

Date Received : June 2025
Date Revised : July 2025
Date Accepted : July 2025
Date Published : July 2025

KIAI'S LEADERSHIP STRATEGY IN IMPROVING USTAZ COMPETENCE AT PONDOK PESANTREN AL- FAUZANNIYAH SUKARESMI GARUT

Anwar Abu Bakar

Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung (anwarabubakar@uninus.ac.id)

Agus Mulyanto

Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung (agusmulyanto@uninus.ac.id)

Usep Suherman¹

Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung (usepsuherman@uninus.ac.id)

Saeful Anwar

Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung (saefulanwar@uninus.ac.id)

Keyword

Academic supervision;
Teacher Professional;
Development;
Professional Identity

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the leadership strategies of kiai in improving the competence of ustaz at Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School, Garut, as a form of adaptation to the dynamics of contemporary Islamic education. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The results showed that kiai leadership is transformational, which is realised through exemplary approaches, intensive mentoring, and strengthening scientific forums. This strategy strengthens the capacity of ustaz in three dimensions: science, pedagogy, and classroom management. In addition, kiai also succeeded in integrating traditional salafi values with the formal education system through an inculturative and innovative approach. Challenges include inequalities in pedagogic competence and resistance to innovation, while opportunities include increased community trust and the strategic role of alumni. This research emphasises the importance of value-based leadership and adaptive strategies to maintain the sustainability and relevance of pesantren in the national education system. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for the development of pesantren leadership models that are contextual and responsive to changing times.

¹ Correspondence author

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that still exists in shaping the character of the nation's generation. The existence of pesantren is not only a place for in-depth Islamic learning, but also serves as a centre for the transmission of spiritual, moral, and cultural values (Masitoh & Rasyid, 2022). This phenomenon shows that pesantren are not just formal or non-formal educational institutions, but educational ecosystems that are deeply rooted in the history and social structure of Indonesian society. Along with the times, the role of pesantren has become increasingly complex, especially in facing the challenges of globalisation, modernisation, and technological disruption that drastically change the face of education. In the midst of these changes, fundamental questions arise regarding the extent to which pesantren are able to maintain their identity while improving the quality of human resources in them, especially the ustaz as the spearhead in the learning process (Komarudin & Anwar, 2024).

Reality shows that rapid social changes require pesantren to not only maintain the traditional value system, but also innovate in the aspect of education management. Kiai leadership as the central figure in pesantren is a key element in the transformation process. Kiai not only acts as a spiritual leader, but also a policy driver, strategy designer, and direction setter of the institution. As stated by Dhofier, (1994) , the pesantren is built and run based on the authority of personal kiai who has strong legitimacy from the community and the students. This is where it appears that kiai leadership has a multidimensional role that affects all aspects of pesantren life, including coaching and improving the competence of ustaz. In this context, it is important to further examine how kiai manage and develop the quality of pesantren human resources to remain relevant to the demands of the times.

Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs notes that by 2023 there will be more than 27,000 pesantren spread across Indonesia, with the number of santri reaching more than four million. Behind this number, there are great challenges related to the quality of educators, especially in terms of pedagogical competence, adaptability to technology, and the capacity to answer the needs of millennials and generation Z. In many cases, ustaz in pesantren have good religious knowledge, but not all of them have formal training in contextualised teaching methodologies. This has the potential to create a gap between the material taught and the needs of students. Therefore, kiai leadership needs to be understood as an entity that is not only religious, but also managerial, strategic, and transformative (Halimah et al., 2024).

Another phenomenon that cannot be ignored is the emergence of a negative stigma against salafi pesantren, which is often misunderstood as anti-change or conservative in the extreme. This stereotype often obscures the fact that salafi pesantren are actually institutions committed to the purification of Islamic teachings, not a rejection of modernity. Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah in Sukaresmi, Garut Regency, is a clear example of a salafi pesantren that seeks to integrate traditional values with the formal education system proportionally. By combining the yellow book curriculum, classical methods such as sorogan, wetonan, and halaqah, as well as formal learning according to national standards, this pesantren shows that innovation and conservatism can run synergistically. The success of this integration is inseparable from the visionary and adaptive leadership of the kiai, as well as his role in increasing the capacity of ustaz as the main educator.

There have been many studies on leadership in the pesantren environment, but most of them still focus on the role of kiai in spiritual development and character building of santri. Bakhtiar's research (2019) shows that the democratic and charismatic leadership style of kiai can increase santri learning motivation. However, there are still few studies that explicitly review how kiai leadership strategies can be directed at increasing the competence of ustaz. In fact, ustaz is a central component in the pesantren education system that functions as a direct link between the kiai's vision and classroom learning practices (Anwar & Rosyad, 2021).

In the literature review, not many studies have been found that comprehensively examine aspects of strategic management in improving the capacity of ustaz in salafi pesantren. Most of the studies are still normative and descriptive, without elaborating the concrete strategies used by kiai in fostering ustaz. This is where the urgency of this research lies. This article aims to position itself in the midst of a void of literature that examines in depth the leadership role of kiai in improving the quality of pesantren human resources through systematic and contextual strategies. By using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research seeks to explore the dynamics of kiai leadership in Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School in managing ustaz competencies in three main dimensions: strengthening traditional values, adapting to modern needs, and developing teacher professionalism.

Within this framework, the research gap becomes clear. First, the lack of studies that examine the role of kiai as HR managers in the context of pesantren. Second, the lack of attention to the professional development of ustaz, which is not only concerned with scientific aspects, but also teaching methods, technological literacy, and effective classroom management. Third, there is no research that specifically raises salafi pesantren as an integrative model that is able to bridge traditional values with the demands of modern education. This research tries to fill the void by presenting empirical data from Pondok Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah, which in practice has demonstrated the ability to maintain the authenticity of the pesantren while developing an education system that is responsive to change.

Relevant literature in supporting the theoretical framework of this research includes Ulwan's thoughts that emphasise the importance of exemplary in the education process. Exemplary leadership is the most effective method in shaping students' character and spirituality (Rachman & Hijran, 2017). Meanwhile, Adiyoga (2019) emphasised the importance of visionary leadership in building a sustainable education system. Leaders must be able to see the future of the institution, design long-term strategies, and create structures that support the achievement of institutional goals. In the context of pesantren, this means that kiai not only need to understand classical texts, but also social reality, technology, and national education policy.

Conceptually, kiai leadership strategies in improving ustaz competence can be mapped into three main focal points. First, strengthening scientific capacity through intensive coaching, routine halaqah, and direct guidance in mastering the yellowclassical books. Second, the renewal of learning methodologies that are adapted to the development of educational psychology and the learning styles of today's students. Third, increasing the ustaz's adaptability to technology and classroom management through competency-based training. These three aspects will be examined in depth in this study to understand the extent to which kiai leadership strategies are able to encourage the transformation of pesantren-based education.

Based on this background, this research is directed to answer three main questions. First, how is the kiai's leadership strategy in fostering and improving the competence of ustaz in Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School? Second, how does the salafi pesantren integrate traditional values with the formal education system in the context of human resource development? Third, what are the challenges and opportunities faced by kiai in carrying out these strategies, both from internal and external aspects of the institution? The answers to these questions are expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the development of leadership systems in pesantren in general, especially in the framework of strengthening the quality of Islamic education.

This research has practical urgency in supporting pesantren development policies that are responsive to change, while maintaining the richness of the Nusantara Islamic tradition. Through an in-depth exploration of kiai leadership strategies, this research not only seeks to provide a description of the actual situation, but also presents an alternative leadership model that can be replicated in similar institutions. This model is expected to contribute to efforts to improve the quality of pesantren-based Islamic education in facing the challenges of the 21st century.

Thus, it can be concluded that this research departs from the need for a sharper understanding of kiai leadership strategies in improving the competence of ustaz as the main actors of education in the pesantren environment. In the context of national and global education transformation, pesantren are required to not only survive, but also develop. Therefore, this study is relevant and significant in filling the space of academic discourse on adaptive and transformative local tradition-based Islamic education leadership.

B. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the social and cultural phenomena that occur in the context of kiai leadership in pesantren. This study aims to understand the strategies applied by kiai in improving the competence of ustaz, especially in Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School, Sukaresmi, Garut Regency. The location selection was purposive based on the typical characteristics of pesantren that combine traditional salafi education with a structured formal system.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with kiai as the main leader, senior ustaz as strategy implementers, and senior santri to obtain a triangulative perspective. Observation was used to understand the direct interaction between kiai, ustaz, and santri in learning and managerial activities. Meanwhile, documentation studies were conducted by reviewing curriculum documents, ustaz coaching programmes, and pesantren institutional archives.

The data obtained were analysed using the interactive model Miles et al., (2018) which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of techniques and sources, member checking, and audit trail. This research also pays attention to research ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of the source's identity and obtaining voluntary participation consent. Through this approach, it is expected to obtain a complete and

in-depth picture of kiai leadership practices and their implications for the development of ustaz competencies in the pesantren environment.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kiai's Leadership Strategy in Improving Ustaz Competence

The results of this study indicate that the leadership strategy of kiai in Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School is complex, integrative, and holistic. Kiai in this context not only functions as a spiritual figure and symbolic leader, but also as a strategic actor who is adaptive to the times. Kiai leadership touches various institutional and individual aspects, especially in the context of increasing the competence of ustaz as a key element in the pesantren learning system.

In the theoretical framework, the leadership pattern of kiai at Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School reflects a transformational leadership model. This paradigm prioritises aspects of inspiration, idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention as keys to success in institutional transformation. In the context of pesantren, this is reflected in the way kiai design ustaz coaching strategies by combining exemplary approaches, intensive mentoring, and empowerment through a structured mentoring system (Armiyanti et al., 2023; Sania et al., 2024).

This approach is strengthened by the application of egalitarian relations based on the scientific and cultural ethos typical of pesantren. Kiai does not position himself as a single rigid authority, but rather as a coach who establishes a dialogical relationship with the ustaz. In this context, the relationship between kiai and ustaz is framed through a spiritual relationship that is deeply rooted in the pesantren tradition, creating a conducive and participatory learning atmosphere. This finding is in line with research that confirms the importance of community-based learning in improving the performance of educational teams (Safariya et al., 2022).

One of the main strategies implemented by the kiai is the implementation of an intensive and continuous yellow book study forum. This activity is not only a space for increasing scientific capacity, but also a collaborative vehicle between senior ustaz and young ustaz. In the forum, there is an exchange of understanding, strengthening of learning methodologies, and open discussion of pedagogical and social issues faced in the teaching process. This activity strengthens the process of scientific regeneration and ensures that the Islamic values taught remain relevant to the current context (Diniyah et al., 2024; Agung, 2021).

The collective leadership model built through the role of senior ustaz in fostering young ustaz also shows the effectiveness of the mentoring system in tradition-based education. This approach not only encourages the strengthening of technical competence, but also the internalisation of teaching values and ethics that characterise pesantren education. The model is consistent with the results of research that reveals that the mentorship system is able to increase teachers' confidence and professional accountability (Agung, 2021).

On the other hand, the kiai also initiated a routine evaluation system of the ustaz's pedagogical achievements. This evaluation is carried out through direct observation, weekly discussions, and reports on teaching and learning activities. The aim is to ensure that each ustaz develops measurably, both in the aspects of delivering material, classroom management, and interpersonal relationships with students. This strategy is in line with the findings of Rosita (2021) and Ihsan & Soleha (2024) which

show that educational supervision and continuous training contribute significantly to improving educators' performance.

The improved ustaz competencies cover three main dimensions: science, pedagogy, and classroom management. In the coaching process, ustaz are trained to deliver teaching materials using thematic and contextual approaches, utilising active discussion methods, and understanding the diverse social characteristics of santri. This competency-based approach is important considering the heterogeneity of santri backgrounds that require adjustments to learning methods (Riskawati, 2021). In addition, successful coaching in an egalitarian atmosphere helps build a culture of mutual respect and encourages openness in the learning process (Nurwahyuliningsih et al., 2022; Satariyah & Nandar, 2022).

A learning environment that supports collaboration among ustaz is also developed through regular evaluation and discussion forums. These activities serve as reflective platforms that allow ustaz to share field experiences, effective teaching strategies, and solutions to classroom challenges. This approach is relevant to the idea that community-based professional learning can build teachers' social skills, confidence and efficacy (Kasmawati, 2023; Arvia et al., 2023). In addition to academic skills, the mentoring system also emphasises emotional and spiritual aspects as an integral part of the ustaz competence.

Furthermore, the kiai's leadership strategy also shows an adaptive dimension to the needs of the times. Although salafi-based, Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School remains open to innovation, especially in the aspects of curriculum, teaching media, and assessment systems. This approach is inclusive and participatory, so it is able to maintain the relevance of pesantren education in the midst of changing social dynamics. These results are reinforced by Chervony & Mahmudah's research (2023) which emphasises the importance of understanding the local context in designing sustainable and responsive education strategies.

The kiai's strategy not only touches on the technical aspects of education, but also strengthens traditional values as the foundation of the institution's character. Local wisdom developed through a culture of deliberation, strengthening adab, and respect for teachers are important elements that form a distinctive and meaningful learning environment. Thus, the guidance provided by kiai is rooted in tradition, but does not close itself off to innovation. This approach reflects leadership that has historical awareness, social sensitivity and future orientation.

Strengthening the competitiveness of pesantren through improving the quality of ustaz is one of the important contributions to the development of Islamic education nationally. The integration of traditional noble values and modern pedagogical strategies shows that pesantren are able to become significant actors in the national education system (Tishana et al., 2023). The strategy applied at Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School has proven to be effective in building institutional capacity while maintaining the continuity of the Islamic scientific tradition. By looking at the developments achieved, the kiai leadership model at Pondok Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah has great potential to be replicated in other Islamic educational institutions. This approach reflects a leadership paradigm that emphasises the balance between vision, values and actions. The ability of kiai to bridge between traditional structures and modern challenges is a crucial factor in achieving relevant and contextualised educational goals (Martuni & Siokalang, 2024; Suryati et al., 2023).

Integration of Traditional Values with Formal Education System

The results of this study revealed that Pondok Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah successfully integrated traditional pesantren values, especially those rooted in the salafi tradition, with the formal education system harmoniously. This integration process not only reflects the synthesis between two fundamentally different education systems, but also displays the central role of kiai as a spiritual leader as well as an agent of innovation that creates a balance between classical scientific heritage and the demands of modernity (Murtadlo et al., 2023).

Structurally, the curriculum system at Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah still maintains classical learning methods such as sorogan, wetonan, halaqah, and bandongan. These four methods are important pillars in the transmission of Islamic sciences in the pesantren environment, which emphasises the importance of in-depth and contextual understanding of the yellowclassical books. In contrast to the one-way lecture method, this approach encourages active participation of santri in the learning process, strengthening their critical and analytical thinking capacity (Budiarti, 2019; Rohmah, 2019). On the other hand, this pesantren also manages formal education institutions equivalent to madrasah, equipped with supporting facilities such as digital media and presentation devices. The use of technology is done selectively and functionally to support learning without eroding the essence of traditional values (Hafizhah, 2021).

This integration is carried out gradually through an inculturative approach, which is the process of adjusting modern values into the cultural framework and values typical of pesantren. With this approach, pesantren do not lose their authenticity as classical Islamic educational institutions, and at the same time are not alienated from the demands of the times. This inculturative approach effectively prevents the secularisation of the education system, because Islamic values remain the main frame of reference in curriculum design and teaching methods (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the muqāranah or comparison method applied in the study of yellowclassical books has given a new colour to the dynamics of learning in pesantren. Through this method, santri are invited to compare the opinions of various scholars in classical literature, fostering the ability to assess and select arguments logically and contextually. This approach not only develops santri cognition, but also makes the learning process more meaningful, open, and democratic (Ngatini & Miyono, 2024).

In the context of leadership, the role of the kiai is significant as the guardian of values as well as the director of innovation. The kiai plays an active role in guiding the ustaz to implement teaching strategies that are in line with the demands of the formal curriculum, but still based on the principles of salaf knowledge. The ustaz are trained in the use of thematic approaches that integrate traditional substance with contemporary issues. The aim of this strategy is to produce a generation of santri who are not only pious in the field of religion, but also able to respond to social and community issues wisely and contextually (Nurgiansah et al., 2021).

The findings also show that the integration process between traditional values and formal education directly contributes to the character building of santri. Learning that is not solely orientated towards academic achievement, but also moral and ethical formation, produces graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have social sensitivity and moral responsibility. Previous research confirms that structured

character education has a major influence on the formation of individual behaviour and integrity (Zarkasyi & Badri, 2023; Sudiada, 2021).

In the integration process, technology also acts as an instrument to strengthen learning. The use of digital learning technology has increased santri involvement in the learning process, expanded access to learning resources, and at the same time trained digital skills that are relevant to the needs of today's society. Technology integration is carried out with a selective principle, which does not replace classical methods, but complements them so that learning becomes more dynamic and interactive (Susiani, 2022). Thus, education in pesantren not only prepares santri as guardians of tradition, but also as individuals who are adaptive to changing times.

The curriculum transformation at Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah is a response to the social dynamics that affect Islamic education institutions nationally. The success of this integration makes pesantren an institution that not only maintains its identity, but also develops institutionally and methodologically. By maintaining its traditional base, this pesantren managed to answer the demands of the times without experiencing value alienation. This makes it a reference model for other pesantren in developing similar educational strategies (Ruspa & Marlina, 2022).

However, the success of this integration cannot be separated from the active role of all internal elements of the pesantren. The role of ustaz and kiai is very important in designing and implementing this integrative approach. Therefore, training and strengthening the capacity of educators is an important aspect that must be carried out continuously. This training aims to ensure that educators have a full understanding of the philosophy of pesantren education and are able to translate it into actual and contextualised learning practices (Suhimo et al., 2021).

The educational ecosystem formed at Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah reflects a healthy and constructive model, which prioritises collaboration, communication, and value integration consistently. This approach strengthens the educational process, not only as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a medium of social and cultural transformation. This pesantren not only produces students who are textually literate, but also sensitive to social realities and ready to take a role in community development.

The education model at Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah shows that the traditional and modern worlds are not conflicting entities, but instead can be synergised in a mutually reinforcing system. Therefore, this integrative approach needs to be further developed and researched so that it can be replicated widely. Further research is essential to assess the long-term effectiveness of this model and its contribution to the quality of national Islamic education (Rohmah et al., 2023).

From these results, it can be concluded that the integration of traditional values with the formal education system at Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah creates a form of Islamic education that is contextual, adaptive, and remains rooted in noble values. This shows that the transformation of Islamic education does not have to sacrifice identity, but rather adjust strategies to remain relevant in an ever-evolving social landscape.

With this great potential, it is hoped that Islamic education stakeholders, both the government, academics, and pesantren managers, can adopt a similar approach to build an Islamic education system that is competitive and firmly rooted in Islamic values. This step will strengthen the contribution of pesantren in shaping a civilisation based on knowledge, character, and social independence.

Challenges and Opportunities in Leadership Strategy Implementation

The results showed that the implementation of kiai leadership strategies at Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School cannot be separated from the dynamics of the challenges and opportunities that accompany it. The challenges faced include internal and external dimensions, both of which interact with each other and form their own characteristics in the management of pesantren-based educational institutions. In this context, the strategic role of kiai becomes very important to bridge the various obstacles that exist and maximise the potential that arises from within and outside the institution.

Internally, the main challenges are related to limited human resources. The inequality of pedagogical abilities among ustaz is one of the fundamental issues. Not all ustaz have an adequate formal education background, resulting in an imbalance in the understanding of teaching methods, learning strategies, and the application of an integrative curriculum. This is in line with the findings of Derung et al. (2023) and Permana et al. (2023), which emphasise that the inequality of educators' qualifications has the potential to hinder the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in Islamic education.

In addition, resistance to innovation from some groups is also a challenge. Some ustaz who have been accustomed to traditional learning patterns feel uncomfortable with changes or new approaches that are applied. The tendency to maintain the old system becomes an obstacle in implementing an integrative and adaptive learning system to social change. In dealing with this condition, kiai developed an approach based on pesantren values, especially through the application of the principle of *tasamuh* (tolerance).

The principle of *tasamuh* is used to bridge differences in methodological approaches among ustaz, while creating an inclusive and dialogical learning environment. Kiai does not impose radical changes, but provides personalised and sustainable coaching. This strategy is effective in building trust, facilitating the adaptation process, and forming a healthy learning ecosystem. This tolerance-based approach, as explained by Falah (2018) and Asmar et al. (2023), is important to reduce tensions in educational settings and support the creation of respectful learning spaces.

From the external aspect, the challenges faced by pesantren include a public image that tends to be stereotypical. Pesantren, especially salafi-based ones, are often seen as exclusive, closed, and less responsive to the times. This impression arises due to the lack of public understanding of the internal system of pesantren as well as limitations in external communication. In response to this, kiaiKiyai responded by building active and open communication with the community through various initiatives.

Some of the strategies implemented include organising social activities, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, and utilising digital media to deliver *da'wah* and institutional information. This step is a form of strategic communication that shows that pesantren not only play a role in religious education, but also in social and cultural development of the community (Nisa' et al., 2022). This is important in building public trust and expanding pesantren institutional networks with other educational institutions.

The successful implementation of kiai leadership strategies also opens a number of significant opportunities. First, increasing public confidence in the quality of pesantren education. This is evidenced by the increasing number of students from various social backgrounds. Second, the creation of an alumni network that is not only loyal to the institution, but also active in various fields of community service. The presence of progressive alumni also strengthens the position of pesantren as credible educational institutions. Nasution et al. (2021) and Redi et al. (2022) noted that the involvement of alumni in institutional development contributes greatly to strengthening the image of pesantren and improving institutional quality.

The leadership strategy carried out by kiai proved to be not only managerial, but also relied on symbolic and moral capital typical of the pesantren tradition. Kiai has a value authority that is respected and used as a basis for formulating policies and managing conflicts. Gumilang and Nurcholis (2018) mentioned that the moral authority of kiai is a key element in the success of value-based education transformation, where leadership is not only based on formal structures, but also on exemplary and personal integrity.

Furthermore, the success of kiai leadership is also related to their ability to respond to the dynamics of values that develop in society. In this case, the integration of traditional values and the utilisation of digital media are important strategies in responding to the challenges of modernity. Pesantren began to utilise digital platforms to deliver da'wah and institutional information as an effort to strengthen their positive image and open access to communication with the wider community (Zaman et al., 2022).

The utilisation of this technology also has an impact on increasing the effectiveness of education and the spread of pesantren values to wider public spaces. Digital da'wah is not only a communication tool, but also an educational instrument that can be used to straighten out negative narratives against pesantren, as well as disseminate its contribution to national character education. This is where the role of kiai as cultural communicators and directors of change that remains grounded in basic Islamic principles is important.

In addition to the challenges and opportunities above, this study also emphasises the importance of developing the capacity of human resources in the pesantren environment. Strengthening the capacity of ustaz and pesantren administrators is a major supporting factor in the successful implementation of leadership strategies. Abdullah et al. (2024) suggested that continuous training for educators should be conducted to improve professionalism, pedagogical skills, and adaptation to the integrative curriculum.

Through institutional strengthening and increasing the capacity of educators, pesantren will be better prepared to face the complexity of the challenges of the times. This is also an affirmation that pesantren education needs to be supported by managerial strategies that are adaptive and sustainable, and open to innovation in various forms.

Finally, the kiai leadership strategy at Pesantren Al-Fauzanniyah presents a concrete example of how traditional values can be effectively combined with modern approaches in the context of Islamic education. Institutional support, network strengthening, and consistency in building strategic communication are the main keys to success. In the context of rapid and complex social change, pesantren need to

continue to strengthen their position as adaptive, relevant, and future-oriented educational institutions. With a collaborative and value-based approach, pesantren are not only able to answer contemporary educational challenges, but also maximise opportunities to contribute significantly to building the nation's character and strengthening the national education system.

D. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that kiai leadership in Al-Fauzanniyah Islamic Boarding School has a strategic role in the transformation of value-based education. Through a transformational approach, kiai succeeded in improving ustaz competence in three main aspects: science, pedagogy, and classroom management. The strategy applied is not only based on exemplary and intensive coaching, but also able to integrate traditional values with the formal education system gradually through an inculturative approach. In the midst of internal challenges, such as pedagogical imbalances and resistance to innovation, as well as external challenges in the form of negative stereotypes of salafi pesantren, kiai demonstrated adaptive capacity through digital da'wah and strengthening institutional partnerships.

Nevertheless, this study has some limitations. The focus on one study location limits the generalisation of the results to other pesantren with different characteristics. In addition, the dominance of internal participants has the potential to cause institutional bias despite triangulation. Long-term evaluation of the impact of leadership strategies has also not been thoroughly explored. Therefore, further research with a multi-site and longitudinal approach is recommended to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of kiai leadership in developing the quality of pesantren human resources in a sustainable manner.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M., Salik, M., & Muchlis, M. (2024). Pendidikan enterpreunersip berbasis pesantren di Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Ulum Panyeppeen Pamekasan. *Ulumuna: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.36420/ju.v9i2.7199>
- Agung, I. G. A. (2021). Peran kepemimpinan, lingkungan kerja dan kompetensi terhadap perilaku kinerja dengan motivasi sebagai variabel intervening. *Probank*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.36587/probank.v6i2.1026>
- Anwar, S., & Rosyad, R. (2021). Pemikiran dan Aplikasi Teologi Lingkungan di Pesantren Cicalengka Kabupaten Bandung. *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v1i2.11793>
- Armiyanti, A., Sutrisna, T., Yulianti, L., Rati, N. L., & Komara, E. (2023). Kepemimpinan transformasional dalam meningkatkan kinerja layanan pendidikan. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP Unma*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v9i2.5104>
- Asmar, A., Said, N. M., & Siagian, H. F. (2023). Islamic boarding school and journalistic da'wah (Da'wah writing campaign study). *JKMD*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.35905/jkmd.v5i2.7615>
- Budiarti, Y. (2019). Pendidikan karakter: Sebuah upaya kolektif. *Jurnal Civic Education*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.36412/ce.v3i1.910>

- Chervony, C., & Mahmudah, F. N. (2023). Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kompetensi guru. *Biormatika: Jurnal Ilmiah FKIP*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.35569/biormatika.v9i2.1366>
- Diniyah, U., Hidayah, N., & Wahyuni, F. (2024). Strategi peningkatan kompetensi guru bimbingan dan konseling: Tinjauan systematic literature review. *G-Couns: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.31316/gcouns.v8i2.5696>
- Derung, T. N., Resi, H., & Pius, I. (2023). Toleransi dalam bingkai moderasi beragama: Sebuah studi kasus pada kampung moderasi di Malang Selatan. *Kurios*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v9i1.723>
- Dhofier, Z. (1994). *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai*. LP3ES.
- Falah, R. Z. (2018). Membangun karakter kemandirian wirausaha santri melalui sistem pendidikan pondok pesantren. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.34001/tarbawi.v15i2.853>
- Gumilang, R., & Nurcholis, A. (2018). Peran pondok pesantren dalam pembentukan karakter santri. *Comm-Edu: Community Education Journal*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.22460/comm-edu.v1i3.2113>
- Hafizhah, Z. (2021). Inovasi pendidikan era revolusi industri 4.0. *Open Science Framework*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/ag4ph>
- Halimah, S., Yusuf, A., & Safiudin, K. (2024). Pesantren Education Management: The Transformation of Religious Learning Culture in the Age of Disruption. *Nidhomul Haq Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(3), 648–666. <https://doi.org/10.31538/ndhq.v9i3.16>
- Hidayat, Y. R., Prayoga, H. Y., Rostika, I., Miftahudin, I., & Sahmidin. (2024). Kedudukan manusia dalam ilmu pendidikan Islam dan Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Pelita Nusantara*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.59996/jurnalpelitanusantara.v2i1.510>
- Ihsan, M., & Soleha, L. K. (2024). Analisis gaya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan motivasi dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru MTs Ar Ridho di Kabupaten Bandung Barat. *Jurnal Global Ilmiah*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.55324/jgi.v2i1.124>
- Kasmawati, Y. (2023). Strategi peningkatan kinerja melalui kepemimpinan spiritual dan kompetensi. *Jurnal Ekobistek*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.35134/ekobistek.v12i2.597>
- Komarudin, D., & Anwar, S. (2024). Environmental Awareness: A Phenomenological Study of Al-Faruq and Bahrul Hidayah Islamic Boarding Schools in Bandung. *International Journal of Nusantara Islam*, 12(2), 150–160. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v12i2.44051>
- Martuni, K., & Siokalang, M. A. (2024). Analisis gaya kepemimpinan kepala desa dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat Desa Padang Pio. *Conference*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.31603/conference.12030>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Murtadlo, G., Khotimah, A. K., Alawiyah, D., Elviana, E., Nugroho, Y. C., & Ayuni, Z. (2023). Mendalami living Qur'an: Analisis pendidikan dalam memahami dan menghidupkan Al-Qur'an. *Pandu*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.59966/pandu.v1i2.206>
- Nasution, S., Ritonga, R., Ikkal, M., Siregar, P., & Akhyar, A. (2021). Pendampingan literasi perguruan tinggi pada santri Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Parmeraan Padang Lawas Utara. *Monsu Ani Tano: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.32529/tano.v4i1.912>
- Ngatini, N., & Miyono, N. (2024). Peran kepala sekolah dalam upaya meningkatkan kualitas prestasi akademik dan non-akademik di SMP Negeri 1 Boja. *Jurnal Guru Kita PGSD*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.24114/jgk.v8i2.55383>
- Nisa', K. M., Risqiya, N. A., & Alifiansyah, C. N. (2022). Otoritas ulama perempuan: Kepemimpinan nyai dalam mewujudkan pendidikan moderat di Pondok Pesantren MIA melalui perspektif 9C. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.21154/sajiem.v3i2.109>
- Nurwahyuliningsih, E., Nulhaqim, S. A., & Rachim, H. A. (2022). Kepemimpinan dan pengambilan keputusan pada organisasi layanan manusia. *Kebijakan: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.23969/kebijakan.v13i2.5310>
- Permana, H., Wahyudin, U. R., Herdiana, Y., & Irwansyah, R. (2023). Pelatihan perencanaan pembiayaan pendidikan dalam peningkatan mutu Pondok Pesantren Almushlih Karawang. *Jurnal Abdimas Peradaban*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.54783/ap.v4i2.28>
- Redi, R. H., Irwansyah, S., & Nuzula, Z. F. (2022). Mewujudkan kemandirian Pesantren Darul Falah Cimenteng Subang dengan konsep wakaf produktif dan penerapan prinsip hukum Islam. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.29040/jiei.v8i3.6192>
- Riskawati, R. (2021). Pengaruh kepemimpinan dan kompetensi project manager terhadap kepuasan kerja dan efektivitas organisasi pada divisi konstruksi I PT Adhi Karya (Persero) Tbk. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis Sriwijaya*, 19(2). <https://doi.org/10.29259/jmbs.v19i2.16018>
- Rosita, E. (2021). Meningkatkan kompetensi guru dalam menyusun silabus dan RPP melalui supervisi akademik yang berkelanjutan di SD Negeri Liunggunung. *J-Kip (Jurnal Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan)*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.25157/j-kip.v2i1.4846>
- Sania, S., Komalasari, I., & Resnasari, U. L. (2024). Aktualisasi kepemimpinan transformasional dalam meningkatkan mutu sekolah di SMK Nahdlatul Ulama Kota Tasikmalaya. *An-Nahdliyyah: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.70502/ajsk.v2i2.102>
- Satariyah, S., & Nandar, N. (2022). Urgensi kompetensi leadership guru pendidikan agama Islam dalam menanamkan kedisiplinan peserta didik. *Arfannur*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.24260/arfannur.v3i1.632>
- Suryati, L., Giatman, M., Maksum, H., & Rahmadhani, S. (2023). Manajemen kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam upaya meningkatkan kompetensi guru menghadapi era revolusi 4.0. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.23887/jipp.v6i3.56703>

Tishana, A., Giatman, M., & Ernawati, E. (2023). Studi literatur implementasi manajemen kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam membangun profesionalisme guru. *Journal of Education Research*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v4i3.239>

Zaman, M. B., Nawir, M. S., Islamy, A., & Aninnas, A. (2022). Harmonisasi pendidikan Islam dan negara. *Tarbawi*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.36781/tarbawi.v10i2.213>

Zarkasyi, E. S. W., & Badri, M. A. (2023). Fenomena fatherless dalam keluarga perspektif hukum Islam. *Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.46773/usrah.v4i2.765>