

The Effectiveness of Leadership Styles in Efforts to Maintain Traditional Islamic Boarding School Culture as Local Wisdom of Aceh

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of leadership style in Islamic boarding schools in preserving the traditional Islamic boarding school culture as local wisdom of Aceh.

Methodology - This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive-correlational design through a structured questionnaire on the leaders, teachers, and staff of the Insafuddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School, Banda Aceh. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including normality tests, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression to measure the influence of leadership style on the maintenance of Islamic boarding school culture.

Findings - This study shows that leadership style positively affects efforts to maintain the traditional Islamic boarding school culture, as the local wisdom of Aceh. The results of simple linear regression analysis show a regression coefficient value of 0.533 and a determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.211, which means that leadership style explains 21.1% of the variation in efforts to preserve Islamic boarding school culture. This finding shows that leadership plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of Islamic boarding school cultural values amidst the challenges of modernization.

Significance - This study contributes to the literature on educational leadership by proposing an adaptive authority model that combines religious legitimacy, cultural roots, and participatory managerial practices. Practically, this study provides insights for Islamic boarding school leaders and policymakers in designing leadership development programs, succession planning, and managerial innovation that balance cultural preservation with the demands of modern education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school in Aceh, locally known as *dayah*, has been the central Islamic educational institution since the Sultanate of Samudra Pasai (1300–1500) and the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam (1500–1873). According to Qanun NAD No. 23/2002 and Qanun Aceh No. 11/2014, *dayah* is recognized as a community-based Islamic educational institution that organizes *diniyah* education or integrates with other fields of learning where *ulama* or *santri* live in dormitories (balee/hut) (Nur, 2019). Outside Aceh, this institution is generally known as an Islamic boarding school. Historically, the emergence of *dayah* cannot be separated from the growth of Islamic communities, with similar forms found in other regions. In Turkey, for instance, education began with small *Qur'an* study groups, developed into mushalla or mosques, and then expanded into hut-based learning centers (khan), resembling the development of Islamic boarding schools in Aceh. After the conquest of the Aceh Sultanate, the Dutch colonial government reversed the Islamic boarding school curriculum and functions. Once regarded as a center of higher learning, the Islamic boarding school was downgraded into a marginalized institution, and even after Indonesia's independence, the Islamic boarding school remained less prioritized in the national education system (Abubakar, 2015; Misnan, 2025; Muhammad Rizal, 2023).

Despite these challenges, Islamic boarding schools has endured as one of Aceh's oldest Islamic educational institutions. Over time, it has developed into a center for nurturing moeslem intellectuals who promote Islam holistically (Winta, 2024). Alums, society, and *ulama* play an essential role in maintaining the existence of the Islamic boarding school. They contribute to building dormitories, raising funds, and encouraging younger generations to pursue their studies there. Leading graduates who later became *ulama* defended this culture to preserve Islam in Aceh, which has been deeply rooted in society. The establishment and inheritance of the Islamic boarding school reflect the aim of fostering an Islamic community in Aceh that is unified with all levels of society. Leaders of Islamic boarding schools rely on resources and contributions from society, while they devote their lives to establishing and teaching in these institutions. This lifelong dedication is seen as a form of charity, while at the same time maintaining Acehnese cultural life (*adat*). The presence of *dayah ulama* has thus become an integral part of social life, often consulted when communities face dilemmas that require resolution (Abubakar, 2015).

The sustainability of an Islamic boarding school is primarily determined by its leadership. Effective leadership influences the management of an Islamic boarding school, and the management, in turn, determines the success of the Islamic boarding school in achieving its goals. Leadership in Islamic boarding schools encompasses both religious authority and organizational capacity, with leadership style serving as the key behavioral manifestation. Leadership is generally defined as the ability to influence and guide others in achieving shared goals. Classic typologies such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership illustrate different approaches (Anasro & El-Yunusi, 2024; Hernawati et al., 2024; Rosyid, 2022). In the Islamic boarding schools, democratic leadership is often considered most effective in fostering collaboration, while authoritarian leadership can provide stability and continuity.

In Aceh, the leadership style of Islamic boarding school leaders has a unique dimension because it is not only managerial but also intertwined with religious authority and cultural legitimacy. Leadership style thus becomes a central factor in preserving Islamic boarding school culture as local wisdom. The findings of this study show that Islamic boarding school leaders in Aceh apply a combination of leadership styles, with authoritarian leadership evident in the strong role of founders, democratic leadership in collective decision-making, and laissez-faire leadership in giving space to teachers and students. Field observations at Insafuddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School, Banda Aceh, indicate that leadership transition is still fragile, with institutional sustainability heavily dependent on charismatic figures, limited managerial innovation, and a lack of structured regeneration systems. This reality shows the urgency of developing adaptive leadership to balance tradition and modernization in Islamic boarding schools (Halimah et al., 2024).

Tradition and modernity in the Islamic boarding school environment create new challenges for *dayah* leadership. Traditional values remain the foundation, yet Islamic boarding school leaders must innovate with

national education standards, digital literacy, and global change (Halimah et al., 2024; Yugo, 2025). Leaders must act as religious figures and managers who can present innovation without abandoning Islamic values and Acehese culture. The role of leadership transition is also crucial, as many Islamic boarding schools are heavily dependent on charismatic figures. When these figures pass away or retire, Islamic boarding schools often face stagnation due to the absence of leadership regeneration. Adaptive and transformative leadership is needed to guarantee the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools, supported by well-designed cadre systems (Nasith, 2024).

Islamic boarding school leaders must establish strong relationships with communities, governments, and donors. In Aceh, with its special autonomy and implementation of Islamic law, the role of *dayah* leaders is increasingly strategic as educators and as respected figures in social and religious life (Bauer et al., 2022; Hanafi et al., 2021). Open and communicative leadership is vital to bridge institutional needs with the expectations of external stakeholders. Meanwhile, rapid social changes and exposure to global values influence the aspirations of younger generations. Today's youth live in a digital reality, raising the need for Islamic boarding schools to balance traditional values with 21st-century skills. Transformational and servant leadership models are relevant, as they emphasize role modeling, empathy, and constructive change. Islamic boarding schools remain attractive to younger generations while continuing to preserve their religious and cultural identity (Mujahid, 2021).

Previous studies have discussed Islamic boarding school leadership in different contexts. For instance, (Thoyib & Fauzan, 2021) analyzed transformational leadership in Islamic boarding school innovation, (Syadzily, 2025) examined Islamic boarding school governance and resilience, (McCarthy et al., 2022; Porfírio et al., 2021) highlighted leadership challenges during digital transformation, (Kyambade et al., 2024) emphasized servant leadership in strengthening community engagement, and (Malisi & Sulasman, 2024) explored balancing tradition and modernity. None of these studies has focused explicitly on Islamic boarding schools in Aceh, where leadership is shaped by Islamic educational values and legal and cultural legitimacy rooted in Qanun-based Islamic law. This is the novelty of the present study.

This study seeks to fill the research gap by determining the effectiveness of leadership style in Acehese Islamic boarding schools in sustaining cultural values while responding to modernization demands. The solution is developing an adaptive authority model integrating religious legitimacy, cultural rootedness, and participatory managerial practices. The expected outcome is theoretical, contributing to educational leadership discourse, and practical, offering strategies for leadership development, succession planning, and managerial innovation in Islamic boarding schools. In the long run, the findings of this study are expected to strengthen Islamic boarding schools as centers of Islamic education that preserve Acehese cultural wisdom while preparing future generations for global educational challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive-correlational design, aiming to analyze the relationship between leadership style and efforts to maintain the culture of Islamic boarding schools as local wisdom of Aceh. This design was chosen to provide a measurable description of the leadership styles applied in Islamic boarding school and their impact on cultural preservation. The research was conducted at the Insafuddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School in Banda Aceh. It was purposively selected because it represents an Islamic boarding school combining strong religious traditions and adaptive organizational management. The limitation of conducting the study in a single Islamic boarding school is acknowledged; therefore, future studies are encouraged to expand to multiple institutions for broader generalization.

Respondents

The population of this study consisted of Islamic boarding school leaders, teachers, and administrative staff. A purposive sampling technique was applied, using the criteria that respondents are directly involved

in educational and managerial activities. A total of 40 respondents participated in the study, comprising 1 Islamic boarding school leader, 25 teachers, and 14 administrative staff. This composition was intended to capture perspectives from both managerial and operational levels within the Islamic boarding school.

Instruments and Data Collection

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire based on theoretical dimensions of leadership style and Islamic boarding school cultural preservation. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items divided into two primary constructs: (a) leadership style (autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire), and (b) efforts to maintain Islamic boarding school culture (tradition, management, community involvement). Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument underwent content validity testing through expert judgment and construct validity using factor analysis. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) structured questionnaires as the primary instrument for quantitative measurement, (2) observation to contextualize institutional practices, and (3) documentation to complement institutional data.

Data Analysis

For data analysis of this study, the following steps were applied systematically; 1) Descriptive Statistics is used to describe respondent characteristics and the overall tendencies of leadership style and cultural preservation (mean, frequency, and standard deviation). 2) Classical Assumption Tests using Normality Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) with the formula:

$$D = \max |F_o(X) - F_e(X)| \dots\dots\dots (\text{Ghasemi \& Zahediasl, 2012})$$

3) Multicollinearity Test (Variance Inflation Factor - VIF) with the formula:

$$VIF \frac{1}{1-R^2} \dots\dots\dots (\text{Gujarati \& Porter, 2020})$$

4) Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser Test) using the Model:

$$|e_i| = \alpha + \beta X_i + \mu_i \dots\dots\dots (\text{Gujarati \& Porter, 2020})$$

5) Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha) using the Formula:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_t^2} \right)$$

the description are k is number of items, σ_i^2 is item variance, σ_t^2 is total variance, and α value ≥ 0.70 indicates good reliability (Cronbach, 1951). 5) Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Used to test the strength of the relationship between leadership style and the preservation of Islamic boarding school culture (Pearson, 1900). this analysis using the formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum (X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \sum (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}}$$

6) Simple Linear Regression Analysis used to determine how much leadership style influences efforts to preserve Islamic Boarding School culture (Sugiyono, 2019). The Model is:

$$Y = a + bX + e$$

The research provided descriptive insights into Islamic boarding school leadership styles and statistical evidence of their relationship with preserving traditional Islamic boarding school culture in Aceh.

FINDINGS

The analysis results prove that the reliability test on the question items is valid. A variable is reliable if the answers to the questions are always consistent. Based on the results of the reliability test calculations, the three variables obtained the following results:

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

No.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	r	Criteria
1.	Leadership Style (X)	0.795	0.600	Trusted
2.	Efforts to Maintain Islamic Boarding School Culture (Y)	0.810	0.600	Trusted

Based on Table 1. The reliability test of variable X is 0.795, and variable Y is 0.810, which has a value of Cronbach's Alpha > 0.600 , in accordance with the basis for making decisions on reliability testing, which means that both variables are declared reliable or meet the requirements.

Classical Assumption Test Results

Normality Test

The normality test aims to determine whether the dependent variable and independent variable used in the regression model are normally distributed or not normally distributed through graphical analysis and statistical tests. Proof of whether the data used can be normally distributed by looking at the histogram and the probability plot. It is said to be normal if the points are spread around the diagonal line and follow the direction of the diagonal line. The results of the normality test in this study are:

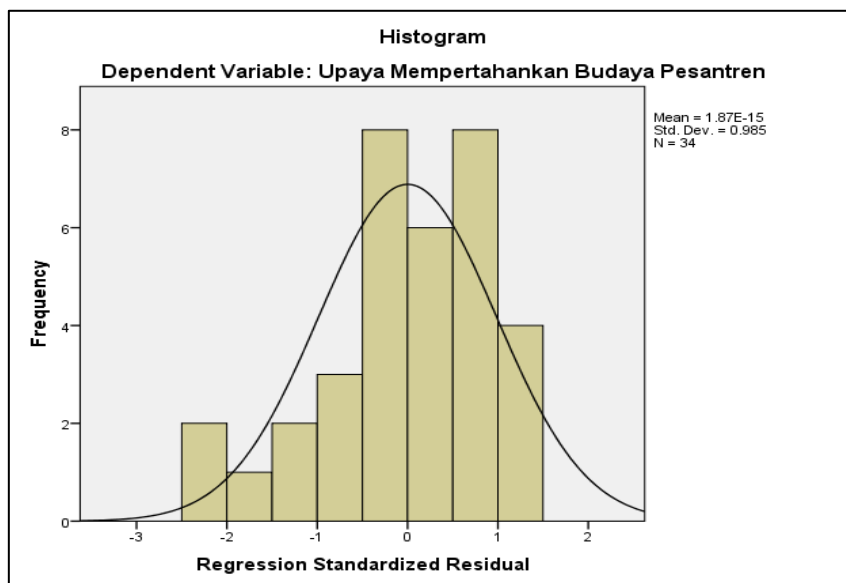


Figure 1. Histogram Chart

Based on Figure 1, it can be concluded that the data used shows normality. This can be seen from the data pattern, which is bell-shaped and in the middle, so it can be concluded that the data is normal.

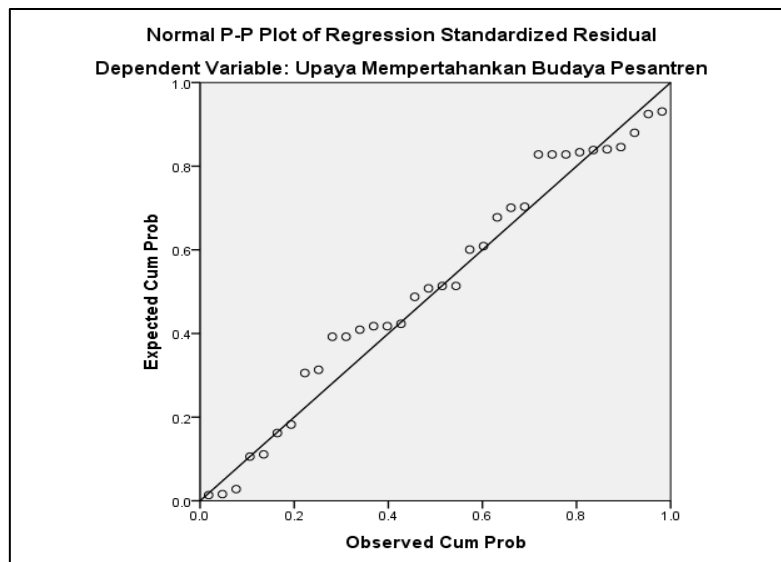


Figure 2. Normal P-Plot Graph

In the P-Plot graph, the data is spread around the diagonal line and follows the direction of the diagonal line, so the regression model meets the normality assumption. The graph shows that the distribution pattern tends to be normal, and the data shows points spread around the diagonal line and follow the direction of the diagonal line. Hence, the regression model meets the assumption of normality. The normality test can also be seen using a statistical test, namely the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, as in the following table:

Table 2. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
N		34
Normal Parameters a, b	Mean	73.74
	Std. Deviation	4.245
	Absolute	.166
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.152
	Negative	-.166
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.968
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.306
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		

Based on the data above, with $n = 100$, it is known that the significance value in the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test obtained a significance value of $0.200 > 0.05$, so that it can be concluded that the data that has been tested is usually distributed. One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, namely if the significance is below 0.05, means that the data to be tested has a significant difference from the standard normal data, meaning that the data is not standardized.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test helps determine whether there is a correlation between independent variables in the regression model. The way to determine whether there is a deviation from the multicollinearity test is to look at each independent variable's Tolerance and VIF values. If the Tolerance value > 0.10 and the VIF value < 10 , the data is free from multicollinearity symptoms. The results of the multicollinearity test calculation can be shown in the following table:

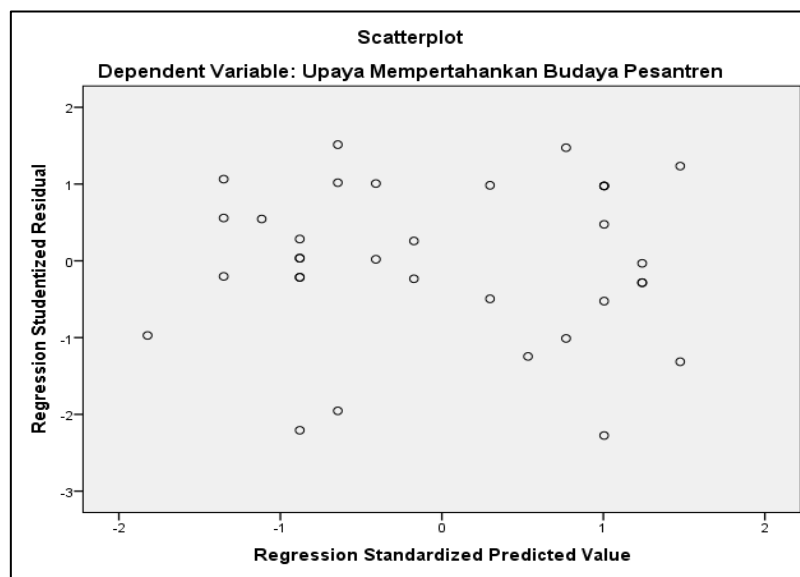
Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model		Coefficients a	
		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Leadership Style	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent Variable: Efforts to Maintain Culture			

Based on the results in Table 3 above, the calculation of the tolerance value does not have an independent variable with a tolerance value > 0.10 with an independent variable tolerance value of 1,000. While the results of the calculation of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value calculation also show the same thing, namely that there is no VIF value for the independent variable with a VIF value < 10 , with an independent variable VIF value of 1,000. Referring to the results of the Tolerance and VIF values calculation, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables in the regression model.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test aims to test whether the regression model shows inequality of variance from one observation to another. The way to determine whether heteroscedasticity occurs is by looking at the Plot Graph between the predicted values of the dependent variable, namely ZPRED, and the residual SRESID. There is no heteroscedasticity, namely if there is no clear pattern, and the points are spread above and below the number 0 on the Y axis. The following is a scatterplot graph of the heteroscedasticity test:

**Figure 3.** Scatterplot Graph

Based on Figure 3. The data is spread well both above and below the zero axis. From the output produced, it can be concluded that the data passes the heteroscedasticity test.

Linear Quantitative Analysis Results

The results of testing the multiple regression model on the Consumer Psychology variable (X), which influences the Purchasing Decision (Y), can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Linear Regression Analysis Results

		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	66,771	12,493		5.345	.000
	Leadership Style	.533	.169	.533	.176	.861

a. Dependent Variable: Efforts to Maintain Islamic Boarding School Culture

In this study, the following linear regression equation model was used $Y = a + bX + e$. By paying attention to the regression model and linear regression results, the following equations are obtained for the factors influencing purchasing decisions: $Y = 14.228 + 0.534X + e$, this can be seen in the following information:

- 1) The constant (a) of 66.771 shows no leadership style variable in efforts to maintain the traditional Islamic boarding school culture, as the local wisdom of Aceh.
- 2) Leadership Style (X) of 0.533 shows that the leadership style variable has a positive and significant effect on efforts to maintain Islamic boarding school culture, meaning that each principal has a different style or way of leading in maintaining Islamic boarding school culture. Increasing the leadership style variable will affect efforts to maintain the traditional Islamic boarding school culture, as well as the local wisdom of Aceh.

Coefficient of Determination Test

The Coefficient of Determination test is shown in the following table:

Table 5. Result of the Determination Coefficient Test (R²)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.431a	.211	.230	4.65125

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Style

b. Dependent Variable: Efforts to Maintain Islamic Boarding School Culture

From the table above, it can be seen that the coefficient of determination (R-squared) is 0.211, which means that leadership style influences efforts to maintain Islamic boarding school culture by 21.1%.

The study's results indicate a positive influence of leadership style on efforts to maintain the traditional Islamic boarding school culture, as well as the local wisdom of Aceh. The regression coefficient of 0.533 indicates the contribution of leadership style in increasing efforts to preserve Islamic boarding school culture. The determination coefficient (R²) of 0.211 indicates that 21.1% of the variation in efforts to maintain Islamic boarding school culture is explained by leadership style. At the same time, the rest is influenced by other factors not measured in this study.

The Islamic boarding school leaders' strategic role is reflected by their leadership style, combining authoritarian and delegative approaches. Authoritarian leadership complies with Islamic boarding school customs, while the delegative approach allows administrators and teachers to make decisions. These results confirm the function of Islamic boarding school leaders as directors of traditional values and facilitators in preserving culture.

Adaptive leadership style strengthens the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools as traditional educational institutions rooted in Islamic values and local culture. Islamic boarding school leaders demonstrate the ability to adjust their leadership approach according to the situation and needs of the organization. The concept of situational leadership, as explained by Khattak et al. (2023), is relevant because leadership effectiveness depends on the leader's flexibility in dealing with the internal and external dynamics of the institution. The active participation of teachers and staff of the Islamic boarding school reflects implementing a leadership model that empowers human resources. Granting authority to subordinates shows the leader's level of trust in their ability to carry out institutional responsibilities. This leadership pattern

supports creating a collaborative, productive, and conducive work environment for preserving Islamic boarding school values.

The results of the classical assumption test show that the research data meet the requirements of regression analysis. Normal distribution, no multicollinearity detected, and the absence of heteroscedasticity symptoms support the validity of the statistical analysis results. The reliability of the data strengthens the interpretation of the influence of leadership style on efforts to maintain Islamic boarding school culture.

The limited percentage contribution of leadership style to efforts to maintain Islamic boarding school culture indicates the need to consider other variables in the preservation process. Community support, government policies, curriculum quality, technological developments, and alums participation can influence the success of preserving Islamic boarding school culture. Further research that identifies these factors can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the strategy for preserving traditional Islamic boarding school culture in Aceh.

DISCUSSION

Leadership is one of the key factors that determines the success of an Islamic boarding school in achieving its objectives. The leadership style influences the organizational performance and the preservation of Islamic boarding school culture as part of Aceh's local wisdom. Leadership is generally defined as the ability to influence others, but the form of leadership style may vary depending on context, individual traits, and social structures (Anasro & El-Yunusi, 2024; Rosyid, 2022). Several classical perspectives categorize leadership into three main types: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. In addition, more recent approaches highlight situational leadership, which emphasizes adaptability (Nursetialloh, 2023), and path-goal theory, which stresses the motivational role of leaders in directing subordinates toward institutional goals (Saleem, 2021). These frameworks form the theoretical basis for analyzing the findings of this study.

The field data collected at Insafuddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School in Banda Aceh revealed that Islamic boarding school leaders do not rely on a single leadership style. Instead, leadership tends to be eclectic, combining authoritarian, democratic, and situational elements depending on context. Authoritarian aspects are powerful when Islamic boarding school leaders act as ulama and founders who hold high moral and religious authority. Teachers and staff often follow these directives without resistance, as obedience is a form of respect for religious legitimacy. However, democratic leadership is also evident, particularly when involving teachers and administrative staff in curriculum, student discipline, or resource management decisions. These findings indicate that Islamic boarding school leadership in Aceh represents a hybrid pattern that balances authority and participation.

The relevance of Acehnese local wisdom is also significant in shaping these leadership styles. The hadith majah "hukum ngon adat lagee zat ngon sifeut" (law and custom are inseparable) illustrates the strong integration between Islamic law and local culture. Democratic and situational leadership resonate with Aceh's musyawarah (deliberation) culture, which values consensus and inclusivity. The persistence of authoritarian traits is consistent with Aceh's tradition of respecting religious figures (Rahman, 2022). This cultural combination shows that Islamic boarding school leadership is deeply contextual and cannot be separated from the values and worldview of the Acehnese people.

Urgency observed in the field also confirms this. Based on observations during data collection, Insafuddin Islamic boarding school faces pressure to maintain its cultural identity while adopting national education standards, managerial systems, and digital tools. Teachers reported that modernization is necessary to attract younger generations, but there is concern that excessive adaptation could dilute traditional Islamic values. This aligns with previous studies showing that Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia often struggle between tradition and modernization (Permana, 2021; Rahman, 2022).

The motivational dimension of leadership also emerged as a crucial factor in sustaining Islamic boarding school culture. Leaders act not only as managers but also as motivators for teachers and students. Based on the path-goal theory, effective leaders provide direction, remove obstacles, and make tasks meaningful

(Farhan, 2018; Olowoselu et al., 2019). In the Islamic boarding school context, motivation is expressed through material rewards such as recognition and support for teachers and non-material reinforcement in spiritual guidance and moral exemplars. These strategies are aligned with recent findings that responsibility and role modeling are the strongest predictors of teacher performance (Downes et al., 2021).

The implications of these findings highlight the challenges Islamic boarding schools face in maintaining cultural authenticity while responding to modern demands. Leaders must adopt managerial innovations, digital literacy, and organizational skills to ensure institutional sustainability (Niu et al., 2022; Zada et al., 2025). This dual responsibility creates a leadership model called adaptive authority, a combination of religious legitimacy, cultural rootedness, and participatory managerial practices.

Leadership succession is another important issue. Many Islamic boarding schools are founded and led by charismatic figures whose leadership is central to institutional survival. Islamic boarding schools often stagnate when these figures pass away or retire due to the lack of leadership cadre systems (Dian et al., 2024). This research suggests that Islamic boarding school leaders must establish regeneration mechanisms that ensure continuity of values and management. Without structured cadre development, Islamic boarding schools risk being overly dependent on single figures, thereby weakening long-term sustainability (Prasetyo et al., 2025; Taufikin & Solihuddin, 2025).

In addition to internal dynamics, an Islamic boarding school must maintain external relationships with stakeholders. Leaders are vital in building networks with the community, donors, and government institutions. In Aceh, where special autonomy allows for the implementation of Islamic law, Islamic boarding school leaders carry even greater responsibilities as both educational and socio-religious figures. Open, communicative, and collaborative leadership is essential in bridging Islamic boarding school needs with broader societal expectations (Bauer et al., 2022; Hanafi et al., 2021). Leadership that is too closed or authoritarian risks alienating the Islamic boarding school from societal development.

Another challenge comes from generational change and exposure to global values. Students and teachers today live in a digital era, requiring Islamic boarding school leaders to integrate 21st-century skills without losing traditional identity. Transformational and servant leadership approaches become highly relevant, emphasizing empathy, collaboration, and constructive change (Roberts, 2020). Leaders who act as role models, encourage innovation, and maintain cultural integrity are more likely to keep Islamic boarding schools attractive and relevant to younger generations.

The findings of this study both align with and extend previous research on leadership in Islamic educational institutions. (Hanafi et al., 2021) emphasized the importance of communicative leadership in Islamic boarding schools to strengthen ties with the community. However, they did not explore the hybrid and adaptive nature of leadership styles as identified in this study. (Abubakar, 2015) Highlighted the role of *dayah* in preserving Acehnese cultural identity, but their research did not explicitly connect leadership practices to cultural preservation. (Ratnawati et al., 2025) Demonstrated that transformational leadership in Islamic schools contributes to digital adaptability, but their context did not reflect the specific socio-cultural dynamics of Acehnese Islamic boarding schools. (Halimah et al., 2024) discussed the tension between tradition and modernization in Islamic boarding schools, warning of the risk of cultural erosion, but they did not offer a contextual leadership framework as a solution. More recently, Dian et al. (2024) identified succession challenges in Islamic boarding school leadership, particularly the risk of stagnation in the absence of structured cadre systems. However, they did not consider how leadership that combines authority and participation might address this issue.

In contrast, the present study introduces the concept of adaptive authority leadership, a hybrid model that integrates authoritarian, democratic, and situational approaches while firmly rooted in Acehnese local wisdom. This model explains how Islamic boarding school leaders can preserve cultural authenticity while adopting managerial innovations and digital strategies to meet contemporary educational demands. By addressing cultural preservation and institutional sustainability, this study contributes a novel framework

that fills the gaps left by earlier research and offers practical implications for leadership development in Islamic boarding schools.

The findings of this study indicate the emergence of an adaptive authority leadership model that uniquely integrates authoritarian, democratic, and situational styles, grounded in Acehese cultural wisdom. This model addresses the urgent problem identified in the introduction: the tension between preserving Islamic boarding school traditions and adapting to modern educational demands. The model provides a practical solution to ensure Islamic boarding school sustainability without eroding its cultural identity (Ziaulhaq et al., 2024).

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to leadership studies by offering a culturally contextualized model of adaptive authority that enriches the discourse on Islamic educational leadership. For future education, the model has three main implications: 1) strengthening Islamic boarding schools as institutions that can balance tradition and innovation, 2) providing a framework for leadership succession through cadre development, and 3) equipping leaders with digital and managerial competencies while retaining cultural authenticity. These contributions are expected to influence Islamic boarding school education and broader Islamic education systems facing similar challenges in the global era.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that leadership style positively affects efforts to maintain the traditional Islamic boarding school culture, as the local wisdom of Aceh. The results of simple linear regression analysis show a regression coefficient value of 0.533 and a determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.211, which means that leadership style explains 21.1% of the variation in efforts to preserve Islamic boarding school culture. This finding indicates that leadership plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of Islamic boarding school cultural values amidst the challenges of modernization. The application of leadership style in Islamic boarding schools in Aceh combines an authoritarian approach to maintain compliance with customs with a delegative approach that encourages the participation of teachers and administrators in decision-making. An adaptive leadership model supports the process of cadre formation, preservation of tradition, and strengthening the identity of Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions rooted in local values. Islamic boarding school leaders are expected to be able to motivate, empower, and build cooperation with all internal and external elements to ensure the sustainability of traditional Islamic boarding school culture as part of the local wisdom of the Acehese people.

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