



The Paternalistic-Technocratic Leadership of Kyai in Developing the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Students at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School, Sumberpucung, Malang

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the concept, process, and impact of the paternalistic-technocratic leadership of Kyai in developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School in Sumberpucung, Malang. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, then analyzed using an interactive model through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions with triangulation techniques to ensure credibility. The impact is the formation of the entrepreneurial character of students which includes independence, creativity, and work ethic, as well as the creation of economic independence of Islamic boarding schools. This research produces a conceptual model of the SIPEA Leadership (Spiritual-Integrative, Participatory, and Entrepreneurial Adaptive Leadership) model, a model of Kyai leadership that integrates spiritual values, paternalistic role models, participatory empowerment, and the development of entrepreneurial character in students within a free Islamic boarding school system. These findings contribute to the development of Islamic educational leadership theory and the practice of Islamic boarding school-based economic empowerment.

Keywords: Kyai Leadership; Student Entrepreneurship; People's Islamic Boarding School.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital era and technological disruption have driven the transformation of the education system to be more adaptive to the needs of the global economy. Strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit has become a strategic agenda in facing the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0. The World Economic Forum emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial skills in the education system as a response to changes in the global job structure (World Economic Forum, 2023a). Countries that integrate an entrepreneurial mindset into their educational curricula have been shown to have greater economic resilience (World Economic Forum, 2023b). However, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report indicates an entrepreneurial intention gap, namely the gap between the intention and the realization of entrepreneurship, particularly in developing countries. This is caused by the low quality of entrepreneurship education, weak systemic support, and a lack of leaders or role models to provide direct guidance (GEM, 2025). This condition indicates that entrepreneurship education is not enough to simply build motivation, but requires leadership support and a strong value ecosystem.

In Indonesia, these challenges are further complicated by the demographic bonus and high unemployment rates among productive-age students. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that open unemployment remains significant, particularly among young people and secondary school graduates (Katadata, 2024). Meanwhile, the national entrepreneurship ratio has not yet reached the minimum target of 5% of the population (Bisnis.com, 2023). In the context of religious education, Islamic boarding schools have historically emphasized spiritual and moral development over strengthening hard skills and entrepreneurial skills (Chotimah et al., 2023). Yet, Islamic boarding schools have significant potential as centers for the economic empowerment of the community, particularly with the Islamic Boarding School Independence program, which has developed hundreds of Islamic Boarding School-Owned Enterprises (Kemenag, 2024).

Several studies have examined entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools, both from the perspective of transformational leadership (Suryadi et al., 2024), entrepreneurship education strategies (Firdaus, 2024), and empowerment of independent Islamic boarding school businesses (Tamam & Kadi, 2024). However, most previous studies have focused more on the development of Islamic boarding school business units as economic entities, rather than on how the leadership of Kyai (Islamic scholars) plays a role in systematically shaping the entrepreneurial spirit of students (Huda & Mulyadi, 2020), especially in the context of free Islamic boarding schools with limited resources (Epistemic Journal, 2024). Yet, within the Islamic boarding school structure, Kyai is a central figure with moral, spiritual, and social authority in shaping the character of students (Masrur, 2017).

Theoretically, the leadership of a Kyai is not only administrative, but also paternalistic and charismatic, which influences the mindset and behavior of students (Hidayat, 2017). From an Islamic perspective, leadership and productive work are part of the mandate and moral responsibility as stated in the Qur'an (QS. Al-Hasyr: 18; QS. At-Taubah: 105). However, in the modern context, such leadership is also required to have a technocratic dimension, especially in managing resources and building a sustainable economic system (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This integration of the values of trust, hard work, and economic independence has the potential to give birth to a model of Islamic entrepreneurship with character. Therefore, it is important to examine



how the leadership of Kyai is translated into concrete strategies and practices of entrepreneurship development in the Islamic boarding school environment.

An interesting phenomenon emerged at the Al-Amin Sumberpucung Malang People's Islamic Boarding School, a free Islamic boarding school that has managed to survive and thrive through economic empowerment based on student entrepreneurship. This Islamic boarding school not only teaches religious knowledge but also builds an educational system based on economic empowerment through agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperatives, market classes, and business development based on modern agricultural technology. All of these activities are carried out under the leadership of Kyai Abdullah Sam, who has a unique leadership style that combines a fatherly relationship with managerial skills and Islamic boarding school economic strategies.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze the concept, process, and impact of the paternalistic-technocratic leadership of Islamic boarding schools (Kyai) in developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School. This article provides a theoretical contribution by offering a model of value-based Islamic boarding school leadership integrated with the development of an entrepreneurial spirit, as well as a practical contribution as a reference for the development of Islamic boarding schools as centers of character education and economic empowerment of the community. Thus, this study expands the discourse on Islamic educational leadership in the context of contemporary socio-economic transformation.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type, which aims to understand the phenomenon in depth in a real-life context (Yin, 2018). This approach was chosen because the research focuses on an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of Kyai leadership in developing the entrepreneurial spirit of student in a specific and natural context. Case studies allow for a comprehensive exploration of leadership dynamics, internalized values, and institutional practices that develop in a particular setting. Thus, this approach is relevant to explore the meaning, process, and impact of leadership contextually and holistically.

The research was conducted at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School in Sumberpucung, Malang Regency, East Java. The location was selected based on the unique characteristics of the Islamic boarding school as a free educational institution that integrates religious and entrepreneurial development. Field research was conducted after the proposal was declared eligible for field research in early 2025, with data collection spanning from January to August 2025, adjusting to the need for depth of information and data sufficiency.

The research subjects consisted of Kyai (Islamic religious leaders) as leaders of Islamic boarding schools, business unit managers, religious teachers (ustadz), and students involved in entrepreneurship programs. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account their direct involvement in the leadership process and entrepreneurial activities of Islamic boarding schools. The number of informants was determined gradually based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when the information obtained is repetitive and does not reveal significant new findings.

The primary research instrument was the researcher herself, who designed, collected, and analyzed data. A semi-structured interview guide was used to explore the concepts, processes, and impacts of Kyai (Islamic cleric) leadership on the development of students' entrepreneurial spirit. Furthermore, observation and documentation sheets were used to record entrepreneurial activities,



institutional culture, and supporting documents such as work programs and activity reports. Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and triangulation of documentation to enhance data credibility.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis process was carried out simultaneously from the initial stage of data collection. In the initial stage, researchers conducted open coding of interview results and observation notes to identify initial themes that emerged from the field. Next, the data was categorized based on the research focus, which included the concept of Kyai leadership, the process of entrepreneurship formation, and the impact of leadership on students and Islamic boarding schools. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and member checking to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. This approach allows for a deep understanding of Kyai leadership model in developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students in the context of free Islamic boarding schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Concept of Kyai Leadership in Building the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Students

The research findings show that the concept of Kyai leadership at the Al-Amin Sumberpucung Malang People's Islamic Boarding School is based on a long-term vision that is oriented towards the independence of students and the sustainability of the Islamic boarding school.

Kyai Abdullah Sam acted as a visionary figure, envisioning the transformation of Islamic boarding schools from consumerist institutions to productive ones. He led not only within a spiritual context but also created an economic ecosystem integrated with character education. This made the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School a concrete example of the integration of religious education and social-based economic empowerment.

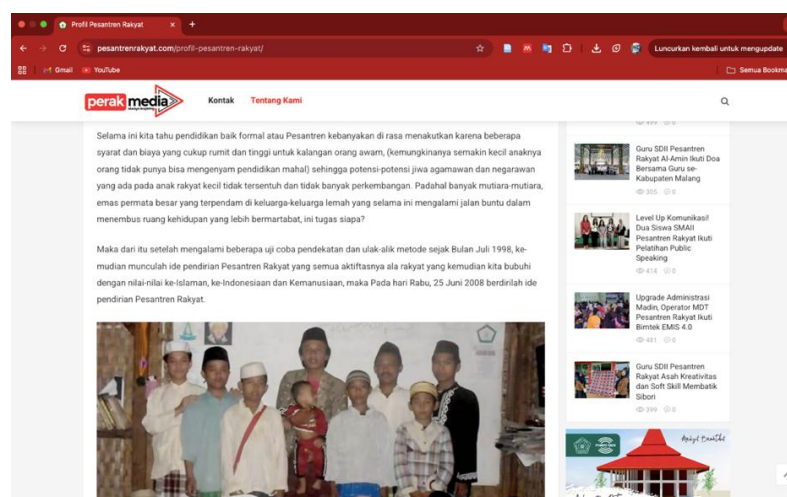


Figure 1. The contents of the writing by Kyai Abdullah Sam which is on the official website of the Al-amin People's Islamic Boarding School

The article explains that Kyai Abdullah Sam's leadership was driven by social intentions and a commitment to the underprivileged, which translated into Islamic boarding school-based entrepreneurial management practices.

In a free Islamic boarding school system like Al-Amin, Kyai Abdullah Sam's leadership is grounded in strong spiritual values, where all activities within the school are directed toward the meaning of worship. Interviews reveal his commitment to positioning himself not in a commanding position, but rather in the lives of his students. He does not hesitate to work directly in the fields, the barn, and the fishponds.

"If I tell them to work, I have to join in too. So, they know that their Kyai can not only talk, but also work and be a role model for the students." (Abdullah Sam, 2025)



Figure 2. Kyai Abdullah Sam joined in feeding the goats with the students

Aris, a local resident of the Islamic boarding school, was also impressed by Kyai's exemplary attitude. He stated:

"What I admire about Kyai is his hands-on approach. Sometimes I see him planting or feeding goats when I pass by the rice fields. The students appear respectful and enthusiastic. If the leader is like that, it's natural for the students to be diligent. I believe that Kyai doesn't just teach, but also sets an example." (Aris, 2025)

Field observations show that this attitude fosters an egalitarian atmosphere in which Kyai participates in shared economic activities. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, which are free of fees, this exemplary practice takes on even deeper significance, as all the economic drivers of the school (including the students and ustadz) are not paid but contribute collectively to the school's sustainability.

Kyai's leadership at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School is not authoritarian, but rather participatory and humanistic. In a free Islamic boarding school, this approach has proven key to success, as it allows each individual to feel equal responsibility for maintaining the institution's sustainability. Kyai Abdullah Sam explained that he never governs by pressure, but rather by leading by example and deliberation:

"I don't like giving orders loudly. If we invite them well, they will follow with their hearts. Student are like children, not subordinates." (Abdullah Sam, 2025)

This approach ensures that the entire Islamic boarding school system operates on a foundation of mutual trust and cooperation. In every decision-making process, especially regarding economic activities such as fish pond management, goat farming, or agriculture, Kyai always involves senior ustadz and students. Ustadz Yogi, an alumnus and one of the boarding school administrators, said:

"Whenever there's a new business idea, Kyai always discusses it first. He invites us to think together, calculates the pros and cons, and then works together. Even if we have our own ideas, he gives us capital or finds us connections so we can pursue our business ideas." (Yogi, 2025)

The research findings above indicate that spiritual values are the main foundation in the leadership practices of Kyai, which integrates paternalistic spiritual leadership, manifested through exemplary living and fatherly relationships, and technocratic leadership based on the management of the Islamic boarding school's economic system, which functions to build an ecosystem for entrepreneurial education for students. Based on the synthesis of field data, this study formulated a conceptual theme in the form of Spiritual-Integrative Leadership.

The Leadership Process of Kyai in Building the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Students

Research findings reveal that the process of developing students' entrepreneurial spirit is carried out through a participatory approach based on direct experience. Students not only receive entrepreneurial theory in class but are actively involved in the management of the Islamic boarding school's business units.

Kyai's leadership process at the Al-Amin Sumberpucung Islamic Boarding School is evident not only in his ideas and vision, but also in his overall management of the school's life. In the context of a free Islamic boarding school, where all costs for education, food, and other needs are covered by the boarding school, the leadership process becomes increasingly complex and demands a high level of creativity.

Kyai Abdullah Sam leads not from a distance, but through direct involvement. He acts as a driving force, supervisor, spiritual guide, and manager of the Islamic boarding school's finances. In an interview, he stated:

"This Islamic boarding school can run because of collaborative efforts. I also have to get involved and be among them to understand what they feel and need." (Abdullah Sam, 2025)





Figure 3. Kyai Abdullah Sam gave directions to all students and Islamic boarding school administrators

In his leadership, Kyai Abdullah Sam positions supervision not as a rigid control tool, but rather as a means of spiritual and moral development. He not only assesses the students' work results but also monitors their attitudes, intentions, and work ethics.

In this implementation phase, the Islamic boarding school combines a productive work system with values education. Students not only work but are also taught to understand the meaning behind their work, that every drop of sweat is part of the struggle to maintain the Islamic boarding school and help others. Student Ahmad Rifai emphasized:

"If we get tired, Kyai says, this is part of the learning process. We work for knowledge and blessings. From there, we become stronger." (Ahmad Rifai, 2025)

Based on field observations, Kyai Abdullah Sam also initiated simple entrepreneurship training programs, such as bonsai care, catfish cultivation, and goat care. These activities are conducted based on the principle of contextual learning, where students learn directly from everyday practices.



Figure 4. Kyai Abdullah Sam is caring for bonsai plants with his students

Activity documentation also shows entrepreneurship training, business visits, and market classes. This involvement demonstrates that entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools is built through a collective empowerment process, not just individual theoretical learning.

During the market classes, researchers observed that students interacted directly with consumers and learned to market the products of their businesses. Ihsan, one of the students, explained:

"I used to be afraid to talk to outsiders. After taking the market class, I've become more confident in offering my products." (Ihsan, 2025)



Figure 5. Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School Market Class Activities

Based on the synthesis of the field data, this study formulated a conceptual theme of "Participatory Entrepreneurial Empowerment." This is where the development of the entrepreneurial spirit of Islamic boarding school students is carried out through participatory empowerment based on direct experience, productive work habits, and active involvement in the Islamic boarding school business system.

The Impact of Kyai's Leadership in Building the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Students

The impact of Kyai Abdullah Sam's leadership at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School is not only evident in the school's economic activities, but also touches the spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions of the lives of the students and the surrounding community. Students demonstrate increased self-confidence, independence, and the courage to create business opportunities. Students no longer position themselves as job seekers, but as opportunity creators. This change is evident in their increased courage to take risks, creativity in creating products, and readiness to participate in community economic activities.

Kyai Abdullah Sam's leadership creates a learning environment distinct from conventional Islamic boarding schools. He integrates religious teachings with practical economic practices, making the boarding school not only a place for learning but also an arena for honing the spirit of independence. In an interview, Kyai stated emphatically:

"I want students to not only be proficient in reciting the Quran, but also to be able to live independently, to stand on their own two feet. If possible, even help others." (Abdullah Sam, 2025)



This statement illustrates a leadership vision that aims for total empowerment, namely students who are knowledgeable, devout, and economically empowered. The impact of this leadership is multidimensional, encompassing individual (students), institutional (*pesantren*), and social (surrounding community) aspects.

The impact of Kyai Abdullah Sam's leadership can be seen in the strengthening of the students' spiritual and moral aspects. Values such as sincerity, hard work, trustworthiness, and responsibility are instilled through direct example.

Students not only understand Islamic theory, but they also experience firsthand how these teachings are applied in everyday life. Every economic activity at the Islamic boarding school, such as feeding livestock, managing fish ponds, or processing agricultural produce, begins with prayer and an intention to worship. Student Ihsan also explained:

"When we want to start work, we recite a prayer first. Kyai said everything we do should be intended as worship. So even if we're tired, keep up the spirit, because this is for Allah." (Ihsan, 2025)

These spiritual values foster a strong religious awareness among the students. They view work not as merely a worldly activity, but as a form of devotion. Spirituality is the primary driver of productive behavior. Ustadz Yogi added:

"What distinguishes the students here from those elsewhere is that they work with their hearts. No one complains even though they aren't paid, because they believe this work is a form of worship." (Yogi, 2025)

Kyai's leadership also has a significant influence on the character development and psychological independence of his students. In a free education system, Kyai strives to ensure that his students develop a strong, tenacious, and responsible personality, avoiding a dependency mindset. Student Afif stated:

"Kyai often says, 'Don't let your life depend on others. If you want to be successful, work hard, and don't be afraid of failure.'" (Afif, 2025)

Each student group has a leader responsible for organizing the schedule and ensuring the smooth running of the work. This is where early managerial experience emerges, which is crucial for fostering an entrepreneurial spirit. Kyai Abdullah Sam explains:

"I can't teach entrepreneurship solely through theory. Students must get involved, manage, make mistakes, and then learn from their mistakes. That's what makes them independent."



Figure 6. Female students are selling fried foods that they make themselves



Figure 7. Several students from the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School are watering and caring for the plantations regularly in the afternoon.

Another concrete impact of Kyai's leadership is the creation of an independent and sustainable Islamic boarding school economic system. All the students' needs, from food and clothing to facility maintenance, are met from the proceeds of the school's business. Ustadz Ghofur explained:

"If there were no income from the ponds or rice fields, I think the Islamic boarding school would struggle. But thank God, so far it's been sufficient, because everyone is working." (Ghofur, 2025)

In addition to shaping individual character, the leadership of Kyai also impacts the economic sustainability of the Islamic boarding school. According to institutional documentation, several Islamic boarding school business units support educational operations, enabling the school to maintain its free education system. Business units established by Kyai, such as cooperatives, goat farms, and bonsai gardens, serve not only as sources of funding but also as platforms for practical economic education. Students learn to manage capital, understand production processes, and experience the fruits of their collective labor.



Figure 8. The Student Cooperative Business Unit and the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School's Catfish Pond

Based on the synthesis of the field data, this study formulated a conceptual theme of "Adaptive Entrepreneurial Character." This is where Kyai's leadership that integrates spiritual values, exemplary work ethic, and adaptive management of the Islamic boarding school economy can shape the entrepreneurial character of students while simultaneously strengthening the economic independence of the Islamic boarding school.

Discussion

Kyai's Spiritual-Integrative Leadership in Building the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Students

Research findings indicate that Kyai leadership serves not only as administrative leadership, but also as a form of Islamic educational authority that fosters the values, culture, and ethos of the students' lives. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the Kyai is not merely an organizational leader but a central figure with moral, spiritual, and social legitimacy in shaping the educational orientation of the Islamic boarding schools (Dhofier, 2011). Kyai leadership in the People's Islamic Boarding School demonstrates how spiritual values are integrated into entrepreneurial activities, so that economic activity is positioned not merely as a productive activity but also as a medium for Islamic character education.

These findings are evident in the daily practices of the Islamic boarding schools, where work activities are always linked to the values of worship, trustworthiness, sincerity, and social service. This situation indicates that entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools is developed through a process of internalizing Islamic values that occurs culturally and practically. From an Islamic educational perspective, this process reflects the concept of *tarbiyah*, which is oriented not only toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward the formation of morals and the instilling of Islamic behavior (Al-Attas, 1999).

Research findings indicate that the leadership of the Kyai (Islamic cleric) at the Malang People's Islamic Boarding School is based on a long-term vision oriented toward student independence and the sustainability of the school. The Kyai's vision is not understood simply as a normative statement, but rather as a framework of values and strategic direction that guides all educational, social, and economic practices at the school. This vision positions the students as subjects of social change, not only spiritually religious but also economically independent and socially empowered.

Within this vision, the paternalistic dimension is evident in the strong emotional bond between the Kyai and the students. This relationship is not built on a formal hierarchical basis, but through a fatherly approach, role model, and social closeness. The Kyai is directly involved in student activities such as feeding livestock, managing the garden, and cleaning the school grounds with the students. These practices create strong moral legitimacy and reinforce the internalization of the values of hard work and independence that can help realize the Kyai's vision.

These findings align with the paternalistic leadership theory, which emphasizes that leaders act as father figures who protect, guide, and direct their followers through emotional and moral bonds (Farh & Cheng, 2000). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, paternalistic relationships are a crucial factor in shaping loyalty, obedience, and the internalization of values in students (Dhofier, 2011).

However, this study uncovered another dimension rarely discussed in studies of Islamic boarding school leadership: the technocratic dimension. Kyai (Islamic clerics) are not only moral symbols but also possess strategic capabilities in managing the Islamic boarding school's economic



system. This is evident in the development of Islamic boarding school business units, the strengthening of student cooperatives, market classes, collaboration with universities, and the development of Internet of Things (IoT)-based greenhouses.

In organizational literature, the technocratic approach refers to leadership based on managerial competence, system efficiency, and rational decision-making. This is clearly evident in the management of the agricultural, livestock, and fisheries businesses at the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School. Thus, the leadership of the Kyai rests not only on spiritual legitimacy but also on concrete managerial skills.

The Kyai's leadership vision is formulated within a contextual Islamic value framework, namely preparing students to live with dignity without relying on external assistance, either from the state or other institutions. This vision aligns with the principles of trust and responsibility for the future as emphasized in Islamic teachings (QS. Al-Hasyr: 18), which require leaders to consider the sustainability of the community. In practice, this vision is translated into a policy of free Islamic boarding schools, strengthening work culture, and fostering entrepreneurship based on the social realities of the surrounding community.

The Kyai's vision is built on the awareness that Islamic boarding schools should not be trapped in traditional romanticism oriented solely toward the transmission of religious knowledge. Instead, they should become spaces for the production of values, creativity, and the economic vitality of the community. In this context, the Kyai's vision integrates three main dimensions: (1) spirituality as a moral foundation, (2) economic independence as an instrument of sustainability, and (3) social benefit as the ultimate goal. The integration of these three dimensions forms a future-oriented leadership paradigm.

Furthermore, the leadership of the Kyai in the People's Islamic Boarding School also demonstrates transformational leadership. The Kyai not only maintains the traditions of the Islamic boarding school but also transforms it into a space for economic empowerment based on spirituality and social collectivity. In the theory of Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leadership is characterized by the leader's ability to build a shared vision, provide inspiration, and encourage social change by strengthening the values and motivation of followers. This is evident in how the Kyai builds an entrepreneurship education system without losing the religious identity of the Islamic boarding school.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that the leadership of Kyai in Islamic boarding schools cannot be understood solely as a managerial practice, but as a practice of Islamic educational authority that produces spiritual values and forms an entrepreneurial culture based on Islamic ethics.

Participatory Entrepreneurial Empowerment of Kyai in Building the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Students

Research findings indicate that the development of entrepreneurial spirit in Islamic boarding school students is carried out through a participatory approach based on direct experience. Students not only receive theoretical entrepreneurship material but are actively involved in production, marketing, business management, and even simple decision-making activities within the Islamic boarding school business unit. This pattern demonstrates that entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools is built as a social and cultural practice in everyday life.

From an experiential learning perspective, effective learning occurs when individuals gain concrete experiences, reflect on those experiences, and transform them into new knowledge and



skills (Kolb, 1984). The entrepreneurial activities carried out by students through market classes, agriculture, animal husbandry, and cooperatives create a contextual learning process that allows students to learn through direct practice. Furthermore, this process is strengthened by the role model of the Kyai (Islamic teacher) as a central figure. From a social learning theory perspective, individuals learn through observation and imitation of behavioral models (Bandura, 1977). The Kyai's exemplary work and interactions serve as an effective learning resource for students.

These findings demonstrate that entrepreneurship education in Islamic boarding schools differs from formal entrepreneurship education models, which are generally based on class theory and an individual profit orientation. In Islamic Boarding Schools, entrepreneurship is built through the values of collectivity, social cooperation, and community service. Thus, Islamic boarding school entrepreneurship aligns more closely with the concept of social entrepreneurship, which integrates economic orientation with social and educational goals (Hisrich et al., 2017).

The Kyai's leadership process is internalized through a consistent institutional culture. This stage is characterized by the instilling of a work culture, discipline, and collective responsibility. Students are not only taught entrepreneurial concepts but also trained to be mentally resilient, creative, and adaptable to limitations. This pattern aligns with the findings of Firdaus (2024), who emphasized the importance of integrating spiritual values into the entrepreneurship education strategy of Islamic boarding schools. However, this study adds that the Kyai's role as the guardian of the vision is a key factor in the success of this internalization.

Furthermore, the participatory empowerment process implemented by the Kyai demonstrates a transformation in the relationship between leaders and students. Students are not positioned as passive objects of education, but as subjects with space to learn, participate, and take socio-economic responsibility. This approach strengthens psychological safety within the Islamic boarding school environment, a condition where individuals feel safe to learn, experiment, and take initiative without fear of being blamed (Edmondson, 1999).

Field findings also indicate that the Kyai's vision does not stop at the level of ideas but is systematically internalized through the culture of the Islamic boarding school. The Kyai consistently instilled the idea that work, endeavor, and creating economic opportunities are part of worship and social service. This narrative shaped the students' perspective on entrepreneurship, not as merely an economic activity, but as a path to social benefit and the actualization of Islamic values.

This internalization is achieved through the Kyai's direct example in initiating various Islamic boarding school businesses, encouraging students to engage in economic activities, and instilling the courage to take calculated risks. This pattern aligns with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the influence of idealism and inspirational motivation as drivers of behavioral change in followers (Priyatno, 2020). However, the Kyai's leadership in this context has distinctly religious characteristics, where the entrepreneurial vision is always linked to the values of honesty, sincerity, and social orientation.

These findings expand on previous research that tends to place Kyai leadership within the context of managing Islamic boarding school business units (Tamam & Kadi, 2024). This research demonstrates that the primary strength of the Kyai's leadership lies in his vision, which fosters an entrepreneurial culture from an early age, even before students become technically involved in business activities. In other words, the Kyai's vision serves as a cultural foundation that enables entrepreneurship to grow organically and sustainably.



These research findings also expand the study of Islamic boarding school entrepreneurship. While some previous studies have focused more on the development of Islamic boarding school business units as an institutional economic strategy, this study shows that entrepreneurial activities also function as a medium for character education and the formation of the social identity of Islamic boarding school students.

Adaptive Entrepreneurial Character in Building the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Islamic Students

The research results show that the leadership of a Kyai (Islamic cleric) fosters the development of adaptive entrepreneurial character traits in students. This character trait is characterized by increased independence, creativity, courage to take initiative, problem-solving skills, and an Islamic work ethic. These findings demonstrate that entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools not only fosters economic skills but also transforms the students' identities and mentality.

From a character education perspective, behavioral development is influenced not only by formal instruction but also by the social environment, educational culture, and daily behavioral habits (Lickona, 1991). The collective work culture and students' involvement in productive activities create a new habitus that shapes independent and productive character.

The impact of the Kyai's leadership is evident in changes in the students' mindsets and attitudes toward the future. Students demonstrate increased self-confidence, independence, and the courage to create business opportunities. They no longer position themselves as job seekers but as opportunity creators. This change is evident in their increased risk-taking, creativity in product creation, and readiness to participate in community economic activities.

The entrepreneurial spirit thus developed is not individualistic, but oriented toward social benefit and community empowerment. These findings align with those of Ma'arif et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of integrating theological values in the formation of *santripreneurs*. Interpretatively, this change indicates the formation of an entrepreneurial identity, not just entrepreneurial skills. This means that entrepreneurship becomes part of the student's identity. This expands on the findings of Ma'arif et al. (2023) regarding the harmonization of theology and entrepreneurship, as in this study, the integration occurs through leadership practices, not just a theoretical framework.

In addition to impacting the students, the Kyai's visionary leadership also contributes to the sustainability of free Islamic boarding schools. By leveraging internal resources and social networks, the Islamic boarding school is able to maintain educational operations without burdening the students financially. This demonstrates that the Kyai's leadership vision is not only pedagogical but also strategic in maintaining the institution's sustainability. Another impact is the formation of economic-based social solidarity. The Islamic boarding school's business is not solely aimed at profit, but also at empowering the surrounding community. Thus, the entrepreneurial spirit fostered is social, not individualistic.

Conceptual Model: SIPEA Leadership (Spiritual-Integrative, Participatory, and Entrepreneurial Adaptive Leadership)

Based on a synthesis of all research findings, this study produced a conceptual construct called the SIPEA Leadership Model (Spiritual-Integrative, Participatory, and Entrepreneurial Adaptive Leadership). This model demonstrates that the success of developing student



entrepreneurship in free Islamic boarding schools is determined by the integration of spiritual values, paternalistic role models, participatory empowerment, experiential entrepreneurship learning, and adaptive entrepreneurial character development.

Theoretically, the SIPEA model expands the study of Islamic educational leadership by presenting an integrative-transformative approach based on spirituality, social empowerment, and Islamic boarding school entrepreneurship. This model also demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools have significant potential as centers of socio-economic transformation in society through strengthening the leadership of Islamic scholars (Kyai) and providing Islamic values-based entrepreneurship education.

This model is a conceptual construct derived from a synthesis of field findings regarding the leadership of Kyai Abdullah Sam in developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School in Sumberpucung, Malang. This model explains that the success of fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in students at free Islamic boarding schools is determined not only by the technical skills of business management, but primarily by the leadership strength of the Kyai (Islamic cleric) in integrating spiritual values, exemplary living, participatory empowerment, experiential learning, and adaptive entrepreneurial character development.

Unlike educational leadership models that tend to be administrative and structurally oriented, the SIPEA model places spirituality as the primary foundation of the entire leadership process. In the context of the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School, all economic activities are positioned not solely as business activities, but as part of the values of worship, devotion, and character education. Therefore, entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools is built not on the basis of individualistic profit-oriented orientation, but on the basis of collective benefit, independence, and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the leadership of the Kyai (Islamic cleric) at the Al-Amin People's Islamic Boarding School plays a central role in developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students through the integration of spiritual values, institutional practices, and participatory empowerment. Entrepreneurial spirit is not formed solely through technical training or business programs, but through the internalization of the values of trust, hard work, independence, and social responsibility, transformed through the Kyai's exemplary behavior. Thus, entrepreneurship in the free Islamic boarding school develops as a form of moral and social entrepreneurship, not simply an economic activity.

Conceptually, this study resulted in the conceptual construction of the SIPEA Leadership Model (Spiritual-Integrative, Participatory, and Entrepreneurial Adaptive Leadership Model). This model emphasizes that the success of developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students at the free Islamic boarding school is determined by the integration of spiritual-integrative leadership, participatory entrepreneurial empowerment, and adaptive entrepreneurial character. This model expands the study of Islamic educational leadership by presenting a spiritual-transformative leadership perspective based on entrepreneurial empowerment and the economic independence of the community.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of transformational leadership, social learning theory, and experiential learning theory in the context of Islamic boarding school education. Furthermore, this study provides theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic



educational leadership studies, as well as practical implications for the development of Islamic boarding schools as centers for the economic empowerment of the community. These findings expand the literature on Islamic boarding school leadership and entrepreneurship, which previously emphasized managerial aspects or business management strategies. Unlike previous research that focused on program effectiveness or business unit success, this article positions leadership as a key variable shaping the economic paradigm of Islamic boarding school students. Thus, this study's scientific contribution lies in the integration of Islamic educational leadership theory and entrepreneurship theory within a single, contextual analytical framework.

Practically, the results of this study imply that developing entrepreneurship in Islamic boarding schools requires more than programmatic interventions or capital assistance, but also strengthening values-based leadership capacity. For Islamic boarding school managers, this model can serve as a reference in designing sustainable entrepreneurship development strategies. For policymakers, this research demonstrates that free Islamic boarding schools have significant potential as centers for community-based economic empowerment if supported by visionary and transformative leadership.

This research is limited by its single-case study context, so generalizations of the findings should be approached with caution. Therefore, future research could test this conceptual model across various types of Islamic boarding schools or use a quantitative approach to measure the influence of leadership on entrepreneurial mindset variables more broadly.

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