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Leadership Principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in the Management of Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso

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ABSTRAK

Kepemimpinan kiai memiliki peran penting dalam menentukan keberhasilan pengelolaan pondok pesantren. Namun, sebagian besar penelitian terdahulu lebih banyak berfokus pada gaya kepemimpinan kiai dibandingkan dengan prinsip-prinsip yang mendasari praktik kepemimpinannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis prinsip-prinsip kepemimpinan KH. Ahmad Baidowi dalam mengelola Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Ulum Bondowoso. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan keluarga kiai, pengurus pesantren, santri, alumni, serta tokoh masyarakat. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña, sedangkan keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan KH. Ahmad Baidowi dibangun atas sembilan prinsip utama, yaitu ketegasan, disiplin, tanggung jawab, istiqamah (konsistensi komitmen), wira'i (kehati-hatian spiritual), kharismatik, ikhlas, sabar, dan nasionalisme. Kesembilan prinsip tersebut membentuk tiga dimensi kepemimpinan yang saling berkaitan, yaitu dimensi manajerial, moral-spiritual, dan sosial, yang secara kolektif mendukung pengelolaan pesantren yang efektif. Dimensi manajerial berkontribusi dalam menciptakan tata kelola yang efektif dan akuntabel; dimensi moral-spiritual memperkuat integritas organisasi dan nilai-nilai budaya; sedangkan dimensi sosial meningkatkan legitimasi kepemimpinan serta memperkuat kemitraan antara pesantren dan masyarakat sekitar. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian Manajemen Pendidikan Islam dengan menawarkan pemahaman mengenai prinsip-prinsip kepemimpinan kiai sebagai fondasi pengelolaan pondok pesantren yang efektif, berintegritas, dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan Kiai; Manajemen Pendidikan Islam; Pengelolaan Pesantren; Prinsip Kepemimpinan; KH. Ahmad Baidowi.

ABSTRACT

The leadership of *kiai* plays a crucial role in determining the success of Islamic boarding school management. However, previous studies have predominantly focused on the leadership styles of *kiai* rather than the underlying principles that shape their leadership practices. This study aims to analyze the leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving the *kiai's* family, pesantren administrators, students (*santri*), alumni, and community leaders. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while data credibility was ensured through source triangulation. The findings reveal that the leadership of KH. Ahmad Baidowi is constructed upon nine fundamental principles: firmness, discipline, responsibility, *istiqamah* (consistency in commitment), *wira'i* (spiritual prudence), charisma, sincerity, patience, and nationalism. These nine principles constitute three interconnected dimensions of leadership: managerial, moral-spiritual, and social dimensions, which collectively support effective pesantren management. The managerial dimension contributes to the establishment of effective and accountable governance; the moral-spiritual dimension strengthens organizational integrity and cultural values; while the social dimension enhances leadership legitimacy and strengthens partnerships between the pesantren and the surrounding community. This study contributes to the development of Islamic Educational Management studies by offering an understanding of *kiai* leadership principles as a foundation for effective, integrity-based, and sustainable Islamic boarding school management

Keywords: *Kiai* Leadership; Islamic Educational Management; Pesantren Management; Leadership Principles; KH. Ahmad Baidowi

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) represent one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, playing a strategic role in developing human resources with knowledge, morality, and character. Pesantren function not only as centers for the transmission of Islamic knowledge but also as institutions for cultivating moral, social, and spiritual values through an integrated educational process (Anam et al., 2019; Purwanto et al., 2021). Along with the dynamics of contemporary education, pesantren are required to preserve their scholarly traditions while simultaneously adapting to social changes, technological advancements, and the increasing complexity of educational governance (Nisak et al., 2025; Saepurohman et al., 2025). Within this transformative context, *kiai* leadership becomes a crucial factor in determining the direction, sustainability, and effectiveness of pesantren management. A *kiai* does not merely function as a spiritual leader but also serves as a strategic decision-maker, organizational manager, educator, and role model who shapes the culture and identity of pesantren (Jubba et al., 2021). Therefore, the quality of *kiai* leadership becomes a fundamental aspect in maintaining the existence of pesantren while encouraging innovation and institutional development within Islamic education in response to contemporary challenges (Darwanto et al., 2024)

The strategic role of *kiai* in pesantren management cannot be separated from the distinctive characteristics of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions with unique leadership systems. Unlike formal educational institutions that generally rely on bureaucratic organizational structures, pesantren are largely based on the personal leadership of a *kiai* who possesses religious, intellectual, and social authority. A *kiai* becomes the central actor in determining institutional development directions, managing student development, allocating resources, and establishing social relationships with surrounding communities (Jubba et al., 2021). This position indicates that *kiai* leadership should not merely be understood as an administrative function, but also as a representation of values, organizational culture, and scholarly traditions that constitute the identity of pesantren (Isbah & (Isbah & Sakhiyya, 2023). Therefore, understanding the principles underlying *kiai* leadership is essential to explain how pesantren maintain sustainability, adapt to changing contexts, and gain public trust as Islamic educational institutions (Darwanto et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, pesantren management in the contemporary era encounters increasingly complex challenges. Educational modernization, demands for professional institutional governance, leadership regeneration, technological development, and growing societal expectations regarding educational quality require pesantren to develop adaptive leadership systems while maintaining their traditional identity. In such circumstances, leadership principles are needed not only to ensure effectiveness in managerial aspects but also to preserve Islamic values as the fundamental characteristics of pesantren. Therefore, examining *kiai* leadership principles becomes increasingly relevant in understanding how leadership values are implemented within the management of Islamic educational institutions.

Previous studies have examined *kiai* leadership and pesantren development from various perspectives. Purwanto et al. (2021) demonstrated that pesantren leadership contributes to strengthening character education through the establishment of religious culture and moral values among students (*santri*), while Anam et al. (2019) emphasized the role of pesantren leadership in internalizing humanitarian values and moral development. Jubba et al. (2021) explained that *kiai* play an important role in maintaining pesantren relevance by balancing religious authority with the demands of social transformation. Furthermore, Darwanto et al. (2024) and Nisak et al. (2025) revealed that pesantren leadership serves as a significant factor in institutional transformation, particularly in management, innovation, and adaptation to modern educational developments. In addition, (Anggadwita et al., 2021; Yusuf et al., 2024)Anggadwita et al. (2021) and Yusuf et al. (2024) found that pesantren leadership contributes to empowering *santri* through the development of independence, skills, and social capacity. However, previous studies have predominantly examined *kiai* leadership from partial perspectives, leaving significant space for further exploration of leadership principles that support pesantren sustainability and strengthen public trust.

Despite these contributions, most previous studies have focused on identifying leadership styles, leadership effectiveness, or the influence of leadership on institutional performance. Studies

specifically examining the leadership principles that serve as the foundation for a *kiai* in decision-making, organizational culture development, student guidance, and pesantren management remain limited. In fact, leadership principles represent the foundation that shapes the consistency of a leader's behavior in performing leadership functions. Understanding these principles enables leadership studies in pesantren contexts not only to explain how a *kiai* leads but also to reveal the values underlying every leadership decision and practice.

Based on this research gap, this study focuses on examining the leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. KH. Ahmad Baidowi was selected as the research subject because he is recognized as the founder and *kiai* of Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, who successfully established and developed the institution through leadership grounded in Islamic values. His leadership legacy continues to be transmitted and serves as a reference in the daily life of the pesantren community. His leadership experience provides a valuable context for identifying the principles applied in managing an Islamic educational institution.

The novelty of this study lies in its effort to identify and describe the leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi that serve as the foundation for managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. Unlike previous studies that primarily analyze *kiai* leadership from the perspectives of leadership styles or typologies, this study focuses on the values and principles that construct the leadership practices of a *kiai* within the context of pesantren management. Therefore, this study is expected to enrich the field of Islamic Educational Management, particularly regarding *kiai* leadership as a central actor in managing Islamic boarding schools. Based on this rationale, this study aims to analyze the leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in the management of Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine the leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. The research was conducted at Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, located in Pekauman Village, Grujugan District, Bondowoso Regency, East Java, Indonesia. This approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership practices based on the experiences and perspectives of the research participants.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, consisting of KH. Ahmad Baidowi's family members, pesantren administrators, *santri*, alumni, and community leaders who had direct knowledge of his leadership practices. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, while observations and documentation were utilized to complement and strengthen the interview findings.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The credibility of the data was ensured through source triangulation by comparing information obtained from various informants and confirming interview findings through observations and documentation. This process was conducted to establish the validity and reliability of the research findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the leadership of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso, is constructed upon nine fundamental principles: firmness, discipline, responsibility, *istiqamah* (consistency and commitment), *wara'i* (spiritual prudence), charisma, sincerity, patience, and nationalism. These principles were identified through the analysis of data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation involving the *kiai's* family, pesantren administrators, *santri*, alumni, and community leaders. The findings indicate that KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership is not merely oriented toward administrative management but is deeply rooted in Islamic values manifested through his daily leadership practices.

These principles serve different yet interconnected functions in supporting the management of Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School. Firmness and discipline contribute to maintaining organizational order, while responsibility and *istiqamah* strengthen leadership consistency. Meanwhile, *wara'i*, sincerity, patience, charisma, and nationalism function as moral foundations that reinforce the relationship between the *kiai*, *santri*, and the broader community. These findings suggest that the success of pesantren management is not solely determined by a leader's managerial competence but also by the values underlying every leadership decision and practice.

Table 1. Leadership Principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in the Management of Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School

No.	Leadership Principle	Implementation in Pesantren Management
1	Firmness	Enforcing institutional regulations and supporting the character development of *santri*.
2	Discipline	Demonstrating exemplary behavior through punctuality and respect for teachers' rights.
3	Responsibility	Taking responsibility for all pesantren activities and the safety of *santri*.
4	*Istiqamah*	Maintaining consistency in preserving pesantren values and organizational culture.
5	*Wira'i*	Managing entrusted responsibilities with careful consideration and integrity.
6	Charisma	Building public trust and strengthening the legitimacy of the pesantren.
7	Sincerity	Prioritizing service and dedication above personal interests.
8	Patience	Demonstrating the ability to face various challenges in pesantren development.
9	Nationalism	Cultivating love for the nation while maintaining Islamic values.

1. Firmness

Firmness is one of the essential principles of leadership, referring to a leader's ability to make decisions, determine organizational direction, and maintain consistency with the values they uphold. From a leadership perspective, firmness does not merely represent the courage to establish rules but also reflects the ability of leaders to implement decisions fairly and responsibly (Anggadwita et al., 2021; Yusuf et al., 2024). A firm leader is capable of creating clarity of objectives, building trust, and maintaining organizational stability through consistent policies.

In the context of pesantren, firmness possesses distinctive characteristics because a *kiai* does not only perform institutional management functions but also preserves the values, culture, and educational traditions of Islam. The firmness of a *kiai* is reflected in the ability to maintain regulations, guide *santri*, and determine the direction of pesantren development based on the foundational values of the institution (Huda, 2016; Isbah & Sakhiyya, 2023; Jubba et al., 2021). Thus, firmness in *kiai* leadership is not merely an expression of authority but also a means of

maintaining a balance between discipline, character development, and the sustainability of pesantren values.

Furthermore, leadership firmness cannot be separated from the aspects of justice and care. Effective leaders are not only capable of establishing clear boundaries but also understand that every decision should serve the purpose of individual development and improvement. Within the pesantren context, the firmness of a *kiai* functions as an educational instrument that assists *santri* in understanding responsibility, the consequences of actions, and the importance of respecting institutional rules. Therefore, firmness becomes a leadership principle that strengthens organizational culture through the integration of authority and a nurturing approach.

The findings of this study indicate that firmness represents one of the key leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. This principle is manifested through the implementation of regulations that are applied fairly to all *santri* regardless of their backgrounds or family relationships. Every violation of institutional rules is followed by consequences according to the level of violation as part of the character-building process. This principle is also applied to his own children, demonstrating his consistency in maintaining justice and leadership exemplarity.

The findings further reveal that KH. Ahmad Baidowi's firmness is not intended as a form of punishment alone but rather as an educational approach to develop students' awareness and responsibility. Based on the interview findings, after providing consequences for violations, he continues to engage in personal approaches through advice, attention, and guidance. Moreover, the provision of appreciation after the process of correction demonstrates that firmness is always accompanied by compassion and concern for the personal development of *santri*.

These findings demonstrate that firmness in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership does not represent an authoritarian leadership approach but rather functions as a mechanism for building a culture of discipline, justice, and responsibility. Firmness is utilized as a means of character formation, enabling *santri* to understand regulations, improve their behavior, and develop into individuals with moral awareness. Therefore, rules and consequences within pesantren do not merely serve as instruments of control but also represent an educational process oriented toward moral and character development.

Accordingly, firmness becomes a leadership principle that strengthens pesantren management through a balance between regulation and guidance. A leader's firmness creates clarity of values, maintains the consistency of pesantren culture, and strengthens the trust of the pesantren community toward the leadership practices implemented. Thus, firmness is not merely a personal characteristic of a *kiai*, but a leadership value that supports pesantren sustainability through practices that are fair, educational, and oriented toward character development.

2. Discipline

Discipline is one of the fundamental principles of leadership, referring to a leader's ability to establish order, maintain consistency in behavior, and demonstrate commitment to the responsibilities being carried out. From a leadership perspective, discipline is not merely understood as a control mechanism implemented through rules and sanctions but as a developmental process aimed at fostering awareness, responsibility, and behavioral transformation among organizational members (Bada et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2024). Leaders who consistently implement discipline are able to establish clear values, create organizational order, and strengthen an organizational culture that supports the achievement of shared goals (Wulansasi & Ma'mun, 2019).

Within the pesantren context, discipline plays a significant role because it constitutes an essential element in the formation of *santri* character and daily institutional culture. The leadership of a *kiai* does not only function to regulate institutional activities but also to shape attitudes and behaviors through exemplary conduct and consistent implementation of values. Therefore, discipline in *kiai* leadership is not merely directed toward ensuring compliance with institutional regulations but also serves as an educational instrument for developing independence, responsibility, and commitment to pesantren values.

In the pesantren environment, leader exemplarity becomes a crucial aspect because a culture of discipline is more effectively established when institutional regulations are supported by leaders' behaviors that reflect the values being promoted. Accordingly, discipline becomes a leadership principle that enables pesantren to maintain organizational order while simultaneously developing a sustainable institutional culture.

The findings of this study indicate that discipline represents one of the leadership principles implemented by KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. This principle is not only applied to *santri* but is also demonstrated through his personal conduct as a leader. Based on interview findings, KH. Ahmad Baidowi is recognized as a figure who consistently arrives on time for teaching activities and religious practices. Furthermore, he considers delays in fulfilling teachers' rights, such as salary payments, as a form of injustice that contradicts the responsibility of a leader.

The findings reveal that discipline in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership is not limited to adherence to time and regulations but also reflects a commitment to fulfilling entrusted responsibilities and respecting the rights of others. This exemplary behavior enables discipline to develop as a shared culture within the pesantren environment rather than merely a formal obligation. *Santri* and educators are not only encouraged to comply with regulations but are also guided to understand the underlying values of discipline as part of character formation and responsibility development.

These findings demonstrate that discipline in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership functions as a mechanism that strengthens organizational order and sustains the continuity of pesantren life. The leader's consistency in practicing disciplinary values creates alignment between words and actions, thereby increasing the trust of the pesantren community toward the leadership being exercised. Thus, discipline is not merely a personal characteristic of a *kiai*, but a leadership principle that shapes pesantren culture through exemplary behavior, responsibility, and collective commitment.

3. Responsibility

Responsibility is one of the fundamental principles of leadership that emphasizes a leader's commitment to fulfilling entrusted responsibilities, ensuring organizational sustainability, and addressing the interests of individuals and groups within the scope of their leadership. From a leadership perspective, responsibility is not merely associated with the completion of formal duties but also with the leader's ability to build trust, maintain social relationships, and be accountable for every decision made (Parker, 2023). A responsible leader does not only function as a direction-setter but also as a figure capable of developing mutual trust through care, involvement, and responsiveness toward the needs of organizational members and the surrounding social environment (Adams et al., 2025; Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011).

Within the pesantren context, the principle of responsibility has distinctive characteristics because *kiai* leadership is not only related to institutional management but also involves the entrusted responsibility of human development. A *kiai* carries responsibility for the development of *santri*, relationships with parents, and the continuity of relationships between the pesantren and the broader community. Thus, *kiai* leadership is not established solely through structural authority but also through the ability to maintain trust and social connectedness between the pesantren and the communities that support it (Isbah & Sakhiyya, 2023)

Furthermore, leadership responsibility is closely associated with moral integrity and a leader's willingness to face the consequences of decisions and actions related to the institution. Responsible leaders demonstrate care, transparency, and commitment to the values underlying the organization (Brown et al., 2005). In pesantren leadership, this principle is reflected through the role of the *kiai* in maintaining a balance between institutional interests, the needs of *santri*, and community expectations (Jubba et al., 2021). Therefore, responsibility becomes a leadership value that strengthens trust and supports the sustainability of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions.

The findings of this study indicate that responsibility represents one of the main leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School,

Bondowoso. This principle is reflected in his perspective that *santri* are a form of trust (*amanah*) entrusted by parents to the pesantren. For KH. Ahmad Baidowi, the responsibility of a *kiai* does not only exist while *santri* are physically present within the pesantren environment but also extends to various circumstances related to their safety, guidance, and personal development.

The findings further demonstrate that this commitment is reflected in his approach to resolving issues involving *santri* and the surrounding community. One example identified in the study occurred when a *santri* experienced an accident after receiving permission to leave the pesantren, resulting in damage to a community member's shop. Upon learning about the incident, KH. Ahmad Baidowi assumed responsibility by compensating the shop owner for the losses incurred rather than placing blame solely on the *santri*. This action demonstrates that responsibility is understood as a form of moral concern and leadership accountability toward the consequences associated with the trust placed upon him.

These findings illustrate that responsibility in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership extends beyond administrative obligations and develops into a form of moral and social responsibility. A leader is not only responsible for ensuring institutional continuity but also for maintaining the trust given by parents, *santri*, and the community. This perspective indicates that relationships within pesantren are not built solely through institutional structures but also through values of care, service, and familial bonds.

Therefore, responsibility becomes a leadership principle that strengthens the legitimacy of pesantren through the establishment of trust among the *kiai*, *santri*, and community. A leader's willingness to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to them creates stronger relationships and reinforces the image of pesantren as institutions that not only provide education but also offer protection and social support. Thus, responsibility is not merely a personal characteristic of a *kiai*, but a leadership value that supports pesantren sustainability through humanistic, trustworthy, and socially oriented leadership practices.

4. *Istiqamah*

Istiqamah is one of the important principles in Islamic leadership that reflects a leader's consistency, steadfastness, and commitment in maintaining the values and responsibilities entrusted to them. From the perspective of Islamic leadership, *istiqamah* is associated with the ability of leaders to preserve integrity, trustworthiness, and sincerity in every action and decision-making process (Zaim et al., 2024). This principle indicates that leadership success is not solely determined by organizational achievements but also by the leader's ability to uphold moral and ethical values as the foundation of leadership practices (Qadir et al., 2023).

Within the pesantren context, *istiqamah* holds an important position in *kiai* leadership because a *kiai* does not merely function as an institutional manager but also as a guardian of values, scholarly traditions, and the direction of pesantren development. The steadfastness of a *kiai* in maintaining religious principles, guiding *santri*, and preserving the continuity of pesantren values becomes a significant factor in shaping community trust and institutional legitimacy. Thus, *istiqamah* in *kiai* leadership does not only represent personal commitment but also reflects the ability to sustain the continuity of pesantren culture, identity, and values amid social transformation.

The findings of this study indicate that *istiqamah* represents one of the leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. Based on interview findings, he is recognized as a figure who consistently maintains pesantren educational values, character development practices, and religious activities as part of the process of shaping *santri* character. This consistency is demonstrated through the continuous implementation of various educational and guidance activities despite changes in circumstances and the development of contemporary challenges.

The findings further reveal that KH. Ahmad Baidowi's *istiqamah* is not only reflected in his personal conduct but also embedded as a value within the pesantren culture. He views educational success as something that is not achieved through temporary programs but through continuous habituation and sustained practices. Therefore, educational activities, moral development, and the

strengthening of religious values are consistently implemented, enabling these values to become integrated into the daily lives of *santri*.

These findings demonstrate that *istiqamah* in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership functions as a principle that maintains the continuity of the pesantren's vision and identity. The consistency between the values upheld, policies implemented, and leadership behaviors demonstrated creates stability within the organizational environment. This condition strengthens the trust of the pesantren community because they observe alignment between the leader's commitment and actual leadership practices.

Therefore, *istiqamah* is not merely a manifestation of a *kiai's* personal steadfastness but also a leadership principle that strengthens pesantren sustainability through the preservation of values, culture, and institutional direction. Consistent leadership enables pesantren to maintain its identity while adapting to social changes without losing the fundamental values that serve as its foundation.

5. *Wira'i*

Wira'i is one of the Islamic leadership principles associated with prudence, self-restraint, and a leader's commitment to safeguarding entrusted responsibilities (*amanah*). In the context of leadership, *wira'i* does not merely indicate an individual's ability to avoid actions that contradict moral and religious values, but also reflects a leader's awareness in considering ethical aspects, responsibility, and the consequences of every decision made. This principle serves as an important foundation in building leadership integrity, as a leader's actions are directed not only toward achieving organizational goals but also toward preserving values and trust inherent in leadership practices (Yusuf et al., 2024; Zaim et al., 2024).

Within the pesantren context, *wira'i* has strong relevance because a *kiai* does not only function as an institutional manager but also as a moral figure who serves as a reference for *santri* and the wider community. Pesantren leadership requires prudence in managing entrusted responsibilities, including institutional resources, decision-making processes, and social relations. Therefore, *wira'i* strengthens *kiai* leadership through simplicity, responsibility, and consistency in maintaining the values that constitute the identity of the pesantren (Makki, 2020).

Furthermore, *wira'i* contributes to strengthening organizational integrity and public trust in the institution. Leaders who apply this principle of prudence are more capable of ensuring transparency, avoiding misuse of entrusted authority, and fostering an organizational culture grounded in honesty and responsibility. Thus, *wira'i* is not only a personal quality of a *kiai* but also a leadership value that supports ethical and socially responsible pesantren governance.

The findings of this study indicate that *wira'i* represents one of the leadership principles implemented by KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. Based on interview findings, *wira'i* is reflected in his cautious attitude in carrying out entrusted responsibilities, particularly in the use of pesantren resources, decision-making processes, and the execution of his duties as the *kiai* of the institution. Every action is not only considered in terms of its benefits but also evaluated based on ethical values, moral responsibility, and alignment with Islamic principles.

The findings further reveal that the principle of *wira'i* is manifested through exemplary behavior in daily life, particularly in maintaining simplicity, avoiding the use of institutional facilities for personal interests, and instilling the importance of *amanah* among his family members, administrators, and *santri*. Such behavior contributes to the formation of a pesantren culture that emphasizes honesty, responsibility, and awareness that every duty constitutes a trust that must be properly fulfilled.

These findings demonstrate that *wira'i* in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership functions not only as an individual spiritual value but also as a moral control mechanism in pesantren management. The prudence exercised in every action strengthens leadership integrity, builds trust among the pesantren community, and fosters more accountable institutional governance. Accordingly, *wira'i* becomes a leadership principle that supports pesantren sustainability through trust-based management practices, exemplary conduct, and Islamic ethical values.

6. Charisma

Charisma is one of the important leadership principles associated with a leader's ability to exert influence, gain trust, and establish emotional relationships with followers through exemplary behavior and the values they embody. In leadership studies, charisma is not merely understood as an innate trait of a leader but as a relational construct formed through interactions between leaders and followers, expressed through behavior, communication, and consistency of demonstrated values (Amalia et al., 2023). Charismatic leaders are able to construct a shared identity, enhance motivation, and strengthen members' commitment through a compelling vision and exemplary conduct (Rodrigues & Madgaonkar, 2014).

Within the pesantren context, charisma holds an essential position in *kiai* leadership because the influence of a *kiai* does not only derive from formal authority but also from moral legitimacy, scholarly authority, and public trust. The charisma of a *kiai* is formed through exemplary behavior, depth of religious knowledge, simplicity of life, and the ability to build strong relationships with *santri* and the surrounding community. Therefore, *kiai* leadership differs from formal organizational leadership, as its authority is largely constructed through social acceptance and the values embodied by the leader (Jubba et al., 2021).

Furthermore, charisma plays a significant role in strengthening organizational cohesion and supporting institutional continuity during periods of change. Leaders with strong personal influence are able to build trust, enhance members' commitment, and foster an organizational culture that supports the achievement of shared goals. In pesantren management, the charisma of a *kiai* functions as social capital that enables the institution to preserve its identity, direct its development, and maintain harmonious relationships with society. Thus, charisma does not only function as a personal leadership trait but also as a social mechanism that strengthens pesantren sustainability.

The findings of this study indicate that charisma is one of the leadership principles inherent in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. Based on interview findings, informants described him as a highly respected figure who serves as a reference in various matters, both within the pesantren environment and the wider community. This influence does not solely stem from his position as *kiai*, but is constructed through exemplary conduct, scholarly depth, simplicity, and consistency in practicing Islamic values.

The findings further reveal that KH. Ahmad Baidowi's charisma is reflected in the high level of trust placed in him by *santri*, alumni, pesantren administrators, and the community regarding the decisions he makes. Acceptance of his guidance is not based merely on formal authority but emerges from a continuously developed relationship grounded in integrity, social closeness, and dedication to the pesantren. This indicates that charismatic leadership is formed through an interactive process that generates recognition and legitimacy from the surrounding environment.

These findings demonstrate that charisma in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership is not merely a form of personal attractiveness but serves as a source of legitimacy that strengthens the effectiveness of pesantren management. Charisma enables the leader to build collective commitment, direct organizational behavior, and establish trust-based relationships among the *kiai*, *santri*, administrators, and the community. Thus, leadership influence does not originate solely from formal structures but develops through exemplary conduct and social acceptance of the leader as a moral figure. Therefore, charisma becomes one of the leadership principles that strengthens pesantren sustainability through the formation of trust, loyalty, and collective commitment. The charismatic value constructed through exemplary behavior and social relationships positions the *kiai* not only as an institutional leader but also as a figure capable of preserving identity, guiding development, and strengthening the role of the pesantren in society.

7. *Ikhlas*

Ikhlas is a fundamental principle in Islamic leadership that reflects sincerity of intention, moral integrity, and a leader's commitment to fulfilling responsibilities without being driven by personal interests. From a leadership perspective, *ikhlas* positions leadership activities as a form of entrusted

responsibility (*amanah*) grounded in spiritual and ethical values, whereby leaders' decisions and actions are directed toward collective well-being (Hartmann & Carey, 2024; Koycu & Hidir, 2023). This principle serves as the foundation for building trust, as leaders who act sincerely tend to demonstrate consistency, integrity, and genuine care for those they lead (Caza et al., 2015).

Within the pesantren context, *ikhlas* plays a crucial role in *kiai* leadership because the management of pesantren is not solely oriented toward institutional achievement but also toward service, character development, and the transmission of Islamic values. *Kiai* leadership is constructed through exemplary conduct, service-oriented practices, and commitment to the development of *santri* and the wider community. Thus, *ikhlas* strengthens the relationship between the *kiai*, *santri*, and pesantren community, as leadership is understood as a moral and spiritual responsibility rather than merely a structural authority (Fauzi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, *ikhlas* is closely related to spiritual and authentic leadership, which emphasizes sincerity, humility, and trust-based interpersonal relationships. Leaders who embody these values are able to cultivate a more ethical organizational culture, enhance members' commitment, and create an environment conducive to achieving shared goals (Balgies & Suwitho, 2022; Dudija, 2025). Therefore, *ikhlas* in *kiai* leadership not only strengthens the spiritual dimension of the individual leader but also shapes relational patterns and the organizational culture of pesantren management.

The findings of this study indicate that *ikhlas* represents one of the key leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. Based on interview findings, informants explained that various activities undertaken by KH. Ahmad Baidowi in educating *santri*, developing the pesantren, and serving the community are performed as a form of devotion without being oriented toward personal gain or material benefit. For him, pesantren management is understood as a sacred trust (*amanah*) that must be carried out with sincerity, responsibility, and a commitment to public benefit.

This principle of *ikhlas* is reflected in his simple lifestyle, dedication to *santri* education, and consistency in prioritizing the interests of the pesantren over personal interests. Such attitudes do not only represent a personal characteristic of the leader but also shape a culture of devotion within the pesantren environment. Administrators, teachers, and *santri* are encouraged to understand their roles as part of a shared responsibility, thereby fostering relationships grounded in commitment and a sense of belonging to the institution. These findings show that *ikhlas* in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership is not merely related to the spiritual sincerity of a leader but also functions as a principle that strengthens the organizational culture of the pesantren. Leadership grounded in *ikhlas* is able to build harmonious relationships, strengthen collaboration, and encourage collective engagement in pesantren development. Thus, *ikhlas* becomes a leadership value that enables pesantren to maintain its identity as an Islamic educational institution based on service, exemplary conduct, and social benefit.

8. Patience

Patience is a leadership principle that reflects a leader's capacity for self-management, resilience in facing pressure, and reflective decision-making in complex situations. From a leadership perspective, patience is not understood as passive behavior; rather, it represents a form of self-regulation that enables leaders to carefully consider consequences before acting, maintain emotional stability, and respond to problems in a constructive manner (Balgies & Suwitho, 2022). This capacity contributes to the development of trust-based leadership relationships, as leaders are able to demonstrate empathy, openness, and an understanding of organizational members' conditions (Solehan, 2022).

Within the pesantren context, patience has strategic relevance because *kiai* leadership is not limited to institutional management but also involves the formation of human character and the development of *santri*. This multifaceted role requires a *kiai* to manage social dynamics, resolve various problems, and maintain the continuity of pesantren values amid environmental changes. Therefore, patience becomes a leadership resource that enables a *kiai* to perform educational functions, moral guidance, and organizational management in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, patience is closely related to emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, as the ability to regulate emotions and manage pressure significantly influences decision-making quality and interpersonal relationships within organizations (Adams et al., 2025). In pesantren leadership, patience does not only reflect the personal resilience of a *kiai* but also serves as a strategic approach in maintaining institutional direction, managing conflict, and responding to change. Thus, patience becomes a leadership dimension that integrates spiritual, social, and managerial aspects in ensuring pesantren sustainability.

The findings of this study indicate that patience represents one of the key leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso. Based on interview findings, informants described him as a calm leader who is able to control emotional responses and address various issues through wise and measured approaches. In both *santri* development and institutional problem-solving, KH. Ahmad Baidowi emphasizes a persuasive and gradual mentoring approach rather than reactive actions.

This practice of patience is evident in the way he handles disciplinary violations or *santri*-related problems. Instead of responding immediately in a punitive manner, he first seeks to understand the context of the issue, provides guidance, and allows space for *santri* to engage in self-improvement. This approach indicates that patience in pesantren leadership functions as a developmental mechanism oriented toward behavioral transformation rather than merely administrative resolution of problems. The same principle is reflected in institutional management, where he consistently maintains the vision of the pesantren despite various limitations and challenges.

These findings demonstrate that patience in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership is not limited to emotional restraint but represents a strategic leadership approach for maintaining organizational stability. Patience enables more objective decision-making processes, reduces the potential for conflict, and creates a conducive educational environment. Consequently, problem-solving within the pesantren is not solely directed toward short-term resolution but also toward the development of social relationships and character formation among all members of the pesantren community. Thus, patience is not merely a personal trait of a *kiai* but a leadership value that shapes pesantren governance through a dialogical, adaptive, and sustainability-oriented approach.

9. Nationalism

Nationalism in leadership represents a value orientation that emphasizes a sense of belonging, collective responsibility, and commitment to the sustainability of the community. From a socio-political perspective, nationalism is not only associated with shared identity but also functions as an ethical foundation that encourages individuals and organizations to maintain solidarity, public interest, and the sustainability of social values that underpin societal life (Kane, 2014; Schwarzmantel, 2012). In leadership contexts, this value is reflected in a leader's ability to integrate internal organizational interests with broader social objectives.

Within the pesantren context, nationalism has distinctive characteristics because pesantren not only function as Islamic educational institutions but also as social spaces that contribute to character formation and the development of national identity. *Kiai* leadership does not stop at the transmission of religious values but also encompasses the development of social awareness, civic responsibility, and concern for national life. Thus, nationalism in *kiai* leadership reflects an integrative process between Islamic values and national values that constitute an essential part of pesantren institutional identity.

Leaders with a nationalist orientation are able to preserve local values while responding to the dynamics of global social change (Lerner, 2025). In the pesantren context, this principle is reflected in the efforts of *kiai* to maintain Islamic traditions while preparing *santri* to develop social awareness and the capacity to contribute to society. Therefore, nationalism becomes a leadership dimension that strengthens the position of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions that are not only oriented toward spiritual development but also perform social and national functions.

The findings of this study indicate that nationalism represents one of the key leadership principles of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School,

Bondowoso. Interview findings reveal that he regards love for the homeland as an inseparable part of Islamic values. From this perspective, *santri* are not only directed to master religious knowledge but are also shaped as individuals with a responsibility to maintain unity, respect diversity, and contribute to community development.

The implementation of nationalism is reflected through various educational and developmental practices within the pesantren, such as instilling respect for national symbols, participation in civic and national activities, and the development of constructive relationships with the government and society. KH. Ahmad Baidowi positions service to the nation as part of the actualization of Islamic values, as long as it remains within the framework of religious teachings. This approach demonstrates that pesantren leadership is capable of constructing a synthesis between religious identity and national orientation in shaping *santri* character.

These findings illustrate that nationalism in KH. Ahmad Baidowi's leadership is not merely understood as an expression of patriotism but also as a leadership strategy that expands the social role of the pesantren. Nationalist values encourage the pesantren to build openness, strengthen social networks, and participate in educational and societal development. Thus, the pesantren is understood not as an isolated institution but as a social actor that contributes to the strengthening of national life.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the leadership of KH. Ahmad Baidowi in managing Bustanul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Bondowoso, is constructed upon nine core principles, namely firmness, discipline, responsibility, *istiqamah*, *wira'i*, charisma, *ikhlas*, patience, and nationalism. These principles do not merely represent the personal characteristics of a *kiai*, but also function as foundational values in pesantren governance.

Firmness, discipline, and responsibility contribute to the establishment of an orderly, fair, and accountable governance system. Meanwhile, *istiqamah*, *wira'i*, *ikhlas*, and patience strengthen moral integrity, organizational culture, and the sustainability of pesantren values. In addition, charisma and nationalism play a significant role in building leadership legitimacy, strengthening public trust, and expanding the pesantren's partnerships with various stakeholders.

This study contributes to the development of Islamic Education Management by demonstrating that the effectiveness of pesantren governance is determined not only by the managerial competence of leaders but also by the integration of moral-spiritual and social values within leadership practices. The findings enrich the study of *kiai* leadership by identifying a set of leadership principles that serve as the foundation of pesantren management.

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