

## Islamic Boarding School Leadership Innovation: From Traditional to Modernization of Education

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**ABSTRACT.** This research examines leadership innovation at Ibadurrahman Modern Islamic Boarding School, focusing on transitioning from traditional to modern education. The research used a qualitative case study approach, with in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The research findings show that Kiai applies visionary, democratic, paternalistic, and spiritual leadership styles that create an inclusive environment that encourages collaboration and innovation. Democratic leadership enables active participation in decision-making, while paternalistic leadership strengthens the emotional bond between Kiai and staff, creating a harmonious working environment. In addition, the integration of spiritual leadership helps maintain a balance between traditional religious values and modern educational needs. Modernization efforts include adopting technology, multilingual education, and incorporating Islamic perspectives in science, which provide students with essential skills to face global challenges. Conflict management is also done through deliberation, which ensures harmony amid change. In conclusion, leadership innovation at Ibadurrahman Modern Islamic Boarding School successfully bridges tradition and modernity, offering a model for another Islamic boarding school in the face of globalization.

**Keywords:** *Leadership Innovation, Islamic Boarding School, Modern Education, Spiritual Leadership, Education Modernization.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia has undergone various phases of modernization, although the Islamic educational traditions they inherited remain the primary basis for their operations (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024; Arif et al., 2024; Arifin et al., 2023; Aziz et al., 2022). With more than 28,000 Islamic boarding schools and around 15 million boarding students across the country, the contribution of Islamic boarding schools in building social, cultural, and religious order cannot be ignored (Anam et al., 2024; Fidayani & Ammar, 2023). A crucial issue arises amid global competition and increasing demands for quality education: how can boarding schools balance their traditional heritage with modernization needs, especially in leadership? This

study tries to answer this question by exploring modern leadership styles in Islamic boarding schools.

Quantitatively, the number of Islamic boarding schools and students shows the large scale of this phenomenon, but from the qualitative side, the transformation of Islamic Boarding school leadership is critical. (Afandi, 2020; Hussain, 2020). Many studies have discussed the modernization of Islamic boarding schools, but most have focused on the pedagogical or curriculum aspects. (Afifuddin, 2019; Nurjan, 2022) Research by Ahmad & Ashraf (2020) shows the importance of a visionary leadership approach to align tradition with modernization in Islamic educational institutions. Similarly, Bashir & Othman (2021) (Banmairuroy et al., 2022; Devi & Subiyantoro, 2021; Fr et al., 2021) found that spirituality in Islamic leadership is indispensable to effectiveness in modern education management.

Most existing studies focus on the administrative and structural aspects of Islamic boarding schools. Still, few studies have explored how visionary leadership can integrate modernization while maintaining the traditional values of Islamic Boarding schools. (Sari & Yani, 2019; Suheri, 2020) Research by Rispler-Chaim (2021) reveals that Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, face significant challenges in maintaining tradition while adapting to rapid modern developments. Alam's (2019) research emphasizes that changes in transformational leadership are vital to creating competitive Islamic boarding schools globally.

Thus, this study aims to fill the void in the literature on leadership modernization in Islamic boarding schools. The main focus of this research is the Ibadurrahman Islamic Boarding School in Tenggarong Seberang, East Kalimantan, which has shown significant development in organization and human resource management. Kiai leads it and has a modern vision (Aisyah et al., 2022; Wajdi et al., 2022) (Afandi, 2020; Sagal, 2021). This study focuses on exploring Kiai's leadership style that can bring this Islamic boarding school towards modernization and examining how internal and external conflicts in the organization are resolved innovatively. (S. Ahmad & Ashraf, 2020; Alam, 2019; Suheri, 2020)

The argument to be tested in this study is that visionary and transformational leadership can be the key to success for Islamic boarding schools in facing the challenges of modern education. (Afifuddin, 2019; I. Ahmad & Zunaih, 2020; Sari & Yani, 2019). This leadership style should integrate traditional elements with modern management methods, resulting in nationally and internationally competitive Islamic boarding school. (Afandi, 2020; Alam, 2019; Fadillah, 2018)

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative and case study approach to understand leadership innovation in Islamic boarding schools transitioning from traditional to modern education. This research involved direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of activities at the Ibadurrahman Modern Islamic Boarding School in Tenggarong Seberang, Kutai Kartanegara. (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018) This research design explores the leadership style at the boarding school that brought the institution from a traditional to a modern education system. The case study approach was chosen because this research focuses on one specific institution, Islamic Boarding School Modern Ibadurrahman, and aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the leadership transformation process at the institution. (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018)

This research was conducted at Islamic Boarding School Modern Ibadurrahman, Tenggarong Seberang, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan. The selection of this location is based on the rapid development of the Islamic boarding school in terms of infrastructure and popularity among the community. The research time lasted from January to December 2019. This research involved the leader, Kiai, as the key informant, educators, Islamic boarding school administrators, and students as research subjects. The informants were selected purposively, meaning they were chosen intentionally because they were considered to have in-depth knowledge related to the research focus, namely the innovation process in leadership. (Palinkas et al., 2015)

Data in this study were collected through several main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to give informants the freedom to explain their views on Islamic boarding school leadership and transformation. Tools in the interviews included voice recorders and field notes. Observations were conducted with researchers participating in the daily life of the Islamic boarding school to capture the leadership dynamics firsthand. (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2018) In addition, documentation data was collected from various archives, such as historical documents and development reports of the Islamic boarding school. (Baxter & Jack, 2008) The main instrument in this qualitative research is the researcher, who acts as the key instrument. The researcher used interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and field note forms to collect and organize data. The instrument development procedure is based on the results of preliminary studies and field observations that have been carried out previously. (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015)

The data analysis technique in this research follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Miles et al., 2014) In the first stage, data collected from various sources will be reduced, simplified and sorted according to the relevance to the research. The data that has been reduced is then presented in the form of narratives, diagrams, and matrices to assist researchers in understanding patterns and relationships between concepts. (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Miles et al., 2014) Finally, researchers draw conclusions based on the patterns found during the analysis process. (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2018) Data validity checks in this study were carried out using several methods, such as source and method triangulation. Triangulation was used to test the consistency of data obtained from various sources, such as Kiai, administrators, and murid. In addition, member checks were carried out by confirming interim findings with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of the data was by the perceptions of the research subjects. This method helps maintain the credibility of the research results. (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015)

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

This study found that Ibadurrahman Modern Islamic Boarding School in Tenggara Seberang has experienced significant innovations in leadership styles that have brought this institution from a traditional system to modernizing education. This transformation is supported by the visionary leadership role of the Kiai, prioritizing a democratic, paternalistic and spiritual approach to managing human resources and responding to the challenges of the times.

### **Kiai's Leadership Innovation**

Based on the results of interviews with Kiai, the main innovation in his leadership is a democratic approach by involves all components of the Islamic boarding school. Based on the results of interviews with Kiai, the leadership approach taken is very much oriented towards collaboration and participation. Kiai views every teacher and murid as a very important contribution to developing the quality of education and Islamic boarding school life. In interviews with several teachers, they stated that the communication between the Kiai and the staff is very intense, through regular morning and evening meetings. They call it “personal coaching”, where each teacher can talk directly with the Kiai, and convey problems, and new ideas for improvement. In addition, direct observation showed that the meeting atmosphere is very open and participatory, where the Kiai listens carefully and provides space for teachers to share opinions and suggestions.

“Kiai always starts our meetings with a question: 'What can we improve today?' It shows his commitment to making everyone's voice heard,” said Teacher A (Interview Code: T1). Another teacher elaborated, “During personal coaching, I feel valued because I can talk about my challenges and ideas without hesitation, and Kiai always provides constructive feedback,” stated Teacher B.

Documentation also shows that the Kiai systematically holds scheduled meeting sessions and provides direct feedback to teachers and murid in formal and informal meetings. It shows that the Kiai implements leadership principles that are not only top-down but also bottom-up. Decisions made by the Kiai are often influenced by inputs provided by teachers, which are then compiled in the policies and strategic steps of the Islamic boarding school. *"I once suggested a program to enhance Murid's Arabic language skills, and Kiai immediately discussed it with the team, giving us the green light to try it out. His openness encourages us to be innovative," mentioned Teacher C.*

In addition, an interesting finding from the observation is the "hobby community" approach formed by the Kiai. On various occasions, Kiai was involved in hobby-based communities, such as fishing or playing soccer with teachers. These activities strengthen personal relationships and serve as an informal platform for sharing ideas and building trust among staff. One of the teachers interviewed revealed that fishing with the Kiai allowed them to raise work issues more casually and without pressure. That created an atmosphere where fresh ideas could emerge without fear or awkwardness. *"One day, while fishing, I casually mentioned the idea of a mentorship program for new teachers. Kiai was very enthusiastic and encouraged me to draft the implementation plan," recalled Teacher D.*

One of the interesting findings that emerged from this study was the combination of democratic and paternalistic leadership styles applied by the Kiai. On the one hand, the Kiai shows a democratic attitude by inviting all components of the Islamic boarding school to actively participate in decision-making. On the other hand, the Kiai also applied a paternalistic style by embracing all members as if they were his own family. Kiai's participation in informal activities, such as fishing or playing soccer, shows he does not see any hierarchical distance between himself and the teachers or staff. Some teachers revealed that they feel closer to the Kiai and comfortable sharing their ideas and feelings. It becomes one of the factors that strengthen the emotional bond within the Islamic boarding school environment and creates a more harmonious working atmosphere. *"He treats us like family. Even during soccer games, he'll joke and cheer for everyone equally. That makes us feel valued and united," said Teacher E.*

This finding is very relevant in Islamic boarding school management, where a more humanistic and respectful relationship between leaders and members can improve overall performance and quality of education. This approach also allows for innovations in Islamic boarding school management that are more responsive to the changes and needs of the times.

### **Spiritual Approach to Leadership**

The spiritual approach to leadership applied by the Kiai at Ibadurrahman Islamic Boarding School has significantly impacted staff motivation and performance. Based on interviews with several teaching staff, they revealed that the Kiai often holds regular meetings that not only discuss work duties and responsibilities but also emphasize the importance of the spiritual relationship between individuals and God. One of the teachers, Ustadzah Siti, revealed, *"Every morning before teaching, we always hold a prayer together, and sometimes the Kiai delivers a short *tausiah* that is very insightful. It makes me feel closer to God and calmer in daily activities"*.

Observations in the field show that joint worship activities at the beginning of the day create an atmosphere of peace and harmony among the staff and the students. Kiai often starts his day by inviting staff to *pray dhuba* or do dhikr together, believed to purify the heart and provide positive energy. It is reflected in the documentation of daily activities, which notes that certain times are always filled with spiritual activities such as tadarus Al-Qur'an or short recitations between breaks.

*"The morning dhikr sessions really help to clear my mind and focus my intentions for the day," explained Ustadz Hasan. Another teacher added, "When Kiai leads the tadarus, it feels like we are spiritually recharged, which positively impacts how we interact with the students throughout the day"*

One interesting finding discovered during the research was the use of SMS (Support, Motivation, Suggestion) launched by the Kiai. Based on interviews with some staff, this motivational messaging system effectively raised their morale. The messages are delivered in Indonesian, Arabic, and English, providing a variety that makes the messages more profound and touches a wide range of people. Messages such as “The power of faith is the greatest strength in every step of life” or “Make your work a field of worship” often provide positive encouragement amid a busy routine. Internal documentation noted that many teachers feel more motivated and inspired to give their best in educating the students after receiving these messages.

“The SMS system is unique; it reminds me daily to align my work with spiritual values,” noted Ustadzah Nur (Interview Code: T4). Another staff member expressed, “Receiving Kiai’s motivational messages in three languages feels very inclusive and always boosts my spirit”

Another interesting finding is how Kiai views mental health as the main key in achieving optimal performance. Based on an interview with Kiai himself, he emphasized that “without a healthy soul, the body and mind will not be able to function properly” (Interview Code: K1). It makes him strongly emphasize the importance of balance between worldly and spiritual duties. Kiai hopes to create an environment that supports the mental and physical well-being of all involved in the Islamic boarding school by instilling the values of serenity, cleanliness of heart, and peace in the staff. With this approach, Kiai does not only focus on teaching material, but also guiding staff and students to develop themselves holistically. “*When Kiai advises us about the importance of mental and spiritual balance, it resonates with my daily struggles. It reminds me to prioritize inner peace,*” shared Ustadz Fahmi.

From the observations, interviews, and documentation obtained, it can be concluded that Kiai's spiritual approach at Ibadurrahman Islamic boarding school significantly contributes to creating a harmonious, energetic, and spiritually healthy work environment. This approach not only serves to improve the performance of the staff but also strengthens the social and emotional bonds among all elements of the Islamic boarding school.

### **Modernization in Education**

In the aspect of education, Ibadurrahman Islamic Boarding School has adopted various modern approaches without abandoning tradition. The Kiai emphasizes the importance of balance between religious and general education, where students are equipped with Arabic and English language skills which are the language of instruction in several subjects. It is reinforced by the results of an interview with the Kiai of Ibadurrahman Islamic boarding school who stated, “We not only want to educate students in spiritual aspects, but also so that they are ready to compete in the global world. Therefore, they need to master international languages and utilize technology in the teaching-learning process”. Students also revealed that using Arabic and English in subjects such as Fiqh, Tafsir, and Science allows them to understand religious knowledge with a broader and more modern perspective.

“Studying Science in English makes it easier for us to access global resources, and it gives us the confidence to explore modern knowledge while staying rooted in Islamic values,” said Student A (Interview Code: S1). Another student added, “Learning Tafsir in Arabic helps me understand the Quran more deeply while also improving my language skills,”

In addition, Islamic boarding schools also integrate technology and modern learning methodologies that prepare students to face global challenges, such as the Islamization of Science approach. Based on observations made in certain classes, it can be seen that technological tools,

such as projectors, computers, and internet access, are used to support learning, especially in natural science and mathematics. It allows students to access the latest materials in science without putting aside the religious values taught at the Islamic boarding school. Documentation obtained during the research shows that the various technology-based learning tools are not only limited to general lessons, but are also used in religious studies by introducing digital literature and scientific sources from various parts of the world.

“The use of projectors and virtual experiments in Chemistry has made the subject more interesting and easier to understand,” mentioned Student. Another student shared, “Through digital Quranic resources, I’ve gained insights into interpretations from different scholars worldwide, which deepens my understanding.”

One of the interesting findings of this research is how Ibadurrahman Islamic Boarding School successfully integrates the religious education curriculum with modern technology without destroying the essence of the Islamic boarding school tradition. In some classes, there is a collaboration between ustadz and competent teachers in information technology. They work together to create learning modules that combine Islamic values with the latest scientific developments. It also reflects the principle of Islamization of Science, which is an effort to adapt science to Islamic principles so that students can understand both simultaneously so that they are not only intellectually intelligent but also able to practice Islamic values in everyday life. “Our ustadz and IT teachers help us see the connection between Islam and modern science, making it clear that both can complement each other,” explained Student.

Another interesting finding is the increased interest of students in studying subjects such as Physics and Chemistry, which were previously considered less desirable among traditional students. With a more interactive and technology-based learning approach, they learn through text and access virtual experiments and other resources that enrich their understanding of the material. In interviews with some students, they stated that technology makes them more interested and motivated to learn, as learning becomes more fun and relevant to the times. “Before using technology, I found Physics very challenging, but now virtual experiments make it enjoyable and easier to grasp,” commented Student.

With the combination of strong religious values and the use of modern technology, Ibadurrahman Islamic boarding school shows that tradition and modernity do not have to contradict each other, but can go hand in hand to create students who not only excel in religious knowledge, but are also ready to face the challenges of the global world.

### **Conflict Management and Modernization Challenges**

One of the major challenges faced in the modernization process is internal conflict that arises from differences of opinion between those who want to maintain tradition and those who support modernization. Kiai successfully managed this conflict with a deliberation approach, where every important decision is taken after considering various views from all stakeholders. Thus, inclusive and democratic leadership is the key to maintaining stability and harmony in Islamic boarding schools.

In interviews with several Kiai and Islamic boarding school administrators, it was revealed that the deliberation approach is often the main channel for resolving differences of opinion among students and administrators of Islamic boarding schools. One Kiai, for example, stated, “Deliberation is not only a tool to reach agreements but also an opportunity to understand each other's perspectives and foster tolerance.” Through deliberation, each party feels valued, and the decisions taken tend to be more widely accepted because they are based on mutual consensus.

From the results of observations, it was found that in daily practice, Kiai function as spiritual leaders and facilitators in managing differences of opinion. In some cases, the deliberation process involves the Kiai, Islamic boarding school administrators, and students from various backgrounds.

“I appreciate how the Kiai always listens to everyone, even the students, when making decisions. It makes us feel like an important part of the process,” noted Student.

This practice shows a high level of inclusivity in decision-making that affects the life of the Islamic boarding school. Major decisions, such as curriculum changes or adoption of new technology, are always made after a long discussion involving various parties.

The documentation obtained shows that there are records of the results of the deliberation that record in detail the decisions taken and the reasons behind each decision. These records not only function as administrative evidence, but also as a reference to remind stakeholders of the decisions that have been agreed upon together. “The records from our discussions serve as a roadmap for future actions and ensure everyone stays on the same page,” said an administrator. It is important to maintain sustainability and consistency in modernizing Islamic boarding schools that are running evolutionarily.

One of the interesting findings of this study is how the deliberation process in Islamic boarding schools not only functions as a method of conflict resolution but also as a means to strengthen traditional values in the face of change. Although Islamic boarding schools try to adopt modern elements, such as technology in teaching and managing Islamic boarding schools, they still maintain traditional Islamic values that are the basis of the Islamic boarding school education system. “Our deliberations help ensure that while we modernize, we never lose sight of our core Islamic teachings and traditions,” shared a senior teacher.

It shows that the process of modernization in Islamic boarding schools does not always mean ignoring tradition, but rather a harmonious integration between the old and the new. In other words, modernization in Islamic boarding schools is faced in a very contextual way. It is adjusted to the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools that still uphold the principles of local religious and cultural teachings. The success of this approach illustrates the collective awareness among Islamic boarding school leaders regarding the importance of maintaining a balance between progress and preserving tradition, which ultimately supports the sustainability and stability of Islamic boarding schools amidst the challenges of the times.

Based on the description in the research results section in the previous section, the main findings of this study can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Key Findings of the Study**

| <b>Aspect</b>                       | <b>Key Findings</b>  | <b>Data Sources</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Kiai’s Leadership Innovation</b> | The Kiai employs democratic, paternalistic, and spiritual leadership styles that foster collaboration and innovation. Personal coaching strengthens communication with staff. Informal activities, such as fishing, enhance emotional bonds.                     | Interviews, direct observations, documentation                |
| <b>Spiritual Approach</b>           | The Kiai integrates spiritual values into management practices, including daily prayers, religious talks, and dhikr sessions. The SMS program (Support, Motivation, Suggestion) provides motivational messages in three languages (Indonesian, Arabic, English). | Interviews, daily activity documentation                      |
| <b>Educational Modernization</b>    | Adoption of technology and foreign languages (Arabic and English) in the learning process. Technology integration, such as projectors  | Classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers |

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|----------------------------|--|--|
|                            | and internet, supports teaching general and religious subjects.  |  |
| <b>Conflict Management</b> | Internal conflicts between traditionalists and modernists are resolved through deliberation. Deliberation enhances involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making. | Interviews with the Kiai, boarding school administration |

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## Discussion

Leadership in Islamic boarding schools has long been an important foundation in maintaining the continuity of Islamic education in Indonesia. However, in facing the demands of globalization and modernization, traditional leadership in Islamic boarding schools requires innovation that can balance religious values with modern developments. The results of research at the Islamic Boarding School Modern Ibadurrahman found that the transformation of democratic, paternalistic, and spiritual leadership has succeeded in bringing this institution towards educational modernization. Leadership in Islamic boarding schools has played a vital role in maintaining and developing Islamic education in Indonesia. Along with the challenges of modernization and globalization, many Islamic boarding schools face a dilemma in maintaining a balance between tradition and innovation. Islamic boarding school Ibadurrahman is an example of how inclusive leadership and oriented towards collective participation can manage change and face new challenges in education. The findings of this study reveal that the leadership model applied in this Islamic boarding school not only pays attention to religious aspects, but also introduces elements of innovation that support modernization, while maintaining the spiritual values that are the basis of Islamic boarding school education.

### Visionary and Democratic Leadership

The visionary leadership implemented by the Kiai at the Ibadurrahman Islamic boarding school, which prioritizes a democratic approach, has proven to be a key factor in modernizing education. This leadership focuses on the active participation of all institution elements in decision-making. This study is in line with the findings of Ahmad & Ashraf (2020) which show that visionary leadership focuses on developing a long-term vision and strengthening collaboration and joint decision-making among staff and other stakeholders.

In addition, the democratic approach implemented at the Ibadurrahman Islamic boarding school also reflects a change in the leadership structure of the Islamic boarding school which is more open. According to Khan (2021) and Qureshi & Zaman (2020), leaders who are open and involve all elements in the decision-making process increase the sense of ownership and responsibility for the changes made, as well as increase the effectiveness of policy implementation. Alavi's study (2020) also reinforces this finding, which shows that staff involvement in decision-making increases organizational productivity.

Furthermore, the results of this study reveal that the coaching approach applied by the Kiai is also in line with the theory of transformational leaders who emphasize the importance of individual development. It creates a more positive work environment, where Islamic boarding school administrators feel valued and encouraged to contribute more deeply. The findings of Rahman (2020) and Smith (2021) support this by showing that leaders who engage in coaching and mentoring can improve performance and reduce staff turnover.

### Paternalistic Leadership: Maintaining Emotional Bonds and Commitment

One of the interesting findings in this study is the application of paternalistic leadership by the Kiai. This approach allows for creating a strong emotional bond between leaders and subordinates, which impacts the loyalty and commitment of staff and students. This leadership style



shows success in creating a more humane relationship, which motivates students and administrators to participate more actively in the life of the Islamic boarding school.

This study supports the findings of Smith and Khan (2021) which show that leaders who apply a paternalistic style can create a more conducive work environment and minimize conflict. In addition, this paternalistic approach is important in creating a psychologically healthy work atmosphere, an important factor in organizational stability. It is also reinforced by Fathurrahman (2019) and Hasan & Ameen (2021), who emphasize that the emotional relationship established in paternalistic leadership improves staff's psychological well-being and productivity.

This approach is not only limited to staff management, but also includes student interactions. Leaders who are directly involved in students' daily lives create a sense of security and comfort that supports the learning process and character development. In this case, the Kiai is not only an education manager, but also a figure who personally directs and guides.

### **Spiritual Leadership: Strengthening Character and Psychological Well-being**

The spiritual leadership implemented by the Kiai at the Islamic boarding school Ibadurrahman plays a vital role in shaping the character and morals of students and improving their psychological well-being. This finding aligns with Rahman's (2020) and Mohammad's (2021) research, which emphasizes the importance of the spiritual aspect in shaping students' character in Islamic educational institutions. Kiai functions as an academic leader and a spiritual guide who helps students and staff face life's challenges.

This spiritual leadership also strengthens commitment and emotional attachment to the institution. As explained by Aziz & Faiz (2020) and Bashir & Othman (2021), leaders who are actively involved in the spiritual life of staff and students can create stronger bonds, increase a sense of togetherness, and reduce conflict. This finding confirms that leadership based on spiritual values can create a harmonious environment and support holistic individual development.

### **Modernization of Education: Technology and Science in Islamic Education**

One of the main aspects of this study is how the Islamic boarding school Ibadurrahman has successfully adopted modern technology and methodology in education. The use of technology in teaching and the introduction of foreign languages such as Arabic and English are essential elements in preparing students to face global challenges. Research by Rispler-Chaim (2021) and Alam (2019) shows that mastery of foreign languages and technology are two critical factors in preparing the younger generation to be more competitive globally.

However, what is more interesting is how this Islamic boarding school integrates technology and modern science with Islamic values. It aligns with Alam's (2019) and Hasan's (2021) studies, which show that modern science and Islamic values must go hand in hand to maintain students' religious identity amidst the flow of modernity. This approach provides opportunities for students to master science and technology without abandoning traditional Islamic values, the main foundation of education in Islamic boarding schools.

### **Conflict Management in the Modernization Process**

In modernization, various challenges and conflicts arise between parties who want to maintain tradition and those who support change. At the Islamic boarding school Ibadurrahman, conflict management is carried out constructively through deliberation. The deliberation process allows for open dialogue between various parties and creates a sense of togetherness when facing challenges involving change.

Research by Qureshi & Zaman (2020) and Alavi (2020) shows that deliberation is an effective method for resolving conflicts and maintaining the stability of Islamic educational institutions. Through deliberation, the decisions taken reflect the interests of the leader and include the views and aspirations of the various parties involved. These findings indicate that deliberation can be a bridge to reduce tensions between groups with different opinions on modernization.

This study provides a new contribution to understanding how leadership combining democratic, paternalistic, and spiritual approaches can effectively manage modernization in Islamic education at Islamic boarding schools. In addition, the integrative approach that combines modern science with Islamic values and the use of technology in education in Islamic boarding schools is an important finding that enriches the literature on the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia. In addition, this study also highlights the importance of conflict management through deliberation in maintaining harmony and stability in the process of change, which is an essential element in the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools amidst the challenges of the times.

Overall, these findings strengthen the theory of Islamic educational leadership, which prioritizes the balance between tradition and innovation and provides an overview of how Islamic boarding schools can manage educational transformation in a way appropriate to the local social and cultural context.

This study offers the concept of Inclusive-Spiritual-Paternalistic Leadership as a new type of leadership that emerges from integrating democratic, spiritual, and paternalistic approaches applied in the Islamic boarding school Ibadurrahman. This concept not only focuses on the administrative or organizational aspects of managing Islamic boarding schools but also emphasizes the importance of students' and managers' moral and emotional development. By embracing various elements in the organization of Islamic boarding schools, this concept brings a new dimension to Islamic educational leadership that leads to a balance between modernization and tradition. The concept of Inclusive-Spiritual-Paternalistic Leadership can be described as follows:

### **Inclusiveness in Decision Making**

Inclusive leadership in the context of Islamic boarding schools refers to a democratic approach in which every community member, from the Kiai, Islamic boarding school administrators, to students, is involved in the decision-making process that impacts their lives. Critical decisions, such as curriculum changes, adoption of new technologies, or changes in organizational policies, are made through deliberation, allowing each party to express their opinions. This leadership model places participation as a critical element in achieving collective goals, which aims to create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the direction and vision of the Islamic boarding school.

This inclusive leadership accommodates different views and aspirations, thus creating space for constructive discussion, reducing the potential for conflict, and encouraging joint innovation. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, where collective values and togetherness are highly valued, this approach strengthens the sense of solidarity among all components of the Islamic boarding school. In line with the views of Khan (2021) and Qureshi & Zaman (2020), this inclusive approach strengthens the relationship between leaders and followers, creating closer collaboration between teaching staff and students.

### **Spiritual Leadership as a Foundation for Character Development**

On the other hand, spiritual leadership is the main foundation that distinguishes this type of leadership from other leadership models. Spiritual leadership focuses on developing religious and ethical values, with leaders acting as moral and spiritual guides for their followers. Kiai at the Islamic boarding school, Ibadurrahman, is an education manager and a spiritual mentor who guides students and administrators of the Islamic boarding school in living a life according to religious principles.

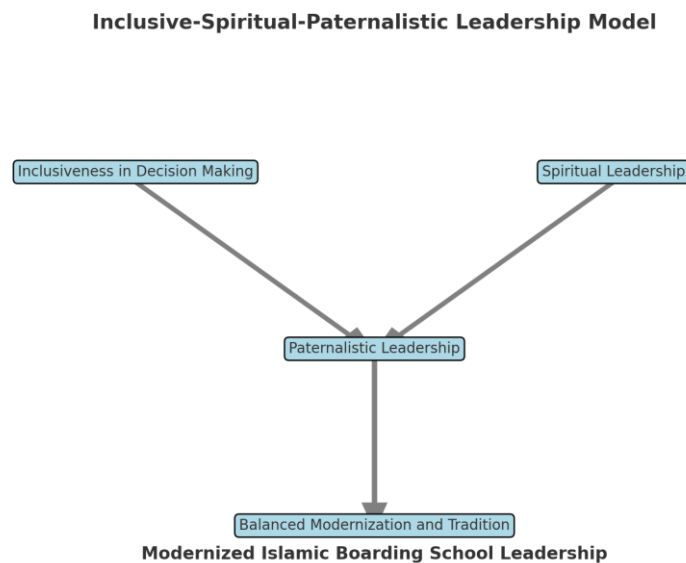
This spiritual leadership positively impacts the mental and emotional health of staff and students. As found by research by Rahman (2020) and Mohammad (2021), leaders who are directly involved in the spiritual aspects of Islamic boarding school life can create a more harmonious atmosphere, reduce stress, and increase commitment to the institution's values. By combining academic teaching with spiritual guidance, this type of leadership can create a generation that is intellectually skilled and strong in moral and religious values.

### Paternalistic Leadership to Maintain Closeness and Trust

The paternalistic leadership style in Islamic boarding schools leads to a close relationship between the leader and his followers. The Kiai sees himself as a figure who provides academic direction and cares about the personal well-being of each student and teaching staff. This paternalistic leadership creates a deep emotional bond between Kiai and all Islamic boarding school members, increasing the sense of loyalty, commitment, and shared responsibility for the institution's success.

Paternalistic leaders who care about the needs and well-being of their subordinates, as found in the research of Fathurrahman (2019) and Hasan & Ameen (2021), can create a conducive working atmosphere, a whole of mutual trust. In Islamic boarding schools, this contributes to strengthening interpersonal relationships and creating an environment that supports the development of students' character. This model also facilitates the creation of discipline and harmony within the organization, which is very important in maintaining the stability of Islamic boarding schools amidst rapid change.

Inclusive-Spiritual-Paternalistic leadership presents a new paradigm in Islamic boarding school management that can manage the modernization of education without sacrificing tradition. The modernization of education, which includes the application of technology, teaching foreign languages, and integrating modern science, is faced with an approach that is not only based on academic aspects but also on strong spiritual and emotional values. Inclusive leadership allows Islamic boarding schools to move forward by involving all elements in the change process. In contrast, spiritual and paternalistic leadership ensures that the changes continue to respect and maintain the traditional values that are the identity of Islamic boarding schools.



**Figure 1.** Inclusive-Spiritual-Paternalistic Leadership Model in Pesantren

The Inclusive-Spiritual-Paternalistic Leadership model integrates democratic inclusiveness, spiritual guidance, and paternalistic care to create a balanced leadership framework for modern Islamic boarding schools. The diagram emphasizes how these three leadership dimensions contribute to fostering balanced modernization and tradition. Inclusiveness ensures active participation and shared responsibility in decision-making, spiritual leadership provides ethical and emotional guidance, and paternalistic leadership strengthens trust and emotional bonds within the institution. Together, these elements lead to a harmonious environment that upholds traditional values while embracing modernization, enabling Islamic boarding schools to adapt effectively to contemporary educational challenges while preserving their cultural and spiritual identity.

By integrating these three elements, Islamic boarding school leadership not only facilitates the achievement of more modern educational goals but also maintains a balance in managing religious values, discipline, and morality. This approach also aligns with the findings of Alam (2019) and Hasan (2021), which shows that for successful modernization in Islamic boarding schools, a careful balance is needed between modern science and Islamic values.

The uniqueness of this study lies in developing the concept of inclusive-spiritual-paternalistic leadership as an adaptive and comprehensive type of leadership, which combines dimensions of democracy, spirituality, and paternalism to manage educational transformation in Islamic boarding schools (Huda et al., 2024; Pratiwi & Warlizasusi, 2023; Susanti et al., 2023). It provides a new contribution to the literature on Islamic educational leadership, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools, which are traditionally known for their hierarchical structure and authoritarian approach to their management (Azizah & Mardiana, 2024). This model responds to the challenges of modernization more flexibly and humanely, paying attention to its followers' emotional and spiritual well-being while opening up space for innovation and collective participation in decision-making. The success of the Ibadurrahman Islamic boarding school in implementing this type of leadership shows that the modernization of education in Islamic boarding schools can be successful without sacrificing traditional values, which are enriched through a more inclusive and in-depth approach.

## CONCLUSION

This research successfully identified that leadership at Ibadurrahman Islamic Boarding School integrates three main approaches, inclusive, spiritual, and paternalistic, which comprehensively support modernizing education without sacrificing traditional values. Inclusive leadership that involves all elements of the institution in decision-making creates a sense of collective responsibility. In contrast, spiritual leadership provides a solid moral and emotional foundation, and paternalistic leadership strengthens the emotional connection between leaders and followers. This leadership model enhances the institution's stability in the face of change and maintains the harmony and psychological well-being of Islamic boarding school members. The findings contribute to the literature on Islamic educational leadership, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools adapting to globalization's demands.

Theoretically, this research enriches the understanding of Islamic educational leadership by offering a new adaptive and holistic leadership type, combining democratic, spiritual, and paternalistic elements. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for other Islamic boarding schools that simultaneously face similar challenges in managing modernization and tradition. However, this study has limitations in that the scope is limited to one Islamic boarding school, so the results may not fully represent leadership variations in another Islamic boarding school. For future research, it is recommended that the scope of the study be expanded by involving more Islamic boarding schools to obtain a more comprehensive picture of similar leadership practices.

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