

An Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to synthesize and analyze previous research findings on kyai leadership in building Islamic education management and to develop a conceptual model that explains the relationships among the various dimensions of kyai leadership. The study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The literature search was conducted through the Scopus database using keywords related to kyai leadership, transformational leadership, Islamic education, and Islamic education management. From an initial pool of 312 identified articles, 42 articles met the inclusion criteria and were subjected to an in-depth analysis using thematic synthesis techniques. The findings reveal that kyai leadership is a multidimensional phenomenon consisting of seven major dimensions: spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, cultural broker leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership. The study further demonstrates that kyai serve as spiritual leaders, agents of organizational change, developers of institutional culture, educational innovators, cultural mediators, community empowerment leaders, and managers of educational transformation. Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study proposes an Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management, which incorporates these seven leadership dimensions into a unified conceptual framework. This study contributes theoretically to the advancement of Islamic education management literature and provides a foundation for future research on Islamic educational leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is one of the strategic instruments for building civilization, strengthening character, and developing human resources based on Islamic values. In the context of the implementation, the success of Islamic educational institutions is determined not only by curricula, infrastructure, and learning systems but also by the quality of leadership that directs the entire educational organizational process. Within the tradition of Islamic education in Indonesia, the kyai occupies a central position as a figure who functions not only as an educator and spiritual guide but also as an organizational leader, strategic decision-maker, guardian of institutional culture, and agent of social change. Numerous studies have demonstrated that kyai leadership significantly influences the sustainability, development, and transformation of Islamic educational institutions. Kyai not only play a role in preserving Islamic scholarly traditions but also serve as key actors in responding to various social, economic, cultural, and technological challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, the study of kyai leadership has become an increasingly important issue in contemporary Islamic education management discourse. The growing body of research indicates that kyai leadership has emerged as one of the primary themes in the development of theories and practices of modern Islamic education. Consequently, studies on kyai leadership are no longer limited to issues of religiosity but have evolved into multidimensional inquiries encompassing organizational

transformation, educational innovation, community empowerment, and institutional development within Islamic education. Previous studies have examined kyai leadership from various theoretical perspectives and approaches. Research on transformational leadership dominates the existing literature and demonstrates that the success of Islamic educational institutions is strongly influenced by the ability of kyai to inspire change, build organizational vision, and mobilize all institutional members toward shared goals. Suhermanto and Jasri (2024) revealed that transformational kyai leadership contributes to improving community quality of life through non-formal education oriented toward social transformation. Halil (2024) emphasized that the ability of pesantren to adapt to globalization is influenced by transformational leadership that successfully integrates innovation with institutional identity. Similar findings were reported by Yaturrochmah et al. (2024), who found that organizational transformation within pesantren is effectively facilitated through the moral influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration demonstrated by kyai. Khoiri, Patoni, and Tanzeh (2022) also demonstrated that improvements in pesantren quality are significantly influenced by strategic policies derived from transformational kyai leadership. Furthermore, Arifin et al. (2024) found that organizational culture within pesantren develops positively when led by kyai who are oriented toward change and organizational quality improvement. Hairo (2025) showed that educational innovation in pesantren emerges from leaders' ability to combine transformational and situational leadership approaches. Meanwhile, Bani Umar et al. (2024) reported that the transformation of traditional pesantren into entrepreneurship-based Sufism-oriented pesantren is the result of strong transformational leadership. These findings indicate that transformational leadership has become one of the dominant perspectives in explaining the successful management of Islamic educational institutions.

The transformational perspective in addition, previous studies have highlighted spiritual and charismatic dimensions as essential characteristics of kyai leadership. Abdul Wahab, Umar, and Badarussyamsi (2024) found that the successful implementation of religious moderation values in pesantren is strongly influenced by the charisma and spiritual exemplarity of kyai. Ali Nasith (2024) demonstrated that charismatic leadership serves as an important instrument for preventing intolerance and radicalism within Islamic educational environments. Maula and Rofiki (2025) found that kyai function as exemplary figures who significantly influence the development of religious character among younger generations. Ahmad, Ngarawula, and Roseli (2025) explained that kyai leadership contributes to the development of social piety through the integration of religious values and local culture within community life. Likewise, Arifin, Huda, Bisyrri, and Budiman (2025) found that kyai serve as both spiritual leaders and cultural mediators who successfully internalize Qur'anic values within rural communities. These studies suggest that the legitimacy of kyai leadership is derived not merely from formal organizational structures but also from spiritual capacity, moral integrity, and social recognition. Therefore, spiritual and charismatic dimensions constitute key elements that distinguish kyai leadership from other educational leadership models. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that kyai leadership is deeply rooted in values that shape the direction and development of Islamic educational institutions. The literature also reveals an expansion of kyai leadership studies into the areas of organizational culture, educational innovation, digital adaptation, and social transformation. Muntoha et al. (2025) showed that the culture of religious moderation is fostered through participatory leadership practiced by kyai. Mundiri and Iqna'a (2025) found that integrative leadership enables a balance between modern academic culture and the scholarly traditions of pesantren. Komariah et al. (2025) developed the concepts of distributed and regenerative leadership as innovative approaches to maintaining organizational resilience within pesantren. Zuhri et al. (2021) argued that the Fourth Industrial Revolution requires kyai to develop leadership approaches that are more adaptive to technological advancement. Sugianto, Rofiqi, and Zainuddin (2025) found that charismatic leadership remains relevant in the digital era when combined with

information technology utilization. Vermeulen et al. (2017) demonstrated that transformational leadership influences the adoption of educational technology through the creation of a positive learning climate. Krein (2025) further emphasized that digital transformation has fundamentally altered leadership and management patterns within educational organizations. Meanwhile, Mukarromah et al. (2024), Hafidloh et al. (2025), and Supriyanto et al. (2022) found that kyai leadership also functions as a mechanism for social transformation, pesantren economic development, and community empowerment. These findings illustrate that the scope of kyai leadership has become increasingly broad and encompasses various dimensions of Islamic education management. Despite their significant contributions, the existing studies reveal several limitations. Most previous research focuses on a single leadership dimension, such as transformational, charismatic, spiritual, integrative, entrepreneurial, or adaptive leadership, in isolation. Consequently, the resulting understanding remains fragmented and insufficient to explain the interrelationships among leadership dimensions comprehensively. Furthermore, the majority of studies employ case-study approaches within one or a limited number of pesantren, producing highly contextual findings that are difficult to generalize. Although studies conducted by Yaturrochmah, Abdul Wahab and colleagues, Nasith, Ahmad and colleagues, Hairo, and Bani Umar and colleagues provide valuable insights into local contexts, they have not produced a conceptual model capable of explaining kyai leadership more broadly.

Another limitation is the absence of studies that explicitly connect various leadership dimensions with the primary functions of Islamic education management, including planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, innovation, human resource development, organizational culture strengthening, and social transformation simultaneously. In other words, previous studies have produced a fragmented understanding of kyai leadership. This condition highlights the need for a more comprehensive synthesis of existing research findings. Therefore, a study that integrates these diverse perspectives into a unified conceptual framework is required. Based on these limitations, an important missing dimension remains in the literature: the absence of an integrative model explaining how various dimensions of kyai leadership interact in building Islamic education management. Existing studies have identified spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, cultural broker leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership. However, previous research has not explained how these seven dimensions collectively form an integrated leadership system that supports the development and transformation of Islamic education management. In fact, numerous studies indicate that the success of Islamic educational institutions is never determined by a single leadership dimension but rather by a combination of multiple dimensions operating simultaneously. The absence of such an integrative model has limited theoretical understanding of the mechanisms through which kyai leadership contributes to the development of effective, adaptive, and sustainable Islamic educational organizations. Therefore, identifying this missing dimension provides an important foundation for more comprehensive research. The need to develop a conceptual model integrating multiple leadership dimensions has become increasingly relevant as Islamic educational institutions face more complex challenges in the contemporary era. Accordingly, this study seeks to fill this conceptual gap in the Islamic educational leadership literature. Based on this background, the present study aims to construct an Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management through a Systematic Literature Review approach. This study seeks to synthesize empirical and conceptual findings from the literature to identify the characteristics of kyai leadership, analyze its role in building and transforming Islamic education management, and formulate a conceptual model capable of explaining the relationships among leadership dimensions comprehensively. The primary contribution of this study lies in the development of an integrative model that combines spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, cultural broker

leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership into a unified conceptual framework. Unlike previous studies that examined leadership dimensions separately, this research offers a multidimensional perspective explaining how these dimensions operate simultaneously in supporting the functions of Islamic education management. Therefore, this study contributes not only theoretically through the development of a new conceptual model but also practically by providing insights for managing Islamic educational institutions in an era characterized by increasingly complex changes. Specifically, this study seeks to answer three main research questions: (1) What are the characteristics and dimensions of kyai leadership identified in the Islamic education management literature? (2) How does kyai leadership contribute to the development and transformation of Islamic education management? (3) How can an integrative model of kyai leadership be synthesized from the existing literature? Through this review, a more comprehensive understanding of kyai leadership as a foundation for effective, transformative, and sustainable Islamic education management is expected to emerge.

2. METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous studies on kyai leadership in Islamic education management. This method was selected because it enables researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of research developments, thematic trends, and conceptual models emerging within the literature. The review process followed the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. Literature searches were conducted using two databases, namely Scopus and Google Scholar through the Publish or Perish application. The search strategy utilized a combination of keywords, including Kyai Leadership, Kiai's Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Islamic Educational Institutions, Transformative Islamic Education, and Islamic Education Management. The Systematic Literature Review followed the four main stages of the PRISMA 2020 framework, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the identification stage, relevant articles were retrieved from the selected databases using predefined search keywords.

The screening stage involved reviewing article titles, abstracts, and accessibility to determine their relevance to the research topic. Articles that passed the screening process were then subjected to a more detailed assessment during the eligibility stage to ensure their alignment with the objectives of the study. The final stage, inclusion, involved selecting articles that met all predetermined criteria and were subsequently used as the primary data sources for analysis and synthesis. The research instrument consisted of a data extraction form designed to systematically collect relevant information from each selected article. The extracted information included the study title, author, year of publication, research location, research objectives, theoretical framework, research methodology, key findings, research limitations, and relevance to the topic of kyai leadership in Islamic education management. The collected data were analyzed using thematic synthesis. The first stage involved open coding to identify key concepts emerging from each article. The second stage involved axial coding to group related concepts into broader categories. Finally, selective coding was conducted to generate major themes that explain the characteristics, dimensions, and roles of kyai leadership in Islamic education management. Through this process, a comprehensive synthesis was developed to construct an integrative conceptual model of kyai leadership in building Islamic education management.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

3.1 Publication Trends in Kyai Leadership Research

Based on a literature search conducted in the Scopus database using the keywords Kyai Leadership, Kyai's Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Islamic Educational Institutions, Transformative Islamic Education, and Islamic Education Management, a total of 312 articles were identified during the initial search stage.

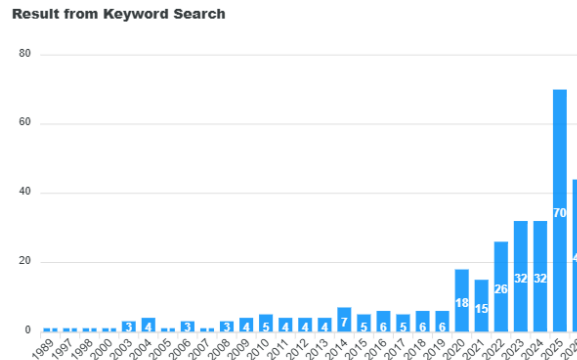


Figure 1 : Publication Trends in Kyai Leadership Research

The publication distribution indicates a significant increase in scholarly interest over the last five years. Between 1998 and 2019, the number of publications remained relatively low, with fewer than ten articles published annually. An upward trend began to emerge in 2020 with 18 publications, increasing to 26 publications in 2022 and 32 publications in 2023. This trend continued to rise and reached 70 publications in 2025. These findings suggest that research on kyai leadership and Islamic educational leadership has experienced substantial growth during the era of digital transformation and educational globalization. The search results further indicate that transformational leadership remains the most dominant theme within the literature. In recent years, increasing attention has also been directed toward adaptive leadership, digital leadership, religious moderation, and social entrepreneurship in pesantren.

3.2 Literature selection results using PRISMA 2020

The article selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 procedure. During the identification stage, 312 articles were retrieved from the Scopus database. Following an initial review, three duplicate records were removed. Subsequently, 52 articles were excluded because they fell outside the predetermined publication period of 2016–2026. An additional 85 articles were removed due to insufficient quality and lack of relevance to the research topic, while 12 articles were excluded because they lacked adequate abstracts for the screening process. After these exclusions, 160 articles remained eligible for further screening. During the full-text retrieval stage, only 40 articles were successfully obtained and met the eligibility criteria. In addition, three relevant articles were identified through other sources. Following the final eligibility assessment, a total of 42 articles were included in the study and used for the literature synthesis. This result indicates that only approximately 13.46% of the initially identified articles satisfied all inclusion criteria.

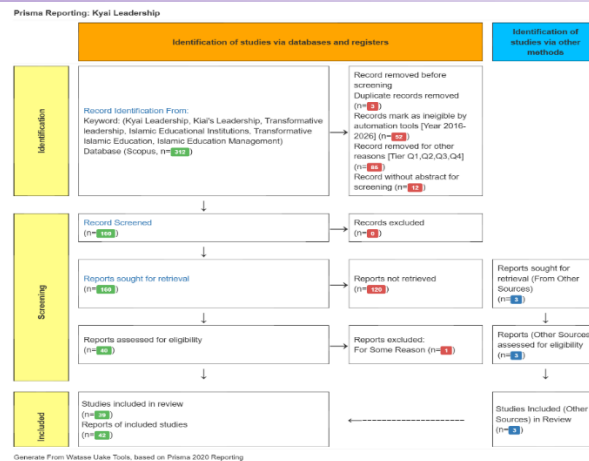


Figure 2. Selection Results Using PRISMA 2020

3.3 Characteristics of the Reviewed Articles

The data extraction process revealed that the 42 reviewed articles consisted of both empirical and conceptual studies addressing kyai leadership, Islamic educational leadership, transformational leadership, pesantren organizational culture, social transformation, and innovation in Islamic education. Most studies employed qualitative approaches, including case studies, multi-site studies, ethnographic research, and field investigations. Several studies adopted conceptual and literature-based approaches, while only a limited number employed quantitative methods. The research settings were predominantly located in Indonesian pesantren and Islamic educational institutions, including Probolinggo, Banyuwangi, Situbondo, Bondowoso, Pamekasan, Malang, Tulungagung, Lampung, West Kalimantan, and Central Java. In addition, several international studies from the United States and the Netherlands examined transformational leadership within broader educational contexts. The diversity of research settings demonstrates that kyai leadership has been studied across various educational and social organizational environments. The review further indicates that the focus of research extends beyond traditional pesantren to include pesantren-based higher education institutions, non-formal education, and community empowerment initiatives. Consequently, the reviewed literature reflects a broad and multidimensional scope.

3.4 Distribution of Kyai Leadership Themes in the Literature

The synthesis results indicate that transformational leadership is the most dominant theme among the reviewed studies. Research conducted by Suhermanto and Jasri, Halil, Yaturrochmah, Khoiri et al., Arifin et al., Hairo, Zulfa et al., and Nursetialloh consistently identifies transformational leadership as a key factor in the successful management of pesantren and Islamic educational institutions. The second most frequently discussed theme is charismatic leadership, as identified in studies by Abdul Wahab et al., Nasith, and Sugianto et al. Spiritual leadership emerged as another prominent theme, particularly in the works of Maula and Rofiki, Ahmad et al., and Arifin et al. Additional themes identified include integrative leadership, distributed-regenerative leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, adaptive leadership, and collaborative leadership. The literature also reveals the emergence of a new theme, namely digital resilience leadership, which integrates traditional charisma with digital technology. Furthermore, several studies position kyai as social change agents, cultural mediators, and drivers of pesantren-based economic development. Overall, the synthesis demonstrates that kyai leadership is understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be adequately explained through a single leadership theory..

3.5 Dimensions of Kyai Leadership Identified in the Literature

The coding and categorization process conducted on the 42 reviewed articles resulted in the identification of seven major dimensions of kyai leadership. The first dimension is Spiritual

Leadership, emphasizing moral exemplarity, religious integrity, and spiritual influence over organizational members. The second dimension is Charismatic Leadership, characterized by social legitimacy, moral authority, and the ability to influence followers through personal charisma. The third dimension is Transformational Leadership, which encompasses the ability to formulate a vision for change, encourage innovation, develop human resources, and transform Islamic educational organizations. The fourth dimension is Visionary Leadership, referring to the ability of kyai to formulate institutional development strategies and shape the future direction of educational institutions. The fifth dimension is Cultural Broker Leadership, reflecting the role of kyai in bridging Islamic values with local cultural traditions. The sixth dimension is Entrepreneurial Leadership, associated with the development of social entrepreneurship and the economic independence of pesantren. The seventh dimension is Adaptive-Collaborative Leadership, which includes the ability to adapt to environmental and technological changes while promoting participatory and collaborative leadership practices. These seven dimensions were consistently identified across the reviewed studies.

3.6 Findings on the rules of Kyai Leadership

The synthesis of the reviewed studies demonstrates that kyai leadership performs multiple strategic functions within Islamic education. First, kyai act as spiritual leaders who foster religious character, religious moderation, and social piety. Second, they function as organizational leaders responsible for directing institutional vision, policy formulation, and quality improvement. Third, kyai serve as agents of transformation by initiating organizational change, educational innovation, and organizational culture development. Fourth, they act as cultural mediators who connect Islamic traditions with local cultural values. Fifth, kyai contribute to community empowerment through social and economic programs based on pesantren institutions. Sixth, they strengthen organizational resilience through leadership regeneration and leadership distribution mechanisms. Finally, kyai perform adaptive leadership functions by integrating digital technology into Islamic educational systems. The findings indicate that these roles do not operate independently but rather coexist within various contexts of Islamic education.

3.7 Synthesis of the Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership

Based on the thematic synthesis of all reviewed articles, an integrative conceptual model of kyai leadership was developed. The model suggests that kyai leadership is founded upon Spiritual Leadership, which serves as the primary source of moral and religious legitimacy. This foundation is reinforced by Charismatic Leadership, which generates trust, commitment, and loyalty among organizational members. Transformational Leadership functions as the driving force for organizational change and educational innovation, while Visionary Leadership provides strategic direction and future orientation for Islamic educational institutions. Cultural Broker Leadership connects Islamic values with the social and cultural contexts of the community. Entrepreneurial Leadership supports economic independence and institutional sustainability, whereas Adaptive-Collaborative Leadership enables organizations to respond effectively to social change, technological advancement, and globalization. The synthesis demonstrates that these seven dimensions interact dynamically and collectively form a comprehensive model of kyai leadership in building Islamic education management. This integrative model represents the principal finding of the study and serves as the foundation for the subsequent discussion section.

Table 1. Summary of Kyai Leadership Dimensions Identified in the Literature

No.	Kyai leadership dimension	Frequency of occurrence in the literature
1	Spiritual Leadership	High
2	Charismatic Leadership	High
3	Transformational Leadership	Very High

4	Visionary Leadership	Moderate
5	Cultural Broker Leadership	Moderate
6	Entrepreneurial Leadership	Moderate
7	Adaptive-Collaborative Leadership	High

The table indicates that Transformational Leadership is the most dominant dimension in the kyai leadership literature, followed by Spiritual Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, and Adaptive-Collaborative Leadership. The remaining dimensions serve as complementary components that strengthen the integrative model of kyai leadership in building Islamic education management.

DISCUSSION

Model and Characteristics of Kyai Leadership in Islamic Education Management

The synthesis of 42 reviewed articles demonstrates that kyai leadership is a multidimensional construct that cannot be adequately explained through a single leadership perspective. This finding indicates that studies on kyai leadership have evolved from traditional approaches that primarily positioned kyai as spiritual leaders toward more complex and integrative perspectives. The reviewed literature suggests that the legitimacy of kyai leadership originates from a combination of scholarly authority, moral integrity, social influence, organizational transformation capacity, adaptability, and the ability to build relationships with the broader community. Sarwadi (2022) argues that kyai leadership embodies charismatic, transformational, and democratic characteristics that interact dynamically within pesantren leadership practices. This finding is reinforced by Mundiri and Iqna'a (2025), who demonstrate that kyai leadership integrates spiritual, academic, and managerial dimensions into a complementary leadership system. Similarly, Maula and Rofiki (2025) emphasize that the primary strength of kyai leadership lies in moral exemplarity and the ability to serve as role models for younger generations. Ahmad, Ngarawula, and Roseli (2025) further reveal that kyai leadership contributes not only to individual piety but also to social piety through strong relationships between pesantren and local communities. Consequently, the characteristics of kyai leadership extend beyond religious authority and encompass spiritual, social, cultural, and organizational leadership dimensions that collectively shape the distinctive identity of Islamic education management.

The findings further reveal that transformational leadership represents the most dominant dimension within the reviewed literature. Studies conducted by Suhermanto and Jasri (2024), Halil (2024), Yaturrochmah et al. (2024), Khoiri, Patoni, and Tanzeh (2022), Arifin et al. (2024), Hairo (2025), Zulfa et al. (2024), and Nursetialloh consistently indicate that the success of Islamic educational institutions is significantly influenced by the ability of kyai to formulate a vision for change, develop human resources, strengthen organizational commitment, and promote educational innovation. These findings suggest that the role of kyai has evolved from merely preserving tradition to becoming a transformative agent within Islamic educational organizations. In this context, transformational leadership functions as a mechanism through which Islamic educational institutions maintain their religious identity while adapting to environmental changes. The results reinforce the argument that the capacity of pesantren to respond effectively to globalization, digitalization, and modernization is highly dependent upon the transformational capabilities of their leaders. Therefore, transformational leadership may be regarded as one of the fundamental pillars of contemporary Islamic education management.

Beyond transformational leadership, this study identifies spiritual leadership and charismatic leadership as the primary sources of kyai leadership legitimacy. Abdul Wahab, Umar, and Badarussyamsi (2024) demonstrate that the successful internalization of religious moderation values is strongly influenced by the charisma and spiritual exemplarity of kyai. Nasith (2024) similarly finds

that charismatic leadership plays a crucial role in preventing intolerance and radicalism within pesantren environments. Comparable findings are reported by Sugianto, Rofiqi, and Zainuddin (2025), who argue that kyai charisma remains highly relevant in the digital era when combined with information technology utilization. Furthermore, Maula and Rofiki (2025) as well as Ahmad, Ngarawula, and Roseli (2025) demonstrate that the spiritual influence of kyai serves as the foundation for the development of religious character and social piety. These findings indicate that kyai leadership possesses a stronger moral foundation than many conventional organizational leadership models. Charisma and spirituality function not merely as sources of personal influence but also as mechanisms for shaping organizational culture and institutional identity within Islamic educational institutions. The significance of these findings lies in their ability to explain kyai leadership as a multidimensional phenomenon that has often been understood only partially in previous studies. This study successfully identifies seven major dimensions that consistently appear throughout the literature: spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, cultural broker leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership. These findings make an important theoretical contribution to Islamic education management by providing a more comprehensive understanding of kyai leadership than studies focusing exclusively on a single leadership dimension.

The Role of Kyai Leadership in Building and Transforming Islamic Education Management

The synthesis results indicate that kyai leadership plays a broad and strategic role in building and transforming Islamic education management. The reviewed literature demonstrates that kyai function not only as institutional leaders but also as vision architects, strategic decision-makers, organizational culture developers, agents of social change, and drivers of educational innovation. These findings suggest that kyai leadership operates simultaneously across multiple organizational levels. At the strategic level, kyai determine institutional direction and formulate long-term organizational visions. At the operational level, they oversee policy implementation, human resource management, and educational program development. At the societal level, they establish connections between educational institutions and surrounding communities. Consequently, kyai leadership occupies a central position in all aspects of Islamic education management. The strategic role of kyai leadership in organizational development is clearly illustrated by Khoiri, Patoni, and Tanzeh (2022), who demonstrate that pesantren quality improvement policies are significantly influenced by the transformational characteristics of kyai leadership. This finding is reinforced by Arifin et al. (2024), who reveal that organizational culture develops positively when institutions are led by kyai committed to change and quality enhancement. Hairo (2025) further demonstrates that curriculum innovation, administrative digitalization, and educational technology development are outcomes of transformational leadership practices implemented by kyai. Likewise, Halil (2024) finds that the ability of pesantren to preserve institutional identity while adapting to globalization is highly dependent on leaders' capacity to integrate innovation with tradition. Collectively, these findings suggest that kyai leadership contributes directly to the effectiveness of planning, organizing, implementation, and organizational development functions within Islamic educational institutions. This study also finds that kyai leadership plays an essential role in developing organizational culture. Arifin et al. (2024) demonstrate that progressive and collaborative organizational cultures emerge through the consistency and exemplary conduct of kyai leadership.

Muntoha et al. (2025) find that religious moderation culture is fostered through participatory leadership characterized by dialogical communication and respect for diversity. Ahmad, Ngarawula, and Roseli (2025) reveal that social piety within pesantren environments develops through the integration of religious values and local culture facilitated by kyai leadership. These findings suggest that kyai function as cultural architects who shape the values, norms, and culture of Islamic

educational organizations. Thus, the success of Islamic education management depends not only on formal administrative systems but also on leaders' capacity to cultivate organizational cultures that support educational goals. Beyond organizational development, kyai leadership also serves as a mechanism for social transformation. Suhermanto and Jasri (2024) demonstrate that village-based kyai contribute to improving community quality of life through non-formal educational initiatives. Mukarromah, Prasetya, and Masuwd (2024) identify kyai as agents of social transformation who influence multiple aspects of community life. Hafidloh, Ramadania, and Rosnani (2025) further reveal the significant role of kyai in promoting pesantren-based social entrepreneurship. Abdullah and Kusaeri (2024) explain that the transformation of kyai roles from religious leaders to socio-political actors reflects the expanding scope of kyai leadership. These findings indicate that Islamic education management under kyai leadership produces not only educational outcomes but also broader social impacts within society. The significance of these findings lies in demonstrating that kyai leadership is a critical determinant of successful Islamic education management transformation. The results contribute to the development of Islamic education management theory by illustrating that management functions cannot be separated from leadership characteristics. In other words, the effectiveness of Islamic education management is strongly influenced by the ability of kyai leaders to integrate spiritual, social, cultural, and organizational dimensions.

An Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management

The most significant finding of this study is the development of an Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management. This model was developed through thematic synthesis of all reviewed studies and serves as a response to the research gap identified in the literature. Previous studies have examined kyai leadership from diverse perspectives, including transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, spiritual leadership, integrative leadership, distributed-regenerative leadership, and social entrepreneurial leadership. However, these studies have largely examined leadership dimensions separately and have not produced a comprehensive conceptual framework capable of explaining the relationships among leadership dimensions. As a result, understanding of kyai leadership remains fragmented and insufficient to explain comprehensively how kyai leadership contributes to Islamic education management. This study addresses this limitation by synthesizing findings across the literature and identifying seven interconnected leadership dimensions: spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, cultural broker leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership. These findings indicate that kyai leadership represents a multidimensional construct that cannot be reduced to a single leadership model. The proposed integrative model suggests that spiritual leadership and charismatic leadership serve as the foundational sources of leadership legitimacy. Spiritual leadership is rooted in moral exemplarity, religious integrity, and the internalization of Islamic values within organizational and community life. Charismatic leadership strengthens social legitimacy through personal influence, role modeling, and community trust. Built upon these foundations, transformational leadership and visionary leadership function as drivers of organizational change and strategic direction. Numerous studies demonstrate that the ability of kyai to formulate visions, manage change, improve educational quality, and promote institutional innovation is crucial for enabling pesantren to respond effectively to globalization and social transformation. Therefore, transformational and visionary leadership act as the primary engines of future-oriented Islamic education management.

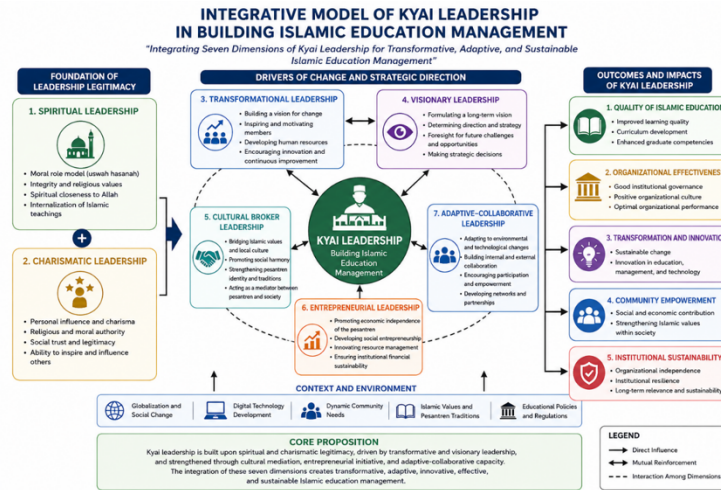


Figure 3 : An Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management

Furthermore, cultural broker leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership function as mechanisms that enhance organizational sustainability. As cultural brokers, kyai bridge Islamic values with local cultural traditions, ensuring that Islamic educational institutions remain relevant to evolving social needs. Entrepreneurial leadership enables pesantren to achieve economic independence through social entrepreneurship and sustainable resource management. Meanwhile, adaptive-collaborative leadership reflects the ability of kyai to adapt to environmental changes, technological developments, and collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders. The integration of these seven dimensions produces a more comprehensive conceptual framework than leadership models identified in previous studies. Consequently, the proposed model provides a new theoretical foundation for the study of Islamic education management. The primary scientific contribution of this study lies in the advancement of a more comprehensive theory of kyai leadership. Whereas previous studies explained only selected aspects of kyai leadership, this research demonstrates the interrelationships among multiple leadership dimensions within a unified framework. The findings extend the work of Sarwadi (2022), Mundiri and Iqna'a (2025), and Komariah et al. (2025), who recognized the complexity of kyai leadership but did not organize these dimensions into a systematic integrative model. Therefore, this study contributes to the advancement of Islamic educational leadership literature and enriches scholarship on pesantren-based Islamic education management. The proposed model further demonstrates that kyai leadership remains highly relevant not only within traditional contexts but also in addressing the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and contemporary social transformation. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that Islamic educational institutions should develop leadership systems that extend beyond traditional charisma and authority by strengthening transformational, adaptive, collaborative, and entrepreneurial capacities. From a theoretical perspective, the findings highlight the need for more contextual, multidimensional, and empirically grounded theories of Islamic educational leadership. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The review included only articles that met predefined inclusion criteria within a specific publication period, which may have excluded other relevant studies. Furthermore, the proposed integrative model remains conceptual and requires empirical validation across diverse Islamic educational contexts. Future studies may therefore employ quantitative, mixed-methods, or multi-site case study designs to test the validity and explanatory power of the integrative model proposed in this study.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze and synthesize existing research on kyai leadership in building Islamic education management through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Based on the review of 42 articles that met the inclusion criteria, the findings indicate that kyai leadership plays a crucial role in the success of Islamic educational institutions. The results demonstrate that kyai leadership extends beyond its traditional spiritual function and encompasses organizational vision development, institutional culture building, educational innovation, community engagement, and organizational change management. The literature synthesis further reveals that kyai leadership has evolved into a multidimensional and adaptive leadership model capable of responding to contemporary challenges. Therefore, kyai leadership can be regarded as one of the key determinants of effective Islamic education management. A major contribution of this study is the development of an Integrative Model of Kyai Leadership in Building Islamic Education Management. The model consists of seven interrelated dimensions: spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, cultural broker leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, and adaptive-collaborative leadership.

These dimensions complement one another in supporting the effective, innovative, and sustainable management of Islamic educational institutions. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of kyai leadership is not determined by a single leadership dimension but rather by the ability to integrate multiple leadership roles and functions simultaneously. Consequently, this study contributes to the theoretical development of Islamic education management by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics and roles of kyai leadership. Furthermore, the findings offer practical implications for pesantren administrators and Islamic educational leaders seeking to strengthen leadership practices and institutional effectiveness. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The review was restricted to articles that met specific inclusion criteria and were published within a predetermined period, which may have excluded other relevant studies. Therefore, future research is recommended to empirically test the proposed integrative model across various types of Islamic educational institutions. Subsequent studies may also develop measurement instruments to examine the influence of each kyai leadership dimension on educational quality, organizational culture, and institutional performance. In addition, further investigations into kyai leadership in the context of digital transformation, technological advancement, and social change are needed to enrich the body of knowledge in Islamic education management. Through continued empirical research, the integrative model proposed in this study is expected to gain stronger empirical support and make broader contributions to both the theory and practice of Islamic educational leadership.

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