

Tuan Guru Leadership in Developing Pesantren Education in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

Modernization, technological change, and shifting public expectations press pesantren to renew their educational practice without giving up Islamic values and scholarly tradition. This study examines how the Tuan Guru leads that renewal at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlahuddiny in Kediri, West Lombok. It pursues three aims: to identify the ideas through which the Tuan Guru develops pesantren education for modern challenges, to trace the leadership process that turns those ideas into practice, and to analyze the implications of that leadership for educational development. The research used a qualitative case study design. Data came from observation, structured interviews, and documentation involving the pesantren leader, madrasah principals, teachers, lecturers, senior students, and alumni, and were analyzed through the interactive model of data collection, condensation, display, and verification. The findings show that the Tuan Guru builds an educational system that joins Islamic values and pesantren tradition with science, technology, and contemporary needs. The leadership process is collective, participatory, and grounded in religious values. Its effects reach institutional growth, curriculum integration, stronger educator competence, wider use of technology, improved student skills and character, and greater public trust. The study proposes a Continuity-Adaptation-Transformation model of Tuan Guru leadership. It implies that value-based institutions can modernize successfully when leaders judge carefully what to preserve, what to adapt, and what to transform.

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INTRODUCTION

Pesantren have long served as more than a place of religious instruction, functioning at once as a center of character formation, scholarship, and community life in Indonesia (Masturin, 2023). The scale of this role is considerable, with more than 28,000 *pesantren* and roughly 15 million students shaping social, cultural, and religious order across the country (Irawan, 2022). In the present era, however, these institutions face pressures they cannot ignore: rapid technological change, digitalization, globalization, the professionalization of educational management, and rising public expectations for graduates who are both religiously grounded and academically capable (Kawakip, 2020; Huda et al., 2025; Malisi et al., 2024). The difficulty is that renewal cannot proceed by simply trading traditional practice for modern methods, since the identity of the *pesantren* rests on the very traditions that reform might erode. What follows from this tension is a central question of direction, namely how a *pesantren* can meet contemporary demands while keeping its Islamic values and scholarly heritage intact, and that question places leadership at the heart of the matter.

Recent scholarship on *pesantren* leadership converges on several themes while leaving



important ground uncovered. A first line of work reframes leadership as a balance between heritage and reform: Salim et al. (2024) propose an inclusive-spiritual-paternalistic model in which democratic, spiritual, and paternalistic dimensions combine to manage educational transformation without loosening the hold of religious values and discipline. A second theme reads modernization at the institutional level, where Sofi et al. (2025) show that *pesantren* increasingly harmonize classical scholarship with modern management, teacher development, and quality assurance while guarding their core identity. A third theme concerns culture and authority, with Aisyah et al. (2022) demonstrating that *kiai* leadership is inseparable from the organizational culture and religious values that give the *pesantren* its coherence. Read together, these studies establish that leadership carries the work of adaptation, yet each tends to isolate a style, a level, or a cultural function rather than the process that binds them.

The gap that remains is therefore not the absence of research on *kiai* or *Tuan Guru* leadership but the scarcity of accounts that explain how such leadership operates as an institutional process managing continuity, adaptation, and transformation at the same time. Prior work names the balance between tradition and modernity, yet it rarely specifies the mechanism by which a leader decides what to preserve, what to adjust, and what to remake, or how vision, participation, and values connect across that decision. The present study addresses this by treating leadership as an integrated process rather than a fixed trait, and by locating it in the figure of the *Tuan Guru* in Lombok, a leadership tradition that has received far less attention than its Javanese *kiai* counterpart. Its novelty lies in this combination of an underexamined regional context and a process-level analysis that links leadership ideas, leadership practice, and institutional outcomes within one explanatory frame.

Building on that gap, this study sets out to analyze and identify three connected things at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlahuddiny in Kediri, West Lombok: the ideas through which the *Tuan Guru* develops *pesantren* education in response to modern challenges, the leadership process through which those ideas are put into practice, and the implications of that leadership for educational development. Pursuing these aims together allows the study to extend the existing literature in a specific direction, moving from descriptions of leadership style toward an account of leadership as a value-filtered institutional process. The relevance of this work is both academic and practical. For scholarship, it offers an empirically grounded model of leadership that integrates spiritual, educational, managerial, social, and adaptive dimensions. For practice, it speaks to how leaders of value-based institutions can steer modernization without surrendering identity.

This study proceeds from a straightforward premise. The development of *pesantren* education in the modern era rests on a form of leadership that ties religious values and *pesantren* tradition to educational innovation, institutional management, technological adaptation, and social engagement. Since the question here is one of meaning, process, and context rather than measurable variables, the study uses a qualitative case study approach that permits a close reading of leadership as it takes shape in its own setting. Attention falls on how the *Tuan Guru* makes sense of change, draws the *pesantren* community into that effort, and holds institutional identity steady through the choices leadership demands. The sections that follow set out the method, present the findings around the three research aims, and consider what they contribute to the study of educational leadership.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine *Tuan Guru* leadership in the development of *pesantren* education in the modern era (Yousaf et al., 2024; Chowdhury et al., 2020). The qualitative approach was chosen because the study set out to understand leadership ideas, leadership processes, and their implications for educational development within the natural setting of the *pesantren*, where the phenomenon of leadership cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs (Oplatka, 2023; Uleanya, 2023). The

case study design allowed a close reading of leadership practice in one institution with a long history and strong social standing (Hodson, 2023; Lee et al., 2025). The site was Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlahuddiny in Kediri, West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, selected because it has kept its traditional *pesantren* identity while building formal education from the basic level to higher education and adapting to present educational demands, which makes it a fitting case for studying continuity, adaptation, and transformation in one place. The researcher served as the main instrument and was directly involved in the field, carrying out preliminary observation and comparative visits to several pesantren before the main fieldwork, and maintaining reflexivity throughout data collection and interpretation to keep the findings grounded in field evidence rather than personal assumption (Paulus et al., 2024; Greschke, 2023).

Data were collected through observation, structured interviews, and document analysis, so that each type of evidence could be checked against the others (Archibald et al., 2019; Lobe et al., 2020; Khan & MacEachen, 2022). Participatory and non-participatory observation covered leadership practice, learning activities, institutional development, and daily interaction within the *pesantren* community, including the morning and evening learning sessions that show the continuity of traditional and formal instruction. Interviews followed a protocol built from the research questions, with different guides prepared for the *pesantren* leadership, institutional managers and teachers, senior students, and alumni or parents, covering vision, decision-making, participation, communication, exemplary conduct, responses to change, and the effects of leadership on students and alumni. Document analysis supplied supporting evidence from institutional records, the internal master plan, photographs, and other materials relevant to leadership and educational development. Informants were selected purposively on the basis of their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the leadership and development of the *pesantren*. The composition of the informants and the data drawn from each group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Informants and Sources of Data

Informant Group	Role in the Study	Primary Data Contributed
<i>Pesantren</i> leader (Tuan Guru)	Central leadership and institutional direction	Leadership ideas, vision, and value-based decisions
<i>Madrasah</i> and school principals	Managers of formal educational units	Curriculum integration and program implementation
Teachers, <i>ustadz</i> , and lecturers	Educators across units	Learning practice, participation, and deliberation
Mudabbir and senior students	Student organization and daily <i>pesantren</i> life	Exemplary conduct, discipline, and student development
Alumni and parents	External stakeholders	Educational outcomes, community trust, and legitimacy

Source: Processed from field data, 2025.

Data analysis was carried out at the same time as data collection using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which moves through data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Bingham, 2023; Laari, 2025; McGill et al., 2023). Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were organized by the research focus, then condensed into categories covering the Tuan Guru's ideas, the leadership process, and the implications of leadership for educational development. The categorized data were compared across informants and across sources to trace recurring patterns, differences, and relationships, and conclusions were built up progressively and checked against the evidence until stable interpretations were reached (Wibeck & Linnér, 2021; Wutich et al., 2021). The trustworthiness of the findings was secured through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, supported by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, source triangulation, peer discussion, negative case analysis, member checking, and an audit trail of field notes, transcripts,

recordings, and documents (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2020; O’Kane et al., 2019). The stages of this analytical process are shown in Figure 1.

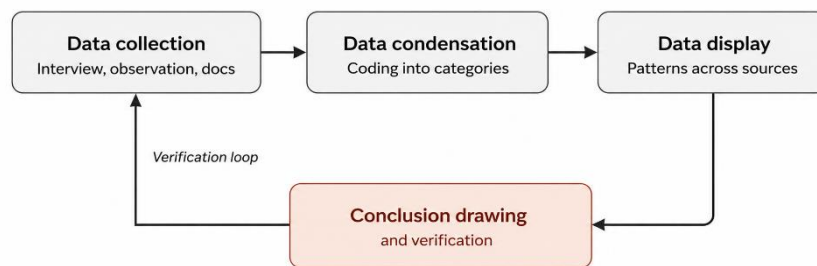


Figure 1. Interactive Data Analysis Model (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña)
Source: Adapted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings fall into three connected themes that follow the research focus: the Tuan Guru's ideas for developing *pesantren* education under modern pressures, the leadership process that puts those ideas into practice, and what that leadership produces for educational development. The themes follow one another in order, from strategic orientation, to institutional process, to outcome. Evidence for each theme comes from interviews with the *pesantren* leader, *madrasah* and school principals, teachers, lecturers, senior students, and alumni, and is checked against direct observation and institutional documents.

Tuan Guru's Ideas for Developing Pesantren Education in the Modern Era

The first theme concerns how the *Tuan Guru* reads a changing educational environment and turns that reading into a plan. His stance is distinctive because renewal is treated as an extension of tradition rather than a departure from it. Advances in science and technology, new patterns of learning and communication, the outlook of a younger generation, and higher public expectations are read at once as pressures to answer and as openings to use. The classical *pesantren* system and modern schooling are not set against each other as rival models. They are held together as one educational whole, so the operative question is never whether to modernize but which elements to keep, which to adapt, and which to add. This matters for the analysis because it places the source of change in a deliberate leadership stance rather than in outside pressure alone, and it fixes the terms for everything the *pesantren* goes on to build.

The *Tuan Guru* described this orientation in his own words:

"Modernity is not something to be rejected or blindly imitated. We anchor ourselves in the principle of *al-muḥāfaẓah 'alā al-qadīm al-ṣāliḥ wa al-akhḍhu bi al-jadīd al-aṣḥaḥ*. The classical texts (*turāth*), the character formation, and the recitation circles must remain intact because they are our soul. However, mastering general sciences, information technology, and foreign languages is an obligation for our *santri* to effectively serve society today. If the *pesantren* does not equip them with contemporary tools, we alienate them from their own era." (Interview, Pesantren Leader/Tuan Guru, 14 August 2025)

Those who turn the vision into daily practice describe the same orientation. One of the educational unit leaders put it this way:

"*Tuan Guru* continually emphasizes that modern education is an instrument of

da'wah, not a dilution of doctrine. At Madrasah Aliyah, we synchronized the national curriculum with the pesantren diniyah timetable. He explicitly instructed us to retain the rigorous examination of classical texts like Fath al-Qarib and Alfiah Ibn Malik, while establishing computer-based testing, digital multimedia labs, and intensive English debate clubs. It is an integrated mandate: deep classical understanding on the one hand, and competitive academic competence on the other." (Interview, Principal of Madrasah Aliyah, 22 August 2025)

Read alongside field observations, these two accounts point to an educational orientation that is integrative, adaptive, and value-based, rather than simply a matter of adding new subjects. Religious education still anchors the system. The study of *kitab kuning*, Qur'an memorization, moral formation, religious habituation, and the sorogan and bandongan methods remain in daily use. A field observation during the morning and evening sessions recorded this continuity in practice, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Field Observation of Daily Learning Continuity at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlahuddiny

Time	Setting	Activity Observed	Mode
05:30–06:45	Main hall of the central mosque	Sorogan and bandongan of classical <i>fiqh</i> and nahwu texts in pegon script, led by senior <i>ustadz</i>	Traditional
07:15 onward	Formal secondary school complex	Same cohort in formal classes using interactive digital screens, structured lab work, and group discussion	Modern

Source: Field Observation Note, Morning Halaqah and Formal Classes, August 18, 2025.

The record shows one cohort of *santri* moving within a single morning from traditional recitation to technology-supported formal instruction, which is the integration in operation rather than in principle. Formal schooling, general sciences, language programs, and skills development sit inside the same framework, and technology enters selectively, under supervision that keeps it in line with discipline and moral values. Student development is defined broadly. It reaches past religious knowledge to Arabic and English, public speaking, leadership, organizational work, and personal responsibility, while raising the competence of teachers, *ustadz*, lecturers, and mudabbir is treated as a condition for the rest of the agenda. The logic that holds this together is a normative filter. Tradition sets the standard against which each innovation is judged, so adaptation does not slide into imitation. The pesantren therefore modernizes by integration, keeping the Qur'an, Hadith, akhlaq, *adab*, and pesantren tradition as its base while preparing *santri* for present demands.

Tuan Guru's Leadership Process in Developing Pesantren Education

Where the first theme sets out what the *Tuan Guru* intends, the second sets out how that intention becomes institutional fact. The leadership process at Al-Ishlahuddiny is neither individual command nor fully distributed authority. It is a collective-participatory process anchored in religious values, in which the *Tuan Guru* keeps central direction while a wide range of actors carries the work forward. The process runs through vision-based planning, deliberation, institutional empowerment, a strengthened organizational culture, human resource development, outside cooperation, and continuous evaluation, with exemplary conduct, ukhuwah, and service as its moral base. This pattern matters because it shows that the integration described in the first theme rests not on the leader's authority alone but on a repeatable mechanism that others can join and reproduce.

Deliberation, or *musyawarah*, sits at the center of the process. An informant directly involved in institutional decisions described how it works:

"Major institutional changes are never dictated overnight. In our monthly leadership council (*musyawarah majlis*), *Tuan Guru* places institutional dilemmas on the table, such as integrating digital devices into boarding dormitories or revising the academic calendar for accreditation. Every unit head, from the diniyah supervisor to the madrasah principals, is asked to offer analysis. *Tuan Guru* establishes the moral

boundaries, listens attentively to the technical assessments, and allows solutions to emerge through consensus before ratifying the final decision." (Interview, Senior Teacher and Foundation Board Member, 28 August 2025)

A second part of the process, leadership by example, was stressed by informants speaking from a different position in the community:

"Policy compliance here is not driven by administrative penalties; it is driven by Tuan Guru's personal example (*qudwah ḥasanah*). When he calls for institutional discipline, he is the first person waiting in the mosque before dawn prayers and the first to attend institutional cleanliness drives (*ro'an*). When santri and teachers witness his humility, piety, and tireless service to the *pesantren*, any institutional policy he approves is embraced with genuine conviction and respect rather than bureaucratic reluctance." (Interview, Senior Santri and Alumni Association Officer, 5 September 2025)

Read together, the accounts show *musyawarah* doing two things at the same time. As an institution, it is where policies are formed, programs are planned, and problems are settled. As a culture, it builds collective ownership, solidarity, and respect for *pesantren* tradition, so decisions arrive already carrying the community's endorsement. Authority and participation work together instead of against each other. The *Tuan Guru* sets strategic direction and guards institutional values, while foundation administrators, unit heads, teachers, *mudabbir*, students, and alumni turn that direction into concrete programs. Example supplies the second binding force. The *Tuan Guru* is followed not only as an office-holder but as a moral figure, teacher, and guardian of values, so acceptance of a policy rests on trust in his example as much as on the organizational chart. Beyond the internal process, development reaches outward through cooperation with universities, language institutions, and alumni networks that widen access to resources without giving up identity, and it is secured over time through leadership regeneration that weighs competence and public trust alongside *zurriyah* continuity. Modernization is handled as a gradual, bounded process in which the *pesantren* grows without losing its core.

Implications of *Tuan Guru* Leadership for *Pesantren* Educational Development

The third theme moves from process to consequence. Its central finding is that the effects of the *Tuan Guru*'s leadership run across several dimensions rather than settling in any single outcome. The leadership does not simply lift teacher performance, or student character, or institutional reputation on its own. It reshapes the educational system, institutional capacity, human resources, organizational culture, and social standing together. That simultaneity is what sets the case apart from studies that isolate one leadership effect, and it is clearest in an educational system where traditional and modern practices run side by side rather than one after the other.

An educational unit leader described how that coexistence feels in daily operation:

"The co-existence of two pedagogical worlds is tangible across our daily operations. In the formal classes, our teachers deploy multimedia projections, science kits, and digital assessment tools aligned with national standards. Yet, as evening approaches, the exact same students sit cross-legged on woven mats with their *Tuan Guru* for traditional *halaqah* and memorization. The modern tools elevate our academic competitiveness, but the traditional environment preserves our collective spirituality and reverence." (Interview, Head of *Diniyah* and Formal Curriculum Coordinator, 12 September 2025)

From the community side, the same balance came through as a reason for trust:

"We chose Al-Ishlahuddiny because it does not force parents to choose between religious depth and modern readiness. Our children master the yellow books and

maintain good adab, yet they are fully prepared for higher education, speak fluent Arabic and English, and operate computers comfortably. This institutional balance gives us complete confidence that our children will succeed academically without losing their moral compass." (Interview, Parent Representative and Alumnus, 18 September 2025)

Institutional records support these accounts:

Documentary review of the *pesantren* registry and the internal institutional master plan indicates steady growth in student enrollment over recent years, with admissions increasingly drawn from beyond the immediate West Lombok area. The same records show a rising proportion of formally qualified teaching staff across the secondary units and accredited status for both the MTs and MA units. (Institutional Document Review, Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlahuddiny Records, 2025)

Together the interviews, observation, and documents point to effects along several lines at once. Traditional practice remains a marker of identity. *Kitab kuning* study, *diniyah* education, Qur'an memorization, moral formation, dhikr, and boarding life continue as living parts of the *pesantren*, while *balaqah*, sorogan, and bandongan run beside discussion, presentation, group learning, and digital media in the formal units. Modernization here adds to tradition rather than replacing it, and that is why it steadies the institution instead of unsettling it. Beyond the classroom, these effects enhance institutional capacity through the growth of units and access, human resources through stronger educator competence, and the wider society through greater community trust and social standing. Public confidence now rests on two grounds at once, the Tuan Guru's religious authority and the *pesantren*'s visible educational performance, so reputation follows demonstrated quality as well as inherited standing. The implications are simultaneously institutional, pedagogical, human-resource, cultural, and social, which is the sense in which this study treats them as multidimensional. The relationship among the three themes is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Synthesis of Research Findings

Research Focus	Main Finding	Empirical Manifestation
Tuan Guru's ideas	Integrative-adaptive and value-based educational orientation	Integration of religious and general knowledge, curriculum development, technology, human resource development, student competencies, and preservation of <i>pesantren</i> values
Leadership process	Collective-participatory leadership grounded in Islamic values	Vision-based planning, exemplary conduct, <i>musyawarah</i> , participation, coordination, human resource empowerment, institutional cooperation, controlled change, and regeneration
Leadership implications	Multidimensional development of <i>pesantren</i> education	Integrated educational system, institutional development, improved learning, stronger student capacities, public trust, and social legitimacy

Discussion

The first finding to interpret is the integrative-adaptive orientation behind the Tuan Guru's educational ideas. The evidence shows that development at Al-Ishlahuddiny does not run along the familiar path from a classical salaf model toward a modern khalaf one. Tradition and modernity are not treated as competing choices. They are combined within one system, so that *kitab kuning*, sorogan, bandongan, Qur'an memorization, and moral formation continue beside formal schooling, general sciences, technology, and language programs. This reading supports the argument of Hasan et al. (2023) that *pesantren* management must adapt to digital developments without losing institutional identity, and it fits the finding of Sofi et al. (2025) that contemporary *pesantren* keep classical scholarship while taking on modern curricula and digital tools. What the case adds is the source of the

integration. It does not arise on its own as an institutional adjustment to outside pressure. It begins in the leadership ideas of the Tuan Guru, who sets the terms on which any innovation is judged.

That point sharpens when the orientation is read against the modernization literature. Mas'udi (2024) treats curriculum modernization as a matter of updating orientation and method while holding to the pesantren's basic vision, and Ihsan (2019) argues that renewal can proceed without erasing the institution's distinctive character. The present study runs in the same direction but locates the governing mechanism more precisely. Adaptation here is bounded by a stated principle, *al-muhāfazah 'alā al-qadīm al-ṣālih wa al-akhḍhu bi al-jadīd al-aslah*, which tells the institution what to keep, what to adjust, and what to add (Aini et al., 2025; Moumni, 2021). Modernization is therefore not a passive response to technological or social change. It is a value-filtered process of educational adaptation, and that filter is what keeps the pesantren from drifting into imitation. This is the first theoretical contribution of the study, namely a concept of integrative-adaptive educational leadership in which classical and modern elements are combined under an explicit normative test rather than set side by side by chance.

The second finding concerns the leadership process, which operates as a collective-participatory practice grounded in religious values rather than as individual command. The Tuan Guru holds central direction, but foundation administrators, unit heads, teachers, mudabbir, students, and alumni take part in shaping and running programs. Musyawarah is the mechanism that carries this, working at once as a way to form policy and as a way to build collective ownership. This confirms the view of Aisyah et al. (2022) that kiai leadership cannot be separated from the organizational culture and religious values of the pesantren, and it aligns with Malisi et al. (2024), who show that pesantren balance tradition and modernity through shared institutional values. The finding broadens the common reading of pesantren leadership as primarily charismatic. Authority and participation are not in tension here. They run together, with the leader guarding values and direction while others translate that direction into practice.

The process also speaks to transformational leadership theory, though it does not simply confirm it. The Tuan Guru communicates a vision, encourages educational innovation, empowers educators, and strengthens commitment, all of which match the vision, influence, and mobilization that the theory describes, in line with the leadership roles reported by Yusuf et al. (2024) and the multidimensional account offered by Ibrahim et al. (2023). Yet the case reveals a limit in applying that theory in its generic form. Transformation at Al-Ishlahuddiny is not pursued for its own sake. It stays bounded by *tafaqquh fi al-din*, *akhlaq*, *adab*, discipline, and respect for teachers, so the leader acts as an agent of change and a guardian of continuity at the same time. The second theoretical contribution follows from this. Effective leadership in the pesantren is better described as collective-participatory value-based leadership, in which central moral authority, deliberation, exemplary conduct, empowerment, networking, and regeneration work as one, refining rather than replacing the charismatic and transformational models.

The third finding is that the implications of this leadership are multidimensional. The effects do not settle in a single outcome such as teacher performance or student character. They reach the educational system, institutional capacity, human resources, organizational culture, and social standing together. Traditional practice continues as a marker of identity while modern methods run alongside it, which matches the transformation pattern that Sofi et al. (2025) describe as a blending of classical traditions with modern curricula. The case extends this by tying the integration directly to leadership decisions and institutional governance rather than to pedagogy alone. The evidence on community trust is telling. Parents place confidence in the pesantren because it joins religious depth with modern readiness, which supports Hasyim (2021), who links kiai leadership in modernizing pesantren to institutional standing. Trust here rests on two grounds at once, inherited religious authority and visible educational performance, so reputation follows demonstrated quality as well as

standing. At the same time, digital technology, social media, and generational change remain live challenges, which is consistent with Kawakip (2020) and marks successful adaptation as an ongoing capability rather than a settled state.

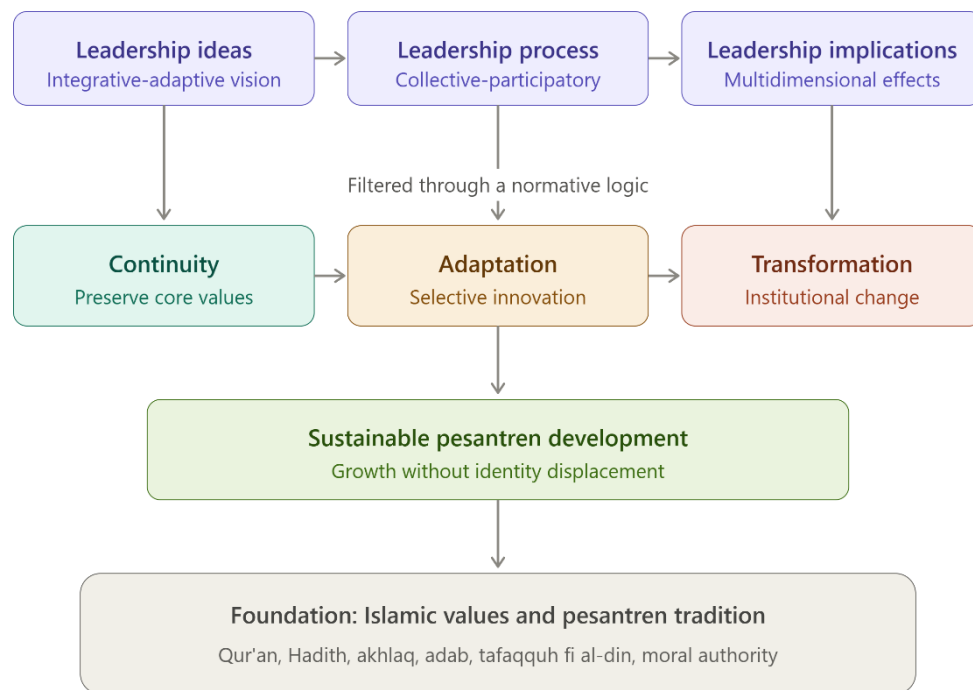


Figure 2. Continuity-Adaptation-Transformation Model of *Tuan Guru* Leadership

Source: Author's synthesis based on research findings, 2025.

Taken together, these three findings form the central contribution of the study, presented as the Continuity-Adaptation-Transformation Model of Tuan Guru Leadership in Figure 2. Earlier research tends to treat leadership values, leadership processes, and institutional outcomes separately. The present study joins them in a continuous chain, in which leadership ideas move through a leadership process into multidimensional implications, and in which institutional change advances through continuity, then adaptation, then transformation, all resting on a foundation of Islamic values and pesantren tradition. Continuity preserves core values, *tafaqquh fi al-din*, moral authority, and identity. Adaptation takes in technology, curriculum innovation, language programs, and external networks in a selective way. Transformation appears when those adaptations produce real change in the educational system, institutional capacity, student competence, and social legitimacy. The model does not reject transformational leadership theory. It modifies the theory for pesantren management by showing that transformation must proceed together with continuity, so that the leader is at once a guardian of inherited values and an agent of institutional change. The contribution to educational management is therefore specific. Sustainability in a value-based educational organization does not come from resisting change or from accepting every innovation. It comes from the leadership capacity to judge what to preserve, what to adapt, and what to transform, which is the distinctive and transferable insight this study offers.

CONCLUSION

This study read *Tuan Guru* leadership at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlahuddiny* as an integrated process linking leadership ideas, leadership practice, and educational development, yet its conclusions should be weighed against several limits. The design rests on a single case,

so the findings portray one information-rich institution rather than a pattern that can be generalized statistically to other *pesantren*. The researcher's closeness to the setting, though managed through triangulation, peer discussion, and member checking, remains a source of interpretive bias that no qualitative safeguard fully removes. The evidence also comes from one fieldwork period, which captures leadership as a living process at a particular moment rather than across its longer development. Future research could test the proposed model across different *pesantren* typologies and regions through multi-site or comparative case studies, follow *santri* and alumni over time through longitudinal work, and draw on quantitative or mixed-methods designs to examine the strength of the relationships among the value foundation, the leadership process, and the developmental outcomes advanced here.

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