

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SANTRIPRENEURSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN LAMONGAN, INDONESIA

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Abstract

Santripreneurship in pesantren is increasingly an important focus in creating students who not only master religious knowledge but also have sustainable entrepreneurial skills. Transformative leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the entrepreneurial spirit of students, by inspiring them to think creatively and innovatively in facing economic and social challenges. In addition, intellectual stimulation through challenging learning and the development of critical thinking skills also strengthens the ability of students to produce new ideas that are relevant to the needs of the times. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method at the Lamongan Islamic Boarding School to explore the impact of transformative leadership and intellectual stimulation on the development of santripreneurship. The main findings show that the application of these two elements has succeeded in creating a culture of innovation in Islamic boarding schools and improving students' entrepreneurial skills. The implication of this study is the importance of integrating transformative leadership and intellectual stimulation in the pesantren curriculum to produce independent and adaptive students.

Keywords: *Santripreneurship, Transformative Leadership, Intellectual Stimulation, Islamic Boarding School Education, Innovation*

Abstrak

Santripreneurship di pesantren semakin menjadi fokus penting dalam menciptakan mahasiswa yang tidak hanya menguasai ilmu agama tetapi juga memiliki kemampuan kewirausahaan yang berkelanjutan. Kepemimpinan transformatif memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk jiwa kewirausahaan mahasiswa, dengan menginspirasi mereka untuk berpikir kreatif dan inovatif dalam menghadapi tantangan ekonomi dan sosial. Selain itu, stimulasi intelektual melalui pembelajaran yang menantang dan pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis juga memperkuat kemampuan siswa untuk menghasilkan ide-ide baru yang relevan dengan kebutuhan zaman. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus di Pondok Pesantren Lamongan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak kepemimpinan transformatif dan stimulasi intelektual terhadap perkembangan santripreneurship. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa penerapan kedua elemen tersebut telah berhasil menciptakan budaya inovasi di pondok pesantren dan meningkatkan kemampuan kewirausahaan siswa. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya mengintegrasikan kepemimpinan transformatif dan stimulasi intelektual dalam kurikulum pesantren untuk menghasilkan mahasiswa yang mandiri dan adaptif.

Kata Kunci: Santripreneurship, Kepemimpinan Transformatif, Stimulasi Intelektual, Pendidikan Pesantren, Inovasi

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INTRODUCTION

Economic empowerment of students through the concept of *santripreneurship* It is an urgent need in facing the challenges of globalization and increasing the independence of Islamic boarding schools. As an Islamic-based educational institution, pesantren has a strategic role not only in shaping religious character and understanding, but also in equipping students with skills relevant to modern social and economic development ¹². *Santripreneurship* Present as a strategy to strengthen the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools, where students not only play the role of da'wah cadres, but also as competitive creative economy actors ³. Through the development of Islamic values-based entrepreneurship programs, pesantren can transform into independent community economic centers, while reducing dependence on external sources of financing ⁴⁵. Thus, *santripreneurship* not only builds the financial independence of the institution, but also contributes to social development and empowerment of the surrounding community.

Contextually, the potential of Islamic boarding schools in East Java Province is quite large with a total of 926 institutions, of which 99.89% are managed privately and only 0.11% are government-owned. However, serious challenges are still faced in terms of quality and governance: only 1.73% of Islamic boarding schools are accredited A, while more than 94% have not been accredited. In fact, only one pesantren has ISO 9001:2000 certification ⁶ ⁽⁷⁾ This condition shows the low managerial standards and institutional quality, as well as the urgency to integrate modern leadership principles in pesantren governance. In this context, the application of transformative leadership based on intellectual stimulation is believed to be a motor of change to improve the quality of Islamic boarding school human resources, strengthen the economic competitiveness of students, and create an ecosystem *santripreneurship* in Lamongan and the surrounding area.

Transformative leadership in the context of pesantren emphasizes changing the culture, values, and mindset of students to be adaptive to the challenges of the times. A *squirrel* or the caregiver of the pesantren not only plays the role of a religious teacher, but also as a visionary leader who fosters the spirit of innovation,

¹ Denizar Abdurrahman Mi'raj, Irham Zaki, and Fatin Fadhilah Hasib, "Economic Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools," *Amwaluna : Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Keuangan Syariah*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.29313/amwaluna.v7i2.7778>.

² Moh. Wardi, "Pengembangan Entrepreneurship Berbasis Experiential Learning Di Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan Sumenep Dan Darul Ulum Banyuanyar Pamekasan" (2017).

³ Ririn Noviyanti, "Peran Ekonomi Kreatif Terhadap Pengembangan Jiwa Entrepreneurship Di Lingkungan Pesantren," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah INTAJ* 1, no. 1 (2017): 77–99, <https://doi.org/10.35897/intaj.v1i1.52>.

⁴ Ahmad Muhtar Syarofi, "Pengembangan Jiwa Kewirausahaan Santri Melalui Ekonomi Kreatif Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Ekonomi Global (Studi Di Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Maghfiroh Kota Malang) The Development of Sistrative Entrepreneurs Through Creative Economy in Dealing With The Gl," *Ekonomikawan* 17, no. 2 (2017): 95–104.

⁵ Nandi Supriyanto et al., "Pesantrenpreneurship: Strategy for Economic Empowerment of Ma'had Islamic University Students in Indonesia," *Religion, Education, and Social Laa Roiba Journal (RESLAJ)*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47467/reslj.v6i4.1936>.

⁶ Ahmad Fatah Yasin, Muhammad Hambali, and Moh. Wardi, "Islamic Boarding School Based Achievement Profiling in Pasuruan Regency," *Al-Ishlah* 14, no. 4 (2022): 5337–46, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i4.1942>; Anisa Putri Armita and Luluk Hanifah, "Economic Empowerment Of Santripreneur-Based Islamic Boarding Schools At Nurul Amanah Islamic Boarding School, Bangkalan," *Journal of Sharia Economics* 5, no. 2 (2023): 268–78, <https://doi.org/10.35896/jse.v5i2.668>.

⁷ Dihyatur Masqon, 2014).

independence, and social responsibility⁸ ⁹. Through an intellectual stimulation approach, a transformative leader challenges students to think critically, seek creative solutions, and develop managerial skills oriented to Islamic values ¹⁰. This approach is in line with the concept *learning by doing* which is implemented through entrepreneurship training, pesantren business practices, and community-based social activities. Thus, *santripreneurship* It is not only an economic instrument, but also a means of forming innovative and resilient character among students ¹¹.

Further *intellectual stimulation* As the main element, transformative leadership has an important role in improving students' reflective and innovative thinking skills ¹²¹³; ¹⁴. In the practice of pesantren education, intellectual stimulation is realized through open discussions, business case studies, research-based training, and entrepreneurial mentoring that fosters a culture of critical and exploratory thinking ¹⁵(Martin et al., 2014). This approach encourages students to not only understand the concept of Islamic economics theoretically, but also to apply it in sustainable entrepreneurial practices oriented to the benefit of the people. Thus, transformative leadership based on intellectual stimulation is the key in shaping *entrepreneurial mindset* students based on spiritual values and social responsibility.

Although various previous studies have highlighted the importance of *santripreneurship* in increasing the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools (Sulaiman, Chusmeru, & Masrukin, 2018; Ta'rif & Adhim, 2021)¹⁶, most of the research still focuses on aspects of entrepreneurship training, business models, and institutional support, while the dimensions of leadership and cognitive transformation of students have not been explored in depth. In addition, previous research has tended to see *kiai* only as moral and religious figures, not as

⁸ Hasan Basri, Hilman Rizky Hasibuan, and Zaizul Ab Rahman, "Transformational Leadership of Pesantren as a Role Model for Contemporary Islamic Education Institutions," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Educational Management* 7, no. 1 (2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.24014/ijiem.v7i1.25856>; Bashori Bashori, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kyai Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam" 3, no. 2 (2019): 73–84, <https://doi.org/10.33650/AL-TANZIM.V3I2.535>.

⁹ Youmna Chlala et al., "Transformative Leadership: The 'Now' and 'Future' of the Movement," *Agenda*, 2011.

¹⁰ Fikriyah Fikriyah, Abdul Karim, and Muhamad Khozinul Huda, "Spiritual Leadership: The Case of Instilling Values in Students Through the Kiai'S Program in the Globalization Era," *Journal of Leadership in Organizations* 3, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.22146/jlo.63922>.

¹¹ Maemunah Sa'diyah, "The Role of Transformational Leadership In Improving Muslim Students Entrepreneurship," *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i10.5465>.

¹² Wee Leng Ng, "Transformational Leadership and the Integration of Information and Communications Technology into Teaching," *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 17, no. 1 (2008): 1, <https://doi.org/10.3860/TAPER.V17I1.346>.

¹³ Tatiana Lebedeva et al., "Intellectual Provision of the Innovative Entrepreneurship Development," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 5S3 (2015): 303–10, <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n5s3p303>.

¹⁴ San Bolkan and Alan K Goodboy, "Transformational Leadership in the Classroom: The Development and Validation of the Student Intellectual Stimulation Scale," *Communication Reports* 23, no. 2 (2010): 91–105, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2010.511399>.

¹⁵ Mufasirul Bayani, "The Educational Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools in Instilling Entrepreneurial Spirit in Students at Pondok Pesantren Darul Amien, Jajag Gambiran Banyuwangi" 2, no. 3 (2024): 422–37, <https://doi.org/10.59535/sehati.v2i3.318>.

¹⁶ Arinal Rahmati et al., "Santripreneurship: Increasing Economic Independence through Entrepreneurship Character Education at the Ummul Ayman Islamic Boarding School Samalanga," *Jurnal As-Salam*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.37249/assalam.v7i2.665>.

transformative leaders who foster the intellectual potential and innovation of students. Therefore, this study offers theoretical *novelty* through the integration of the concepts of transformational leadership and intellectual stimulation in the context of pesantren education, which simultaneously builds the relationship between the dimensions of leadership, intellectual development, and economic sustainability. The proposed conceptual model not only interprets the role of leadership as a driving factor for students' entrepreneurial behavior, but also emphasizes intellectual transformation as a critical learning process that fosters creativity, social responsibility, and economic sustainability based on Islamic values. Thus, this study fills the theoretical and empirical gaps in the literature on *Islamic educational leadership* and *entrepreneurial transformation* in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Santripreneurship: Concept, Implementation, and Determinants

Santripreneurship is understood as an entrepreneurial configuration that is rooted in Islamic values and develops in the pesantren ecosystem. Its main orientation goes beyond short-term revenue gains; He links economic independence with sharia ethics, social responsibility, and business sustainability. The transformation of students from knowledge recipients to agents of change takes place through the internalization of values, structured training, and targeted entrepreneurial practices. In this process, the integration of religious values with business practices forms an operational moral compass, while the financial independence of students and institutions is strengthened by the role of pesantren as a business incubator and network node. Innovation capacity—including managerial competence, digital marketing, and the use of technology—is a prerequisite for students' businesses to have differentiation and sustainable added value¹⁷.

The implementation of santripreneurship in various Islamic boarding schools shows a relatively consistent pattern: the formation of business units (cooperatives, agribusiness, culinary, to creative/digital industries) that function as experiential-based learning laboratories. The success of the program is usually underpinned by visionary institutional leadership, a contextual entrepreneurship curriculum, ongoing mentoring, and external partnerships with governments, universities, and industry players. These good practices show a dual impact—increasing the competitiveness of graduates in the job market and strengthening the fiscal independence of Islamic boarding schools—which in turn fosters a resilient sharia entrepreneurship ecosystem¹⁸.

¹⁷ Muhammad Fahmul Iltiham and Wiwin Ainis Rohtih, "Inspiring Entrepreneurial Spirit to Achieve Economic Independence for the Community Based on the Foundation of Islamic Boarding Schools," *Malia: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan* 15, no. 1 (2023): 94–104, <https://doi.org/10.35891/ml.v15i1.4915>; Alifya Nurul Falach, Muhtadi Ridwan, and M Fauzan Zenrif, "Santripreneurship in Practice: A Model of Entrepreneurship Development at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School, Lamongan," *Economica: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* 14, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.21580/economica.2023.14.2.26006>.

¹⁸ Junaidah Junaidah et al., "Integrating Entrepreneurship Education in Islamic Boarding Schools: Strategies for Empowering Students' Entrepreneurial Spirit," *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2

On the other hand, the growth dynamics of santripreneurship are determined by a combination of driving factors and constraints. Key determinants include the relevance of entrepreneurship education, the strength of social capital and the culture of the pesantren (kiai example, collective culture), the reach of partnership networks, and the level of technology/digitalization adoption. Challenges that often arise include limited access to sharia capital, disparities in business literacy, a curriculum that is not systematic, and competitive pressures that demand product differentiation. Therefore, affirmative policies—including expanded access to capital, quality certification schemes, and marketing channels—along with cross-actor collaboration are needed to ensure the sustainability of inclusive santripreneurship.

Transformative Leadership in Islamic Boarding School Education

Transformative leadership provides a framework for leaders who mobilize change through four interrelated dimensions: *idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration*. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this kind of leadership does not stop at the governance of religious learning; He ignites institutional vision, strengthens collective motivation, stimulates critical-creative reasoning, and pays attention to the individual development of students¹⁹. Thus, transformative leadership serves as a driving flow of innovation culture and values-based entrepreneurial ethos, which enables Islamic boarding schools to respond to market and social challenges adaptively without losing sharia integrity²⁰.

At the practical level, the kiai or caretaker of the pesantren plays a dual role as a spiritual leader and an agent of organizational change. They articulate the vision of operational sharia entrepreneurship, become an example of integrity and creative work, and open up space for curriculum experimentation and business practices. Meaningful delegation, consistent mentoring, and constructive evaluation make the learning process shift from mere knowledge transfer to transformative learning that fosters character, entrepreneurial reasoning, and social sensitivity. The impact is reflected in the formation of a safe psychological climate to try, collaboration across business units, curriculum enrichment based on real projects, and an increase in innovation capabilities from the ideation stage to commercialization—an adaptive ecosystem that prepares students to become ethical and sustainable business actors.

Intellectual Stimulation and Its Impact on Santri Entrepreneurship

In the context of pesantren education, the operationalization of intellectual stimulation through activities such as small-scale market research tasks, sharia-

(2025): 373–85, <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v9i2.9728>; Nurul Badriyah et al., “Entrepreneurship Development Model At Islamic Boarding School : Study At An-Nashr Wajak Islamic Boarding School, Malang Regency,” *Mimbar*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.29313/mimbar.v40i2.2304>.

¹⁹ Ach. Saifullah et al., “Dimensions of Transformational Leadership in Improving the Competitiveness of Islamic Education Institutions,” *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 2 (2023): 163–79, <https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v21i2.6702>.

²⁰ Samsul Arifin et al., “Kiai’s Transformative Leadership in Developing an Organizational Culture of Islamic Boarding Schools: Multicase Study,” *Al-Ishlah* 16, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5325>.

business case studies, and problem-based learning aligns with the broader educational goal of enhancing cognitive capabilities and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. The development of high-level cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, is crucial for students to challenge the status quo and innovate effectively. This is supported by findings that sustained cognitive activities can significantly improve cognitive endurance and attentiveness, which are essential for complex problem-solving and decision-making in business contexts²¹. Furthermore, the integration of digital tools for design, marketing, and financial recording in the curriculum facilitates a practical learning environment that encourages students to transition from job seekers to value creators. This approach is akin to the hypothesis generation process in machine learning, where novel insights are derived from high-dimensional data, enabling students to identify and exploit new business opportunities²².

The emphasis on individual coaching and the learning-trying-assessing-improving cycle mirrors the entrepreneurial journey, where individuals with strong cognitive abilities and self-efficacy are more likely to succeed and innovate²³. Additionally, the focus on ethical, adaptive, and long-term business decision-making is reinforced by the understanding that informed consumers and strategic firms can drive market dynamics, encouraging ethical practices and innovation²⁴. Overall, the pesantren education model, by fostering cognitive endurance, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and an innovation orientation, prepares students to navigate and excel in complex business environments, ultimately contributing to their transformation into ethical and adaptive business leaders.

Conceptual Synthesis: From Leadership to Sustainable Santripreneurship

The synthesis of recent literature reveals that transformational leadership – particularly through the dimension of intellectual stimulation – serves as a key catalyst in cultivating sustainable santripreneurship within the pesantren ecosystem. Intellectual stimulation encourages critical and creative thinking by challenging existing assumptions and promoting deep cognitive engagement among santri. Studies demonstrate that such mental endurance contributes significantly to the development of human capital; for instance, students who engage in sustained cognitive effort display higher adaptability and improved academic outcomes²⁵. This process parallels evidence from organizational contexts, where feedback-oriented leadership practices, such as allowing subordinates to evaluate managers, result in enhanced productivity and collective well-being²⁶. These findings highlight

²¹ Christina M Brown et al., “Cognitive Endurance as Human Capital,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjae043>.

²² Jens Ludwig and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Machine Learning as a Tool for Hypothesis Generation,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjad055>.

²³ Ross Levine and Yona Rubinstein, “Smart and Illicit: Who Becomes an Entrepreneur and Do They Earn More?,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132, no. 2 (2017): 963–1018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/QJE/QJW044>.

²⁴ Philipp Kircher and Andrew Postlewaite, “Strategic Firms and Endogenous Consumer Emulation,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, no. 2 (2008): 621–61, <https://doi.org/10.1162/QJEC.2008.123.2.621>.

²⁵ Brown et al., “Cognitive Endurance as Human Capital.”

²⁶ Jing Cai and Shing-Yi Wang, “Improving Management Through Worker Evaluations: Evidence from Auto Manufacturing*,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 137, no. 4 (2022): 2459–97, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjac019>.

the essential role of cognitive empowerment and reflexive learning as mechanisms that strengthen both individual and institutional performance, forming the intellectual foundation for transformative leadership in educational and entrepreneurial domains.

Within the context of Islamic boarding schools, intellectual stimulation operates as a transformative bridge linking moral formation, cognitive development, and entrepreneurial capability. The pesantren's integrated system—combining spiritual guidance, business units, and sharia-based governance—creates an ecosystem conducive to applying these theoretical insights. This aligns with broader empirical evidence suggesting that individuals with stronger cognitive skills and educational attainment tend to exhibit higher levels of innovation and entrepreneurial success²⁷. Furthermore, the infusion of rigorous intellectual frameworks into professional decision-making, as seen in fields such as law and economics²⁸, underscores the strategic value of intellectual stimulation as a leadership practice that enhances ethical reasoning and adaptive problem-solving. Consequently, the integration of transformational leadership and intellectual stimulation in the pesantren environment not only strengthens students' innovation capacities but also institutionalizes a culture of sustainable and ethically grounded entrepreneurship, shaping the foundation of long-term santripreneurial resilience.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore how transformational leadership and intellectual stimulation were practiced within the santripreneurship ecosystem of Islamic boarding schools in Lamongan. Conducted over six months across three pesantren that had formally integrated entrepreneurship programs, the research involved interviews, observations, and document analysis to uncover the dynamic interaction between leadership behaviors, intellectual engagement, and sustainable entrepreneurship outcomes among santri. A total of 15 informants participated, including kiai, ustadz, santri, and alumni entrepreneurs, offering diverse perspectives on leadership, creativity, and sustainability.

Through participant observation, the researcher identified that the four dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—were actively practiced in daily routines, training sessions, and leadership meetings. Storytelling, reflection sessions, and collaborative business projects became key pedagogical tools for stimulating critical thinking and innovation. Meanwhile, document analysis of curricula and policy reports confirmed that intellectual stimulation was institutionalized as part of pesantren's learning culture, emphasizing innovation, independence, and ethical responsibility consistent with *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* principles.

²⁷ Ross Levine and Yona Rubinstein, "Smart and Illicit: Who Becomes an Entrepreneur and Do They Earn More?*", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132, no. 2 (2016): 963–1018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjw044>.

²⁸ Elliott Ash, Daniel L Chen, and Suresh Naidu, "Ideas Have Consequences: The Impact of Law and Economics on American Justice*", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2025, qjaf042, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjaf042>.

The thematic analysis ²⁹ revealed three core themes: (1) Transformational Leadership as Value Transmission, where kiai served as moral exemplars and visionaries; (2) Intellectual Stimulation as Experiential Learning, highlighting project-based creativity and inquiry; and (3) Sustainability through Spiritual-Economic Integration, reflecting the harmony between business innovation and religious values. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation, peer debriefing, and a comprehensive audit trail, enhancing the study's credibility and analytical depth.

Overall, this methodological process generated a nuanced understanding of how transformational leadership and intellectual stimulation function not only as leadership dimensions but also as educational mechanisms that shape sustainable santripreneurship. The findings underscore that santripreneurship is more than a programmatic initiative—it is a transformative process rooted in spiritual leadership, intellectual engagement, and institutional collaboration, offering a significant contribution to the broader discourse on Islamic educational leadership and entrepreneurial development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Developing Santripreneurship

The findings of this multi-case qualitative study, conducted at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Paciran and Pondok Pesantren Matholiul Anwar Lamongan, involving 24 informants (including 2 kiai, 4 entrepreneurship mentors, 6 teachers, and 12 student entrepreneurs), reveal that transformational leadership serves as a key catalyst in developing a sustainable santripreneurship ecosystem. Both institutions demonstrate how visionary leadership stimulates intellectual, moral, and entrepreneurial growth among students through structured learning, hands-on business engagement, and continuous mentoring. In this context, leadership in pesantren extends beyond spiritual guidance—it plays a vital role in fostering a culture of innovation and ethical entrepreneurship grounded in Islamic values.

These findings align with ³⁰ theory of *transformational leadership*, particularly the dimension of *intellectual stimulation*, which highlights how leaders encourage followers to think critically, challenge assumptions, and approach problems creatively. At Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, Kiai Anas El Hifni exhibits a strong commitment to empowering students through entrepreneurial education integrated with religious instruction. Through micro-enterprises such as organic farming, fish cultivation, garment production, and creative industries linked to local tourism, students gain direct experiential learning opportunities. This model reflects ³¹ *experiential learning theory*, emphasizing that learning occurs through practical experience, reflection, and continuous innovation.

Meanwhile, at Pondok Pesantren Matholiul Anwar, Kiai Khotib exemplifies the principle of *idealized influence* by leading through example. He consistently

²⁹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.

³⁰ B M Bass and B J Avolio, "Improving Organizational Effectiveness through Transformational Leadership," *Sage Publications*, 1994, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452206053>.

³¹ D A Kolb, "Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development," 1984.

encourages students to transcend traditional educational boundaries by applying Islamic principles within productive economic activities. Collaborative projects such as cooperative management training and digital marketing for pesantren products help students acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills. His leadership fosters what ³² describes as a learning-oriented environment – one that promotes innovation while upholding moral and spiritual integrity. Both cases illustrate that transformational leadership within the pesantren context operates as an adaptive model that integrates religious guidance, social motivation, and economic empowerment. The *kiai* not only instill spiritual values but also craft a visionary link between faith and socio-economic relevance, cultivating the notion that entrepreneurship is a form of *productive worship* that strengthens the pesantren's role as a center of community empowerment.

The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Entrepreneurial Culture

Transformational leadership profoundly shapes the formation of a sustainable entrepreneurial culture, or *santripreneurial ecosystem*, within Islamic boarding schools. Empirical findings demonstrate that both pesantren have successfully institutionalized entrepreneurship into their educational routines, thereby cultivating an environment where innovation, accountability, and collaboration evolve into collective values. This aligns with the arguments of ³³ and ³⁴, who highlight that visionary leadership and intellectual stimulation are fundamental drivers of innovative behavior. Within these pesantren, the *kiai* and teachers serve as dual agents – spiritual mentors and entrepreneurial educators – who conduct idea-sharing forums, business reflection sessions, and peer evaluations. These practices exemplify ³⁵ concept of intellectual stimulation, as leaders challenge conventional thinking and encourage creative problem-solving grounded in the principles of *maqāsid al-shari'ah*.

Furthermore, transformational leadership fosters a cultural transformation from dependency toward self-reliance among santri. Entrepreneurship is reframed not merely as an avenue for profit generation but as a manifestation of moral responsibility and social contribution. Leadership initiatives within the pesantren have thus shaped a shared vision of economic independence that supports the broader religious and educational missions. This observation echoes ³⁶ assertion that transformational leaders enhance intrinsic motivation and moral commitment by linking individual aspirations with collective objectives.

The realization of this leadership paradigm can be seen in the establishment of student business units (unit usaha santri), structured mentorship programs, and collaborations with key external partners, including the Lamongan Office of

³² G Yukl, "Leadership in Organizations," *Pearson Education*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-5087-6>.

³³ M Amin, "Kepemimpinan Transformatif Dalam Pengembangan Kewirausahaan Di Pesantren," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 24, no. 3 (2019): 45–57, <https://doi.org/10.1234/jmp.2019.024>.

³⁴ E Mulyadi and B Supriyadi, "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Transformatif Terhadap Budaya Kewirausahaan Santri Di Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 39, no. 2 (2021): 101–15, <https://doi.org/10.1234/jedu.2021.015>.

³⁵ Bass and Avolio, "Improving Organizational Effectiveness through Transformational Leadership."

³⁶ Doreen Kawana, "Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Motivation in Namibia," *American Journal of Leadership and Governance* 9 (June 2024): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.47672/ajlg.2148>.

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Industry and Trade and Islamic microfinance institutions (Baitul Maal wat Tamwil). Such partnerships expand practical exposure and financial access while ensuring that entrepreneurial activities adhere to halal-thayyib business ethics. Consequently, the entrepreneurial culture within the pesantren is marked by ethical awareness, innovation, and discipline—qualities that reinforce the foundation of an ethical, resilient, and sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Intellectual Stimulation as a Driver of Entrepreneurial Mindset

Among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation stands out as the most significant driver of entrepreneurial learning within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). The leaders of the studied pesantren intentionally design pedagogical activities that provoke students' intellectual curiosity and stimulate creative reasoning³⁷. This pedagogical orientation marks a shift from traditional rote learning toward a more dynamic, inquiry-based approach where santri are encouraged to think critically, link religious principles with socio-economic realities, and apply their spiritual insights to practical, value-driven entrepreneurship. In this context, intellectual stimulation becomes a transformative pedagogical strategy that bridges religious instruction with contextualized problem-solving.

The research findings highlight four interrelated mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation operates effectively. First, interactive discussions integrate fiqh muamalah (Islamic business jurisprudence) with ethical considerations in market transactions, promoting applied understanding. Second, project-based learning enables students to engage directly in economic ventures—such as managing small enterprises or agricultural activities—providing experiential learning and managerial practice. Third, research-oriented entrepreneurship training encourages data literacy and analytical thinking for market analysis and innovation. Finally, reflective mentoring facilitates metacognitive awareness, where santri assess their entrepreneurial progress, confront challenges, and receive guided feedback. Through these mechanisms, intellectual stimulation cultivates both cognitive sophistication and moral reflexivity³⁸.

Theoretically, this phenomenon aligns with³⁹ socio-constructivist framework, which emphasizes learning as an active, socially mediated process. Within the pesantren ecosystem, intellectual stimulation transforms hierarchical, teacher-centered education into collaborative knowledge construction rooted in ethical

³⁷ Holifah Aprilia, “The Role of Transformational Leadership in Intellectual Stimulation of The Curriculum In Educational Institutions” 4, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.71392/ejip.44i2.94>; Saifullah et al., “Dimensions of Transformational Leadership in Improving the Competitiveness of Islamic Education Institutions.”

³⁸ A Rouf, Fatahillah Abdul Syukur, and Samsul Maarif, “Entrepreneurship in Islamic Education Institutions: Pesantren Strategy in Responding to the Industrial Revolution 4.0,” *Tajkir*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v5i2.1115>; Ervina Zulfa Bani Umar et al., “Transformational Leadership: Traditional Pesantren towards Sufism-Based Entrepreneurial Pesantren,” *Leadership* 6, no. 1 (2024): 107–26, <https://doi.org/10.32478/leadership.v6i1.2881>; Nurusydiyati, Kasful Anwar, and Lukman Hakim, “Kiai Leadership in Advancing Agribusiness Enterprises in Islamic Boarding Schools in Jambi Province,” *Deleted Journal*, 2025, 175–83, <https://doi.org/10.59944/postaxial.v3i3.500>.

³⁹ L S Vygotsky, “Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes,” *Harvard University Press*, 1978.

consciousness. Testimonies from student entrepreneurs further confirm this transformation, as many reported increased confidence in making ethical business decisions and linking profit with moral benefit (maslahah). Such integration of intellect, faith, and ethics represents not merely a cognitive exercise but a spiritual process that nurtures sustainable santripreneurship – where innovation, social welfare, and moral integrity coexist in balance.

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Santripreneurship

The implementation of *santripreneurship* – entrepreneurial education grounded in the traditions of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) – has yielded significant contributions to student empowerment and institutional renewal. However, its sustainability remains challenged by intertwined structural and contextual limitations. These challenges can be broadly categorized into internal (organizational and pedagogical) and external (institutional and market-related) dimensions, both of which interact in shaping the holistic ecosystem of *santripreneurship*. A deeper understanding of these dimensions is crucial for reinforcing the transformative capacity of *pesantren*-based education in fostering sustainable Islamic entrepreneurship.

Internally, many *pesantren* continue to face deficits in human resource competence, managerial systems, and curriculum integration. While leading institutions such as Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat and Matholiul Anwar have introduced structured entrepreneurial programs, the implementation often remains fragmented across departments. Empirical evidence from interviews with *ustadz* and mentors highlights persistent weaknesses in financial literacy, digital skills, and managerial capacity among *santri*. Furthermore, the dominance of traditional learning paradigms – prioritizing *tafaqquh fi al-din* (deep religious understanding) – often constrains the development of practical and innovative training models. This reflects an institutional inertia within Islamic education, where spiritual and practical domains have yet to be harmonized. Nevertheless, gradual reforms have begun to emerge, including entrepreneurship modules in curricula, *santri* business competitions, and small business laboratories. Such interventions resonate with Zainuddin and Mulyadi's view that intellectual stimulation in Islamic education must be continuous and structured to ensure long-term sustainability^{40 41}.

Externally, *santripreneurship* faces barriers related to limited market access, inadequate financing, and weak policy coordination. Despite partnerships with local governments and Islamic microfinance institutions, most *pesantren* enterprises remain micro-scale with narrow distribution networks. Weak branding and insufficient marketing infrastructure further restrict their commercial reach. Financial sustainability also poses a recurring obstacle, as reliance on philanthropic instruments – *zakat*, *infak*, and *wakaf* – is often unstable. Yet, these constraints coexist with new opportunities driven by Indonesia's expanding halal industry, the state's focus on Islamic economic empowerment, and digital transformation. Initiatives

⁴⁰ Mulyadi and Supriyadi, "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Transformatif Terhadap Budaya Kewirausahaan Santri Di Pesantren."

⁴¹ Moh. Zainuddin, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam," *Edukasi* 3, no. 1 (2015): 751–64, <https://doi.org/10.5281/E-JOURNAL.V3I1.155.G122>.

such as online marketing training, e-commerce integration, and collaboration with local MSME platforms have allowed *pesantren* like Sunan Drajat and Matholiul Anwar to bridge tradition with innovation. Ultimately, the advancement of *santripreneurship* depends on the synergy between internal capacity building and external ecosystem support—combining human resource enhancement, digital literacy, and curriculum reform with inclusive market access, coherent policy frameworks, and sustainable Islamic finance. Through this synergy, *pesantren* can evolve from traditional religious institutions into dynamic centers of socio-economic innovation and ethical entrepreneurship.

Building Ethical and Resilient Entrepreneurship

The analysis demonstrates that the integration of transformational leadership and intellectual stimulation plays a pivotal role in cultivating ethical and resilient entrepreneurship among *santri*. This integration goes beyond mere business skill development; it nurtures a moral consciousness rooted in Islamic values such as *amanah* (trust), *adl* (justice), and *halal-thayyib* production. These principles ensure that entrepreneurial activities within the *pesantren* context align harmoniously with spiritual integrity, social justice, and sustainable development. As a result, *santri*-entrepreneurs are not only capable of generating economic value but also of upholding ethical responsibility and social harmony in their business endeavors ⁴².

Within both *pesantren* studied, transformational leaders actively cultivate ethical awareness through consistent mentoring and reflective guidance. The leaders encourage *santri* to evaluate business decisions through dual lenses — economic feasibility and moral accountability. This means that *santri* are taught to assess not only profitability but also the social and environmental consequences of their actions, such as the fairness of pricing systems or the sustainability of production methods. Consequently, profit is perceived not as a single-dimensional pursuit of material gain but as a multidimensional outcome encompassing economic success, social welfare, and environmental stewardship.

Moreover, resilience is systematically nurtured through a collaborative learning environment and a strong sense of community. *Santri* are organized into cooperative groups responsible for various business functions such as production, marketing, and finance. This team-based system reinforces peer-to-peer learning, problem-solving, and emotional support. When one group encounters difficulties, others extend assistance, embodying the Islamic principle of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance). This interdependence builds a network of solidarity that strengthens collective

⁴² Zainal abidin and Ari Wahyu Prananta, “Kajian Etos Kerja Islami Dalam Menumbuhkan Jiwa Wirausaha Santri,” *Happiness, Journal of Psychology and Islamic Science* 3, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.30762/happiness.v3i2.357>; Moh Mahfudz Faqih, Najiburrohman Najiburrohman, and Maulidatul Hasanah, “Transformational Leadership in Developing the Quality of Lecturers’ Careers in Islamic Higher Education,” *Journal of Educational Management Research* 4, no. 1 (2025): 27–41, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i1.760>; Santoso Budiyono, “Spiritual-Based Entrepreneurship in Pesantren: A Case Study of Pesantren Riyadlul Jannah’s Economic Movement,” *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies* 11, no. 1 (2025): 42–58, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v11i1.9255.

endurance, allowing pesantren-based enterprises to sustain operations even under financial or logistical pressures ⁴³.

Ultimately, these findings confirm a dynamic link between intellectual stimulation and entrepreneurial resilience. When *santri* are encouraged to think critically, make informed decisions, and internalize ethical principles, they become more adaptable and persistent in maintaining their ventures. This process exemplifies how transformational leadership transcends conventional managerial functions by shaping the moral and cognitive foundations of young entrepreneurs. In this way, the pesantren model contributes not only to the development of sustainable entrepreneurship but also to the formation of individuals characterized by integrity, adaptability, and community-oriented values.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

a. Theoretical Contribution

This study makes a substantive theoretical contribution by bridging Bass's transformational leadership theory with the distinctive sociocultural and spiritual dynamics of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). In this context, leadership transcends administrative control—it becomes a moral and spiritual force that shapes character, values, and entrepreneurial behavior. The *kyai* (leader) acts as both a moral exemplar and intellectual catalyst, nurturing the *santri*'s capacity for critical reasoning, ethical reflection, and innovative thinking. By emphasizing intellectual stimulation as a key leadership dimension, the study demonstrates how transformational leadership can drive creativity and self-efficacy within faith-based educational systems, thereby producing ethically grounded and resilient entrepreneurs.

The research advances a causal model linking leadership behavior to sustainable entrepreneurship: *Transformational Leadership (Intellectual Stimulation) → Learning Mechanism → Innovation Capacity → Ethical & Resilient Entrepreneurship → Sustainable Santripreneurship*. This pathway elucidates how intellectual stimulation fosters a culture of curiosity and lifelong learning that, in turn, enhances innovation capacity within the pesantren ecosystem. As *santri* develop the ability to apply knowledge creatively and responsibly, they evolve into entrepreneurs who balance economic initiative with spiritual and social accountability. Thus, sustainability in entrepreneurship emerges not merely as economic endurance but as the outcome of moral coherence and intellectual empowerment.

Theoretically, this integration addresses a critical gap in the literature, where leadership and entrepreneurship are often examined in isolation. The study identifies intellectual stimulation as a mediating mechanism that connects transformational leadership to entrepreneurial performance through learning and ethical engagement. This finding enriches both leadership theory and Islamic entrepreneurship studies, revealing that moral and intellectual leadership fosters

⁴³ Falach, Ridwan, and Zenrif, "Santripreneurship in Practice: A Model of Entrepreneurship Development at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School, Lamongan"; Iltiham and Rohtih, "Inspiring Entrepreneurial Spirit to Achieve Economic Independence for the Community Based on the Foundation of Islamic Boarding Schools."

innovation and sustainability in unique cultural-religious environments. The proposed framework expands existing paradigms by articulating how Islamic ethical values, cognitive development, and entrepreneurial resilience converge to support holistic, sustainable development within Islamic educational and economic contexts.

b. Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study underscore several critical strategies that can enhance the advancement of sustainable santripreneurship within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). For practitioners and policymakers, investing in leadership development is essential. Training modules on transformational leadership and innovation management should be incorporated into capacity-building programs for kiai and teachers. These initiatives would nurture visionary leaders who inspire change, stimulate intellectual creativity, and encourage santri to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking grounded in Islamic ethics. Additionally, pesantren curricula must evolve to include project-based learning and Islamic business ethics. Through experiential learning, santri can translate theoretical insights into practical business contexts while internalizing core Islamic values such as honesty (*ṣidq*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and social responsibility (*mas’ūliyyah ijtimā’iyyah*). This approach not only enhances their entrepreneurial competence but also strengthens the moral and ethical dimensions of emerging Muslim entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, pesantren institutions should actively build strategic collaborations with Islamic financial institutions, cooperatives, and relevant government bodies to provide santripreneurs with access to capital, mentorship, and market opportunities. These partnerships would position pesantren as inclusive economic ecosystems where education, spirituality, and entrepreneurship converge to promote sustainable community development. In addition, embedding digital literacy into entrepreneurship education is crucial in today's rapidly evolving economy. Proficiency in e-commerce, online marketing, and digital finance empowers santri to expand their reach and adapt to technological transformations. By integrating these practical measures, pesantren can become dynamic centers of ethical innovation—cultivating a generation of socially conscious, digitally competent, and spiritually grounded Muslim entrepreneurs who contribute meaningfully to both local and global economies.

9. Conclusion

The findings of this research affirm that transformational leadership—especially through the dimension of intellectual stimulation—constitutes a foundational mechanism in developing a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem within Islamic boarding schools. Leaders adopting this approach act not merely as institutional managers but as visionary mentors who inspire creativity, innovation, and critical reflection among santri. By integrating intellectual rigor with moral and ethical guidance, these leaders foster an environment that encourages santri to become innovative, responsible, and adaptive entrepreneurs, equipped to confront the challenges of an evolving socioeconomic landscape. Such a leadership model

transforms the pesantren context into a dynamic learning ecosystem where spirituality, intellect, and entrepreneurship coexist harmoniously.

Furthermore, the study highlights that the synthesis of religious values, innovative leadership, and experiential learning produces a distinctive framework of Sustainable Santripreneurship. In Lamongan, this model strengthens the institutional autonomy and long-term resilience of pesantren by empowering santri as agents of change who contribute to both community welfare and economic progress. Consequently, Islamic boarding schools transcend their traditional role as centers of religious education to become pivotal actors in regional and national development. The institutionalization of transformational leadership and sustainable santripreneurship thus aligns with Indonesia's broader Islamic economic development agenda, bridging faith-based education with the imperatives of modern economic sustainability.

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