



Integrating Mangenta Local Wisdom into Pesantren Leadership: An Empirical Model of Educational Transformation

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Abstract

Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) leadership is increasingly required to respond to contemporary educational challenges while sustaining deeply rooted religious, cultural, and institutional traditions. However, integrative leadership models that systematically bridge indigenous wisdom with modern education remain underexplored. This study examines the development of an adaptive *pesantren* leadership framework by integrating the Mangenta philosophy as indigenous local knowledge with critical pedagogy and systematic transformation. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected through structured surveys administered to *kyai*, teachers, and educational practitioners in *pesantren* settings and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Reliability and construct validity were confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The findings reveal that local knowledge exerts a strong influence on Mangenta philosophy, while critical pedagogy significantly mediates the internalization of local wisdom into leadership practices. Systematic transformation contributes as a supporting institutional condition that facilitates adaptation without undermining philosophical coherence. These results demonstrate that Mangenta-based local wisdom, when critically mediated and institutionally supported, forms a culturally grounded and adaptive *pesantren* leadership model. The study contributes to Islamic educational leadership scholarship by offering an empirically validated, context-sensitive framework that harmonizes tradition and innovation within faith-based educational institutions.

Keywords: *Pesantren Leadership; Local Wisdom; Mangenta Philosophy; Critical Pedagogy.*

A. Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) constitute a foundational pillar of Indonesia's educational system, characterized by an integrative educational model that combines spiritual cultivation, moral formation, and academic development (Wajdi et al., 2022; Wasehudin et al., 2023). Beyond their instructional function, *pesantren* historically operate as socio-cultural institutions that preserve and transmit local wisdom, communal ethics, and religious traditions within Indonesian society (Anam et al., 2019; Assa'idi, 2021; Muafiah et al., 2022). Through their distinctive pedagogical practices and leadership structures, *pesantren* play a strategic role in shaping moral authority, collective identity, and value-based education that extends beyond formal schooling into broader community life.

In the contemporary era of globalization, however, *pesantren* are increasingly confronted with rapid flows of external values, information, and cultural norms that significantly influence the mindset, aspirations, and identity of younger generations (Rahman, 2022; Tanamas et al., 2020). These dynamics place *pesantren* in a complex and often contradictory position. On the one hand, they are expected to remain educationally competitive, adaptive, and responsive to modern demands, including innovation, inclusivity, and organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, *pesantren* are required to safeguard their traditional identity and cultural rootedness, which constitute the moral and institutional foundations of their legitimacy (Kawakip & Sulanam, 2023; Rashdi, 2024). This tension between modernization and cultural continuity generates a critical leadership challenge: how can *pesantren* manage transformation without eroding indigenous values that sustain their spiritual authority and social relevance?

Existing studies on *pesantren* transformation have predominantly focused on institutional adaptation, curriculum reform, or managerial modernization. While such approaches have contributed valuable insights into structural and administrative change, they often marginalize the substantive role of indigenous knowledge systems in shaping leadership practices and guiding sustainable transformation. In many cases, local wisdom within *pesantren* is treated as symbolic heritage or cultural ornamentation rather than as an epistemological and operational framework for leadership and decision-making (Sukadari et al., 2020; Witro et al., 2022). As a result, leadership reform initiatives risk becoming technocratic or externally driven, lacking deep cultural legitimacy within the *pesantren* ecosystem.

From a theoretical standpoint, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy conceptualizes education as a process of *conscientization*, enabling learners to critically engage with their socio-cultural realities rather than passively absorb transmitted knowledge (Alves & De Oliveira, 2021; Madhakomala et al., 2022; Terzi et al., 2020). In principle, this perspective offers significant potential for empowering *pesantren* communities to reflect on tradition, authority, and change. Nevertheless, empirical applications of Freirean pedagogy in *pesantren* contexts have rarely explored its role as a mediating mechanism for internalizing local wisdom into leadership practices. Instead, critical pedagogy is often discussed at the classroom level, detached from institutional leadership dynamics.

Similarly, Michael Fullan's theory of systemic educational change emphasizes coherence among leadership, organizational culture, and stakeholder participation as prerequisites for sustainable transformation (Thiers, 2017; Procaccini, 2012; Viczko, 2016; Wajdi et al., 2024). Although this framework has been widely applied in educational reform studies, empirical integration with indigenous value systems in religious institutions remains limited. The question of how systemic change can be anchored in local philosophical traditions – rather than imposed solely through managerial rationality – has not been adequately addressed in research on *pesantren* leadership.

Transformational leadership theory, as articulated by Bass and Avolio, has frequently been employed to explain the role of *kyai* as moral and institutional leaders who inspire innovation while maintaining organizational commitment (Annisafitra & Rositawati, 2023; Jubba et al., 2022; Ramdhani et al., 2022). This perspective aligns closely with Clifford Geertz's concept of local knowledge, which recognizes cultural wisdom as a legitimate epistemological resource rather than merely inherited tradition (Aslan, 2017; Balmaceda, 2023; Cossu, 2021; Munk et al., 2022; Prastyadewia et al., 2020; Widayati et al., 2023). Complementing this view, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory highlights the reciprocal relationship between institutional structures and human agency, suggesting that *pesantren* transformation emerges through continuous interaction between leadership actions, institutional norms, and community participation.

Despite the richness of these theoretical perspectives, previous research has largely employed critical pedagogy, systemic change, transformational leadership, and local knowledge frameworks in isolation. This theoretical fragmentation limits a comprehensive understanding of how indigenous wisdom can be operationalized within *pesantren* leadership. Consequently, the empirical mechanisms through which



local values shape adaptive leadership practices – particularly the dynamic interplay between structure and agency – remain insufficiently understood.

This study addresses this gap by introducing *Mangenta*, an indigenous Dayak tradition rooted in gratitude to God, communal cooperation, respect for nature, and spiritual solidarity, as an operational leadership framework rather than a symbolic cultural artifact, as previously noted by Sukadari (2020) and Witro (2022). Traditionally practiced as a hereditary ritual welcoming the rice harvest season, *Mangenta* is reconceptualized in this study as a source of leadership values that foster critical skills, creativity, and cultural understanding within *pesantren* education in Palangkaraya. Rather than positioning *Mangenta* as a static tradition, this research situates it as a living epistemic resource capable of guiding leadership transformation.

By integrating *Mangenta* with critical pedagogy, systemic transformation theory, transformational leadership, and structuration theory, this study proposes a culturally grounded yet theoretically coherent model of *pesantren* leadership. This integrative framework enables an examination of how indigenous philosophy, pedagogical mediation, and institutional structures interact empirically to shape leadership practices. In doing so, the study moves beyond normative or descriptive accounts and offers an explanatory model that connects local wisdom with contemporary leadership theory.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate how *Mangenta* local wisdom is integrated into *pesantren* leadership practices by *kyai* through a transformational leadership approach. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) examine the relationship between transformational leadership and the internalization of *Mangenta* values among *kyai*, teachers, and students; (2) analyze how critical pedagogy mediates the internalization of local wisdom into leadership and educational practices; and (3) assess how visionary and inclusive leadership supports innovation while preserving cultural identity within *pesantren*. Through this focus, the study aspires to contribute not only to *pesantren* leadership scholarship but also to broader international debates on culturally grounded leadership in faith-based educational institutions.

B. Method

This study employed a purely quantitative research design to examine the integration of *Mangenta* traditional wisdom into educational leadership practices within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). The research was situated within a post-positivist

paradigm, emphasizing empirical verification of theoretically derived relationships among local wisdom, critical pedagogical orientation, and leadership transformation. To achieve this objective, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used as the primary analytical approach, enabling the simultaneous evaluation of measurement validity and structural relationships among latent constructs (Kaeedi et al., 2023).

The study was conducted in two *pesantren* located in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan. These institutions were purposively selected due to their documented engagement with *Mangenta* values, an indigenous Dayak tradition emphasizing gratitude to God, communal cooperation, spirituality, and respect for nature in daily educational and leadership practices. The selection of these sites was theoretically grounded in the assumption that *pesantren* operating within Dayak cultural environments provide an appropriate empirical setting for examining the institutionalization of *Mangenta*-based local wisdom in leadership processes.

The research involved 100 respondents, comprising 80 students and 20 teachers who were actively engaged in *pesantren* educational activities. Snowball sampling was employed to identify participants with adequate experiential familiarity with *pesantren* leadership practices and *Mangenta* values. Although this sampling technique facilitated access to information-rich respondents, its limitations in terms of representativeness and statistical generalizability were acknowledged. Consequently, the interpretation of findings was oriented toward analytical generalization rather than population-level inference.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items designed to capture perceptions of *Mangenta*-based local wisdom, leadership practices, and educational orientation (Morgan, 2019; Vonglao, 2017). Prior to hypothesis testing, instrument reliability and validity were rigorously assessed. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, while construct validity was examined through factor loadings and model fit indicators within the SEM framework to ensure the robustness of the measurement model.

Quantitative data analysis followed a systematic SEM workflow encompassing evaluation of the measurement model, testing of the structural model, and estimation of path coefficients to determine the strength and direction of relationships among latent variables. This procedure enabled empirical testing of the proposed leadership integration model and facilitated identification of the relative contribution of *Mangenta* local wisdom to *pesantren* leadership dynamics (Cheron et al., 2022).

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection and were informed that their participation was voluntary. Respondent anonymity and data confidentiality were strictly maintained, and all data were used exclusively for academic research purposes under ethical approval number 1356/A.12/IV.6/2024.

C. Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings of the study based on SEM-PLS analysis using SmartPLS. The results are organized in a coherent sequence aligned with the research objectives and hypothesized relationships. The presentation begins with respondent characteristics, then model adequacy, and finally the core structural findings among the study constructs.

1. Results

a. Demographic features

Table 1 shows research respondents: 80 were students, and 20 were teachers. Among the student respondents, 30 were male, and 50 were female, all aged 14–16 and enrolled at the secondary (*pasantren*) level. Among the teacher respondents, 13 were male, and 7 were female, with ages ranging from 21 to 40 years. In terms of educational background, 15 teachers held undergraduate degrees and 5 held postgraduate degrees. Overall, the sample comprised 43 male and 57 female respondents.

Table 1. Demographic findings

Respondent Group	Age Range (Years)	N	Male	Female	Education	%
Students	14–16	80	30	50	Secondary (Pasantren Level)	80.0
Teachers	21–40	20	13	7	Undergraduate (15), Postgraduate (5)	20.0
Total	–	100	43	57	–	100.0

These results show that the respondent composition shows that the majority of participants were students, accounting for 80% of the total sample, while teachers represented 20%. Female respondents constituted a larger proportion of the sample than male respondents. Students formed a relatively homogeneous group in terms of age and educational level, whereas teachers displayed greater variation in both age and

academic qualifications. This distribution reflects the involvement of both learners and educators in the data collection process within the pesantren context.

b. Measurement model adequacy

Table 2 presents the results of construct reliability and validity assessment using Cronbach’s alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as generated by SmartPLS. Cronbach’s alpha values ranged from 0.892 to 0.958. Composite reliability values for rho_a ranged from 0.918 to 0.965, while rho_c values ranged from 0.917 to 0.967. AVE values ranged from 0.651 to 0.828 across all constructs.

Table 2. Reliability and validity

Construct Reliability and Validity-Overview				
	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
<i>Mangenta</i> philosophical	0.955	0.965	0.964	0.815
Local Knowledge	0.934	0.947	0.948	0.753
Critical pedagogical	0.892	0.918	0.917	0.651
Systematic transformation	0.958	0.961	0.967	0.828

Source: SmartPLS

All Cronbach’s alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency among the indicators of each construct. Similarly, both composite reliability indices, rho_a and rho_c, exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.70, confirming the stability and reliability of the construct measurement within the SEM framework. Furthermore, all AVEs were above the 0.50 threshold, indicating that each latent construct explains more than half of the variance in its observed indicators.

These results present robust empirical evidence that the measurement model satisfies established criteria for internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. Consequently, the constructs of *Mangenta* philosophy, local knowledge, critical pedagogy, and systematic transformation are measured with sufficient precision and validity, allowing the analysis to proceed confidently to the evaluation of the structural model and hypothesized relationships among constructs.



Table 3 presents the results obtained from SmartPLS. The *Mangenta* philosophical construct shows an R² value of 0.575 with an adjusted R² of 0.561, while the Local Knowledge construct reports an R² value of 0.670 and an adjusted R² of 0.663.

Table 3. R-Square

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
<i>Mangenta</i> philosophical	0.575	0.561
Local Knowledge	0.670	0.663

Source: SmartPLS

These values show that the exogenous variables in the model explain 57.5% of the variance in the *Mangenta* philosophical construct and 67.0% of the variance in the Local Knowledge construct. The slight differences between R² and adjusted R² values for both constructs suggest that the model’s explanatory power is not substantially affected by model complexity or the number of predictors.

Moreover, Table 4 presents the f² values generated by SmartPLS. The effect of Local Knowledge on *Mangenta* philosophical yielded an f² value of 0.335, while the impact of Critical Pedagogical on *Mangenta* philosophical was 0.027. The effect of Critical Pedagogy on Local Knowledge produced an f² value of 0.680. Additionally, Systematic Transformation showed f² values of 0.125 on *Mangenta* philosophical and 0.048 on Local Knowledge.

Table 4. F-Square

	<i>Mangenta</i> philosophical	Local Knowledge	Critical pedagogical	Systematic transformation
<i>Mangenta</i> philosophical				
Local Knowledge	0.335			
Critical pedagogical	0.027	0.680		
Systematic transformation	0.125	0.048		

Source: SmartPLS

According to established effect-size benchmarks, f² values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Based on these criteria, Local Knowledge exerts a medium-to-large effect on *Mangenta* philosophical, while Critical Pedagogical has a negligible effect on *Mangenta* philosophical. In contrast, Critical Pedagogy demonstrates a large effect on Local Knowledge, indicating a strong predictive contribution. Systematic Transformation shows a small-to-moderate effect on *Mangenta* philosophical and a small impact on Local Knowledge.

c. Structural relationships and path coefficients

Table 5 presents the standardized path coefficients generated by SmartPLS. The path from Local Knowledge to *Mangenta* philosophical yielded a coefficient of $\beta = 0.657$. The path from Critical Pedagogical to *Mangenta* philosophical showed a coefficient of $\beta = -0.200$, while the path from Critical Pedagogical to Local Knowledge produced a coefficient of $\beta = 0.679$. Additionally, Systematic Transformation demonstrated path coefficients of $\beta = 0.339$ to *Mangenta* philosophical and $\beta = 0.181$ to Local Knowledge.

Table 5. Path Coefficients

Path Coefficients-Matrix				
	<i>Mangenta</i> philosophical	Local Knowledge	Critical pedagogical	Systematic transformation
<i>Mangenta</i> philosophical				
Local Knowledge	0.657			
Critical pedagogical	-0.200	0.679		
Systematic transformation	0.339	0.181		

Source: SmartPls

These coefficients indicate that Local Knowledge has a strong positive association with *Mangenta* philosophical. Critical Pedagogy exhibits a strong positive relationship with Local Knowledge but a negative relationship of small-to-moderate magnitude with *Mangenta* philosophical. Systematic Transformation shows positive relationships with both endogenous constructs, although the strength of these relationships varies, being moderate for *Mangenta* philosophical and weaker for Local Knowledge.

2. Discussion

This study argues that leadership transformation in *pesantren* is not a product of managerial rationalization or pedagogical innovation in isolation, but emerges from a culturally embedded interaction between indigenous philosophy, pedagogical mediation, and institutional transformation. Empirically, the findings demonstrate that *Mangenta* philosophy, local knowledge, critical pedagogy, and systematic transformation are structurally interconnected within *pesantren* leadership dynamics. These relationships form an integrated leadership ecosystem in which cultural legitimacy, reflective learning processes, and organizational coherence mutually reinforce one another.

The structural model clearly positions local knowledge as the central conduit through which *Mangenta* philosophy is translated into leadership practice. This finding confirms the authors' theoretical stance that indigenous wisdom cannot function as a leadership foundation unless it is actively internalized and operationalized through shared epistemic frameworks. *Mangenta*-based local wisdom functions as the philosophical anchor of leadership, providing moral legitimacy, cultural continuity, and spiritual coherence in *pesantren* governance (Prastyadewia et al., 2020; Widayati et al., 2023; Adimayuda et al., 2025). Leadership authority in *pesantren*, therefore, is not derived merely from formal hierarchical position or administrative control, but from alignment with deeply embedded cultural meanings and collective moral expectations (Aslan, 2017; Balmaceda, 2023; Cossu, 2021; Munk et al., 2022).

This finding challenges technocratic orientations in educational leadership theory that prioritize efficiency, performance metrics, and organizational restructuring as the main engines of institutional change. In *pesantren* settings, leadership effectiveness is not primarily derived from managerial instruments or digital optimization strategies, but from the leader's capacity to align authority with culturally embedded values and spiritual credibility. While contemporary leadership discourse increasingly emphasizes technological adaptation and organizational culture as drivers of performance, such approaches remain insufficient when detached from locally grounded epistemologies that shape legitimacy and trust within religious institutions (Pranajaya, 2024; Rosodor & Putra, 2025).

Within this context, *Mangenta* philosophy—anchored in gratitude to God, communal cooperation, respect for nature, and spiritual solidarity—functions as an epistemic framework that informs how leadership decisions are interpreted, communicated, and collectively endorsed. Rather than operating as a symbolic tradition, *Mangenta* actively structures moral reasoning and institutional coherence, reinforcing the distinctive authority of *pesantren* leadership rooted in spiritual exemplarity rather than formal hierarchy. This pattern resonates with comparative studies highlighting the unique moral and relational foundations of kiai leadership in contrast to formal school management models (Syarifudin & Priyadi, 2023), as well as research on Sufi ethical orientations that shape social interaction beyond ritual domains (Mustapha, 2024; Jaafar, 2025). In this sense, the findings reaffirm local knowledge as a valid epistemological resource while extending its relevance by demonstrating its concrete role in shaping leadership transformation within Islamic educational institutions.

Critical pedagogy contributes to this leadership configuration in a mediated and conditional manner. The findings indicate that critical pedagogy indirectly strengthens leadership transformation by positively influencing local knowledge, rather than through a direct philosophical pathway. This suggests that critical pedagogy plays a reflective and dialogical role, enabling *pesantren* actors to reinterpret indigenous values in light of contemporary challenges. Such a function aligns with Freire's conception of conscientization, where critical awareness emerges through dialogue and contextual reflection rather than abstraction (Alves & De Oliveira, 2021; Madhakomala et al., 2022; Terzi et al., 2020).

However, the negative direct association between critical pedagogy and *Mangenta* philosophy reveals an important epistemic tension that the authors explicitly acknowledge. This tension indicates that critical pedagogical approaches, when applied without sufficient cultural calibration, may be perceived as destabilizing established spiritual hierarchies and moral authority within *pesantren*. From the authors' analytical standpoint, this does not invalidate critical pedagogy, but rather underscores the necessity of contextualization (West, 2023; Wajdi et al., 2024; Ayu et al., 2025). Critical pedagogy in faith-based institutions must be culturally embedded, dialogical, and respectful of collective norms to function as a transformative rather than disruptive force. This finding empirically supports arguments that pedagogical reform in religious institutions must engage with spiritual authority and participatory decision-making structures (Abubakar et al., 2022; Tamam & Syaefudin Sa'ud, 2016).

Systematic transformation occupies a supportive yet non-dominant position in the leadership model. Its positive relationship with both *Mangenta* philosophy and local knowledge demonstrates that organizational structures, administrative systems, and institutional reforms can facilitate leadership transformation when they are aligned with indigenous values. The authors argue that this finding partially confirms Fullan's theory of systemic educational change, particularly regarding the importance of coherence and institutional support (Thiers, 2017; Procaccini, 2012; Rebeqa Rivers, 2020; Viczko, 2016). However, the findings simultaneously challenge the universal applicability of systemic reform models by showing that, in *pesantren* contexts, institutional change derives legitimacy from philosophical alignment rather than managerial efficiency alone (Farias-Gaytan et al., 2022; Rasyid et al., 2024).

This study, therefore, advances transformational leadership theory by situating it within an indigenous moral-philosophical framework. While transformational leadership is empirically supported, the authors argue that its effectiveness in *pesantren* depends on congruence with local wisdom rather than on charismatic authority or performance-driven outcomes alone (Carrington et al., 2024; Hamdanah et al., 2025). This extends character-based transformational leadership studies in Islamic education (Sidik et al., 2025; Fauzi et al., 2025) by demonstrating that leadership transformation gains sustainability and legitimacy when rooted in culturally embedded epistemologies. In *pesantren*, the *kyai*'s authority is sustained through moral credibility and cultural resonance, not merely through formal leadership roles (Jubba et al., 2022; Ramdhani et al., 2022; Manaku, 2025).

The central novelty of this study lies in the construction and empirical validation of an integrated leadership model that unifies indigenous philosophy (*Mangenta*), critical pedagogy, and systematic transformation within a single explanatory framework. The authors explicitly position this contribution against prior studies that treat local wisdom as symbolic heritage or offer descriptive accounts of *pesantren* leadership without analytical integration (Labbas & Shaban, 2018; Sukadari et al., 2020; Witro et al., 2022). By conceptualizing *Mangenta* as an epistemic and operational leadership construct, this study demonstrates how philosophical values, pedagogical processes, and institutional mechanisms interact structurally to shape leadership effectiveness.

The operationalization of *Mangenta* philosophy in *pesantren* education is summarized in the following table.

Table 6. The Implementation of *Mangenta* in Education

Aspects	Description
Critical Skills	Ability to analyse and evaluate information objectively and formulate logical arguments.
Creativeness	Ability to generate innovative ideas and new solutions to face the challenges of the times.
Cultural Understanding	Awareness of traditional values, social norms, and local cultural heritage in the face of modernization dynamics.

As reflected in Table 6, *Mangenta* philosophy is translated into concrete educational dimensions encompassing critical skills, creativity, and cultural understanding. These dimensions demonstrate that indigenous values can be transformed into pedagogical

competencies without losing their philosophical depth. The authors argue that this operationalization provides empirical evidence that leadership transformation in *pesantren* occurs through alignment between cultural philosophy, reflective pedagogy, and adaptive institutional practice, rather than through cultural substitution or managerial standardization.

Beyond the local Indonesian context, this study makes a significant contribution to global educational leadership discourse by proposing a *glocal* leadership model applicable to faith-based and community-oriented institutions in the Global South (Lisak & Harush, 2021; Popescu, 2020; Misdah et al., 2025). The findings demonstrate that global leadership theories—transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and systemic change—cannot be effectively transferred as culturally neutral frameworks. Instead, they must be reinterpreted through indigenous epistemologies to remain legitimate and effective (Agéllii Genlott et al., 2023; Cherian & Bhaumik, 2023; Smith et al., 2022).

From the authors' standpoint, the *Mangenta*-based leadership model offers an analytically transferable framework for institutions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that face similar tensions between cultural authenticity and global educational demands. The study shows that indigenous philosophies can function not as barriers to modernization, but as epistemic resources that enable culturally sustainable transformation. This positions the study within international debates on decolonizing educational leadership theory and advancing culturally responsive governance models in faith-based education.

Furthermore, the substantial participation of female respondents (58.1%) provides empirical evidence of increasing inclusivity within *pesantren* leadership spaces. This finding contributes to global discussions on gender-responsive leadership in religious education and aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. The authors argue that culturally grounded leadership models, such as *Mangenta*-based leadership, need not reinforce exclusionary practices but can accommodate evolving norms of participation while maintaining institutional identity.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. The cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to capture leadership transformation as a dynamic and longitudinal process. The focus on *Mangenta* philosophy limits direct generalizability to *pesantren* operating outside similar indigenous cultural environments. Additionally, reliance on quantitative SEM constrains deeper exploration of lived

leadership experiences, interpretive meaning-making, and everyday leadership practices within *pesantren* communities. These limitations define the analytical boundaries of the study and underscore the need for cautious interpretation within broader debates on leadership and education.

D. Conclusion

This study synthesizes empirical evidence to demonstrate that leadership transformation in *pesantren* is most effectively achieved through the integrative alignment of indigenous wisdom, critical pedagogy, and systematic institutional support. The findings confirm that *Mangenta* local wisdom functions as the philosophical core of leadership, shaping moral authority, institutional identity, and value continuity within *pesantren*. Rather than operating as a symbolic cultural element, *Mangenta* is empirically shown to be an epistemic and operational framework that guides leadership orientation and decision-making. The structural model further reveals that local knowledge serves as the primary conduit through which *Mangenta* philosophy is internalized, while critical pedagogy and systematic transformation play complementary and conditional roles in facilitating adaptive leadership.

In terms of contribution, this study advances *pesantren* leadership scholarship in several important ways. Theoretically, it extends transformational leadership by embedding it within an indigenous moral-philosophical framework, thereby challenging technocratic and culturally neutral leadership assumptions. By empirically grounding local wisdom in epistemic legitimacy, the study contributes to the development of a context-sensitive leadership theory in Islamic education. Methodologically, the study offers an integrative SEM-based model that connects philosophy, pedagogy, and institutional structure within a single explanatory framework. In practice, the findings provide evidence-based guidance for *pesantren* governance, suggesting that leadership development, curriculum design, and institutional reform should be grounded in local wisdom while supported by reflective pedagogy and coherent organizational systems.

Building on the limitations identified in the discussion, future research should adopt longitudinal designs to capture leadership transformation as a dynamic and evolving process rather than a static outcome. Mixed-method approaches are also needed to explore lived leadership experiences, interpretive meaning-making, and everyday pedagogical practices within *pesantren* communities. Further studies should test the proposed model across diverse cultural and institutional settings to

strengthen its external validity and examine how digital and AI-based educational tools may support the internalization of indigenous wisdom without undermining cultural authenticity.

This study affirms that *pesantren* leadership rooted in local wisdom, critically mediated through pedagogy, and systematically supported by institutional structures offers a sustainable and legitimate pathway for educational leadership development. Such a model positions *pesantren* as culturally grounded institutions that are capable of responding constructively to global educational change while preserving their philosophical integrity and social relevance.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that there are no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the research reported in this article.

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