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# The Innovative Leadership Model Of Pesantren In Developing The Potential Of Gifted Students

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#### ABSTRACT

The attractiveness of pesantren is determined through the quality of graduates. The talent interest factor requires innovative policy support. This study aims to explore the implementation of innovative leadership and describe the characteristics of innovative leadership in developing the potential of talented santri at Almuslim Peusangan Bireun Islamic boarding school. The sources of informants in this study are the head of the care sector, the head of the teaching sector, the supervisor of the santri organization, and the supervisor of the santri talent interest section. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach located at the Almuslim Peusangan Bireun Integrated Islamic Boarding School. The results of this study found that the leader of the Al Muslim integrated pesantren applies innovative leadership characteristics, 1) The innovations made are, a). Creating a digitalization program in learning, b). Creating a santri entrepreneur program, c). And increasing the potential of students. 2) Increasing the competence of santri is done through, a). External and internal support (cooperation), b). Development of individual potential, c). Development of institutional potential.

#### INTRODUCTION

Pesantren graduates are considered less competitive in the academic aspects of science, sports competitions, Olympics and various other extracurricular activities that lead to the general field (Faizin, 2020). Pesantren institutions are frequently underestimated by the community in terms of the potential of the general field, especially in supporting academic potential, extracurricular activities, general olympiads and various kinds of sports carried out by tiered educational institutions, communities, and education offices (Arifiah, 2021). Autonomicisation in educational

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institutions opens opportunities for pesantren to implement strategic innovations in creating competitive graduates (Ulum & Munim, 2019). The students have their own interests and talents in both writing stories, drawing, sports, sewing, reading poetry, giving speeches and other kinds, as for how to find and develop these talents by providing facilities, leadership concern for talent development, providing special counselors for the development of interests and talents and managing extracurricular activities and techniques (Miftahus Sa'adah, 2018; Halimah et al., 2024). This must be considered by a pesantren leader based on many school graduates who are difficult to adapt to the world of work and due to a lack of life skills and skills, efforts that can be made by pesantren leaders by accommodating all educators to develop santri skills (Arba'i, 2022).

Innovative leadership in pesantren shows that the role of leadership is very important in developing the potential of students as a whole (Mujahid, 2021; Syam et al., 2023). revealed that although pesantren are often considered less competitive in academics and extracurricular activities, some pesantren have shown positive changes through creative and innovative leadership (Hanafi et al., 2021). For example, (Djafri et al., 2020) highlighted the importance of paying attention to the development of santri's talents and interests, which can be achieved through structured management of extracurricular activities. In addition, research by (Hidayati & Farikhah, 2023).confirmed that leadership that prioritizes innovation is able to create new programs that support the development of santri competencies in various fields (Chanda, 2021). This shows that leadership transformation in pesantren is very influential on the readiness of santri in facing challenges outside the world of pesantren education (Dasuki, 2019).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of innovative leadership in developing the potential of santri in pesantren, especially in the academic field and extracurricular activities. This paper aims to explore how creative and strategic leadership can create programs that support the talents and interests of santri, and how this can increase their competitiveness in the world of work and wider social life In addition, another goal is to provide an understanding of the importance of pesantren adaptation to global developments by creating an educational environment that accommodates the development of academic and other skills, in order to produce graduates who are ready to compete in various fields.

Innovative leadership in pesantren has a significant role in developing the potential of santri, both in academic aspects and extracurricular activities Creative and strategic leadership can create programs that support the talents and interests of santri, as well as improve their life skills that are relevant to the needs of the world of work. With special attention to the development of non-academic competencies through organized extracurricular activities, pesantren can produce graduates who are more

competitive and ready to face challenges outside the pesantren environment. Therefore, leadership that supports innovation and change in pesantren is the main key in creating santri who not only excel in the field of religion, but also in various other fields that are relevant to today's global life.

#### RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method that aims to describe in depth the characteristics of innovative pesantren leadership (Zaini et al., 2023). This research is located in Almuslim integrated pesantren affiliated with the Almuslim foundation. Primary informants in this study were in the form of pesantren leaders, teaching fields, care fields, and talent interest fields, while secondary informants were in the form of organization coaches, sports coaches, teachers, education personnel and students. Data collection techniques used through three stages, namely observation, interviews and documentation, researchers directly observed the practice of developing interests and talents in the field. Interview activities were carried out by researchers with leaders, teachers, teaching, nurturing, interest and talent, students and several tendik structurally (Nina Adlini Et Al., 2022). In addition, it also conducts activities to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers face to face, so that data can be constructed into a topic that researchers want to study. Documentation activities are carried out by analyzing and collecting written or electronic documents related to research studies. The process of analyzing data through data collection, data reduction, data presentation and data verification, in the data analysis process also uses descriptive analysis by filtering the data obtained in the form of an easy-to-understand explanation. Furthermore, data validity testing carried out by researchers is based on credibility, depentability, transferability, and confirmability (Sugiyono, 2018). The research process carried out by researchers is in accordance with the structural expectations of the institution, and interacts well and clearly during the implementation of the research. The researcher hopes that this research will achieve a scientific work that is useful for all readers, then it can also be used as a reference for the next scientific work

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS Implementation of innovative leadership in pesantren

The leader of the Al Muslim Peusangan Bireun Integrated Pesantren can be said to be an innovative leader based on his leadership behavior, in which the leader has made several changes and innovations in improving educational institutions, especially pesantren, in accordance with the needs of the times in the digitalization era (Nordberg et al., 2020). The characteristics that exist in the leadership of the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School include:

## 1. Indicators of Innovative Leadership

a) Changes

The leaders responded well to all the changes that occurred in the distribution era, this was done by preparing all the demands according to the changing times that occurred, then the leadership also integrated the pesantren curriculum with the ever-changing national curriculum, furthermore, the leaders also made the teachers and staff adapt to the use of technology in the learning process such as innovative learning applications and learning media, and finally the leaders made trainings to support the ability of teachers and staff in facing the distributed era (Longmuir, 2023; Uhl-Bien, 2021).

## b) Innovation and Novelty

The characteristics of an innovative leader are inseparable from the innovation or novelty formed, the leadership of the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School also has programs and innovations that have been made and are able to develop, the leadership itself has made innovations in the fields of technology, student entrepreneurship, and the development of student potential (Sansone et al., 2021). The first innovation is in the field of technology or digitalization that in the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School all students are required to bring laptops to be used in computer learning where the target is carried out to prevent students from being ignorant of technology, then the second innovation is in the field of student entrepreneurship, the goal is to form the entrepreneurial spirit of the students, and the third innovation is in the field of developing the potential of students, the development is carried out strategically and structured, the results of these innovations are many students who excel in activities such as popda, porseni and other events (Riva et al., 2021).

The results of the study are in line with the expression of H. Djoko Hartono and Erna Kusumawati, that innovative leadership can be characterized by discovery and change in a good direction, as well as making the attractiveness of the innovations made, especially the demands of adjusting the times in the era of globalization (Hartono, 2020; Kusumawati, 2023).

Implementasian model kepemimpinan inovatif pimpinan Pesantren Terpadu Al Muslim melalui karakteristik kepempinan inovatif menghasilkan beberapa inovasi sebagai berikut:

*Pertama*, Technology / digitalization; Innovations made in the field of using technology in learning, namely santri have used laptops in learning, for example computer learning, then there is already digital literacy made to increase knowledge through training, then in terms of infrastructure it is also adequate such as infocus, learning media, and the internet provided to make it easier for santri to learn.

*Kedua*, Enterpreneur; Enterpreneur santri created in order to build an entrepreneurial spirit towards santri, where santri when graduating from pesantren have entrepreneurial skills not only religious disciplines, academics, and talent interests that can be displayed, but can also add to the level of santri's ability to build

a business, a form of entrepreneurship made by visiting creative community businesses and making several forms of crafts such as liquid soap.

*Ketiga*, Development of santri potential; The development of santri potential is very prominent in the Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren, where in several events or competitions in Bireun Regency many santri have qualified to represent Bireun Regency for events at the provincial level.

Table 1 Table of Stages of Santri Potential Development

Tuble 1 Tuble of Stages of Builtin 1 otential Development						
No	Aspect	Programs	Target			
1	Mental	Student organization	Maturation and readiness to			
	strengthening	leadership Motivation	perform			
2	Talent interest	Consultation and data	1. Build interest talent and			
	briefings	collection	potential.			
			2. Competitiveness			
3	Training facility	Facilities, trainers, and	1. Memenuhi kebutuhan			
		transportation	pengembangan potensi			
			2. Berkompetensi sesuai bidang			
4	Motivation	Taujihat wal isyadat	Encourage the spirit of achievement			
5	Education and	Special scheduling,	1. Structured training activities.			
	training	Competent mentors,	2. Focus in training.			
		Conducive environment	3. Skilled in potential.			
			4. Comfort in building potential			
6	External	Dukungan orang tua	1. Building morale.			
		dan masyarakat	2. Social potential			
7	Materil	Finansial	1. Comparative study.			
			2. Transportation.			
			3. Competent trainer			
8	Physical,	Training center,	1. Maturity in events			
	psychological,	Motivation and advice,	2. Boost morale.			
	emotional, and	Understanding	3. Adaptability.			
	spiritual aspects	conditions, Islamic	4. Peace of mind			
		values and worship				

#### c) Vision and Missions

The characteristics of the innovative leadership of Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren are that the leaders have a good vision and mission, and are able to socialize the vision and mission to teachers, staff and students in a good and structured manner. The process of implementing socialization in conveying the vision and mission is carried out in stages, namely through annual meetings, semester meetings and monthly meetings (Fathih et al., 2021).

## d) Strategy

Innovative leadership characteristics have strategic direction, in every activity and program made, it increases and has the potential for development, this is because all forms of programs made must be structured and included with the committee structure, so that all parts are able to be responsible for their own parts in the success of each program carried out. Through a strategic and structured leadership strategy so that the program created is growing day by day, as evidence is that several students represent Bireun Regency in participating in the Popda event and the Tahfidzul Qur'an field which participates in the MTQ at the Bireun Regency level.

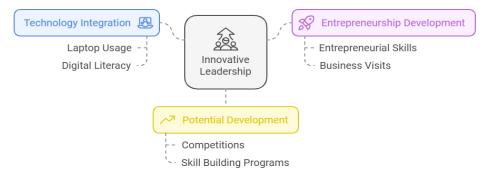
## e) Ideas, Programs and Policy

The leadership of Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren has innovative characteristics in involving all elements in making new policies and innovations, this is carried out through deliberation activities, then also through deliberation activities will decide together on new policies and innovations that will be implemented in the future (Jacquet & van der Does, 2021; Zen & Rodliyah, 2022).

## f) Problem Solving

Problem solving is understood as the ability to solve problems, both internally and externally. Problem solving is done with openness, meaning that if there is a problem, it opens up opportunities to be seen as a solution in solving it (Dąbrowska et al., 2022; Mohamed Nor et al., 2022).

Figure 1. Inovative Leadership



## 2. Change Strategy

#### a. Encourage all elements to innovate

The change strategy carried out by the Pesantren leadership to encourage all elements to innovate, encouragement to make policies and innovations to subordinates is carried out through deliberation or consensus, which in the deliberation will be decided together about the policies and programs to be implemented. Encouragement to invite staff and teachers is also done by adapting to innovations or novelties that occur in educational institutions (French et al., 2020; Harun et al., 2020; Husnan, 2019).

#### b. Attractiveness

The next change strategy carried out by the leadership is to make the pesantren's attractiveness to the community, the attractiveness made is to make the pesantren environment a language environment and the Qur'an environment, namely by implementing it in the daily culture of students always speaking Arabic/English and inseparable from the Qur'an, then also the next attraction is the integration of the pesantren and national curriculum, so that students are proficient in religious and general knowledge.

No Characteristics **Activity** Result Adapting education to Prevent technology stupor 1. Change the times Islamic boarding school Innovation Able to have science 2. techology, academic and religion enterpreneurship Make students have lifeskill students Planning activity for Achieved all Islamic boarding Strategy 3. development school activity Manage and resolve all All problem resolved and **Problem Solving** 4. problems in a peacefully structured manner Attractiveness Integration of religious Be a solution for the whole 5. with academic community

Table 2 Table Characteristics Innovation Leadership

## Model of Innovative Pesantren Leadership in Developing Santri's Potential

knowledge

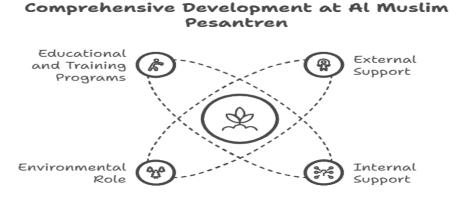
The effectiveness in shaping the potential of talented students is carried out through the development of the potential and interests of students' talents, the development is carried out so that students are able to compete and excel in their respective fields (Fuadi & Irdalisa, 2022). In the process of developing the potential of students, many improvements have been made by leaders with various efforts. The innovations and efforts made by leaders in developing the potential and talent interests of students at the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School include:

The external support in shaping the potential of students is through the support of the parents of students and the community around the pesantren (M. Hanif Satria Budi, 2023; Skinner et al., 2022). As for the support carried out by parents through moral support, namely the santri guardian is very enthusiastic and eager to motivate students to develop, as for material support, namely supporting students with financial assistance to facilitate the tools or needs of students in education and talent interest training. Meanwhile, regarding community support in developing the potential of

students, namely the pesantren provides its students to perform in activities invited by the community, as well as collaborating in presenting students to represent villages or sub-districts around the pesantren in events such as speeches and MTQ.

One form of internal support for developing the potential of students is that the pesantren fully supports the development of the potential and talent interests of students, where this support is carried out by facilitating facilities and infrastructure, moral and material support which is through motivation and funds. The development of santri potential is carried out in a structured manner, from the selection and direction of talent interests to including santri in core members, very specific material support, for example providing a stage for santri to participate in all events and including comparative studies to other pesantren and countries to see the development of other pesantren potential.

Figure 2. Comprehensive Development Pesantren



The role of the pesantren environment in developing students' talent interests in the Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren is considered very good, because through this environment students are not influenced by things outside the pesantren (Azis, 2024; Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė & Barkauskienė, 2023). The pesantren environment system is very positive because the Al Muslim Integrated Boarding School has a 24-hour curriculum system, where students are easily organized and scheduled for training. One way to develop the potential of students is through education and training. Education and training provided for the development of the potential of students at the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School through scheduling special time outside of academic lessons, then providing training according to their fields of interest, and the students are nurtured by trainers who are competent in their respective fields, for example such as martial arts, soccer, tahfidz, lectures, scouts, journalism, table tennis, basketball, and so on.

## 1. Individualized Development

The individual ability development of santri is also carried out at the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School, namely by means of training centers (Tc) in every event attended by santri, both at the pesantren, regional, or provincial levels. Then the development of individual abilities is also through providing opportunities or stages in implementing the knowledge that has been obtained by performing at events, as imams, as organizational administrators, so that students have mature abilities in themselves (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Syahri et al., 2023).

Autodidactic training is also carried out by students of the Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren, where students are formed by the value of independence by staying at the pesantren, so that these students are able to answer all the needs of their individuals, including in establishing themselves towards developing potential in the field they have.

## 2. Institutionalization Development

The next potential development is by forming a strategy in developing the potential of students, this is done by the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School by directing the interests and talents of students, providing moral and material support, forming a talent interest development environment, mentally strengthening students, providing motivation and advice, giving rewards, making training, integrating the curriculum, supervising structured training, and developing four postencies from physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects (Alqahtani et al., 2021; Crawford & Burns, 2020).

To pursue the potential of talented students at the Al Muslim Integrated Islamic Boarding School is carried out by directing the interests and talents of students and including them in the core members of the field of interest, this is monitored directly by the student talent interest section, including scheduling training, recommending trainers who are competent in their respective fields, from these efforts, the potential of students who are qualified and excel in their own fields can be formed.

No	Activity	Objective
1.	Retrieved from	Make it easy to map talent interests
2.	Briefing	Awareness of students according to qualified fields
3.	Incorporate in core members	Makes it easy for students to adapt to their interests
		and talents.
4.	Training scheduling	Make it easy for students to focus on developing
		their talents
5.	Recommend a trainer	Produce qualified students with their own fields

Table 3 Table of Talent Interest Support Activities

The next potential development at Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren is through the development of physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual potential. First, the development of physical potential is through training centers or sections where the

potential is related to physical aspects, such as sports and scouts. Then the development of psychological potential is the parts related to the potential of the mind such as tahfidz, ceramah, and khat, this is done by motivating and independent santri in training / self-taught.

Then the third is the development of emotional potential by creating a pesantren environment where there is a lot of advice and motivation in mobilizing feelings for achievement. Then the last is the development of developing the potential of students through spiritual aspects, namely by building spiritual values such as worship, and mental strengthening (Chanifah et al., 2021; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023).

The last development of santri potential is the development and integration of academic and non-academic potential. Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren develops this potential by making students militant, meaning that students are required to be able to have academic and non-academic potential, the academic potential itself is carried out in class during teaching and learning hours, then non-academic potential through extracurricular activities and students' talent interests, the development of this potential is related to curriculum integration, because it must schedule specifically so that students have potential in two fields.

Table 4 Table Programs Development Student

No	Programs	Aspects of talent	
	<u> </u>	interest	
1	Training Center, Reschedule, Comparative Study, Taujihat wal		
	Isyadat, Al Muslim Peusangan Olympiad, Internal Competition	Sports	
	Procurement.	_	
2	Reschedule, Al Muslim Drama Contest, Taujihat wal Isyadat,	Art/Language	
3	Reschedule, KDI Community Building, Al Muslim Speech	Public speaking	
	Contest, Taujihat wal Isyadat.		
4	Organizational training, implementation of organizational	Leadership	
	tasks, and Lpj of santri organizations. Taujihat wal Isyadat.		
5	Comparative Studies, Mini Workshops, Practices, and Bazaar	Kewirausahaan	
	Procurement.		
6	ASEAN Scout Adventure, Al Muslim Scout Movement	Pramuka	
	Competiont, Taujihat wal Isyadat.		
7	Reschedule hafalan, Muraja'ah, Tasmi', Taujihat wal Isyadat.	Tahfidzul Qur'an	
8	Writing Training, Social Media Mastery, Documentation.	Jurnalism	

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The implementation of innovative leadership of the leadership of Al Muslim integrated pesantren has been running well, innovative through responding to changes and developments of the times, creating new innovations, being able to solve existing problems both internal and external, being able to make adjustments to the times of educational institutions, optimizing the performance of teachers and pesantren staff, and forming evaluations and monitoring the extent of the performance carried out. The innovations that have been created and have been carried out in Al Muslim integrated pesantren are the utilization of technology for learning, forming literacy, building the entrepreneurial spirit of students, and developing the potential of talented and outstanding students.

The strength of this paper lies in its contribution to the development of educational leadership science, especially in the pesantren environment. This study updates the perspective on innovative leadership by identifying the dimensions of leadership that are relevant in the context of pesantren, such as adaptation to changing times, the application of technology in learning, and the development of the potential of students as a whole. The research questions raised also provide a clear focus on leadership innovations that can be adapted by pesantren in the future.

The limitations of this study lie in several aspects, including the limited scope of cases only at Al Muslim Integrated Pesantren, so the findings cannot be generalized to other pesantren. This study is also limited to the location, which only includes pesantren in one region, so it may not reflect leadership practices in pesantren in other regions with different social or cultural conditions. In addition, this study did not consider gender and age factors in the development of santri potential, which may affect the results and dynamics in the implementation of innovative leadership. The variety of methods used, i.e. interviews and observations, although providing sufficient descriptions, may not fully cover a broader or in-depth perspective. This limitation needs to be considered in expanding further research.

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