

## Recontextualization of the Concept of Kiai Leadership through a Distributed and Regenerative Approach for the Resilience of Islamic Boarding School Educational Institutions in the 21st Century

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### Abstract

Centralized Kiai leadership, despite being the historical foundation of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), faces significant challenges in addressing the complexities of the 21st century. This article discusses the recontextualization of Kiai leadership through the integration of distributed approaches and systematic regeneration to build institutional resilience. This research uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following an adapted PRISMA framework. A literature search was conducted in indexed academic databases using a combination of keywords such as "Kiai leadership," "distributed *pesantren* leadership," and "*pesantren* leadership regeneration." Data analysis was conducted thematically on selected studies. The study produced a hypothetical model that transforms the Kiai's role from a single operational leader to a visionary-spiritual leader. Distributed leadership is realized through the empowerment of the *asatidz* council, senior *santri*, and professional staff in operational decision-making. This model is implemented in three integrative phases: foundation preparation, empowerment implementation, and ongoing maintenance. The synergy between distributed leadership and regeneration creates a sustainable leadership pipeline. Distribution of responsibilities serves as a laboratory for cadre development, while systematic regeneration ensures the availability and quality of potential successors. This integration allows Islamic boarding schools to maintain their traditional values (such as *Uswah Hasanah* and *Zuhd*) while increasing their adaptive capacity and pedagogical innovation, thus building strong organizational resilience in a disruptive era.

## Introduction

As the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have proven themselves to be resilient and adaptive entities within the Indonesian national education landscape. More than simply "religious schools," *pesantren* have proven themselves to be resilient and adaptive social engines, consistently producing generations with religious, independent, and high-integrity characters (Oktari & Kosasih, 2019; Syafe'i, 2017). Within the national education landscape, *pesantren* are not mere spectators, but rather key players, having navigated through the ages with their own distinct identity. Their strength lies not in their magnificent buildings or complex curricula, but in their unique and strong culture, built on core values that underpin every activity within them.

These noble values include Exemplary Leadership (*Uswah Hasanah*), where the leader (*Kiai*) is followed and respected not because of his commands, but because of his real-life example.

Simplicity (Zuhd), which teaches a non-materialistic lifestyle and a focus on spiritual goals. And Independence, which fosters the ability to be self-sufficient and independent of external forces. The combination of these values creates a holistic educational ecosystem that shapes students holistically, not only intellectually but also morally and in character. (Zuhri, 2025; Fauzi et al., 2023). This is the “spirit” that enables Islamic boarding schools to survive and remain relevant.

However, the 21st century presents a completely different face. Waves of change and disruptive shocks come one after another, challenging every institution, even the most entrenched, to adapt if they are to avoid being eroded by the times. To remain relevant and sustainable, Islamic boarding schools cannot simply rely on the "old ways" that have been successful in the past. These new challenges demand a strategic reconfiguration, a bold rethinking, particularly in redefining the central role of the Kiai. The concept of single, centralized leadership, which has long been the backbone of Islamic boarding schools, now needs to be viewed through a new lens: the perspective of distributed leadership (where leadership responsibilities are shared among more people) and systematic regeneration (planned, not impromptu, regeneration). The goal is noble: preserving the "spirit" and values of Islamic boarding schools while adopting a more adaptive, agile, and sustainable leadership structure to address the challenges of the times.

In this modern era of rapid and unpredictable change, traditional organizations around the world, including Islamic boarding schools, face a classic problem: the centralized, hierarchical "one-man show" leadership model is no longer effective. This model, which relies almost entirely on a single leader, often backfires. Instead of fostering organizational agility, this structure stifles innovation, stifles creativity, and creates a single point of failure. The entire organization can falter and lose its direction if the central leader experiences problems, is absent, or is no longer capable of leading. (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020; Harris, 2013)

This classic problem is further exacerbated and accelerated by the wave of technological disruption brought about by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. This new era is not simply about the presence of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and the internet of things. More than that, it is about a fundamental paradigm shift that blurs the traditional boundaries of organizing, learning, and doing business. The world has become hyperconnected, complex, and fluid. To survive and compete amidst this turbulence, an organization can no longer rely on the command of a single person. What is now required is speed (agility), high adaptability, and most crucially, collaboration across functions and hierarchies. (Mastuti & Suhantoro, 2021) Digital technology has become a driving force that forces every institution, without exception, to evolve from a rigid command and control model to an agile, collaborative, and decentralized network model.

One of the most specific global challenges faced by institutions based on local wisdom is the tug-of-war between maintaining cultural identity and the undeniable demands of modernization. Traditional institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) also find themselves at a crossroads. On the one hand, they have a sacred obligation to uphold the core values, authenticity, and cultural independence that have defined their identity for hundreds of years. On the other hand, they are also required to adopt innovations in teaching methods, organizational management, and the use of technology to remain relevant, engaging with the younger generation, and competitive with other educational institutions. (Nuryani et al., 2023)

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this tension is particularly pronounced and centered on the centralized leadership system of the Kiai. Undeniably, the power and authority of the Kiai, stemming from their charisma, spirituality, and profound knowledge, constitute a very strong and unquestionable foundation. (Siregar et al., 2013); (Faline Izza Nisa'u & Ravik

Karsidi, 2025). The authority of the Kiai is the sun that is the center of the Islamic boarding school solar system. However, this very heavy dependence on one leader figure creates several strategic risks that threaten the sustainability of the Islamic boarding school: (1) Organizational Vulnerability: The Islamic boarding school becomes very vulnerable if something happens to the Kiai, whether due to illness, age, or other things. The stability of the organization seems to depend on one person. (2) Slow Response (Inertia): Centralized structures are often slow in responding to changes in the times because all decisions must wait for and go through one person. (3) Succession Crisis: The biggest concern is who will continue the leadership baton in the future. Unplanned regeneration can cause turmoil and internal conflict that has the potential to divide the Islamic boarding school.

A study (Liu et al., 2021) demonstrated that distributed leadership significantly improves teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction through collaboration and empowerment mechanisms. This finding aligns with (Komang et al., 2025), who linked distributed leadership practices to increased organizational innovation through mediating knowledge sharing. Furthermore, (Azorín et al., 2020), emphasized that in complex ecosystems, leadership must be viewed as a distributed activity within a network, organically creating an adaptive space for growth and innovation. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this approach means building a collective leadership system around the Kiai (Islamic scholars). The Kiai's role evolves from an operational leader to a visionary and spiritual leader (enabling leader) tasked with setting broad directions, upholding core values, and most importantly, creating a climate and culture that enable leadership to flourish at all levels (Bolden, 2011). Meanwhile, operational leadership responsibilities such as information technology management, entrepreneurship, modern curriculum, and public relations can be distributed to young, digitally literate religious teachers, potential senior students, and professional staff based on their expertise (Buyukgoze et al., 2024)

Furthermore, (Gumus et al., 2018) provides strong empirical evidence on the effectiveness of distributed leadership as a regeneration tool. These findings suggest that strategically distributing leadership responsibilities creates a learning laboratory where aspiring leaders can develop their capacity through real-world experiences. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, these findings support the approach of assigning operational responsibilities to young ustadz and senior students as part of a regeneration strategy. Furthermore, (Buyukgoze et al., 2024) confirmed that distributed leadership plays a key role in driving collective teacher innovation. This finding is relevant in the context of traditionally hierarchical Islamic boarding schools. When kiai involve ustadz/ustadzah and musyrif in leadership, two impacts are created: psychologically, teachers feel valued and are motivated to innovate; structurally, collaboration is built that supports the exchange of ideas and pedagogical experimentation. In an Islamic boarding school culture that prioritizes brotherhood, this approach strengthens collective innovation without diminishing the central role of the kiai as a spiritual leader.

Building on previous empirical findings, distributed leadership has proven effective in fostering innovation, collaboration, and readiness for regeneration in various modern educational organizations (Buyukgoze et al., 2024; Gumus et al., 2018; Azorín et al., 2020). However, the implementation of this concept in the context of Islamic boarding schools as unique traditional educational institutions there is still an academic gap that needs to be studied in more depth.

Most previous studies on distributed leadership have been conducted in formal organizational settings with clear bureaucratic structures. Meanwhile, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have unique characteristics based on charisma, cultural values (uswah hasanah, zuhd, and

independence), and the central spiritual authority of the Kiai. This research gap lies in the absence of a contextual model capable of integrating the principles of distributed leadership with the traditional hierarchical-spiritual values of Islamic boarding schools. In other words, it remains unclear how a distributed leadership mechanism can be implemented without diminishing the spiritual authority of the Kiai, instead strengthening the resilience and sustainability of Islamic boarding school leadership. Therefore, this study aims to recontextualize the concept of Kiai leadership through a distributed and regeneration approach, focusing on the question: "How can a distributed leadership model be configured within the Islamic boarding school ecosystem to strengthen institutional resilience, encourage pedagogical innovation, and prepare for leadership regeneration without neglecting traditional values as the 'soul' of the Islamic boarding school?"

Through this approach, the research not only adopts Western theories but also formulates a hypothetical model rooted in the local wisdom of Islamic boarding schools. The results are expected to provide a concrete roadmap for Islamic boarding schools to remain resilient and relevant in leading civilization amid the disruptive challenges of the 21st century.

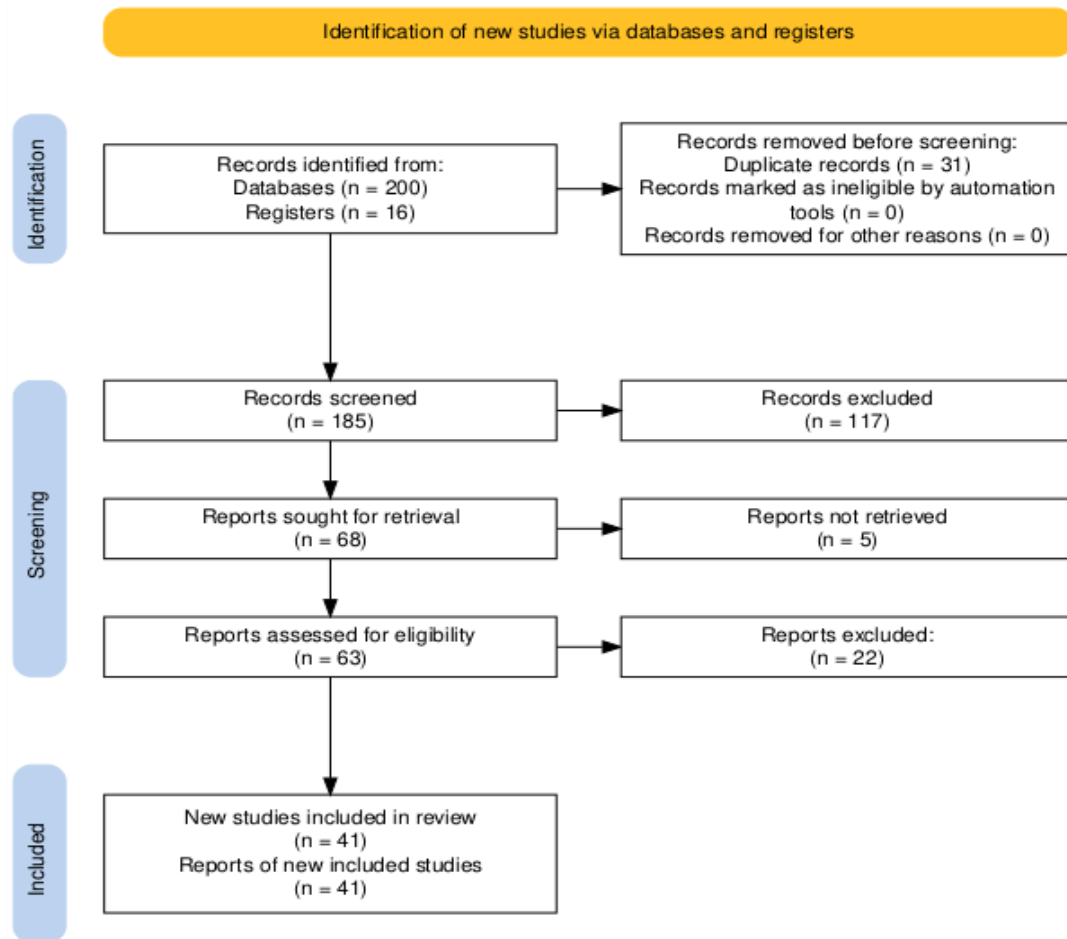
## Methods

This research is a literature study using the Systematic Review (SR) method, or more commonly known as the Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This research method allows researchers to evaluate and interpret all accessible research relevant to the research question, topic, or event of interest. (Tedja et al., 2024) This method was chosen to map previous research on distributed leadership and leadership regeneration in Islamic boarding schools. This aims to recontextualize distributed leadership and leadership regeneration in Islamic boarding schools to maintain their existence in the 21st century.

## Literature Search

Data for this study were collected from August 10, 2025, to September 15, 2025. The researchers used Scopus-indexed journals as the primary source of information, supported by journals indexed by Google Scholar and Sinta. The researchers collected data using the Publish or Perish (PoP) application and then processed it using the PRISMA method. The systematic literature review (PRISMA) process consists of four steps: (1) identifying journals to be included in the meta-analysis; (2) screening, filtering or selecting data; (3) eligibility, determining which articles to use for the literature review; and (4) inclusion, combining and reporting the results. (Tedja et al., 2024)

By following these steps, a systematic literature review can be conducted in a comprehensive, transparent, and structured manner to explore and synthesize evidence from previous studies related to distributed leadership and leadership regeneration for the resilience of Islamic boarding school educational institutions in the 21st century. The following is a data collection flowchart using the PRISMA approach that will help in reporting the literature review process clearly and systematically.



*Figure 1. Data collection flowchart*

Based on the PRISMA diagram and the explanation above, the following describes the process of data collection, analysis, and data presentation by applying the PRISMA model.

### Data Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using the Publish or Perish tool. The primary data sources were research journal articles published in reputable international journals using Scopus and national journals accredited by SINTA (Science and Technology Index) Levels 1-6, published within the last 10 years (2015-2025). The search strategy used a combination of Boolean keywords (AND/OR) in Indonesian and English. The main keywords used were: "kiai leadership" OR "kiai leadership," "distributed leadership," AND pesantren "distributed leadership," AND pesantren "regeneration of pesantren leadership" OR "succession pesantren," "organizational resilience," AND pesantren "institutional resilience."

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria (Trimming Criteria)

These criteria were applied to ensure the quality and relevance of the selected studies.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Type	Empirical or conceptual research journal articles; theses/dissertations converted into articles.	Books, seminar proceedings, technical reports, opinion articles, and non-systematic narrative reviews.

Subject & Context	Studies explicitly discussing leadership in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren).	Studies on Islamic leadership outside the context of pesantren (e.g., in mosques, general Islamic schools).
Topic	Focus on at least one of the three core concepts: Kiai leadership, distributed leadership, and/or leadership regeneration.	Studies discussing only aspects of curriculum, pedagogy, or pesantren management without linkage to leadership.
Methodological Quality	Published in SINTA-accredited journals (Level 1-4) or reputable international journals (Scopus/WoS). Possesses a clear methodology section.	Articles from non-accredited journals or those without a clear peer-review process.
Time Frame	Publications between 2015 and 2025.	Publications before 2015 (unless considered seminal and highly relevant).
Full-Text Availability	Full text accessible online or through institutional library.	Only abstracts available and full text cannot be accessed.

### Selection Process and Flowchart

The selection process began with the identification of 216 potential studies from two primary sources: 200 studies from Scopus-indexed journals and 16 from Sinta- and Garuda-indexed journals. Before entering the screening stage, 31 duplicate studies were removed, leaving 185 studies eligible for the next screening stage. During the screening stage, these 185 studies were evaluated based on their titles and abstracts. This resulted in 117 studies not meeting the inclusion criteria and being excluded from the selection process. Next, 68 studies deemed relevant were searched for full-text review. However, of these, 5 reports were either unavailable or inaccessible, resulting in only 63 studies being fully assessed for eligibility through full-text review.

In this full-text eligibility assessment, 22 studies were identified that did not meet the established inclusion criteria and therefore had to be excluded from the selection process. Finally, after going through all stages of rigorous and systematic selection, 41 studies were deemed to meet all requirements and were included in this systematic review. These 41 studies then formed the basis for the analysis and synthesis of the findings in this study, with a successful selection rate of 19% of the total number of initially identified studies, and 65% of the studies successfully assessed for eligibility through full text.

### Data Extraction and Analysis.

The fourth stage was data extraction and analysis from the 41 final studies. Data from the selected studies were extracted into a standardized extraction sheet that included study identity (author, year, title, journal), research objectives, methods, pesantren context/location, key findings related to Kiai leadership, distributed leadership, and pesantren regeneration. Data analysis was then conducted thematically following the Braun & Clarke model as mentioned in (Naeem et al., 2023). There are six stages carried out sequentially, namely: familiarization by repeatedly reading the included studies; initial coding by marking relevant texts; searching for themes by grouping similar codes; reviewing themes to check for correspondence with the data; defining and naming themes to formulate an analytical narrative; and producing a report by compiling the synthesized findings into a coherent narrative presented in the discussion

section. The main themes that emerged from this analysis were then synthesized to formulate a hypothetical model of the integrative recontextualization of Kiai leadership.

## Results and Discussion

Leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools Before discussing leadership in Islamic boarding schools further, it is necessary to first clarify the definition of a leader. According to (Guastello, 2007), a leader is an individual who emerges naturally from an initially leaderless group, through a non-linear dynamic process and self-organization. He or she distinguishes themselves through distinctive social contributions and interaction patterns, thereby becoming recognized by other group members as the person who most influences or directs the group. Meanwhile, according to (Anderson et al., 2014), a leader is a facilitator who creates a work environment that allows for the emergence and implementation of new ideas by influencing motivation, team processes, organizational climate, and resource allocation. A leader's effectiveness in an innovation context is determined by their ability to adapt and apply leadership styles appropriate to different stages in the innovation cycle (idea generation vs. implementation) and their ability to build a supportive and empowering climate.

What is meant by kiai leadership is the art and educational-spiritual process that is charismatic-transformative. A kiai does not only act as a structural leader, but as a central figure who radiates authority and exemplary conduct that comes from personal integrity, depth of religious knowledge (religious scholarship), and spiritual piety (spiritual piety). Through his charisma and influence, the kiai is able to inspire, influence, and direct the entire pesantren community from students, ustadz, to the community voluntarily and consciously to collaborate to realize the main goal of the pesantren, namely to form a perfect human being who is faithful, knowledgeable, and has noble character. By combining elements of charismatic, transformative, and servant leadership, the kiai's leadership functions as a guiding force that not only overcomes organizational problems, but also shapes the culture, values, and identity of the pesantren holistically. (Anwar, 2018)

Meanwhile, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that play a significant role in instilling moral values and noble character. (Fitri & Ondeng, 2022) Islamic boarding schools not only demonstrate their resilience and existence but also continue to develop with increasingly diverse variations. This shows that Islamic boarding schools are pluralistic and heterogeneous entities. The only unifying element that defines an Islamic boarding school's identity is its religious foundation, reflected in the teaching of classical texts (kitab kuning) which form the core of its education. In the leadership structure of educational institutions in Indonesia, the title for the highest leader varies according to the characteristics and traditions of the institution. In formal educational institutions such as Elementary Schools (SD), Junior High Schools (SMP), and Senior High Schools (SMA), the highest authority holder is structurally referred to as the Principal. Meanwhile, in the context of Islamic boarding schools as traditional Islamic educational institutions, the highest leader plays not only an administrator but also a spiritual, moral, and charismatic figure. This leader is generally addressed as Kyai (or Kiai). This title not only reflects his structural position, but also a deep recognition of his piety, authority, and religious integrity in leading the santri community.

Leadership patterns in Islamic boarding schools are generally centralistic with authoritarian and paternalistic traits. (Anwar, 2018) Kiai or Nyai act as central figures who are not only sources of inspiration and motivation, but also the main decision-makers who are guided by traditions and deep-rooted cultural values. However, as time goes by, more democratic and modern leadership styles are beginning to emerge. In addition, hereditary leadership patterns,

both through family lines and foundations, are still common. The characteristic of this leadership is the close relationship between the kiai and the students, where the kiai acts as a role model in all aspects of life, with a strong emphasis on the formation of Islamic morals and ethics. This leadership pattern can vary depending on the type and characteristics of the Islamic boarding school.

### **The Evolution of Islamic Boarding School Leadership: From Authoritarian Centralism to Collaborative Distribution**

The leadership system in Islamic boarding schools is dynamic and heavily influenced by the internal and external contexts of the school. During the initiation phase, leadership is centralized and authoritarian, fully anchored in the figure of the kiai (leader), the founder, who aims to maintain the consistency of the primary vision and mission in disseminating Islamic education. Along with the demands of modernization and the development of science and technology, Islamic boarding schools have undergone significant institutional transformation. This change has driven the evolution of the leadership model from a centralized pattern to a more collegial and participatory distributed leadership model, supporting innovation and more adaptive management. (I. Wijayanti, 2016)

Distributed leadership is a pattern of leadership activities shared by many people within an organization, rather than determined by a single leader. This concept believes that leadership grows from dynamic collaboration between various parties, both those with formal and informal positions, and supported by existing resources and systems. Essentially, every direction and decision emerges from the interaction between the people involved, the type of work being done, and the circumstances at hand. (Spillane et al., 2001; Harris, 2013) A similar opinion was expressed by (Fauzi et al., 2023) that distributed leadership is a leadership approach that involves various individuals in the decision-making process and the implementation of leadership tasks. It is not solely focused on a single leader, but is spread among several individuals who have important roles in the organization. MacBeath argues that distributed leadership is based on trust, implies mutual acceptance of each other's leadership potential, requires formal leaders to 'relinquish' some of their control and authority, and prioritizes consultation and consensus over command and control. Each of these challenges poses serious challenges to the traditional hierarchical model of authority and control in organizations and can cause severe psychological stress on appointed managers. (Bolden, 2008)

Based on these various opinions, it can be concluded that distributed leadership can be understood as a leadership style that prioritizes togetherness, where leadership responsibilities are not solely assigned to one person. This concept stems from the idea that effective leadership is born from active collaboration across multiple parties. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this is realized when the Kyai (Islamic leader) is no longer the sole decision-maker, but rather distributes leadership roles to the Nyai (Islamic clerics), ustaz (Islamic teachers), and even senior students (students). The policy direction and dynamics of the Islamic boarding school are formed organically from the interaction of all these elements, adapted to various activities such as religious study, schooling, entrepreneurship, and emerging challenges. Ultimately, this collective approach makes Islamic boarding schools more adaptive and sustainable in facing the complexities of the times.

### **Implementation of Distributed Leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools**

The implementation of distributed leadership in Islamic boarding schools has its own characteristics because it must negotiate with the entrenched charismatic structure. (Ramdhani

& Andriyana, 2023). In its implementation, distributed leadership in Islamic boarding schools can be carried out in several forms: First, Synergistic Collaboration of Kiai and Asatidz Council: Kiai as the main authority builds partnerships with senior ustadz/ustadzah in strategic decision-making through forums such as asatidz deliberations. Second. Empowerment of Senior Santri: Santri at a certain level (senior) are given responsibilities as mentors (buddy system), business unit managers, or activity managers. Third. Activation of Nyai/Ustadzah Leadership: The strategic role of women (wives/children of Kiai) in managing certain domains such as diniyah education, health, or public relations. Fourth. Technology Integration: Utilization of Management Information Systems for transparency and wider participation. (Bolden, 2011)

According to Copland (Arar & Taysum, 2020), the successful implementation of a distributed leadership model in a school environment depends heavily on the creation of a conducive school culture. This culture must be supported by key pillars, namely collaboration, trust, continuous professional learning, and a system of mutual accountability. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the implementation of distributed leadership elements such as the strategic role of the Kyai, the emergence of informal leadership from senior ustadz or ustadzah (religious teachers), synergy in deliberation forums such as the asatidz meeting, and the implementation of participatory decision-making patterns significantly play a role in creating a positive climate of togetherness (*ukhuwah*). In turn, this condition strengthens the collective commitment of the entire Islamic boarding school family, both leaders and teachers, in actualizing the vision and mission of the Islamic boarding school as an educational institution and character builder.

According to (Nadeem, 2024) there are several strategies that can be implemented by teachers, administrative staff, and principals or school systems to implement distributed leadership, namely: First. Creating a shared vision and goals. A shared vision and goals in an organization can unite all parties involved. Schools can realize this through open discussions involving various parties to formulate a vision that is not only attractive but also reflects shared aspirations. This vision then serves as a guide in daily decision-making. Like a compass that points the direction, a shared vision becomes a guide for all efforts to improve towards school success. (Rahayu et al., 2025) Second. Every member of the school community has clear roles and responsibilities. To create effective collective leadership, it is important for every member of the school community, whether teachers, staff, or students, to have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. This clarity allows each party to know the specific contribution they can make to the joint effort. (Gusrianto & Afriza, 2024) Third. Distributed Decision Making. One characteristic of distributed leadership lies in the empowerment of every member of the school community. In its implementation, the decision-making process is delegated to various levels of the organizational structure, thus enabling the integration of diverse perspectives in shaping policies and their implementation. Alma's research states that distributing leadership to teachers can support positive instructional change under the right conditions. (Harris et al., 2022) Fourth. Collaborative Learning Communities. Fostering collaborative learning communities is very beneficial for fostering creative thinking, allowing ideas to flourish and implement them. In addition, learning communities enable teachers to improve their professionalism in their work. Fifth. Continuing Professional Development. In the context of distributed leadership, Continuing Professional Development is no longer seen as a "top-down" activity required only by the principal. On the contrary, PPB is a collective responsibility and a dynamic process that empowers each individual to become a leader in their respective fields. (Elkaleh et al., 2025) The goal is to build capacity (capacity building) evenly across all members of the school community, so that they have the competence, confidence,

and insight to take initiative and assume leadership responsibilities. Sixth. Effective communication. In distributed leadership, authority is spread across many people. Effective communication serves as a shared navigation system that keeps all parties connected and moving in the same direction. Two skills that leaders must master are: (1) Leaders must communicate their ideas and goals to gain support from staff. (2) Leaders must convey meaning by choosing the right words to prevent misunderstandings. Communication involves verbal and non-verbal communication skills. (Manalullaili, 2015) Seventh. Recognizing and celebrating contributions. One of the key principles of distributed leadership is actively recognizing and celebrating the contributions of every stakeholder. (Phillips et al., 2024) Schools can achieve this by creating various platforms to highlight teacher dedication, student innovation, and the role of administrators in advancing the school. This form of recognition not only serves as a powerful motivator for individuals but also becomes a pillar for cultivating a culture of shared leadership. Ultimately, sincere and systematic appreciation plays a crucial role in strengthening the foundation of a culture of collaboration and leadership shared by all school members. (Li et al., 2022) Eighth. Adaptive leadership. The world of education is always dynamic in accordance with the times, and the development of science and technology. To respond to every change, an adaptive leader will help every individual in the organization to overcome difficulties and adapt to change. (Eka Rachmawati et al., 2023).

Furthermore, (Arar & Taysum, 2020) in their research stated that there are several steps that can be taken to implement distributed leadership systematically: To ensure that school leadership does not rely solely on one person, this study offers ten structured implementation tips. First, collaborate with universities as partners for mentoring and the latest knowledge. Second, involve the entire school community in simple "action research" to solve problems together. Third, leaders need to introspect, control egos, and shift to servant and empowering leaders. Fourth, build intercultural understanding through dialogue so that differences can be managed well. Fifth, give teachers and students opportunities to lead strategic projects. Sixth, create an environment of transparency and mutual trust, where everyone is accountable for their role. Seventh, ensure all steps lead to one goal: improving student achievement and character, which in this study managed to increase by 17-27%. Eighth, face resistance by involving all parties in the change process. Ninth, provide a forum for teachers and staff to share best practices. Tenth, establish a sustainable support network, both nationally and internationally, so that this program does not stop midway. Based on the synthesis of the (Arar & Taysum, 2020) and (Nadeem, 2024) models, the implementation of distributed leadership in Islamic boarding schools can be formulated in three integrative phases which are illustrated in the following table:

Table 2. Roadmap for Implementing Distributed Leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools

Phase	Operational Steps	Main Activities	Measurable Output	Success Indicators (Outcome)
Phase 1: Preparation and Foundation Laying	1. Formulating a Collective Vision	✓ Organizing a series of workshops or FGDs involving Kyai, ustadz/ah, staff, student representatives, and the Islamic	The "Shared Vision and Mission" document is agreed upon and displayed in strategic areas.	At least 80% of stakeholders can convey the vision in their own language.

		boarding school committee.		
	2. Transformation of Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Servant leadership and quiet ego training for leaders.</li> <li>✓ "One Day as a Student" program for religious teachers.</li> </ul>	Minutes of discussion and Personal Action Plan of each leader.	Leaders are more active in facilitating and solving problems together, not just giving orders.
	3. Building Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish official cooperation (MoU) with universities or education consultants.</li> </ul>	MoU Document and Mentoring Work Plan for 1 year.	The external support team actively conducts visits and provides assistance at Islamic boarding schools.
Phase 2: Implementation and Empowerment	4. Whole School Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Form a "Pesantren Innovation Team" and train them to conduct Action Research to address one priority problem.</li> </ul>	Data-based Problem Diagnosis Report and Solution Proposal.	The issues raised are real problems that are shared, and the solutions are designed in a participatory manner.
	5. Distribution of Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish a Committee/Task Force (e.g., Literacy, Student Activities, Environment).</li> <li>✓ Establish clear duties and responsibilities and assign simple authority and budgets.</li> </ul>	The new organizational structure reflects the distribution of leadership and the Tupoksi documents for each committee.	Each committee can design and run at least 1 initiative program per semester independently.
	6. Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organize a monthly "Sharing Session" where ustadz/ah share best practices with each other.</li> </ul>	Regular schedule and documentation of sharing session materials.	Increased active participation and the implementation of innovative teaching

				methods in the classroom.
	7. Community of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Facilitate the formation of groups based on interests (example: Mathematics Teacher Community, Tahfiz).</li> </ul>	Active discussion forums (online/offline) for each community.	Peer coaching is established (observing each other's classes and providing feedback).
Phase 3: Maintenance and Evaluation	8. Transparent Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Utilize digital bulletin boards, chat groups, or internal bulletins for information updates.</li> </ul>	Documented information flow that is easily accessible to all.	All stakeholders felt informed and there was no significant miscommunication.
	9. Recognition and Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organizing "Quarterly Appreciation" or "Pesantren Award" events.</li> </ul>	List of appreciation recipients and event documentation.	Increased motivation and the number of people actively contributing to various initiatives.
	10. Adaptive Leadership and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Semester evaluation meetings discuss concrete data (academic grades, participation, satisfaction surveys).</li> <li>✓ Compare data with initial targets.</li> </ul>	Annual Evaluation Report that focuses on outcomes.	Decision to continue/revise program based on data; visible trend of improvement in learning outcomes (academic & character).

From the table above, the following is a brief and concise explanation of the roadmap for implementing distributed leadership in Islamic boarding schools:

In short, this model transforms Islamic boarding schools from being led by a single individual (the Kyai) to being led collaboratively by the entire Islamic boarding school family. The changes are designed to be gradual and practical: Phase 1: Mental Preparation and Collaboration. In this phase, the foundation is laid. All parties, from the Kyai to the students, are invited to sit together to formulate a shared vision. The leadership mindset is also shifted from being the "most powerful" to being a "servant" who listens. To obtain expert guidance, Islamic boarding schools partner with universities or consultants. Phase 2: Real Action and Empowerment. This is the implementation phase. Problems in the Islamic boarding school are addressed through collaborative research, not simply orders from superiors. Leadership

responsibilities are shared through the formation of various "committees" or small teams (e.g., the Literacy Committee, the Activities Committee) involving senior ustadz and students. Teachers also share knowledge within a learning community to improve teaching quality. Phase 3: Maintenance and Improvement. This phase ensures lasting change. Transparent communication and recognition for achievement are maintained to foster motivation. Most importantly, the success of the program is evaluated based on real data, such as improvements in academic grades or student character, so that improvements can be continuously made adaptively.

The distributed leadership model transforms Islamic boarding schools into collaborative learning organizations, where everyone feels ownership, responsibility, and contributes to collective progress. The implementation of distributed leadership can be identified by the following indicators: (1) Collective Participation: Involving all members of the organization in decision-making and task execution, reflecting collaboration and shared responsibility. (2) Intensive Interaction: Effective communication and frequent interaction between leaders and members of the organization, enabling the exchange of ideas and coordination. (3) Delegation of Tasks and Responsibilities: Leaders distribute responsibilities and tasks to various members of the organization according to their respective abilities and expertise. (4) Involvement in Vision and Mission Development: All members of the organization have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the organization's vision and mission. (5) Fairness and Transparency: Fairness and transparency exist in the decision-making process and resource distribution. (6) Capacity Building: Providing training and development to members of the organization to improve their leadership capacity. (Spillane, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2010; Harris, 2013)

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Distributed Leadership**

As an alternative to the centralized model, distributed leadership in Islamic boarding schools offers significant advantages such as improved performance, adaptability, and empowerment through collaborative sharing of responsibilities. However, its implementation faces real challenges in the form of an entrenched hierarchical culture, limited resource availability, and the risk of ineffective delegation of authority. These two aspects will be fully explained below.

Some of the advantages of distributed leadership are: (1) Improved Outcomes and Performance: Research (Arar & Taysum, 2020) shows a significant increase in student learning outcomes (17-27%), such as increased test scores and graduation rates. This is because decisions are made by those closest to the problem, resulting in more targeted outcomes. (2) More Adaptive and Innovative Organizations: Distributed leadership enables organizations to be more responsive to change and the complexities of the times by leveraging diverse perspectives and ideas from many people. (M. M. Wijayanti & Rosalinda, 2020; Harris, 2013) (3) Empowerment and Leadership Regeneration: This model empowers organizational members by assigning responsibilities, which in turn builds capacity and prepares future leaders. (Arar & Taysum, 2020) (4) Collective Commitment and Strong Sense of Ownership: The involvement of various parties in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the organization's vision and mission. (Nadeem, 2024). (5) Efficient and Sustainable Management: By sharing responsibilities, the leadership workload is not concentrated on one person, so that the organization can run more smoothly and sustainably. (Fauzi et al., 2023)

Despite its many advantages, the implementation of distributed leadership is not without its challenges and weaknesses, namely: (1) Hierarchical Culture and Internal Resistance: A traditional and centralized organizational culture can be a major barrier, where delegation of authority is perceived as a weakness. (Arar & Taysum, 2020; Ramdhani & Andriyana, 2023) (2) Dependence on Individual Readiness and School Culture: The success of this model depends heavily on the capacity and willingness of organizational members to collaborate and the leader's ability to manage egos. (Arar & Taysum, 2020) (3) Risk of Delegation Without Real Empowerment: If not implemented properly, distributed leadership becomes merely a division of tasks without real authority and meaning. (Arar & Taysum, 2020; Harris, 2013) (4) Complex Communication and Coordination Challenges: Co-leadership requires a highly effective communication system to ensure all parties are well-coordinated. (Nadeem, 2024) (5) Conflict with External Policies and Accountability Systems: Rigid external education policies and top-down accountability systems often do not align with this participatory approach. (Nadeem, 2024) (6) Psychological Pressure on Formal Leaders: The process of "letting go" of control and authority can be a source of stress and pressure for traditional leaders (such as Kiai) accustomed to a centralized model. (Harris, 2013)

To ensure the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools amidst the limitations of a centralized model, distributed leadership offers a more systematic regeneration framework. Through this approach, the process of developing prospective leaders is designed holistically, not only sharpening their intellectual-religious capacities but also equipping them with empirical experience within leadership structures. The result is the emergence of leaders who have deeply internalized the Islamic boarding school's culture, vision, and mission.

While distributed leadership is claimed to increase organizational capacity through the distribution of responsibility, its effectiveness in building sustainable leadership resilience is not automatic. Organizational resilience requires more than simply a multiplicity of leadership figures; it requires a leadership system that is adaptive, capable of organizational learning, and resilient in maintaining the core vision amidst disruption. Without a planned strategy, the implementation of distributed leadership has the potential to create new vulnerabilities such as fragmentation of authority, inefficient coordination, and collective exhaustion, which can ultimately weaken the organization. (Harris, 2013) Therefore, leadership resilience must be built proactively through its integration with a systematic leadership regeneration process. Regeneration serves as a foundation that continuously replenishes and renews the leadership pipeline, ensuring that collaborative values and leadership competencies are not only disseminated but also internalized and passed on to the next generation. (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018); Spillane, 2005). The synergy between these two concepts, where distributed leadership serves as a development arena for cadres, while regeneration ensures the availability and readiness of leadership talent, creates a virtuous cycle. This cycle allows organizations to no longer rely on specific individuals but instead become resilient thanks to the support of a robust system and culture. (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018) Thus, true resilience is realized when distributed leadership is strengthened by strategic regeneration, supported by established infrastructure, and grounded in a collective commitment to a shared vision.

### **Leadership Regeneration: The Foundation for the Sustainability and Resilience of Islamic Boarding School Educational Institutions in the 21st Century**

Leadership regeneration in Islamic boarding schools is not merely a formal succession process, but rather a systematic strategy to ensure the sustainability of the organization's values, vision, and culture. Effective regeneration enables Islamic boarding schools to maintain their "spirit" and remain adaptive to the challenges of the times. Regeneration is understood as a dynamic

and ongoing process to identify, develop, and prepare future leaders, thus ensuring a smooth, planned leadership transition that can strengthen organizational resilience. (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018); (I. Wijayanti, 2016). In the unique ecosystem of Islamic boarding schools, regeneration is not merely a matter of replacing figures, but rather a process of transformation and passing on spiritual, intellectual, and cultural values from one generation to the next. To build an effective regeneration system, organizations need to take the following steps:

### **First: Identification and Talent Mapping within the Framework of Islamic Boarding School Leadership Regeneration**

As a strategic foundation for building the regeneration of Islamic boarding school leadership, the talent identification and mapping process serves as a proactive early warning system and a navigation map for designing precise and contextual leadership development programs. In the unique Islamic boarding school ecosystem, a mechanistic, paper-based approach is deemed inadequate to capture the complexity and spiritual-cultural dimensions inherent in a leader. Therefore, a holistic and organic approach is needed, integrated with the daily life of the Islamic boarding school.

### **Participatory Observation: Uncovering the Traces of Exemplary Leadership in Everyday Life**

Participatory observation is a primary methodology that prioritizes a qualitative and ethnographic approach. In practice, Kiai, Nyai, and senior ustaz act as "cultural observers" who actively and reflectively delve into the dynamics of social interactions in Islamic boarding schools. They are not only teachers, but also observant of the leadership traits reflected in the candidates' attitudes and actions in natural, unstructured situations. This observation process focuses on exploring non-cognitive indicators that indicate the quality of Islamic boarding school leadership, including: (1) Moral Integrity: Reflected through consistency between words and actions, honesty in daily transactions, and good manners maintained both in quiet and crowded settings. (2) Commitment to Pesantren Values: Demonstrated through sincerity in maintaining the positive traditions of the pesantren, a strong sense of belonging to the institution, and a willingness to sacrifice for the common good. (3) Exemplary Conduct: The ability to be a spontaneous role model, for example in discipline, simplicity, and enthusiasm for learning, which is then followed by other students without coercion. (4) Socio-Emotional Intelligence: Seen from the ability to build harmonious relationships (ukhuwah), empathy for the problems of others, and wisdom in resolving conflicts (Fauzi et al., 2023) This approach allows the identification of prospective leaders who are not only "smart" academically, but also "character" and "soul" of leaders, whose leadership will be born from respect, not just a formal position.

### **Multidimensional Assessment: Mapping Leadership Competencies Comprehensively**

To map and measure the potential of prospective leaders in a more comprehensive and structured manner, a multidimensional assessment is required. This assessment model resembles a pyramid built from four pillars of mutually supporting competencies. The main foundation is the Spirituality Dimension, which assesses spiritual depth, humility, steadfastness, and the ability to inspire, ensuring leadership remains rooted in divine values. Above this, the Intellectual Dimension tests mastery of traditional religious knowledge and the ability to translate it to address contemporary challenges, so that a leader is not only a successor to tradition but also a relevant enlightener. The Social Dimension is the next pillar, focusing on communication skills, building networks, and mobilizing communities. The apex of this pyramid is the Managerial Dimension, which encompasses modern organizational

management skills from strategic planning and resource management to digital literacy and social entrepreneurship so that Islamic boarding schools can be managed professionally and sustainably (I. Wijayanti, 2016) The results of this multidimensional mapping are not intended to create rankings or unhealthy competition, but rather to develop an individual development plan. Each prospective leader will receive a development program tailored to their strengths and areas of improvement, ensuring that the regeneration process is more focused, fair, and has a maximum impact on the resilience of Islamic boarding schools in the future.

### **Second: Capacity Building Based on Experiential Learning (Capacity Building through Experience)**

The concept of distributed leadership is the most effective leadership laboratory for regeneration (Gumus et al., 2018). Capacity development is carried out through several methods, namely: First, Granting Gradual Responsibilities: Prospective successors are not only taught theory but are given increasingly complex, real-world responsibilities. This ranges from leading small activities (such as coordinating routine religious study groups) to managing Islamic boarding school business units, to participating in strategic planning discussions (M. M. Wijayanti & Rosalinda, 2020). This real-life experience builds self-confidence, problem-solving skills, and authority in the eyes of the community. Second, Intensive Mentorship and Guidance (Apprenticeship Model): The kiai acts as the primary mentor, providing direct spiritual, managerial, and philosophical guidance. This "apprenticeship" model is at the heart of pesantren regeneration, where prospective successors learn not just what to do, but more importantly why to do it that is, understanding the philosophy and "feeling" behind every leadership decision. (Siregar et al., 2013). Senior ustadz can also be co-mentors in their respective fields..

### **Third: Incubation of Values and Vision**

Regeneration must ensure the maintenance of the core values of the Islamic boarding school (Uswah Hasanah, Zuhd, Independence). This is done through: (1) Regular Dialogue and Discussion: Holding special forums between the Kiai and prospective successors to discuss the long-term vision of the Islamic boarding school, contemporary challenges, and how to address them without sacrificing basic values. (2) Integration in Daily Activities: Values are not taught as separate material, but are internalized through daily practices in the Islamic boarding school, such as in interactions, resource management, and conflict resolution. Prospective leaders learn by seeing and experiencing directly how these values are lived. (Anwar, 2018)

### **Fourth: Planned and Transparent Succession**

The critical point in regeneration is the succession process itself. To avoid conflict and turmoil, it is necessary: (1) Long-Term Planning: The succession process must be designed well in advance, not when the Kiai is old or has died. The succession plan must include clear scenarios, including the criteria for successors, stages of handover, and the roles of stakeholders (family, asatidz council, alumni). (2) Wise Communication: Although it may not be announced publicly, the prepared successor candidates need to be introduced and given legitimacy gradually to the wider pesantren community. This allows for natural acceptance and reduces resistance. (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018)

### **Synergy of Distributed Leadership and Regeneration for Institutional Resilience**

In building organizational resilience, distributed leadership and regeneration serve as two sides of a coin that complement each other. Distributed leadership creates a "training ground" by establishing small command posts across the organization, allowing aspiring leaders to be tested and develop their capacity through real-life responsibilities.(Gumus et al., 2018) In

parallel, a systematic regeneration process acts as a pipeline, ensuring the availability of ready and qualified talent to fill every open leadership position, both at the operational and strategic levels. The synergy between the two ultimately creates organizational resilience. This resilience no longer relies on the strength of a single individual, but on the strength of a collective leadership system. Organizations become more adaptive because decisions are made by many people close to the problem, and more sustainable because there are always ready successors, so that if one element experiences a shock, others can immediately support it. (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Harris, 2013)

### **Challenges and Strategies for Leadership Regeneration**

The process of leadership regeneration in Islamic boarding schools faces a number of complex challenges. The main challenge often centers on the issue of heredity versus quality, where the tradition of family succession (nepotism) can clash with the need for religious knowledge, managerial skills, and charisma in potential successors. This has the potential to trigger internal conflict and power struggles, especially if the Kiai does not clearly designate a successor. Furthermore, the highly personal, charismatic nature of Kiai leadership can make it difficult to create a regular and sustainable leadership pattern, resulting in sudden and unplanned changes and a heavy dependence on a single figure. Other challenges include the low interest of the next generation in continuing the baton, economic and political pressures related to Islamic boarding school assets, and demands from today's students for more transparent and professional leadership.

To address these challenges, several strategies and solutions can be implemented. First, it is important to implement planned regeneration, whereby key Kiai prepare potential successors from an early age through intensive training and mentoring. This strategy can be strengthened by adopting a foundation system with a clear succession mechanism, so that leadership changes are not solely based on lineage but also consider the professionalism and qualities of individuals. (Ramli, 2017) The principle of "al-muhafazhatu 'alal qadimisi shalih ma'al akhdzi bil jadidil ashlah" (maintaining existing good things while developing new and better ones) can serve as a guide in this transformation process. Furthermore, building partnerships with universities or mentoring institutions, as well as creating transparency in the management of Islamic boarding school assets, are also crucial steps to minimize conflict and ensure the future survival of Islamic boarding schools.

### **Discussion**

#### **The Beginning of the Centralistic Leadership Pattern of Islamic Boarding Schools**

Early in their development, Islamic boarding school leadership adopted a centralized pattern, anchored on the figure of the Kiai (Islamic leader) as the founder, manager, and primary person in charge. This model aimed to maintain the consistency of the vision and mission of Islamic education, which underpins the pesantren. According to (Fauzan, 2019), the centralized pattern in Islamic boarding school leadership is based on the belief that the Kiai is a charismatic and sacred figure believed to bring blessings. However, as the complexity of institutional management increases, centralized leadership is deemed less conducive to addressing modern challenges (Anwar, 2018). According to (Mubarok et al., 2023), a centralized system offers structural efficiency through organizational simplification and accelerated decision-making. Furthermore, distributed leadership offers better planning integration, resource optimization through asset sharing, and increased coordination and centralized utilization of expertise. However, distributed leadership also has weaknesses in terms of responsiveness and decision quality. Centralized bureaucratic processes tend to slow down responses to environmental

changes, while decisions taken often do not take into account the realities of implementation at the field level. (Mubarok et al., 2023) Thus, centralized leadership faces challenges in balancing short-term effectiveness with long-term sustainability.

### **Evolution of Islamic Boarding School Leadership (Centralistic-Distribution)**

To address the challenges of modernity and maintain the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools, Islamic boarding school leadership has undergone a transformation in leadership style from a charismatic-authoritarian style to a more rationalistic, diplomatic, and participatory approach. Likewise, in terms of its form, from traditional Islamic boarding schools (salaf) to semi-modern (integrated) or modern (khalaf) Islamic boarding schools. (Anwar, 2018). This flexibility demonstrates the ability of Islamic boarding schools to respond to developments while maintaining public trust. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, there are at least two known leadership models, namely individual leadership and collective leadership. Individual leadership is a leadership model that places a single figure as the source of all policies, religious authority, and decision-making. In contrast, collective leadership offers a more inclusive approach (Harris, 2013). According to (Harris, 2013) the distributed leadership model offers several strategic advantages compared to the centralistic approach, including: (1) increasing the overall organizational capacity by utilizing the various talents and expertise possessed by ustadz, caretakers, and even senior students. (2) creating a sense of ownership among all components of the Islamic boarding school, which ultimately encourages more active participation and initiative. (3) ensuring the sustainability and resilience of the Islamic boarding school, and (4) being more adaptive in facing the complexity of modern challenges. This opinion is supported by (Gumus et al., 2018) who state that, by distributing responsibilities, Islamic boarding schools can respond to change more agilely and innovatively. A flexible structure allows small units within the Islamic boarding school to experiment with new solutions without waiting for instructions from the center, thus being more responsive to social, educational, and technological dynamics. In addition, the implementation of a distributed leadership model can create a sustainable leadership pipeline through empirical experience. Prospective leaders, such as young ustadz and senior students, not only learn theoretically but are directly involved in real leadership practices. This allows the transfer of knowledge and Islamic boarding school values to occur organically, while minimizing the leadership vacuum in the future.

### **The Challenge of Implementing Distributed Leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools**

Despite its potential benefits, the implementation of a distributed leadership model in the Islamic boarding school ecosystem faces several crucial challenges, including:

The first challenge is the tension between charismatic and rational-legal authority. According to Weber in (Latif & Hanani, 2025) the main foundation of Islamic boarding school leadership often rests on the charismatic authority of the Kyai, a unique form of personal authority that is difficult to institutionalize. On the other hand, distributed leadership adopts a rational-legal authority model based on structure and role division. As a result, this redistribution of authority has the potential to cause tension and can be perceived as an attempt to delegitimize the Kyai's omnipresent spiritual authority. (Malik & Muhamad Ibnu, 2023)

The second challenge is the risk of policy fragmentation and weakened internal ties. Distributed leadership is not simply a division of tasks, but rather an effort to create "connected leadership." Without solid coordination, this model will degenerate into "fragmented leadership," where each unit operates independently without a unified vision. (Spillane, 2005). For example, the

modern curriculum policies of the education division may clash with the traditional values held dear by the care division, thus causing disorientation.

The third fundamental challenge comes from the deeply ingrained organizational culture of the Islamic boarding school itself, namely a culture of hierarchy and absolute obedience. Established groups close to the Kyai may view this new model as a threat to their position and influence. Furthermore, a culture of reluctance to take initiative can hinder the growth of a sense of collective responsibility, which is the very essence of distributed leadership. Stakeholders are often reluctant to act for fear of being perceived as overstepping the authority of their Kyai or seniors. (Harris, 2013).

### **Leadership Regeneration through Distributed Leadership for the Resilience of Educational Institutions in the 21st Century**

In the context of Islamic boarding school leadership transformation, implementing a structured regeneration strategy is imperative to overcome cultural resistance and maintain institutional sustainability. Based on the theoretical framework (Harris, 2013), This approach does not merely distribute authority, but substantively builds a sustainable leadership ecosystem.

The three pillars of the strategy implemented are:

First, the Progressive-Symbolic Delegation Mechanism. This model adopts a gradual approach through three developmental phases: operational (administrative and communication), development (non-core curriculum), and independence (strategic planning). Each transition is reinforced through symbolic legitimacy that affirms delegation as an authoritative mandate from the Kyai, thus maintaining spiritual authority while building the leadership capacity of the next generation.

Second, the Institutionalization of the Leadership Council. In accordance with the concept (Bolden, 2011), this collegial structure integrates multidimensional representation: spiritual authority (Kyai), traditional authority (Dewan Asatidz) based on a study (Lutfi et al., 2024), managerial competence (Professional Administrator), and stakeholder representation (Senior Santri). The council serves as an institutional mechanism to transform the charismatic vision into measurable operational policies, while preventing fragmentation through a strategic alignment process.

Third, the Continuous Development and Socialization Program. This strategy builds a cultural foundation through the internalization of Islamic values (shura, amanah), the development of technical competencies, and participatory socialization. The legitimacy of the transformation is strengthened through exemplary modeling by Kyai in collaborative practices, which organically reconstruct the leadership paradigm.

The integrated implementation of these three strategies has successfully transformed the distributed model from a potential threat into a strategic solution that strengthens the institutional resilience of Islamic boarding schools, creates a sustainable regeneration mechanism, while maintaining the integrity of fundamental values amidst the demands of modernity. There are many different types of people, all of them have the same model as they do not have to do anything that they need to do on the Pondok Pesantren abad 21, which will be the first one to do this:

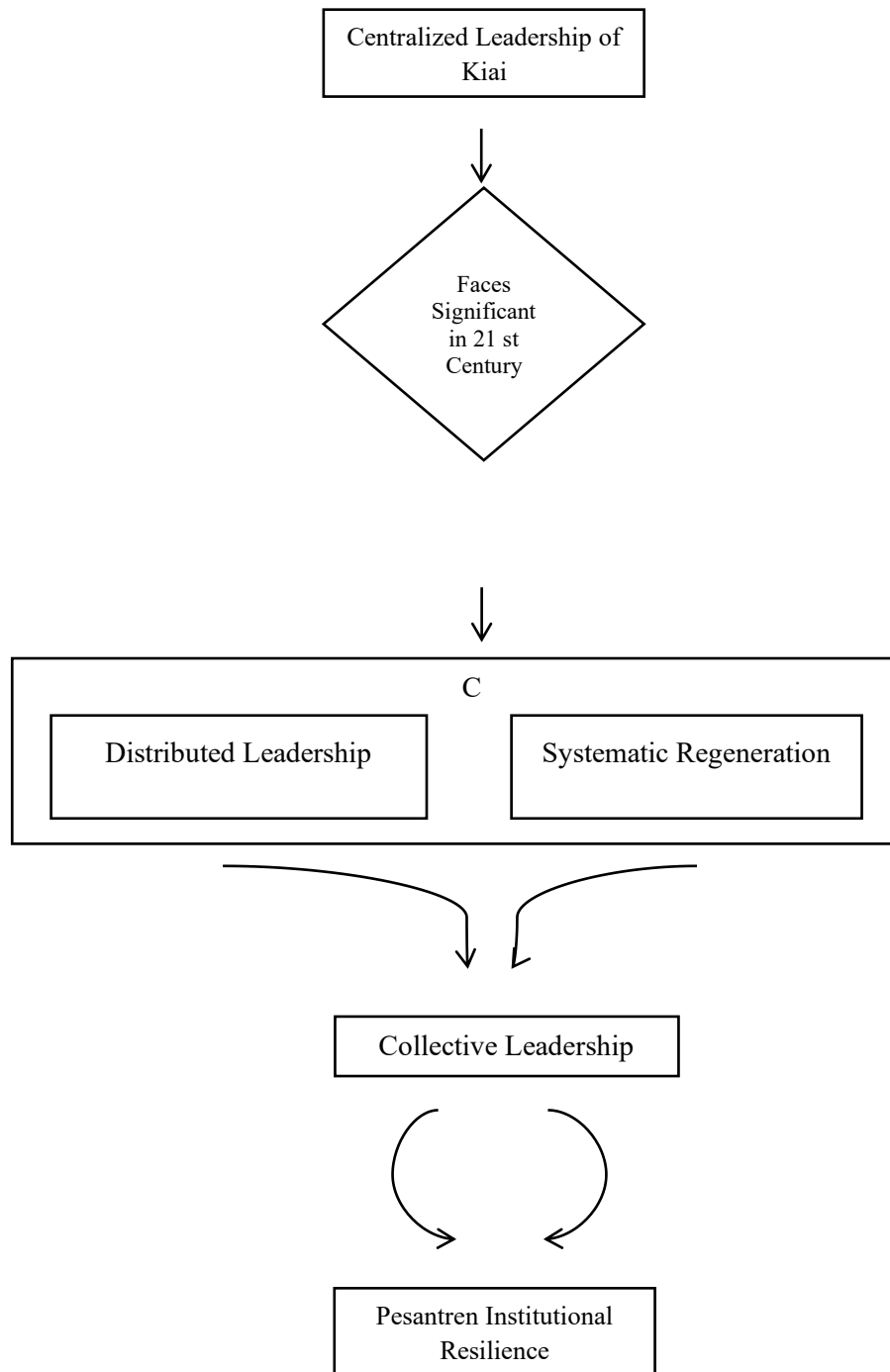


Figure 2. Model Leadership of kiyai for the resilience of educational institutions in Islamic boarding schools in the 21st century

Based on the presented chart, it can be explained that the 21st-century Islamic boarding school leadership model has undergone a fundamental transformation, moving from a centralized paradigm to an integrative approach. Initially, centralized Kiai leadership faced significant challenges in addressing the complexities of the 21st century, such as over-reliance on a single figure, slow innovation, and a regeneration crisis. To address these issues, an integrative solution combining two primary approaches is required.

First, a distributed leadership approach that divides operational responsibilities among the asatidz council, senior santri, and professional staff. Second, systematic regeneration that

builds a leadership pipeline through talent identification, capacity development, and the transmission of values. These two pillars synergize to form collective leadership, where the Kiai transforms from a single operational leader to a visionary-spiritual leader.

The result of implementing this integrative model is the realization of Islamic boarding school institutional resilience, characterized by three main characteristics: adaptability and innovation in the face of change, organizational continuity and sustainability, and system resilience independent of a single individual. Importantly, this resilience creates a virtue cycle by reinforcing collective leadership practices, thus forming a sustainable system capable of maintaining traditional Islamic boarding school values while remaining relevant in a disruptive era.

## Conclusion

Based on a systematic literature review, this research successfully formulated a recontextualization of the concept of Kiai leadership through the integration of distributed and regeneration approaches as a fundamental strategy for building the resilience of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in the 21st century. First, the distributed leadership model offers a structural transformation from a centralized, command-based paradigm to a collaborative-adaptive model that distributes operational leadership responsibilities to the board of asatidz (leaders), senior students (santri), and professional staff, while the Kiai maintains his role as a spiritual and visionary authority. Second, the implementation of this model through three integrative phases foundation preparation, empowerment implementation, and ongoing maintenance has proven effective in creating a collective leadership ecosystem that strengthens the capacity for pedagogical innovation and responsiveness to digital disruption.

Third, the synergy between distributed leadership and regeneration creates a virtuous cycle where distributed responsibility serves as a laboratory for developing leadership cadres, while systematic regeneration ensures the continuity of the leadership pipeline through holistic talent identification mechanisms, experiential learning-based capacity development, and the transmission of the pesantren's core values. Fourth, the resulting hypothetical model addresses the academic gap by integrating Western distributed leadership principles with local pesantren values (uswah hasanah, zuhd, and independence) without diminishing the spiritual authority of the Kiai, but instead strengthening it through a robust collective leadership system.

The theoretical implications of this research present a contextual model that reconciles the charismatic-spiritual leadership tradition of pesantren with modern managerial demands, while offering a new perspective in the study of Islamic educational leadership. Practically, the developed implementation roadmap provides operational guidance for pesantren to transform into resilient learning organizations. Further research is needed to test the effectiveness of this model across various pesantren typologies and to explore the implementation of digital technology to strengthen distributed leadership systems.

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