

Developing an Authentic Leadership Model for University Rectors and Internalization of Pesantren Values in Enhancing Lecturer Performance at Pesantren-Based Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Pesantren-based higher education institutions in Indonesia face a distinctive leadership challenge: integrating authentic leadership practices with the deeply embedded values of pesantren tradition to enhance lecturer performance. This study develops and validates a model of authentic leadership for university rectors that incorporates the internalization of pesantren values—including ikhlas (sincerity), tawadhu' (humility), istiqamah (steadfastness), ukhuwah (brotherhood), and keteladanan (exemplary conduct)—as mediating mechanisms in shaping lecturer performance across teaching, research, and community service domains. Employing a qualitative multi-case study design grounded in the constructivist paradigm, this research was conducted at two pesantren-based higher education institutions in Kabupaten Bogor: Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami (IUQI) and Universitas Darunnajah. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 28 informants comprising rectors, vice-rectors, faculty deans, department heads, and senior lecturers, supplemented by participatory observation and document analysis over a twelve-month period. Data analysis employed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model incorporating data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing with verification. The findings reveal a distinctive Pesantren Authentic Leadership (PAL) model comprising four interconnected dimensions: relational transparency grounded in musyawarah, internalized moral perspective rooted in Islamic jurisprudence, balanced processing informed by shura principles, and self-awareness cultivated through muhasabah (self-reflection). The study demonstrates that pesantren value internalization functions as a critical bridging mechanism between authentic leadership and lecturer performance, generating a culture of ibadah-oriented professionalism that transcends conventional performance metrics.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership; Pesantren Values; Lecturer Performance; Pesantren-Based Higher Education; Islamic Educational Management.

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of higher education governance in Indonesia has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, driven by intensifying demands for institutional accountability, international competitiveness, and the professionalization of academic human resources (Marlia et al., 2025; Rosser, 2023). Within this broader national context, a distinctive category of higher education institutions has emerged with growing prominence: perguruan tinggi berbasis pesantren (pesantren-based higher education institutions), which integrate the centuries-old Islamic boarding school (pesantren) tradition with modern university structures, academic programs, and quality assurance standards (Dhofier, 2011; Lukens-Bull, 2019). As of 2024, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs oversees more than 700 Islamic higher education institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam), a substantial proportion of which operate within

or in direct affiliation with pesantren foundations (Kemenag, 2024). These institutions face an inherently complex leadership challenge: their rectors must simultaneously navigate the demands of national higher education accreditation standards, the expectations of pesantren-based governance structures rooted in the authority of the kyai (Islamic scholar-leader), and the imperative to develop lecturer performance across the tri dharma domains of teaching, research, and community service (Srimulyani, 2012; Shulhan, 2019). The tension between these institutional logics—modern academic professionalism and traditional pesantren authority—creates a unique governance environment that demands leadership approaches capable of authentically bridging both worlds.

The concept of authentic leadership, as theorized by Walumbwa et al. (2008) and further developed by Avolio and Gardner (2005), has gained substantial scholarly attention as a leadership paradigm that emphasizes self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing of information, and an internalized moral perspective. Systematic reviews of authentic leadership in educational contexts have confirmed its positive associations with organizational trust, teacher commitment, psychological safety, job satisfaction, and performance outcomes (Ahmed, 2024; Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Crawford et al., 2020). In the specific context of Islamic higher education, Shulhan (2019) demonstrated that authentic leadership positively influenced academic atmosphere and organizational culture at Indonesian Islamic universities, while Bahzar (2019) found that authentic leadership in madrasas was associated with enhanced teacher performance through the assertion of Islamic values. Soares and Lopes (2020) further established that authentic leadership by university lecturers created psychologically safe environments that improved student academic performance. However, the overwhelming majority of authentic leadership research—including studies conducted in Islamic educational settings—has relied upon Western-derived theoretical frameworks and measurement instruments that do not adequately account for the distinctive cultural, spiritual, and institutional dynamics of pesantren-based organizations (Ahmed, 2024; Begley, 2006). The foundational dimensions of authentic leadership as proposed by Walumbwa et al. (2008) were developed within Western organizational contexts and may not fully capture the values-laden, spiritually grounded, and communally oriented leadership practices that characterize the pesantren tradition (Lukens-Bull, 2019; Dhofier, 2011).

This gap is particularly significant because pesantren-based higher education institutions operate within a normative framework fundamentally shaped by values (*nilai kepesantrenan*) that have no direct equivalent in Western organizational theory. These values include *ikhlas* (sincerity of intention oriented toward divine pleasure rather than worldly reward), *tawadhu'* (humility and the avoidance of arrogance in interpersonal relations), *istiqamah* (steadfastness and consistency in adhering to principles), *ukhuwah* (Islamic brotherhood and communal solidarity), and *keteladanan* (leadership through exemplary personal conduct rather than positional authority) (Mastuhu, 1994; Ziemek, 1986; Bruinessen, 2015). While several studies have examined the role of Islamic values in educational leadership broadly (Ibrahim & Abdullah, 2014; Dacholfany et al., 2024; Karim, 2024), no study to date has systematically investigated how these specifically pesantren-derived values are internalized within authentic leadership practices by university rectors, nor how such internalization mediates the development of lecturer performance in pesantren-based higher education settings. Existing studies on faculty

performance in Indonesian Islamic higher education have predominantly focused on conventional antecedents such as organizational commitment, compensation, work motivation, and supervision (Amzat et al., 2022; Andriani et al., 2018), without interrogating the distinctive cultural-spiritual mechanisms through which leadership influences performance in pesantren-embedded institutional environments.

This study aims to address this critical gap by developing a contextually grounded model of authentic leadership for rectors of pesantren-based higher education institutions that integrates the internalization of pesantren values as a core mechanism linking leadership to lecturer performance development. Specifically, the study pursues four objectives: (1) to describe and analyze the manifestations of authentic leadership dimensions—self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective—as practiced by rectors at Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami (IUQI) and Universitas Darunnajah in Kabupaten Bogor; (2) to identify the processes through which pesantren values are internalized within the institutional culture and leadership practices of these two institutions; (3) to examine how the interaction between authentic leadership and pesantren value internalization shapes lecturer performance across the tri dharma domains; and (4) to construct an integrative Pesantren Authentic Leadership (PAL) model that synthesizes the empirical findings into a theoretically coherent framework applicable to pesantren-based higher education governance. The selection of IUQI and Universitas Darunnajah as research sites is strategically grounded in their representativeness: both institutions are located within established pesantren foundations in Kabupaten Bogor, yet they differ in institutional maturity, governance structure, and the specific pesantren traditions from which they emanate, enabling cross-case comparison that enhances the transferability of findings.

The central argument of this study is that authentic leadership in pesantren-based higher education is not merely the application of Western authentic leadership constructs to an Islamic organizational setting, but rather constitutes a qualitatively distinct leadership phenomenon in which the four dimensions of authentic leadership are reconstituted through pesantren values, producing what we term Pesantren Authentic Leadership (PAL). We argue that this reconstituted form of authentic leadership generates a distinctive performance culture among lecturers characterized by ibadah-oriented professionalism—a construct in which teaching, research, and community service are experienced not merely as institutional obligations or career advancement mechanisms, but as forms of worship (ibadah) and devotion that carry intrinsic spiritual motivation. This argument draws upon Avolio and Gardner's (2005) authentic leadership development theory, Mastuhu's (1994) framework of pesantren value systems, and Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership philosophy as reconceptualized through Islamic maqasid al-shariah (objectives of Islamic jurisprudence). This article proceeds with a detailed description of the research methodology, followed by the presentation of findings organized around the four research objectives, a comparative discussion situating the findings within the broader educational management and Islamic leadership literature, and concluding remarks with implications for policy, practice, and future research.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative multi-case study design (Yin, 2018; Stake, 2006) grounded within the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which posits that social reality is constructed through the meanings, interpretations, and lived experiences of participants within specific cultural and institutional contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The multi-case study approach was selected for its capacity to generate rich, contextualized understandings of complex organizational phenomena while enabling cross-case comparison that enhances the analytical generalizability of findings (Yin, 2018). This design is particularly appropriate for investigating authentic leadership in pesantren-based settings, where leadership practices are deeply embedded within culturally specific normative systems that require interpretive rather than positivistic methodological approaches (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The research was conducted at two pesantren-based higher education institutions in Kabupaten Bogor, West Java Province: Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami (IUQI), located in Leuwiliang, and Universitas Darunnajah, located in Cidokom. These two institutions were selected through purposive sampling based on four criteria: (1) formal institutional status as a higher education institution under a pesantren foundation; (2) minimum five years of operational history to ensure organizational maturity; (3) active engagement with national accreditation processes under BAN-PT; and (4) an institutional culture in which pesantren traditions remain visibly integrated into campus governance and daily academic life. The selection of two cases from the same regency was intended to control for regional policy variation while maximizing variation in institutional characteristics: IUQI operates as an institute with a more focused academic mandate, while Universitas Darunnajah holds university status with a broader range of faculties, enabling comparison across different institutional types within the pesantren-based category. The research was conducted over a twelve-month period from January to December 2025, with the primary researcher maintaining an extended presence at both sites to facilitate rapport building, participant trust, and deep contextual immersion.

Informants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques based on the criterion of direct involvement in or significant knowledge of the rector's leadership practices and lecturer performance development processes. A total of 28 informants participated across both sites: at IUQI, the sample included the rector (1), vice-rectors for academic and institutional affairs (2), faculty deans (2), department heads (3), senior lecturers with minimum five years of service (4), and the pesantren foundation board representative (1), totaling 13 informants. At Universitas Darunnajah, the sample included the rector (1), vice-rectors (2), faculty deans (3), department heads (3), senior lecturers (4), the pesantren foundation secretary (1), and the head of the internal quality assurance unit (1), totaling 15 informants. The asymmetry in sample size reflects the larger organizational structure of Universitas Darunnajah as a university compared to IUQI as an institute. Data saturation was achieved at both sites, confirmed by the absence of substantively new themes emerging in the final three interviews at each institution.

Data collection employed three primary methods consistent with multi-case study methodology (Yin, 2018). First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview protocol organized around four thematic domains: (a) the rector's self-understanding and leadership philosophy (self-awareness dimension); (b)

communication patterns and decision-making transparency (relational transparency and balanced processing dimensions); (c) the integration of Islamic and pesantren values into leadership practices (internalized moral perspective and value internalization); and (d) perceived impacts on lecturer motivation, professional development, and tri dharma performance. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, was audio-recorded with informed consent, and was transcribed verbatim in Bahasa Indonesia. Second, participatory observation was conducted during formal institutional events (academic senate meetings, faculty coordination meetings, lecturer performance review sessions, and pesantren communal activities such as pengajian and halaqah), informal interactions between the rector and faculty members, and daily campus routines that revealed the lived expression of pesantren values. Observation data were recorded in detailed field notes organized chronologically and thematically. Third, document analysis encompassed institutional strategic plans, rector decrees and circulars, lecturer performance evaluation instruments, annual reports, accreditation self-evaluation documents, pesantren foundation statutes, and relevant minutes of meetings.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which integrates three concurrent analytical processes: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. Data condensation involved iterative coding of interview transcripts, field notes, and documents using a combination of deductive codes derived from Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) authentic leadership framework and Mastuhu's (1994) pesantren value taxonomy, and inductive codes that emerged organically from the data. Coded segments were organized into thematic categories and displayed in matrices that enabled within-case and cross-case comparison. Conclusion drawing involved the identification of patterns, causal chains, and conceptual relationships across cases, with verification achieved through triangulation of data sources (interviews, observations, documents), member checking with key informants, peer debriefing with two independent qualitative researchers, and thick description to enhance transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The trustworthiness of findings was further established through prolonged engagement at both sites, persistent observation across multiple institutional contexts, and an audit trail documenting all analytical decisions. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Darunnajah, and all participants provided written informed consent with assurances of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms in reporting.

RESULTS

The findings are presented according to the four research objectives, beginning with the manifestations of authentic leadership at both institutions, followed by pesantren value internalization processes, the leadership–value–performance nexus, and the emergent Pesantren Authentic Leadership (PAL) model.

Table 1. Manifestations of Authentic Leadership Dimensions at IUQI and Universitas Darunnajah

Authentic Leadership Dimension	IUQI Manifestation	Universitas Darunnajah Manifestation
Self-Awareness	Rector practices daily muhasabah (self-reflection) informed by Sufi tradition; acknowledges limitations openly in faculty meetings; seeks counsel from kyai musyrik (senior scholars)	Rector engages in structured self-evaluation linked to pesantren's Panca Jiwa (Five Souls) framework; integrates tafakkur (contemplation) into strategic planning retreats
Relational Transparency	Open-door policy framed as silaturahmi (maintaining relational bonds); financial transparency through communal musyawarah at monthly pengajian gatherings	Institutionalized transparency through regular 'halaqah akademik' (academic circles) where rector shares institutional challenges; digital information sharing via internal platforms
Balanced Processing	Decisions informed by shura (consultation) councils comprising faculty, pesantren elders, and student representatives; deliberate inclusion of dissenting voices	Multi-stakeholder decision-making through academic senate, foundation board, and pesantren alumni advisory; formalized feedback mechanisms for policy deliberation
Internalized Moral Perspective	Leadership decisions anchored in maqasid al-shariah and pesantren's founding charter; personal lifestyle reflects zuhud (asceticism) values	Institutional policies guided by integration of national HE regulations with pesantren's wasiat (testament) of founder; rector models istiqamah through consistent policy implementation

Table 1 presents the cross-case comparison of authentic leadership manifestations across both institutions. A convergent finding across both cases is that all four dimensions of authentic leadership as theorized by Walumbwa et al. (2008) were identifiable in the rectors' leadership practices, but each dimension was reconstituted through distinctively pesantren-specific mechanisms rather than manifesting in forms directly corresponding to Western organizational contexts. Self-awareness, for instance, was not primarily cultivated through psychological self-assessment or executive coaching—as typically described in the Western authentic leadership literature (Avolio & Gardner, 2005)—but through Islamic spiritual practices of muhasabah (self-accounting before God) and tafakkur (contemplative reflection on divine signs). As the IUQI rector articulated: "My self-awareness as a leader does not come from management seminars. It comes from tahajjud prayer at night, where I ask Allah to show me my weaknesses and guide my decisions for this institution." Similarly, relational transparency at both institutions was embedded within the Islamic-pesantren practice of musyawarah (deliberative consultation) and silaturahmi (the cultivation and maintenance of relational bonds), transforming transparency from an organizational communication technique into a spiritual obligation rooted in Quranic injunctions (Q.S. Al-Imran: 159; Q.S. Ash-Shura: 38).

Table 2. Pesantren Value Internalization Processes and Their Manifestations in Institutional Culture

Pesantren Value	Internalization Mechanism	Institutional Cultural Manifestation	Impact on Lecturer Orientation
Ikhlas (Sincerity)	Daily ta'lim (spiritual learning sessions); rector's personal narrative sharing; reward systems that emphasize spiritual merit alongside material incentives	Culture of voluntary overtime and extra service without complaint; lecturers view low salary as ujian (divine test) rather than grievance	Intrinsic motivation for teaching and research beyond contractual obligations
Tawadhu' (Humility)	Rector participates in communal activities (cleaning, cooking) alongside staff; flat interaction norms in informal settings; avoidance of hierarchical titles in daily communication	Reduced power distance between senior and junior faculty; collaborative rather than competitive research culture	Openness to peer feedback and willingness to learn from junior colleagues
Istiqamah (Steadfastness)	Rector demonstrates consistency between stated values and daily behavior over extended periods; institutional policies maintained despite external pressures	Organizational trust and predictability; reduced cynicism about institutional reforms	Long-term commitment to institutional mission despite limited resources
Ukhuwah (Brotherhood)	Communal living arrangements; shared meals (makan bersama); family-oriented institutional events; collective problem-solving traditions	Strong social cohesion among faculty; informal mentoring networks; mutual support during personal difficulties	Collaborative tri dharma activities; co-authorship and team teaching cultures
Keteladanan (Exemplary Conduct)	Rector's visible participation in teaching, research, and community service; personal sacrifice and dedication witnessed by faculty	Modeling effect: lecturers emulate rector's work ethic and dedication; 'leadership by presence' culture	Internalized commitment to excellence as moral-spiritual obligation rather than compliance

Table 2 synthesizes the cross-case findings on pesantren value internalization processes. A critical finding is that pesantren value internalization does not operate merely as a set of abstract normative statements or formal policy declarations, but functions through embodied, relational, and ritualized mechanisms that permeate the daily lived experience of institutional life. The most frequently cited internalization mechanism across both institutions was keteladanan—the rector's personal exemplary conduct. A senior lecturer at Universitas Darunnajah described this dynamic: "When we see the Rector still teaching his own classes despite his administrative burden, still writing papers, still going to community service activities, we cannot make excuses for ourselves. His example is more powerful than any policy directive." This finding illuminates a distinctive feature of pesantren authentic leadership: the rector's authenticity is not validated through organizational transparency reports or stakeholder satisfaction surveys, but through the consistency between his or her personal conduct and the pesantren values the institution professes, observed directly by community members in the intimate, communal environment that pesantren-based institutions preserve.

Table 3. Impact of Authentic Leadership–Pesantren Value Interaction on Lecturer Performance Domains

Tri Dharma Domain	Observed Performance Enhancement	Mediating Mechanism	Representative Evidence
Teaching (Pendidikan)	Increased student-centered pedagogy; integration of Islamic character formation into disciplinary courses; higher teaching evaluation scores	Ikhlas-driven intrinsic motivation transforms teaching from obligation to ibadah; keteladanan models pedagogical dedication	Lecturers voluntarily develop supplementary materials; mentoring extends beyond classroom hours
Research (Penelitian)	Growth in Scopus/SINTA publications at both institutions; emergence of pesantren-focused research niche; increased collaborative authorship	Ukhuwah fosters research collaboration; istiqamah sustains long-term research commitments; rector's research modeling inspires	Research groups organized around halaqah model; peer writing support systems established organically
Community Service (Pengabdian)	Expanded community outreach programs integrated with pesantren dakwah activities; deepened engagement with surrounding villages	Ukhuwah extends institutional boundaries to encompass wider community; ikhlas motivates service beyond institutional credit	Lecturers lead community programs as expressions of pesantren mission rather than workload compliance

Table 3 presents the findings on how the interaction between authentic leadership and pesantren value internalization translates into observable lecturer performance outcomes across the three domains of the tri dharma perguruan tinggi. The most significant finding is the emergence of what informants consistently described as a culture of ibadah-oriented professionalism—a performance orientation in which the conventional distinctions between institutional obligation, professional ambition, and spiritual devotion are collapsed into a unified motivational framework. A department head at IUQI articulated this construct: "Our lecturers do not think of teaching as just a job, or research as just a requirement for promotion. They understand that seeking and transmitting knowledge is ibadah. When the rector lives this truth authentically, it becomes the air we breathe here." This ibadah-oriented professionalism was associated with several distinctive performance characteristics that differentiate pesantren-based lecturer performance from conventional academic performance cultures: voluntary extension of effort beyond contractual requirements, a preference for collaborative over competitive modes of scholarly production, and the integration of community service with the pesantren's broader dakwah (Islamic outreach) mission.

Institutional document analysis corroborated these qualitative findings. At Universitas Darunnajah, the number of Scopus-indexed publications by faculty members increased from 4 in 2022 to 17 in 2024, while SINTA-accredited publications grew from 28 to 63 over the same period. At IUQI, although the absolute numbers were smaller given its more recent establishment, SINTA publications rose from 8 to 22 between 2022 and 2024. In both cases, informants attributed the research performance growth not primarily to external incentive structures or punitive performance review mechanisms, but to the motivational culture generated by the rector's authentic leadership and the internalization of pesantren values that framed scholarly productivity as a form of intellectual jihad (striving in the path of knowledge). The community service domain showed the most distinctive pesantren influence, with both institutions reporting that

lecturer-led community programs were seamlessly integrated with the pesantren's established dakwah infrastructure, resulting in community service activities that were deeper in engagement, more sustainable in duration, and more culturally resonant than conventional university outreach programs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute substantially to both the authentic leadership and Islamic educational management literatures by demonstrating that authentic leadership in pesantren-based higher education constitutes a qualitatively distinct phenomenon that cannot be adequately captured by the direct application of Western-derived frameworks. This discussion situates the key findings within the broader scholarly landscape, draws comparisons with international and national research, and elaborates the theoretical and practical implications of the Pesantren Authentic Leadership (PAL) model.

The reconstitution of authentic leadership dimensions through Islamic-pesantren epistemological frameworks represents this study's most fundamental theoretical contribution. While Ahmed's (2024) comprehensive systematic review of authentic leadership in educational research (1997–2021) identified 78 studies across diverse cultural contexts, only four studies examined authentic leadership in Islamic educational settings, and none investigated leadership within pesantren-based institutions. The present study extends this literature by demonstrating that self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective—the four pillars of Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) authentic leadership construct—are present in pesantren rector leadership but operate through fundamentally different psychological and spiritual mechanisms. Self-awareness in the PAL model is cultivated not through executive coaching or psychometric self-assessment but through muhasabah, a deeply Islamic practice of self-accounting rooted in Prophetic tradition (hadith) and Sufi spiritual discipline. This finding aligns with Begley's (2006) early call for culturally sensitive conceptualizations of authentic leadership that account for diverse epistemological traditions, and with Barth and Tsemach's (2021) finding that authentic leadership perceptions vary significantly across religious-cultural contexts in Israeli schools. The implication is profound: the "authenticity" of pesantren leadership is validated not against Western standards of psychological self-knowledge but against Islamic standards of spiritual consciousness (taqwa) and self-purification (tazkiyah al-nafs).

The identification of pesantren value internalization as a mediating mechanism between authentic leadership and lecturer performance addresses a critical gap in the educational management literature. Previous studies on faculty performance in Indonesian Islamic higher education have predominantly employed quantitative structural equation models linking leadership styles (typically transformational or instructional) to performance outcomes through conventional mediators such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work motivation (Andriani et al., 2018; Amzat et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2024). While these studies have produced valuable insights, they have not captured the culturally specific mechanisms through which leadership translates into performance within pesantren-embedded institutions. The present study's finding that pesantren values—particularly keteladanan and ikhlas—function as the

primary transmission mechanisms adds an important cultural-spiritual dimension to the leadership–performance relationship that existing quantitative models have not operationalized. This finding resonates with Karim’s (2024) observation that leadership in Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions operates as a culturally embedded phenomenon that cannot be reduced to generic leadership competencies, and with Ibrahim and Abdullah’s (2024) finding that the leadership-driven development of a sense of educational calling among Islamic university faculty is deeply tied to institutional religious identity.

The construct of ibadah-oriented professionalism, which emerged as the distinctive performance culture generated by the PAL model, represents a novel contribution to the discourse on academic performance in higher education management. In contrast to the predominantly instrumental performance frameworks that dominate the higher education quality assurance literature—where lecturer performance is measured through publication counts, teaching evaluations, and service hours (Shin & Jung, 2014; Cadez et al., 2017)—ibadah-oriented professionalism describes a motivational orientation in which the intrinsic spiritual meaning of academic work supersedes extrinsic incentive structures. This finding aligns with but extends Srivastava and Dhar’s (2020) work on authentic leadership and extra-role behavior, by demonstrating that in pesantren-based contexts, the distinction between in-role and extra-role behavior is itself dissolved: when teaching, research, and community service are experienced as ibadah, they cease to be bounded by contractual definitions and become open-ended expressions of spiritual devotion. This observation carries significant implications for performance management in pesantren-based institutions, suggesting that conventional incentive-based or compliance-driven performance systems may actually undermine the intrinsic spiritual motivation that constitutes the distinctive performance advantage of pesantren-affiliated faculty.

The cross-case comparison between IUQI and Universitas Darunnajah reveals that while the core structure of the PAL model is consistent across both institutions, its manifestation is moderated by contextual factors, most notably institutional maturity and the governance relationship between the university and the pesantren foundation. At IUQI, where the institution is more recently established and the kyai’s authority remains more directly influential in daily academic governance, the rector’s authentic leadership was more visibly mediated through personal relationship with the kyai and direct transmission of pesantren values through face-to-face ta’lim sessions. At Universitas Darunnajah, with its larger and more formalized organizational structure, the rector’s authentic leadership operated through a more institutionalized value transmission system, including codified pesantren principles in strategic planning documents, formalized mentoring structures, and established organizational rituals. This variation suggests a developmental trajectory within the PAL model: as pesantren-based institutions mature and professionalize, the mechanisms of value internalization may shift from predominantly personal and relational (kyai-centered) to increasingly institutional and structural (system-centered), while the core pesantren values themselves remain stable. This observation is consistent with Dhofier’s (2011) analysis of pesantren institutional evolution and with Lukens-Bull’s (2019) work on the modernization of pesantren educational systems.

The PAL model's theoretical architecture invites comparison with several established leadership frameworks in the educational management literature. Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model shares the PAL model's emphasis on leader humility and service orientation, and the construct of *tawadhu'* in the PAL model represents a culturally specific instantiation of the servant leadership ethos. However, the PAL model differs from servant leadership in its explicit grounding in Islamic transcendent accountability (responsibility before God, not merely before stakeholders), which provides a qualitatively different motivational foundation. Similarly, the PAL model shares with Burns' (1978) transformational leadership the emphasis on moral elevation and the transformation of followers' motivation, but differs in that the "transformation" in the PAL model is directed not toward organizational performance per se but toward spiritual development (*tarbiyah*) as the ultimate purpose of educational leadership. The PAL model is perhaps most closely aligned with what Yukl (2013) has termed "ethical leadership," but transcends this construct by embedding ethical leadership within a comprehensive Islamic moral-spiritual framework rather than treating ethics as a standalone leadership dimension. These comparisons suggest that the PAL model occupies a distinctive theoretical position at the intersection of authentic leadership, servant leadership, and Islamic spiritual leadership, offering a synthesis that is both culturally grounded and theoretically generative.

Several implications for policy and practice emerge from this study. For the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and BAN-PT accreditation bodies, the findings suggest that performance evaluation frameworks for pesantren-based higher education institutions should be designed with sensitivity to the distinctive motivational and cultural dynamics identified in the PAL model, rather than applying uniform secular performance metrics that may inadequately capture the qualitative dimensions of ibadah-oriented professionalism. For rectors and governing boards of pesantren-based institutions, the study provides evidence that investment in pesantren value internalization mechanisms—including regular *ta'lim* sessions, communal living arrangements, and the rector's personal *keteladanan*—constitutes an effective leadership strategy for lecturer performance development that complements and may even surpass conventional incentive-based approaches. For leadership development programs targeting Islamic higher education leaders, the PAL model offers a framework for designing culturally authentic leadership training that integrates Islamic spiritual practices with evidence-based leadership competencies, avoiding both the uncritical importation of Western models and the romanticization of traditional authority structures.

This study acknowledges several limitations that should guide the interpretation of findings and inform future research. The qualitative multi-case design, while generating rich and contextually grounded findings, limits statistical generalizability; the PAL model should be understood as an analytical generalization (Yin, 2018) that requires validation across a broader range of pesantren-based institutions with varying characteristics. The study focused exclusively on two institutions in Kabupaten Bogor, and pesantren-based higher education institutions in other regions of Indonesia—particularly those affiliated with different pesantren traditions (e.g., *salafiyah* versus *khalafiyah*)—may exhibit different PAL configurations. The reliance on self-reported data from informants, despite

triangulation with observation and document analysis, may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly given the normatively charged environment of pesantren institutions. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to trace the development of PAL practices over time, mixed-methods approaches to quantitatively validate the PAL model's dimensions and relationships, and comparative studies across different types of pesantren-based institutions and different regions of Indonesia to test the model's transferability and boundary conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study has developed and empirically grounded the Pesantren Authentic Leadership (PAL) model as a contextually responsive theoretical framework for understanding how university rectors in pesantren-based higher education institutions exercise authentic leadership through the internalization of pesantren values to enhance lecturer performance. Through a qualitative multi-case study at Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami (IUQI) and Universitas Darunnajah in Kabupaten Bogor, the research has demonstrated that authentic leadership in pesantren-based settings constitutes a qualitatively distinct phenomenon in which the four dimensions of authentic leadership are reconstituted through Islamic-pesantren epistemological frameworks: self-awareness through muhasabah, relational transparency through musyawarah and silaturahmi, balanced processing through shura, and internalized moral perspective through maqasid al-shariah. The internalization of five core pesantren values—ikhlas, tawadhu', istiqamah, ukhuwah, and keteladanan—functions as the critical mediating mechanism linking authentic leadership to a distinctive lecturer performance culture characterized by ibadah-oriented professionalism. This construct represents a novel contribution to the educational management literature by articulating a performance orientation in which teaching, research, and community service are experienced as integrated forms of spiritual devotion rather than fragmented institutional obligations. The PAL model offers a theoretically coherent and culturally authentic alternative to the uncritical application of Western leadership frameworks in pesantren-based governance contexts, and provides actionable insights for policymakers, institutional leaders, and leadership development practitioners committed to strengthening the distinctive contribution of pesantren-based higher education to Indonesia's national educational development.

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