

Exploring Leadership Models in Islamic Education: A Comparative Study of Mono and Dual Leadership Structures in East Java Pesantren

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Abstract

Grounded in leadership theory within educational and socio-religious institutions, this study examines three critical aspects of leadership in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school): the formation of formal and informal structures; the role of family, foundations, and symbols of authority in reinforcing internal stability and leadership legitimacy; and the consequences of leadership models on moderation, institutional openness, and adaptability of *pesantren*. A qualitative approach was employed, involving in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis at *Pesantren Miftahul Ulum* and *Pesantren Kiai Syarifuddin* in East Java. Data and findings were analyzed through symbolic and socio-cultural lenses. The results indicate that the mono leadership model generates a centralized and rapid decision-making process heavily reliant on the personal authority of the *Kiai*. In contrast, the dual leadership model emphasizes collective deliberation through family forums and foundation structures, fostering an inclusive and adaptive organizational culture. Spiritual symbols and the informal role of family members were also key elements in maintaining value continuity and internal stability in both models. This study offers a new analytical contribution by highlighting how differing leadership typologies in *pesantren* not only influence internal governance but also shape the development of democratic and moderate Islamic education practices within changing socio-religious contexts.

Keywords

Dual Leadership; Islamic Boarding School Leadership; Islamic Education Governance; Mono Leadership; Organizational Adaptation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) determines the success of institutions in responding to social dynamics, maintaining organizational stability, and internalizing religious moderation values that are increasingly relevant in the era of globalization. As value-based educational institutions, *pesantren* must integrate the heritage of *salafiyah* scholarship with modern education, although tensions often arise due to differing value orientations. Nurtawab and Wahyudi (2022) found a shift in leadership models from the single authority of the *Kiai* towards collective governance



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involving families and foundations, which is considered more adaptive. This perspective is supported by Fatih (2024), who views the collective model as a response to social change. Furthermore, moderation values such as *tawassut* (moderation) and *tasamuh* (tolerance) are internalized through curricula and community empowerment, creating an inclusive social ecosystem. This transformation strengthens *pesantren* resilience, although they continue to face challenges in maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity (Fatih, 2024; Hamidah & Chasannudin, 2021).

To sharpen our analysis of *pesantren* leadership, this study situates its core argument within Max Weber's typology of charismatic authority and James MacGregor Burns's transformational leadership. Weber's approach explains the enduring authority of *Kiai* through charisma and community trust (Barisione, 2023), while Burns's model frames leadership as moral collaboration and transformation. The hybrid model emerging in *pesantren* fuses personal spiritual authority with participatory governance, facilitating both continuity and adaptation. This blended leadership paradigm is central to understanding how *pesantren* now balance their symbolic heritage with evolving institutional needs.

Several studies between 2020 and 2024 have identified four main trends in the study of leadership in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). *First*, Babussalam et al. (2025) and Huzaili & Purnomo (2024) Highlight traditional and transformational leadership models that position the *Kiai* as central to decision-making and organizational culture. *Second*, Muis (2020)) and Rusmini et al. (2023) Discuss the modernization of *pesantren* management with a shift toward foundation-based collective leadership. *Third*, Fatih (2024) and Nasir & Rijal (2021) Investigate the role of *pesantren* in instilling moderate values through symbolic-cultural approaches, which are relevant in plural societies. *Fourth*, Hasmiza & Muhtarom (2023) and Al Ayubbi (2024) Analyze the adaptation of *pesantren* to the digital era, particularly the challenges of technology and changes in the education system that impact charismatic leadership. Despite their thematic richness, these studies have not explicitly compared mono- and dual-leadership models in terms of power distribution and their effects on organizational stability, moderation, and the adaptive capacity of *pesantren*, especially at the local level, such as in Lumajang, East Java.

This study focuses on three primary issues: (1) how formal and informal structures are formed within mono leadership and collective models in *pesantren*; (2) the role of family, foundations, and symbols of authority in reinforcing internal stability and leadership legitimacy; and (3) the consequences of each model on moderation, openness, and institutional adaptability of *pesantren*. The research enriches the understanding of the dynamics of formal and informal leadership structures in singular and collective *pesantren* leadership. This study broadens institutional leadership theory by examining the roles of family, foundations, and symbols of authority as factors of legitimacy and internal stability. Moreover, it examines the impact of leadership models on moderation, organizational openness, and adaptation, thereby strengthening the theoretical frameworks of religious and traditional organizational leadership. This study provides practical guidance for *pesantren* management to enhance mono- and dual-leadership models by leveraging the roles of family, foundations, and symbolic authority, thereby improving organizational legitimacy and stability and reinforcing internal governance through a comprehensive understanding of various symbolic and social elements.

This study begins with the hypothesis that dual leadership in *pesantren* governance provides greater adaptability, inclusiveness, and institutional resilience than mono leadership, particularly when institutions face complex social and educational challenges. Dual leadership, which combines formal structures such as foundations with informal family-based authority, enables broader consultation, distributes symbolic and administrative power, and enhances internal legitimacy through participatory deliberation. This model also better supports the integration of moderation values and the fulfillment of regulatory or curricular requirements. Nevertheless, the study does not assume the inherent superiority of dual leadership; rather, it treats this proposition as a hypothesis to be empirically tested. Mono leadership, centered on the *Kiai*, may remain effective in contexts characterized by strong charismatic authority and cohesive communal trust, allowing for swift decision-making and the

preservation of doctrinal coherence. Using a comparative approach, the research examines how different authority configurations operate across various institutional settings. Conceptually, it connects Weber's theory of charismatic authority with Burns's transformational leadership to interpret *pesantren* leadership as a hybrid model, while empirically examining the coexistence of formal and informal authority in maintaining stability and promoting moderation.

2. METHODS

This study was conducted over a period of six months, from May to October 2024, in the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum and *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin in Lumajang, East Java. These *pesantren* were selected due to their significantly different leadership structures and governance models. The *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum implements a mono leadership model, where the *Kiai* holds the highest structural and symbolic authority. In contrast, *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin adopts a dual leadership model, exercised collectively through the *Majelis Kiai* and the broader *pesantren* family forum. This study focuses on examining how power is distributed within each leadership model and its influence on moderation and organizational adaptability.

A qualitative approach with a multiple case study design was employed to capture the complexity of power relations and social dynamics within *pesantren* leadership contexts. As Hall and Liebenberg (2024) note that qualitative research enables a deep and contextual understanding of social realities. This approach facilitates the interpretation of meanings behind actions, symbols of authority, and latent social interactions (Cena et al., 2024). Employing multiple case studies allows for a comparative analysis of different leadership systems, providing richer contextual insights into variations in power distribution (Pauwels & Matthyssens, 2004; Roth, 2022).

Data collection involved three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document review. A total of 11 informants were purposively selected, including *Kiais*, foundation administrators, senior students, and alumni directly involved in leadership and governance processes in the two *pesantren*. Purposive sampling ensures that relevant and rich data are obtained from individuals with direct knowledge of organizational practices (Tongco, 2007). Interviews explored perspectives on leadership structures, power distribution, deliberation mechanisms, and the role of symbolic authority within the *pesantren* environment. Observations focused on interactions in formal and informal forums, including family councils and central mosques, as suggested by Grabowski et al. (2020) For studying social spaces and power dynamics. Document review covered organizational charts, meeting minutes, student registries, and historical archives to triangulate findings from interviews and observations.

For data analysis, an interpretative qualitative analysis framework was employed, drawing on established methodologies in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This approach enables the researcher to uncover meanings embedded in actions, social symbols, and cultural contexts. The analysis followed a systematic process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Nicmanis, 2024). Interview transcripts, observational notes, and documents were coded according to major themes, such as leadership structures, power distribution patterns, family and foundation involvement, and their influence on fostering moderation within the *pesantren*. Relevant theoretical frameworks, including power theory, spiritual leadership theory, and organizational climate concepts, guided interpretation (Brinke & Keltner, 2022). Triangulation across data sources and methods was applied to enhance credibility and validity.

This methodological framework ensures a rigorous and contextually grounded understanding of how different *pesantren* leadership models influence governance, institutional stability, and the internalization of moderate Islamic values.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Formal and Informal Structures in Mono vs. Dual Leadership Models

In *pesantren* leadership, formal and informal structures play pivotal roles in determining how power is distributed, decisions are made, and institutional vision is sustained. This study compares two *pesantren* leadership models: mono leadership at the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum and dual leadership at *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin. The formal and informal structures evolving within each model significantly influence organizational forms and actor relationships within the *pesantren*, as demonstrated by interview excerpts in Table 1.

Table 1. Interviews on Mono vs. Dual Leadership

No	Informant	Findings	Brief Description
1	(KH), Management of the Miftahul Ulum Foundation	Centralization of authority in the <i>Kiai</i>	The <i>Kiai</i> holds complete control over all critical <i>pesantren</i> policies. No significant decisions are made without approval, reflecting a mono leadership model.
2	(A), Senior <i>santri</i> of the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum	Structural dependency on the <i>Kiai</i>	Despite formal structures, all decisions await guidance from the <i>Kiai</i> : “always wait for the <i>Kiai</i> ’s guidance before making any decision”, even in technical matters like study schedules. This condition reinforces a centralized leadership character.
3	(RM), Management of the <i>Pesantren</i> Kiai Syarifuddin Foundation	Collective decision-making	<i>Pesantren</i> decisions are made through a forum involving caregivers. No single figure dominates, embodying the dual leadership model through collective deliberation and decision-making.

Table 1 illustrates that the mono leadership model establishes a hierarchical, formal structure that tends to restrict participatory spaces (Knudsmoen et al., 2022). One figure—the *Kiai*—determines decisions as a spiritual and managerial leader (Khamid, 2024). Conversely, the dual leadership model emphasizes collective deliberation, family participation, and the distribution of symbolic power, potentially yielding policies that are more representative and legitimate, fostering more inclusive, adaptive, and moderate *pesantren* governance (Adams, 2023; Prasetyo, 2022; Rofdillah et al., 2024; Tejeiro, 2022). These dynamics reflect the socio-religious complexities inherent in *pesantren* governance, offering an open space for combining traditional values with modern management practices. These are key to ensuring *pesantren* relevance and resilience amid rapid social change.

Table 2 indicates that at *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, formal structure operates under direct command patterns from the *Kiai*, while informal structure is formed through personal loyalty and salaf traditions. Meanwhile, at *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin, formal structure is driven by deliberation systems via the *Majelis Kiai*, and informal structures are reinforced by family fellowship forums and collective approaches.

Table 2. Leadership Structure Observations

Date	Observation	Brief Description
May 5, 2024	The <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum management meeting is awaiting the <i>Kiai</i> ’s instructions. “We cannot proceed without the <i>Kiai</i> ’s instruction; it is our tradition.”	Despite a complete management structure, program implementation depends heavily on direct instructions from the <i>Kiai</i> .
May 17, 2024	Weekly <i>Majelis Kiai</i> meeting at the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin.	Two caregivers and family members jointly make decisions in a collective atmosphere.

Date	Observation	Brief Description
May 23, 2024	Activity evaluation at the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum.	Program managers must report all development activities directly to the <i>Kiai</i> .
May 30, 2024	Family deliberation forum at the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin.	Before policy formulation, open discussions among management, caregivers, and large family members.

Salim et al. (2025) Assert that *pesantren* institutional stability depends on local social networks and cultural practices embedded in daily life. At the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, which adopts the mono leadership model, Muttaqin (2020) Observes that power is centralized in the *Kiai* figure, who controls all strategic and technical decisions, while administrative structures only function as policy executors. In this regard, Nisa'u and Karsidi (2025) Emphasize personal loyalty and *Kiai* charisma as symbolic forces that support monolithic leadership dominance. In contrast, Joseph and Sengul (2025) Identify that dual leadership models, exemplified by the *Pesantren* *Kiai* Syarifuddin, stress collectivity through the *Majelis Kiai* and family forums, which promote an open discussion culture and kinship. This pattern, they argue, creates a shared sense of ownership regarding the *pesantren*'s direction. Thus, mono leadership is deemed more efficient but potentially stagnant, while dual leadership is adaptive and participative, requiring more complex coordination.

In the face of contemporary social dynamics, Indonesian *pesantrens* confront the challenge of balancing traditional Islamic teachings with moderate education that promotes social harmony. Nurtawab and Wahyudi (2022) Highlight the strategic role of *pesantren* leadership in integrating *salafiyah* values with modern educational practices. This condition is further reinforced by Bahij and Anshory (2023), who regard leadership as a bridge between tradition and current social needs.

Figure 1 illustrates that the mono-leadership model at *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, centered on the *Kiai*, produces a hierarchical and non-deliberative power structure. Formal structures, such as the foundation, merely execute the *Kiai*'s decisions. In contrast, informal structures rely on personal loyalty and hereditary charisma, according to Babussalam et al. (2025). This model effectively maintains stability but lacks adaptability to changes that require broad participation and collaboration. This pattern can hinder institutional inclusiveness and democratization (Huzaili & Purnomo, 2024), weaken meritocratic regeneration (Hamidah & Chasannudin, 2021), and lead to ideological stagnation (Knudsmoen et al., 2022). Therefore, Muis (2020), Fatih (2024), and Samsudin et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of shifting toward a more collective model relevant to *pesantren* moderation and sustainability.

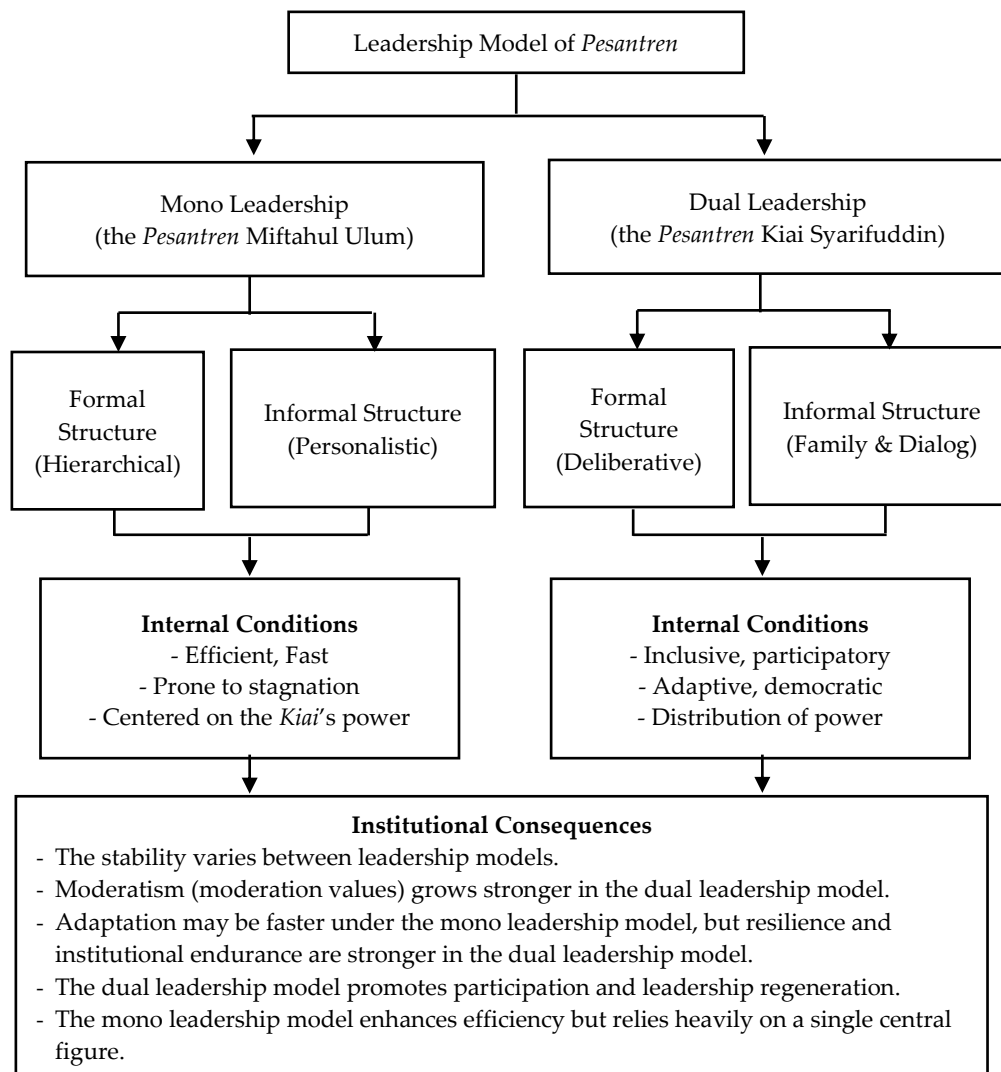


Figure 1. Leadership Model of *Pesantren*

Conversely, the *Pesantren Kiai Syarifuddin* employs a dual leadership model that adopts a more democratic approach, involving collective actors such as the *Majelis Kiai* and extended family forums in the decision-making process. The formal structures are legally established through the foundation and operationalized deliberatively through institutionalized *musyawarah* (deliberation) mechanisms. Informal structures are strengthened by a culture of open discussion, *silaturahmi* (kinship) among extended family members, and symbolic legitimacy distributed among stakeholders. Muis (2020) argues that such a collective leadership pattern can broaden participation and enhance institutional adaptability. The distribution of authority in dual leadership fosters more inclusive compromise spaces in *pesantren* governance (Basit et al., 2023). Moreover, the transition from charismatic to collective leadership enables the systematic growth of religious moderation values (Silvia & Nurhadi, 2023). Therefore, comparing the mono and dual leadership models highlights different governing styles and illustrates how the distribution of formal and informal power is key to maintaining a balance of authority, participation, and adaptability in the modern era.

The Role of Family, Foundation, and Symbols of Authority in Maintaining Organizational Stability

The roles of the *pesantren's* extended family, foundation, and symbols of authority constitute a crucial foundation in organizational stability within *pesantrens*, both structurally and culturally. These roles are evident from how two *pesantren*, namely the *Pesantren Miftahul Ulum* and *Pesantren Kiai Syarifuddin*, construct a power distribution system based on strong social and spiritual relations. Table

3 presents excerpts from interviews with the management and senior students:

Table 3 indicates that the *Kiai* family plays a strategic role as informal actors, maintaining the continuity of values and acting as mediators in the event of potential disintegration. Meanwhile, the *Pesantren* Foundation serves as a formal entity that ensures the organization's continuity both legally and administratively. Field observations also show that *Pesantren* symbols hold considerable symbolic power in maintaining internal stability.

Table 3. Interviews on the Role of Family, Foundation, and Symbols of Authority

No	Informant	Findings	Brief Description
1	(MHA), Head of AUPK Bureau IAI Miftahul Ulum	Centralization of <i>Kiai</i> leadership	The <i>Kiai</i> is the primary actor in all aspects of <i>pesantren</i> management, assisted by the foundation, boarding school administrators, and teachers. The role demonstrates the dominance of a singular role in decision-making.
2	(MA), Senior <i>Santri</i> of the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin	Family deliberation as a strategic forum	Important decisions are taken through a large family forum, indicating the strong role of informal kinship-based structures in the collective leadership system.
3	(KH), Foundation Management of the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin	Symbolic meaning in leadership	Symbols such as <i>the kitab kuning</i> , a heritage of the <i>Kiai</i> , seats, and the main house are considered to have spiritual value that culturally strengthens the legitimacy of the <i>Kiai</i> .
4	(AH), Alumnus of the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum	Role of the foundation as a balancer	The foundation functions administratively, safeguarding <i>Kiai</i> 's vision and mitigating potential internal conflicts, acting as a pillar of organizational stability.

Table 4. Observations on the Role of Symbols of Authority

Date	Observation	Brief Description
May 5, 2024	Special guest room in <i>Kiai</i> 's house (the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum)	Reserved solely for important meetings, creating a charismatic atmosphere and symbolizing the highest authority of the <i>Kiai</i> .
May 17, 2024	Weekly family forum in the main house (the <i>Pesantren</i> <i>Kiai</i> Syarifuddin)	It is a sacred space for strategic decision-making and maintaining the values of togetherness among <i>pesantren</i> family members.
May 30, 2024	Main library housing the <i>kitab kuning</i> heritage of the <i>Kiai</i>	Serves as an intellectual symbol and spiritual continuity, reinforcing the historical legitimacy of <i>pesantren</i> leadership.

Symbols of authority within *pesantren* significantly shape leadership legitimacy, both formally and informally (see Figure 2). The special guest room, family forum, and *kitab kuning* heritage of the *Kiai* are not mere physical artifacts but representations of power, spiritual continuity, and deliberative values. In the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, symbols reinforce the *Kiai*'s dominance as the central authority figure. In contrast, in the *Pesantren* *Kiai* Syarifuddin, such symbols strengthen collective leadership and participative values. These findings reveal that symbols serve cultural functions and act as strategic instruments in *pesantren* governance and leadership stability.

Organizational stability in *pesantren* depends not only on formal structures such as foundations and administrative boards but is also profoundly influenced by the *pesantren* family system and symbols of authority rooted in local traditions and spirituality. In the *pesantren* context, organizational strength is sustained mainly through social relations and cultural values that thrive within the community (Halim, 2023). At the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, the *Kiai* figure holds a central position, overseeing all strategic activities, while the foundation serves as a legal protector and social representative. As

documented, symbols such as the special guest room and the *Kitab Kuning* heritage reinforce informal structures and create emotional bonds within the community (Karim et al., 2023). Consistent with Garcia (2018), the extended family in the *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin holds a strategic position within the informal structure through a weekly forum that operates as a collective deliberation space. The foundation embodies the institutional vision collectively, and symbols like the main house and the *Kitab Kuning* heritage of the *Kiai* play important roles in reinforcing community identity and solidarity. In both mono- and dual-leadership models, the *pesantren* family, foundation, and symbols of authority function integratively to maintain value continuity, spiritual succession, and *pesantren* resilience in the face of social change (Ipandang et al., 2022).

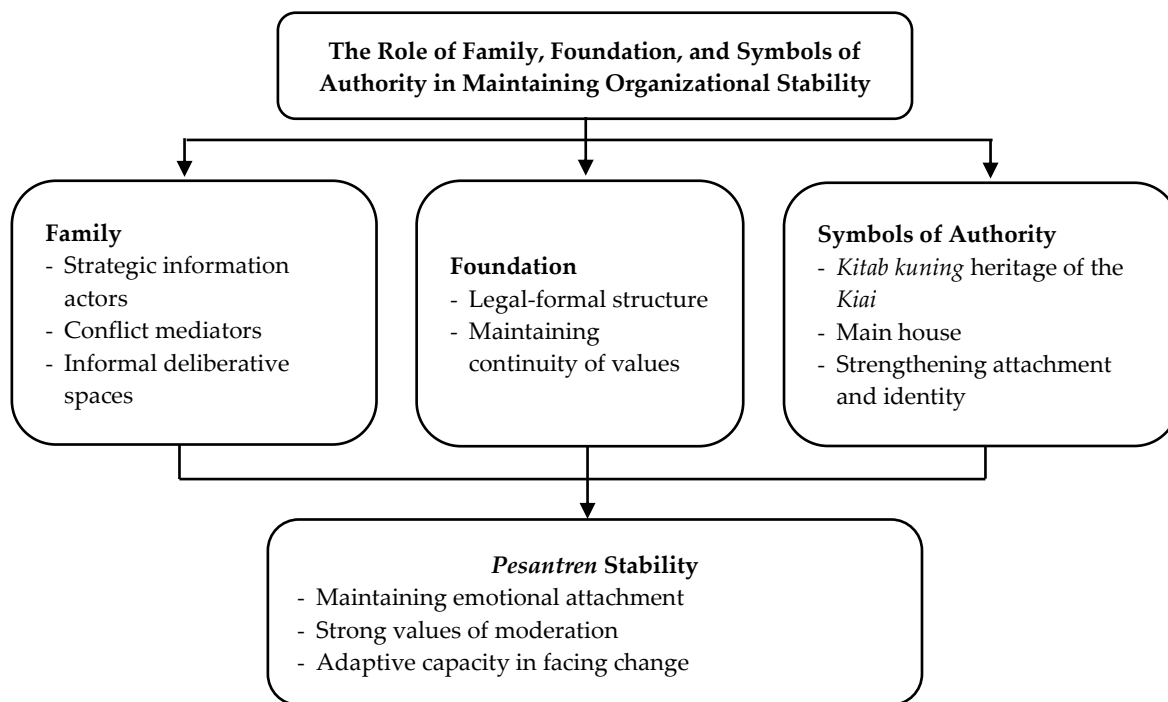


Figure 2. The Role of Family, Foundation, and Symbols of Authority

In *pesantren* contexts, institutional stability relies not only on formal structures, such as foundations, but is also strongly supported by informal forces rooted in kinship relations and spiritual symbols. In the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum and the *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin, the family serves as a strategic actor, safeguarding value continuity, mediating internal conflicts, and nurturing leadership legitimacy. Babussalam et al. (2025) Argue that such informal dimensions strengthen institutional structures culturally and spiritually. Muis (2020) Emphasizes the importance of collective and participatory leadership in building *pesantren* institutional effectiveness amidst contemporary challenges. Similarly, Rusmini et al. (2023) Observe that moderate values in Islamic education grow more effectively within inclusive and deliberative environments. For instance, in the *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin, the family forum functions not merely as a kinship space. However, it has evolved into an informal deliberative arena with significant authority over *pesantren* policy directions.

Furthermore, symbols such as *kitab kuning*, a heritage of the *Kiai*, the main house, or a special guest room are spiritual artifacts that serve as symbolic power devices, upholding emotional bonds and a collective identity among *pesantren* residents. These symbols align with studies by Fatih (2024) and Hidayatulloh et al. (2023), highlighting how *pesantren* foster moderation values through symbolic and cultural approaches. In the face of rapid social changes, such symbols act as value anchors and tools for internal stabilization, especially when formal structures face external pressures or leadership regeneration. This study also supports the findings of Muttaqin (2020), which suggest that revitalizing deliberation systems, symbolic relations, and family participation in leadership can enhance *pesantren*

adaptability and instill moderate Islamic values more organically. Thus, the interaction among family, foundation, and symbols of authority is not merely an institutional complement but the core of *pesantren* resilience amid complex times.

Consequences of Leadership Models on Moderation, Openness, and Institutional Adaptability

The leadership models implemented at the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum and *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin demonstrate differing consequences on moderation, institutional openness, and adaptability to social and educational changes. The research findings indicate that variations in leadership structures directly affect how moderate values are instilled and the extent to which the organization remains flexible in its transformation. Table 5 presents the results of interviews with several key informants:

Table 5. Interviews on the Consequences of Leadership Models

No	Informant	Finding	Brief Description
1	(HS), Senior teacher of the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum	High efficiency and compliance	The <i>Kiai</i> acts as the sole decision-maker in every change. Once the <i>Kiai</i> 's approval is granted, all elements move uniformly without resistance, reflecting strong control and efficiency.
2	(AN), Vice Caretaker of the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin	Inclusive deliberative process	Decision-making is conducted through collective discussions. "We discuss all policies together before final approval, so everyone feels heard. Although more time-consuming, the outcomes are more consensual and collectively accepted."
3	(NL), alumnus of the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin	Moderate attitude and openness	Collective leadership between two <i>Kiais</i> fosters a flexible culture that is open to differing views.
4	(ZR), alumnus of the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum	Moderation based on <i>Kiai</i> 's authority	Moderation in the <i>pesantren</i> is achieved through strict control by the <i>Kiai</i> , who requires all official channels to pass through his authority. This demonstrates stable but rigid centralization.

The statements from several informants in Table 5 indicate that the mono leadership model at the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum supports rapid and centralized transformation. However, openness to change is elitist, relying entirely on the *Kiai*'s approval. In contrast, the dual leadership model at the *Pesantren* Syarifuddin encourages a moderate and open attitude by habituating the management of differences through deliberation (see Table 6).

Table 6. Field Observations on Leadership and Adaptation Processes

Date	Observation	Brief Description
July 2, 2024	Socialization of the Independent Learning Curriculum (<i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>) at the <i>Pesantren</i> Miftahul Ulum	The new policy is only implemented after full approval from the <i>Kiai</i> . The adaptation process is swift and uniform but lacks participatory dialogue due to its top-down nature.
July 10, 2024	Curriculum innovation workshop at the <i>Pesantren</i> Syarifuddin	Decision-making involves the chairman of the <i>pesantren</i> , teachers, and senior students. Each element is given space to express opinions through deliberative forums, reflecting a participatory leadership style.

The leadership models at the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum and *Pesantren* Kiai Syarifuddin significantly influence the patterns of internalizing the values of moderation, organizational openness, and adaptability to social changes and educational policies. At *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, the mono

leadership model facilitates rapid and uniform policy implementation, as exemplified by the swift adoption of the Independent Learning Curriculum following the *Kiai's* approval. However, this process is top-down with minimal dialogic space, such that moderation depends heavily on the personal will of the *Kiai*. High cohesion is created through loyalty to a single figure, yet it carries the latent risk of silent resistance. Conversely, the dual leadership model of *Kiai* in the *Pesantren* *Kiai* Syarifuddin, grounded in family deliberations and participatory forums, fosters an open and dialogical organizational culture. Policies emerge through a deliberative process involving various stakeholders, resulting in collective legitimacy and openness to difference. This climate strengthens *pesantren* adaptability and promotes the internalization of moderate Islamic values, relevant to the challenges of pluralism and contemporary social dynamics.

The leadership models applied at *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum and *Pesantren* *Kiai* Syarifuddin have distinctly different consequences for cultivating moderate values and how the *pesantrens* respond to social and educational dynamics. Sah and Fuad (2024) argue that leadership patterns have a significant influence on the development of a moderate character within Islamic educational environments. At the *Pesantren* Miftahul Ulum, the mono leadership structure centered on the *Kiai* enables swift and solid policy execution, as seen in the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum. Fischer et al. (2017). Note that the efficacy of this model relies on directional uniformity, albeit at the expense of broad participation. However, Holland and Shepherd (2013) caution that reliance on a single figure can create an elitist pattern in adaptation management. Anjar (2021) describes this model as technically strong charismatic leadership, but weak participation. Indeed, Kim et al. (2022) emphasize that *Kiai's* cautious stance on change can foster stability but limit opportunities for innovation and collective reflection among *pesantren* actors.

In contrast, the *Pesantren* *Kiai* Syarifuddin exemplifies how a dual leadership pattern can foster a more democratic, participatory, and adaptable institutional environment for change, according to Imran et al. (2025) This dual leadership model opens up space for more open and accommodating decision-making, one that is attuned to the aspirations of all *pesantren* members. Humaidi et al. (2024) Emphasize that involving the *Kiai*, teachers, senior students, and the broader *pesantren* family in deliberative processes provides adequate dialogic space for internalizing inclusive values. Silvia and Nurhadi (2023) and Mustakim et al. (2021) State that the shura-participative leadership pattern significantly contributes to creating open communication systems and more professional management. In the context of strengthening religious moderation, Zakariyah et al. (2022) Note that the involvement of multiple actors in decision-making habituates *pesantren* members to respond constructively to differences. Furthermore, Muttaqin (2020) and Gule (2025) Assert that such an inclusive environment forms a crucial foundation for Islamic education, grounded in moderation and balance. Thus, the dual leadership model provides a structural alternative and acts as a cultural mechanism reinforcing *pesantren* adaptability to the challenges of the times (see Table 7).

Table 7. Comparison of Leadership Models

No	Mono Leadership	Dual Leadership
1	Fast and solid decision-making	Collective and participative leadership
2	Adaptation depends on personal approval	Adaptation to change
3	Limited discussion space	Encourages openness and dialogue

The comparison between the mono and dual leadership models within the context of *pesantrens* reveals essential differences in decision-making patterns and adaptability to change. Basit et al. (2023) argue that monolithic leadership excels in technical effectiveness by enabling quick and solid decisions. However, as noted by Hallo et al. (2020) and Wang et al. (2022), this model heavily depends on a central figure and provides limited space for participation and open discussion. Conversely, Tabassi et al. (2025) emphasize that dual leadership, characterized by its collective and participatory nature, fosters a

more flexible adaptation process to social dynamics and policy changes while opening spaces for broad and healthy dialogue. Although the decision-making process in this model tends to be slower, Esenyel (2024) demonstrates that this approach grants strong moral legitimacy and cultivates an inclusive organizational culture. Thus, institutional effectiveness is not solely determined by the speed of execution but also by the quality of collective engagement and the institution's capacity to build sustainable consensus.

4. CONCLUSION

Leadership in *pesantren* is not solely based on formal institutional structures but is profoundly influenced by informal relationships shaped through family networks, cultural traditions, and spiritual symbols passed down through generations. The differing leadership models observed in two *pesantren* mono leadership and dual leadership directly affect organizational stability, the values of moderation, and institutional adaptability to social and educational dynamics. The mono leadership model establishes a hierarchical organizational pattern with swift decision-making processes, relying heavily on a single authoritative figure of the *Kiai*. In contrast, the dual leadership model fosters a participatory leadership system through family forums and collective deliberation, thereby contributing to an inclusive, adaptive, and open-minded institutional climate. This research adds conceptual novelty by examining the convergence of formal and informal leadership domains in promoting moderation values and institutional robustness, an area previously overlooked in *pesantren*-focused investigations.

Theoretically, the study enriches the scholarship on Islamic educational leadership by highlighting the critical role of both formal and informal power distributions in maintaining legitimacy and organizational sustainability. The study supports the concept of collective leadership (*syuro-participative leadership*) as a strategic alternative to address the complex social changes faced by *pesantren*. The study recommends strengthening collective structures based on *musyawarah* (deliberation) within *pesantren* as a strategy to improve governance quality that is moderate, democratic, and oriented toward professional regeneration. This recommendation serves as an important reference for formulating *pesantren* education policies aligned with the values of Islamic *wasathiyah* (moderation).

The study's limitations include its geographic scope and the number of cases confined to two *pesantren* in Lumajang Regency. Therefore, future research is suggested to involve *pesantren* from diverse regions with varied characteristics, and to explore further gender issues, digital technology, and the impact of globalization on *pesantren* leadership structures. An interdisciplinary approach combining anthropology, sociology of religion, and organizational studies may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of future leadership dynamics and institutional transformation within *pesantren*.

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