU, although the literature has been dominated by studies of IPNU and IPPNU (Fauziah et al., 2022). However, comprehensive studies investigating NU's cadre regeneration crisis from an institutional perspective remain relatively limited.

Most previous studies have examined cadre development within a single autonomous body and have therefore not provided a comprehensive account of the relationships among autonomous bodies within NU's broader cadre system. Furthermore, few studies have integrated the problems of cadre transition, duplicated cadre education, intergenerational identity transmission, and disparities in organizational structures within a unified analytical framework. This fragmented scholarly attention has left important questions concerning the systemic integration and institutional sustainability of NU's cadre development largely unexplored.

Against this background, the present study seeks to address the gap in the literature by examining NU's cadre regeneration through an institutional perspective. It specifically analyzes the regeneration crisis in relation to unclear cadre transitions among autonomous bodies, duplication in cadre education, the intergenerational transmission of NU identity and organizational participation, and disparities in organizational structures across regions. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions. First, how does the institutional design of NU's cadre system regulate the regeneration process through its tiered autonomous bodies? Second, how do unclear cadre transitions and duplicated cadre education reflect institutional weaknesses within NU's cadre development system? Third, how do the intergenerational transmission of NU identity and disparities in organizational structures affect the sustainability of NU's cadre regeneration? Fourth, what model of cadre system strengthening could support organizational consolidation and sustainable leadership succession within Nahdlatul Ulama in the future?

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research. Library research refers to a systematic investigation conducted through the collection, processing, and analysis of data derived from library-based sources, including journal articles, books, magazines, newspapers, and other relevant materials (Nasurillah et al., 2021). The analysis focused on Nahdlatul Ulama's cadre development system through an examination of institutional documents. This approach was selected because it enabled an in-depth investigation of the regulations, concepts, and practices of cadre development as articulated in official organizational documents and relevant academic literature. The data consisted of primary and secondary sources. Primary data included the Constitution and Bylaws (Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga, AD/ART) of Nahdlatul Ulama, as well as the Basic Regulations and Internal Regulations (Peraturan Dasar dan Peraturan Rumah Tangga, PD/PRT) of NU's autonomous bodies, including IPNU, IPPNU, GP Ansor, Fatayat NU, and Muslimat NU. These documents served as the normative foundation for examining NU's cadre development system. Secondary data were obtained from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and previous studies related to cadre development, leadership succession, and the institutional structures of religious organizations. Data were collected through documentation, with particular attention to cadre development regulations, mechanisms of cadre transition, cadre education systems, and the structural relationships among NU's autonomous bodies. The data were analyzed using content analysis through the systematic processes of identification, classification, reduction, and interpretation of documents relevant to the research focus. The findings were subsequently examined using three theoretical perspectives. Institutional Theory was employed as the overarching theoretical framework to assess the alignment between institutional design and cadre development practices. Social Reproduction Theory was used to understand the intergenerational transmission of NU identity, while Organizational Life Cycle Theory was applied to analyze the long-term implications of cadre regeneration for organizational sustainability. Data trustworthiness was enhanced through prolonged and careful engagement with the documents and through peer debriefing with individuals who possessed an informed understanding of the organizational context of Nahdlatul Ulama. All findings were analyzed systematically to produce a comprehensive understanding of NU's cadre regeneration crisis and to formulate a more integrated, sustainable, and adaptive model for strengthening its cadre development system.

Result and Discussion

The Institutional Design of Nahdlatul Ulama's Cadre Development within Its Autonomous Body System

An analysis of the Constitution and Bylaws of Nahdlatul Ulama, together with the regulations governing its autonomous bodies, indicates that NU has developed a tiered and segmented institutional design for cadre development. This structure is organized according to age, gender, and the social orientation of membership. IPNU and IPPNU serve the student segment, the Ansor Youth Movement and Fatayat NU accommodate younger adult members, while Muslimat NU functions as an organization for adult women. Normatively,

this arrangement reflects a relatively systematic and comprehensive cadre development design intended to sustain the organization through age-based regeneration and differentiated social roles. Such a tiered structure can be understood as an institutionalized governance system designed to ensure the continuity of the organization's human resources through a systematic process of cadre reproduction. Institutionalization depends not only on the existence of formal structures but also on the consistent implementation of regulations and the integration of organizational units into a coherent system. The presence of autonomous bodies within NU can therefore be interpreted as an institutional effort to establish a cadre development system capable of ensuring intergenerational leadership continuity.

Institutional Theory views organizations as entities that survive not merely because of technical efficiency, but also because of their capacity to establish legitimacy through stable structures, rules, and norms. In this sense, Institutional Theory emphasizes organizational stability and legitimacy (Rukmana et al., 2025). Organizational sustainability is strongly influenced by an institution's ability to integrate formal regulations with organizational practices at the operational level. From this perspective, NU's system of autonomous bodies has theoretically fulfilled the structural requirements of institutionalization, although it continues to face challenges in integrating its various organizational units. Fragmented organizational structures frequently lead to coordination dysfunction, particularly when each organizational unit operates its own cadre development system and training curriculum independently. Such multilayered coordination may reduce the efficiency of cadre development, while inconsistent standard operating procedures and overlapping reporting mechanisms can inhibit organizational innovation (Simanjuntak & Sudarmanto, 2025). This condition suggests that NU's institutional design remains at the stage of structural differentiation and has not yet fully achieved system integration. In other words, its cadre development system has been formally structured but has not been functionally integrated into a continuous national cadre development pathway.

This study found that NU's institutional design for cadre development remains dominated by sectoral patterns of operation among its autonomous bodies. IPNU and IPPNU maintain their own cadre development systems, Ansor and Fatayat NU implement separate training curricula, and Muslimat NU follows a distinct model of organizational strengthening. Although all autonomous bodies are ideologically united under the framework of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah an-Nahdliyah, there is no institutional mechanism that systematically integrates the outcomes of cadre education across different organizational levels. Consequently, relationships among the autonomous bodies tend to remain administrative and symbolic rather than constituting an integrated cadre development system. This phenomenon is consistent with findings from studies of contemporary da'wah organizations, which demonstrate that organizations with multi-unit structures frequently encounter difficulties in coordinating cadre development curricula, especially when no cross-unit competency recognition system is available. Coordination among organizational units is often constrained by lengthy internal bureaucratic procedures, particularly in decision-making processes involving multiple units (Nurmaya, 2025). Cadre development, however, should not function solely as a process of ideological formation. It should also operate as a

system of competency recognition through which knowledge, skills, and organizational experience can be accumulated progressively across organizational levels.

Weak institutional integration frequently results in program duplication, training inefficiency, and the fragmentation of cadre resources. These conditions reinforce the finding that NU's cadre development system remains primarily focused on strengthening its structural foundations and has not yet achieved the systemic integration required to facilitate the automatic and continuous mobility of cadres across autonomous bodies. Overall, NU's institutional design for cadre development has succeeded at the level of structural institutionalization but has not yet attained systemic institutional integration. This condition demonstrates a gap between the organization's normative design and the operational implementation of cadre development. Such a gap requires further examination because it has direct implications for the effectiveness of cadre regeneration and the long-term sustainability of organizational leadership.

Unclear Cadre Transitions and the Duplication of Cadre Education as Institutional Problems

The absence of a clear mechanism for cadre transition among the autonomous bodies of Nahdlatul Ulama indicates a structural weakness in the organization's cadre development design. Normatively, each autonomous body has its own age segmentation and cadre development stages, as regulated through its respective organizational provisions. However, these regulations have not been translated into a systemic and binding transitional mechanism across organizational units. Consequently, the movement of cadres from IPNU to GP Ansor, from IPPNU to Fatayat NU, and from Fatayat NU to Muslimat NU occurs largely through informal processes and individual preferences rather than as part of an integrated and sequential cadre development system.

From the perspective of Institutional Theory, this condition reflects institutional fragmentation, in which subsystems within a large organization operate separately without effective institutional coordination. It also demonstrates institutional decoupling, whereby the organization's formal structure provides rules for cadre segmentation, while their implementation remains operationally disconnected across autonomous bodies. In a large-scale religious organization such as Nahdlatul Ulama, this situation can disrupt the cadre development pipeline and lead to stagnation in leadership regeneration at particular age-transition points.

The duplication of cadre education further confirms the limited integration of cadre development across NU's autonomous bodies. Cadres who have completed formal training at one organizational level are still required to undertake basic training when entering another autonomous body, even though the curricula substantially overlap in areas such as Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, NU organizational identity, leadership, and organizational management. From a human resource management perspective, this condition indicates the absence of a competency recognition system capable of formally acknowledging cadres' learning achievements across organizational units.

When examined through the perspective of a knowledge-based organization, such duplication indicates weaknesses in NU's knowledge management system. Cadres'

knowledge, competencies, and training records are not documented within a shared system that can be recognized across autonomous bodies. Consequently, each organizational unit tends to restart the learning process from the beginning. This creates structural inefficiencies that increase the burden of cadre development in terms of time, financial resources, and participant motivation. In the context of modern organizations, such a condition contradicts the principles of a learning organization, which emphasize the accumulation, transfer, and integration of knowledge as strategic organizational assets. From a broader institutional perspective, these findings suggest that NU's autonomous bodies continue to operate as semi-autonomous institutional subsystems. These units possess considerable organizational autonomy but have not yet been incorporated into a coherent and integrated cadre development system. As a result, cadre education functions primarily as an internal administrative mechanism within each autonomous body rather than as a comprehensive system for developing the organization's human resources as a whole.

Identity Transmission and Organizational Structural Disparities in Nahdlatul Ulama's Cadre Regeneratio

This study found that one of Nahdlatul Ulama's fundamental strengths lies in its capacity to preserve its religious identity and socio-religious traditions across generations. Practices such as tahlil, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday, istighasah, grave visitation, and other religious traditions associated with Nahdliyin communities function as mechanisms for the continuous transmission of values within families, local communities, Islamic boarding schools, and wider social networks. Through these processes, NU identity is maintained not only as a form of religious affiliation but also as a social identity that shapes the worldview, religious practices, and national orientation of Nahdliyin communities. NU's transformation in response to social and technological change further demonstrates that its organizational adaptability continues to rest on the strength of traditions transmitted sustainably to younger generations. However, the successful reproduction of identity is not always accompanied by the successful reproduction of organizational participation. Many Nahdliyin families effectively transmit the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, respect for Islamic scholars, and emotional attachment to NU, but do not actively encourage their children to participate in NU's autonomous bodies, such as IPNU, IPPNU, GP Ansor, or Fatayat NU. Under these circumstances, Nahdliyin identity remains strong but does not develop into a source of cadre capital capable of reinforcing the organizational structure. Consequently, a gap emerges between the large number of NU's socio-religious constituents and the comparatively limited number of cadres actively involved in organizational regeneration.

This phenomenon indicates that identity transmission and organizational transmission are distinct processes. Identity can be transmitted through relatively spontaneous sociocultural mechanisms, whereas organizational participation requires more structured institutional mechanisms. In other words, an individual may grow up as a member of the Nahdliyin community without ever participating in NU's formal cadre development process. This condition helps explain why the number of people who identify culturally with NU is substantial, while only a proportion of them are transformed into cadre resources

capable of supporting organizational sustainability.

These findings can be interpreted through Pierre Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory. According to this perspective, values, norms, and social identities are transmitted through socialization processes occurring within families and broader social environments. Such processes produce habitus, understood as a set of durable dispositions that influences how individuals think and act in social life. In the context of NU, Nahdliyin families successfully reproduce a religious habitus through the repeated performance of rituals and socio-religious traditions. Nevertheless, the reproduction of religious habitus does not automatically result in institutional reproduction. An individual may therefore possess a strong Nahdliyin identity without developing an equally strong organizational attachment to NU. This analysis is consistent with recent studies showing that religious identity is often more readily transmitted than institutional participation. Religious or social group identity can provide individuals with a powerful source of social meaning (Warsito, 2024), while active organizational involvement requires more complex processes of internalization, recruitment, and sustained participation. This suggests that NU's principal challenge is no longer merely to preserve the religious identity of Nahdliyin communities, but to transform that identity into continuous organizational participation.

The phenomenon also reveals a gap between NU's cultural institutions and its organizational institutions. NU's cultural foundations remain highly resilient because they are supported by deeply rooted socio-religious traditions. By contrast, its cadre development institutions have not yet established an effective mechanism for connecting cultural identity with organizational participation. This condition reflects what Institutional Theory conceptualizes as institutional decoupling, namely a situation in which formally recognized organizational values are not fully connected to institutional practices at the operational level. In practical terms, members of society may accept and practice NU's values without perceiving active participation in its organizational structures as necessary. A further challenge concerns disparities in organizational development between Java and regions outside Java. A large proportion of NU's cadre resources, Islamic boarding school networks, educational institutions, and cadre development activities remains concentrated on the island of Java. As the historical birthplace and principal center of NU's development, Java has a substantially denser and stronger organizational structure than many other regions of Indonesia. By contrast, a number of regions outside Java continue to face limited cadre availability, weak institutional networks, and difficulties in establishing organizational structures at the village-branch and subdistrict levels.

These disparities reflect differences not only in the number of cadres but also in institutional capacity. Organizational effectiveness is strongly influenced by the availability of social capital, institutional networks, and adequate human resources. Regions with extensive pesantren networks and long-established organizational traditions are generally better positioned to produce cadres continuously than regions in which NU's institutional presence is more recent or less developed.

More broadly, these disparities indicate that NU's success as a national organization has not yet been accompanied by an equitable distribution of institutional capacity across all regions. This finding is significant because recent studies have positioned NU as one of

Indonesia's principal religious civil society actors, with a strategic role in supporting democracy, religious moderation, and social transformation. However, NU's long-term capacity to perform these functions depends heavily on its ability to establish an equitable and sustainable cadre regeneration system throughout the country. The disparity between Java and regions outside Java further demonstrates that organizational institutionalization has not developed uniformly. Strong organizational structures at the national level do not necessarily correspond to equally strong institutional capacity at the regional and local levels. As a result, NU faces the risk of becoming overly dependent on particular regions as its principal centers of cadre production. In the long term, such dependence may produce unequal patterns of leadership regeneration, a concentration of organizational resources, and limited expansion of NU's influence in regions with considerable potential for growth but insufficient institutional and cadre development support.

A Cadre Development Strengthening Model for the Consolidation and Sustainability of Nahdlatul Ulama

The various challenges affecting cadre development within Nahdlatul Ulama should not be understood as isolated problems, but rather as an interconnected set of institutional issues that collectively threaten organizational sustainability. Unclear transition mechanisms among autonomous bodies obstruct the flow of leadership regeneration, while the duplication of cadre education indicates that human resource development within the organization remains insufficiently integrated. At the same time, the weak transmission of organizational participation within Nahdliyin families reduces the supply of new cadres, whereas disparities in organizational structures between Java and regions outside Java widen differences in cadre development capacity at the grassroots level. Unless these problems are addressed systematically, NU may face increasing difficulty in maintaining leadership continuity and reproducing cadres in the future.

These challenges reveal a gap between the organization's formal structures and the institutional practices embedded in its everyday organizational life. Normatively, NU possesses a relatively comprehensive institutional framework through the Constitution and Bylaws of the parent organization and the regulations of its autonomous bodies. However, the existence of formal regulations has not yet produced an integrated cadre development mechanism. This phenomenon is consistent with institutional theory, which argues that organizational effectiveness is determined not only by the existence of rules but also by the extent to which those rules are institutionalized in organizational practice. In other words, the effectiveness of cadre development cannot be assessed merely by the availability of formal training levels, but must also be evaluated in terms of the organization's capacity to create continuity across those levels.

This analysis becomes increasingly relevant when examined through Organizational Life Cycle Theory. As an organization that has existed for more than a century, NU can be categorized as having entered the stage of organizational maturity. At this stage, the organization's principal challenge is no longer to establish legitimacy or expand its constituency, but to maintain sustainability through effective leadership regeneration. Studies of nonprofit organizations have shown that failures in succession planning and leadership

regeneration often become major constraints on long-term organizational continuity. Organizational life-cycle perspectives likewise suggest that mature organizations are particularly vulnerable to stagnation when they are unable to undertake institutional renewal and continuously regenerate their human resources.

NU's cadre development problems also demonstrate an imbalance between the reproduction of identity and the reproduction of organizational participation. Nahdliyin religious traditions, practices, and cultural identities have proven highly transmissible across generations. However, this process of transmission is not always accompanied by the reproduction of active organizational involvement. As a result, NU continues to possess a broad socio-religious constituency, but this does not necessarily correspond to an increase in the number of cadres prepared to enter its organizational structures. This condition indicates that the social and cultural capital embedded within Nahdliyin families has not yet been fully converted into organizational capital capable of strengthening NU's institutional sustainability. Based on these findings, this study proposes a cadre development strengthening model oriented toward institutional integration. First, clearer and more systematic transition mechanisms are required among autonomous bodies through the establishment of a sustainable cadre pipeline system. This system would enable cadres to progress from IPNU and IPPNU to GP Ansor and Fatayat NU, and subsequently from GP Ansor and Fatayat NU to the broader NU structure and Muslimat NU, on the basis of age, competencies, and organizational track records. Cadre regeneration would therefore no longer depend primarily on individual awareness or initiative, but would become an integral component of the organization's institutional mechanisms.

Second, NU requires an integrated cadre recognition system that aligns the training curricula of its autonomous bodies. The findings indicate that the repetition of substantially similar materials across different levels of cadre development creates inefficiencies in human resource development. The organization should therefore establish a recognition of prior learning mechanism through which particular competencies and learning outcomes can be formally acknowledged across autonomous bodies. Such an approach would not only improve the efficiency of cadre education but also encourage cadres to continue developing their capacities at more advanced levels.

Third, cadre development should be strengthened through a Nahdliyin family-based approach. This strategy is based on the assumption that the family constitutes the primary arena for the reproduction of values and organizational identity. Cadre development should no longer be understood solely as a formal training activity, but also as a process through which organizational commitment is transmitted within the family environment. In this way, NU identity would be inherited not only through religious traditions but also through active participation in organizational structures.

Fourth, affirmative policies are required to strengthen cadre development outside Java. The continued concentration of cadre resources and organizational activities in Java risks widening interregional disparities in institutional capacity. NU should therefore prioritize strategies for cadre distribution, organizational mentoring, trainer development, and the provision of regionally adapted cadre education programs. Such measures are essential to ensure that cadre reproduction does not occur only in areas with well-established

organizational infrastructures, but also reaches regions that continue to experience limited cadre resources. The proposed model demonstrates that strengthening NU's cadre development cannot be achieved merely by increasing the number of training activities. Instead, cadre development must be positioned as an integrated and sustainable institutional system. This finding is consistent with studies of nonprofit organizations emphasizing that organizational sustainability depends largely on the establishment of structured mechanisms for regeneration and leadership succession, rather than solely on the size of an organization's membership base. Through such a model, cadre development can function as an instrument of leadership reproduction that not only reinforces organizational consolidation but also safeguards the long-term sustainability of Nahdlatul Ulama as a religious civil society organization.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Nahdlatul Ulama's cadre regeneration crisis constitutes an institutional problem characterized by the absence of an integrated cadre development system across its autonomous bodies. Although NU has established a tiered and structured cadre development design through its various autonomous organizations, its implementation continues to face several constraints, including unclear transition mechanisms among organizations, duplication in cadre education, weak transmission of organizational participation within Nahdliyin families, and unequal organizational development between Java and regions outside Java. From the perspective of Institutional Theory, these conditions reflect institutional decoupling and institutional fragmentation, in which formal organizational regulations are available but have not yet been effectively connected within a sustainable and coherent cadre development system. Social Reproduction Theory further explains that the successful reproduction of NU identity does not automatically lead to the reproduction of organizational participation. Meanwhile, Organizational Life Cycle Theory suggests that cadre regeneration has become a central challenge for NU as an organization that has entered a stage of institutional maturity. The findings extend the literature on cadre development in religious organizations by demonstrating that organizational sustainability depends not only on the strength of collective identity and the size of the socio-religious constituency, but also on the organization's capacity to establish institutional integration within its cadre development system. Accordingly, efforts to strengthen NU's cadre development should focus on establishing a sustainable cadre pathway across autonomous bodies, developing a cross-organizational competency recognition system, strengthening family-based cadre regeneration within Nahdliyin communities, and implementing affirmative policies to expand cadre development outside Java. Through these measures, cadre development can function as a leadership reproduction system capable of reinforcing organizational consolidation while ensuring the long-term sustainability of Nahdlatul Ulama as a religious civil society organization. Future research should undertake empirical studies across different levels of organizational leadership and autonomous bodies to evaluate the effectiveness and practical implementation of a more integrated cadre development model.

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