

Model of Kiai Leadership Based on Local Wisdom: Preventing Radicalism and Building Education in the Global South

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Kyai Leadership,
Pesantren,
Prophetic Leadership Model,
Global South.

Article history:

Received 2025-11-10

Revised 2026-01-12

Accepted 2026-03-10

ABSTRACT

The role of the Kyai in maintaining the stability and character of santri (Islamic boarding school students) is a fundamental responsibility that cannot be replaced. The dynamic interplay of cultural diversity and varying social conditions must be carefully considered in managing pesantren, especially amidst the widespread issue of radicalism. This study aims to analyze how the Kyai's leadership model, grounded in local wisdom, functions as a strategy to prevent radicalism within pesantren environments, and how this model can contribute to the development of relevant and high-quality education in the Global South. It also explores the challenges faced by Kyai leadership when rooted in local cultural values. This research employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. The primary sources of data include Kyai, pesantren administrators, and santri, collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis follows Yin's case study framework, involving pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, and repeated observation. Data validity is ensured through triangulation of methods, sources, and theoretical perspectives. The findings reveal that the Kyai's leadership model based on the prophetic (Nubuwwah) approach, integrated with the pesantren's local wisdom namely the Panca Jiwa (five foundational values) and the four spiritual pillars serves as a key ideological defense mechanism against the spread of radicalism in the pesantren. Future research is recommended to expand this model across various pesantren and to apply methodological innovations that test the effectiveness of this integrated prophetic-local leadership approach in responding to global challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Discussions about the world of education are essentially inseparable from the world of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), which are non-formal educational entities with a long history since the early days of Indonesia's formation (Dhofier, 1980). Geertz revealed that pesantren are traditional institutions that shape social, economic, political, and cultural life, especially in small rural communities. This is evidenced by the fact that many pesantren alumni become small entrepreneurs (Supriyanto et al., 2022). On the other hand, pesantren alumni often serve as preachers who disseminate understanding of both worldly and spiritual life from one place to another (Geertz, 1976). This remains a relevant reality in facing modernity while preserving Islamic traditions (M. L. Fauzi, 2012).

Pesantren, as non-formal educational institutions, have five inseparable characteristics (Dhofier, 2011; M. Qomar, 2002), including: the kyai (the highest leader in the pesantren, who often functions as a living curriculum), the santri (students who study for 24 hours a day in the pesantren), the mosque/musalla, dormitories, and the study of classical Islamic texts (turats/kitab kuning) (Mumtaz et al., 2024; Ni'am, 2015). Pesantren have remained relevant Islamic educational institutions amid changing times and have demonstrated a strong ability to adapt (M. L. Fauzi, 2012; Ningsih et al., 2023; Pohl, 2006). At the heart of this adaptability is the kyai, whose leadership defines the development and character of the pesantren (Hamdanah et al., 2025; Ma'arif et al., 2025; Rofiq, 2025; Wajdi et al., 2022). As noted by Apud et al., one of the kyai's roles, beyond teaching classical Islamic texts, is instilling a sense of nationalism in santri (Apud et al., 2020; Fatah et al., 2025; Hasan, 2024; Kurniailah & Bakar, 2023; Utama & Salim, 2024), through exemplary behavior, advice on the importance of nationalism (A. S. Qomar & Damara, 2023), and activities that strengthen national values (Misdah, 2020; Pertiwi et al., 2018).

Muali presents a different perspective, highlighting the kyai's role in cultivating noble character in santri through a spiritual approach embodied in attitudes such as moderation (tawasuth), fairness (i'tidal), balance (tawazun), and tolerance (tasamuh) (Blegur et al., 2024; Ilham & Ramadani, 2024; Muali et al., 2021; Ratnah et al., 2024; Salim et al., 2024). Similarly, Aisyah argues that the kyai acts as a leader who determines the institution's goals through culture and commitment, enabling pesantren to sustain their legacy over centuries (Aisyah et al., 2022; Balqis et al., 2025; Fitriani et al., 2024; Ghafar et al., 2025; Wahab et al., 2024). Various studies have examined kyai leadership models. Sahid et al. show that the leadership style of kyai combines charisma (Sahid et al., 2024) and visionary traits (Muflichah, 2014; Rahayuningsih et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Makruf emphasizes that kyai leadership, which integrates formal and non-formal education, can optimize a democratic-transformational model as a key component in maintaining educators' professional and personal competencies (Makruf, 2017). However, this leadership model faces criticism from Sopian et al., who argue that spiritual leadership is the foundational model at Pesantren Al-Ittifaqiah (Sopian et al., 2021), since the development of a pesantren largely depends on the kyai's leadership model, depth of knowledge, charisma, and skills (Ghafar, 2022). In line with this, Muktiningsih et al. emphasize that the kyai's leadership significantly impacts human resource development in pesantren (Muktiningsih et al., 2017), through exemplary conduct, sincerity, and dedication, which help ensure that all tasks are carried out optimally (Fajri & Munir, 2022).

The implementation of kyai leadership models cannot be uniformly applied as a single standard. As Anggraini and Barizi et al. note, there is no superior or best kyai leadership model; its selection must be based on specific conditions, situations (Anggraini & Barizi, 2024; Bahrudin et al., 2026; Chughtai et al., 2024; Fansori et al., 2024), dynamics, and cultural contexts. However, the case of Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik provides a compelling example of a leadership model based on local wisdom. The kyai, who also serves as the chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama branch at the regency level in Gresik,

demonstrates an integration-interconnection model between pesantren and formal schools, ensuring that human resources can keep up with developments in Islamic education and technology. Based on these conditions, the researcher identifies the need for a specific study on the kyai leadership model based on local wisdom at Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, particularly in preventing radicalism. The purpose of this research is to analyze how a kyai's leadership model rooted in local wisdom can prevent radicalism within the pesantren environment, and how it can contribute to developing high-quality and relevant education in the Global South. Additionally, this research aims to identify the challenges faced in implementing kyai leadership based on local wisdom in pesantren.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a case study approach (Yin, 2018), as stated by Yin that one of the reasons for using a case study approach is the findings in the field regarding the kyai's leadership model based on local wisdom in efforts to prevent radicalism in the pesantren environment, which represents a unique and relevant fact to be critically studied. Therefore, several primary data sources selected by the researcher are based on purposive and in-depth selection processes, such as: the kyai (caretaker of Darul Ihsan pesantren in Menganti Gresik), pesantren teachers, and santri (Arif, 2023). The data collection process optimizes semi-structured interviews in order to gather a large amount of valid data, while in the observation process, the researcher uses participant observation, because the researcher directly participates and is involved in the leadership at Darul Ihsan pesantren Menganti Gresik. Thus, the researcher can fully obtain comprehensive data about the situation, conditions, and context naturally in the field. In addition, to support data collection, the documentation process becomes the final process to validate the data obtained from the field.

Furthermore, in the data analysis process, the researcher uses Yin's analysis model, which includes (Abed, 2023; Yin, 2011): pattern matching, where the researcher makes predictions about the exemplary leadership model implemented by the kyai in the pesantren, and this prediction will be validated based on the data found in the field. Second, explanation building, a process in which the researcher constructs explanations based on the field findings. For example, if the leadership process conducted by the kyai uses an exemplary model, then the researcher must develop a detailed explanation. Third, time-series analysis as an inseparable part, because the findings of the leadership model must be compared with theories and specific conditions and times. Fourth, repeated observation, which is a stage that, if necessary, must be carried out to strengthen the time-series analysis. In addition, the researcher will combine this with data validity testing through data triangulation (Patton, 2015), including triangulation of methods, sources, and theories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Kyai's Leadership Model Based On Local Wisdom In Efforts To Prevent Radicalism In The Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) Environment

Leadership at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik, has distinctive characteristics compared to other pesantren. This is because Kyai Mulyadi, as the caretaker, is not an authoritarian figure. On the contrary, he is known for his gentleness and humility, especially in managing the pesantren in its efforts to prevent radicalism. Kyai Mulyadi explained in detail the rationale behind his leadership model as follows:

"As caretakers of the pesantren, our aim in managing the institution is to ensure its growth and sustainability by strengthening leadership in the way Prophet Muhammad led his companions based on compassion, tolerance, deliberation, and the ability to embrace diversity, just as the Prophet guided companions with varied characters. Thus, when we encounter students showing

signs of radical thinking, the approach we take is not punishment, but emotional closeness, dialogue, and wise mentorship. In daily practice, the values of *tawazun* (balance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice) are consistently embedded into the learning process. In addition, we emphasize the importance of strengthening the *Panca Jiwa* of the *Pesantren*, namely: Sincerity, Simplicity, Self-Reliance, Religious Brotherhood, and Togetherness as part of our local wisdom that reinforces students' resilience against deviant ideologies. With this approach," he said, "the *pesantren* becomes a stronghold in shaping students to be moderate, inclusive, and moral individuals."

This condition was also confirmed by Ustadz Zaimin, the *pesantren*'s first student and currently the head of Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik. He provided insights into the *kyai*'s leadership model in preventing radicalism among students:

"The true strength of the *pesantren* in countering radicalism lies in *Kyai Mulyadi*'s consistent emulation of the leadership model of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). According to him, the role of the *kyai* is not limited to formal leadership but also as a spiritual figure who nurtures students through exemplary conduct, emotional closeness, and moral guidance. The approach taken is not harsh or punitive, but dialogical and compassionate, especially when addressing students who begin to adopt extremist views. One of the strengths here is that the *kyai* consistently reminds the students of the *Panca Jiwa* of the *Pesantren*, which include Sincerity, Simplicity, Religious Brotherhood, and Togetherness thus strengthening students' character so that they are not easily influenced by deviant ideologies. *Kyai Mulyadi* is also well-known as a warm and friendly figure among all students, making his leadership based on the prophetic model of Rasulullah a powerful bulwark against radicalism in today's era."

Similarly, Ustadz Diantoso also provided his perspective on the *kyai*'s leadership model at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik, in combating radical movements:

"The *kyai*'s leadership model at Darul Ihsan is very effective in shielding students from the influence of radicalism, because the *kyai* educates not only through knowledge but also by way of example and compassion, just as the Prophet Muhammad guided his companions. He stated that the *kyai* has the capacity to embrace all student personalities without discrimination, consistently using a gentle yet profound approach when addressing those who begin to exhibit signs of extreme thinking. One of the spiritual strengths continuously reinforced by the *kyai* lies in the instillation of the Four Core Pillars of the *Pesantren*: Intention, Certainty, Gratitude, and Sincerity which are brought to life in every aspect of student life, from learning and worship to service. These pillars are founded upon the strong foundation of the *Panca Jiwa* of the *Pesantren*. The combination of these values helps students become more resistant to deviant ideologies and develop a strong, respectful, and balanced character spiritually and socially."

Ustadz Barudin also emphasized that the *kyai*'s leadership is deeply rooted in the prophetic model of the Prophet Muhammad how he served as a role model for his companions and managed their differences as a divine blessing:

"*Kyai Mulyadi*, in leading the *pesantren*, adopts many prophetic values that shape students not only intellectually but also emotionally and morally. Ustadz Mahfud affirmed that the *kyai* never imposes his will, but rather creates space for each student to grow through an approach that is gentle, grounded, and full of compassion. From his perspective, this kind of leadership is not merely about running a system but about presenting a real-life figure who serves as a daily role model whether in worship, manners, or how to handle differences. The *kyai* consistently delivers Islamic messages through stories of the Prophets and companions, and instills the values of Intention, Certainty, Gratitude, and Sincerity in every *pesantren* activity."

This view is further supported by Ulul, a student who also attends university while residing at the pesantren. He offered the following thoughts on the kyai's leadership model:

"Abah Kyai Mulyadi at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School is truly inspiring and plays a central role in shaping students' character so they are not easily influenced by radical ideologies. According to him, Abah Kyai is not only a respected leader but also someone who is very close to the students and able to touch their hearts through his exemplary character and gentle demeanor. One of the most memorable aspects is his habit of telling stories about the Prophet's companions, not merely as tales but as reflections of exemplary character that are highly relevant to students' lives today. Stories about the firmness of Umar ibn Khattab, the gentleness of Abu Bakr, and the wisdom of Ali ibn Abi Talib are often used by Abah Kyai to illustrate that character differences are natural and all can be guided toward goodness when approached with wisdom. Through such methods, students grow with a holistic, balanced understanding of religion and are far removed from rigid or deviant ways of thinking."

Based on various interview findings, supported by data triangulation through observation and documentation at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik, it is evident that the kyai's leadership model in preventing radicalism in the pesantren environment is rooted in the Nubuwwah Leadership Model which is based on the prophetic example of Prophet Muhammad in leading his companions. This is implemented through the integration of the Panca Jiwa of the Pesantren Sincerity, Simplicity, Self-Reliance, Religious Brotherhood, and Togetherness with the Four Core Pillars of the Pesantren: Intention, Certainty, Gratitude, and Sincerity. These values, drawn from local wisdom, serve to reinforce the students' resilience against radical ideologies, allowing them to gain an inclusive, comprehensive, and balanced understanding of religion.

Challenges of Kyai's Leadership Based on Local Wisdom in the Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)

The implementation of the leadership model carried out by the kyai in building and developing Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik, cannot be separated from the emergence of various challenges especially in the efforts to prevent radicalism in the pesantren environment through the integration of the Nubuwwah leadership model, the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren, and the four core pillars. As expressed by the kyai during the interview:

"Kyai Mulyadi stated that implementing a leadership model based on Nubuwwah in the pesantren is not an easy task, as it demands real-life exemplarity in attitude, speech, and action. The main challenge is how to deal with students from diverse backgrounds and characters, especially in today's digital era where incomplete or even false information can influence their way of thinking. For example, when I emphasize the importance of implementing the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren Sincerity, Simplicity, Self-Reliance, Religious Brotherhood, and Togetherness I often encounter resistance due to the students' instant mindset and low awareness of process. Similarly, instilling the four core pillars of the pesantren Intention, Certainty, Gratitude, and Sincerity requires continuous habituation through strengthening the meaning of worship, stories of the Prophets and Companions, and personal guidance to minimize radical thoughts among students. Although this is a heavy task, I and the teachers remain optimistic that if this process is carried out patiently and consistently, the students will grow into moderate, resilient individuals with strong ideological resistance, making them less susceptible to misleading doctrines."

Ustadz Zaimin also shared insights on the existing challenges in efforts to prevent radicalism at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik:

"The presence of individual student differences is one of the most dominant challenges, as not all students arrive with the same level of mental and spiritual readiness. Some bring individualistic traits, instant thinking patterns, and a lack of patience in the character-building process. Thus, shaping the four pillars within each student cannot be done merely through sermons but requires daily habituation and real-life examples. Another challenge is maintaining consistency in the values of simplicity and brotherhood amidst a fast-paced and consumerist modern lifestyle. Nevertheless, he believes that with a patient, dialogical, and continuous approach as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), these values will gradually be absorbed into the students' souls and become a stronghold against radical influence."

In line with this, Ustadz Diantoso explained that the character-building process carried out by the kyai and teachers at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik, encounters both internal and external challenges. As he conveyed during the interview:

"The main challenge faced by the kyai in applying the Nubuwwah-based leadership model, the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren, and the four core pillars lies in the students' personal readiness. Another major challenge is the unfiltered information that rapidly shapes perceptions without a deep understanding of knowledge. Therefore, we see the role of the kyai as a central figure who sets an example and provides direct guidance as very important in countering radical narratives that subtly and covertly enter. He believes that with consistent Nubuwwah-based leadership, pesantren can remain a final stronghold in filtering and suppressing external influences that have the potential to distort students' understanding and character."

Ustadz Barudin expressed a similar, though broader, view regarding the challenges faced by Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik, in preventing radicalism:

"External challenges also have a significant impact in hindering the success of implementing the Nubuwwah-based leadership model, the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren, and the four core pillars. This is due to the influence of external information flows, especially from social media and digital platforms, which often present incomplete, even provocative and extreme religious content. Such information can instantly and misleadingly shape the students' worldview, particularly if they lack the ability to filter it and possess a weak understanding of religion. Even though the kyai and teachers have built a strong character-building system within the pesantren, external influences that enter without filters can erode the values that have been instilled. Therefore, the role of the kyai is crucial not only to guide morally and spiritually but also to serve as an ideological stronghold that is responsive to contemporary challenges."

Several of the above conditions were reflected in the perspective of Ulul, a student who shared his thoughts:

"Among our fellow students, there are still cases where religious teachings are understood textually without internalizing the essence and spirit of the message itself, making them vulnerable to rigid and narrow thinking. Therefore, a more contextual and reflective approach is needed in guiding students so that they not only understand the values theoretically, but also truly internalize them in their way of thinking and behavior. He believes that once students are able to fully understand these values, they will develop strong resilience against radical influences and become an intelligent, moderate, and morally upright generation of Muslims."

Based on interview results and field findings, several challenges were identified, such as the diverse character backgrounds of students, varying thought patterns, individualism, and difficulty in emotional regulation. In addition, the digital era brings a stream of incomplete, provocative, extreme,

and even false information aiming to indoctrinate students and the wider community. Therefore, the pesantren implements several strategies, such as intensifying student development systems and strengthening the kyai's role as a leader who not only provides moral and spiritual guidance but also acts as an ideological fortress ready to respond to the challenges of the times. This is achieved through continuous habituation that reinforces the meaning of worship, stories of the Prophets and Companions, and personal guidance to reduce radical thinking among students while consistently implementing the Panca Jiwa of the Pesantren (Sincerity, Simplicity, Self-Reliance, Religious Brotherhood, and Togetherness) in combination with the four core pillars of Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti, Gresik (Intention, Certainty, Gratitude, and Sincerity).

DISCUSSION

Kyai's Leadership Model Based on Local Wisdom in Preventing Radicalism in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)

Kyai, as the highest leader in the pesantren, is a key instrument in developing the identity of Islamic education, starting from the development of human resources, student learning resources, and the evaluation process (Ibrahim et al., 2024). One inseparable element from the kyai's leadership figure is role modeling (Roqib, 2021), such as: the kyai's attitude which tends to be simple in living life, not excessive, humble, and able to distinguish between needs and desires (Sobari et al., 2023), as this behavior reflects the example of Prophet Muhammad SAW. This is in line with Rahman who interprets the position of kyai (an Islamic education leader within the pesantren context), as a figure who exemplifies good behavior and pioneers action (T. Rahman, 1999). Therefore, every action deserves to be an example as long as it does not conflict with the commands of Allah and the behavior of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

The leadership role above aligns with the role of the kyai at Pondok Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik in the effort to prevent radicalism, as the kyai reinforces his leadership model based on compassion, tolerance, consultation, and embracing all differences (Abdul Mutalib et al., 2022; Safi, 2008), just as the Prophet Muhammad SAW exemplified in nurturing companions with diverse attitudes and characters without requiring uniformity. This creates a sense of comfort for students in pursuing education in the pesantren, as the kyai prioritizes the nurturing process so that students can find their identity and strengthen their moderate character while rejecting intolerance and even radicalism (Ashoumi et al., 2023; Sulaiman & Yusuf, 2023). This is in line with the values of the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah pesantren, namely tawazun (balance), tasamuh (tolerance), and i'tidal (justice), as the main foundation for creating moderate individuals who are not quick to blame and remain proportionally open (Suwarjin, 2023).

In addition, the kyai as the highest figure in the pesantren must also be able to preserve local wisdom in the context of pesantren development as a medium for contextualizing Islamic values in the future (Huda, 2024). As seen in the local wisdom of Panca Jiwa of Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Menganti Gresik, as a vehicle for the internalization of prophetic character in the lives of students to prevent radicalism in the pesantren, which includes:

First, Sincerity, the kyai's character in educating students is with a sincere heart and without worldly interests or incentives. Second, Simplicity is an inherent trait in the Prophet Muhammad SAW, thus the kyai tends to be humble and ascetic in worldly matters. Third, Self-Reliance as the main foundation that must be possessed by students, because one of the methods used by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in guiding his companions was to form independent and responsible individuals (Ramadan, 2007). Donner noted that Muhammad's character was responsible and hardworking, enabling him to establish a state in Medina (Donner, 2010).

Fourth, Religious Brotherhood as an element that must be implemented by the students in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Menganti Gresik, where all students are guided to foster brotherhood among each other, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad among the Muhajirin and Ansar. In line with Alkhotob et al., one of the successes of the Prophet Muhammad was strengthening the bonds of brotherhood between the Muhajirin and Ansar, not only symbolically but also in rights and responsibilities (Alkhotob et al., 2023). Fifth, Togetherness is the foundation of collectivity taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a basis for decision-making, conflict resolution, and organizing the Islamic society at that time. As stated in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imran verse 103 which reads "And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah, and do not be divided...", this verse emphasizes that togetherness is a key principle in building strength to avoid division (F. Rahman, 2009; Saeed, 2005).

The presence of Panca Jiwa at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Menganti Gresik is a real manifestation of the kyai's leadership model based on the Nubuwwah principle, thus helping to prevent radicalism in the pesantren environment. Moreover, the kyai at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Menganti Gresik integrates it with the four pillars of the pesantren, namely: intention, certainty, gratitude, and sincerity (Arif, 2018), so as to build an inclusive pesantren education system where students have a strong Islamic identity, a moderate learning environment, and ideological resilience in countering radical thinking (Abubakar & Hedayat, 2020; Akmansyah & Nurnazli, 2020). As illustrated in the figure below:

KYAI LEADERSHIP MODEL BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM

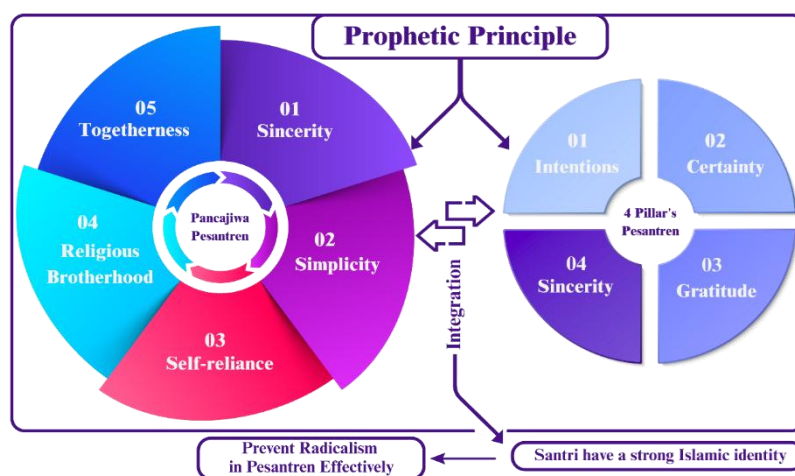


Figure 1: Kyai Leadership Model Based on the Principle of Nubuwwah as a Means to Prevent Radicalism in the Pesantren Environment

In Figure 1, it illustrates that the kyai's leadership model at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School, Menganti Gresik, adopts the nubuwwah (prophetic) principle, which is based on the exemplary leadership of the Prophet Muhammad towards his companions. Specifically, Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School establishes two main elements as the foundation of the institution. First, the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren, which include: sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, religious brotherhood, and togetherness. Second, the four pillars of the pesantren, which consist of: intention, certainty, gratitude, and sincerity. These two components are optimally integrated, thus forming students with a strong Islamic identity who are inclusive and moderate. As such, it becomes an effective instrument in preventing radicalism among students within the Islamic boarding school environment.

Challenges of Kyai Leadership Based on Local Wisdom in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)

The implementation of the kyai's leadership model based on local wisdom with the nubuwwah (prophetic) principle also faces several challenges, such as the diverse backgrounds and personalities of students, varying mindsets, individualism, and poor emotional regulation. This is especially true for the millennial and Gen-Z generations, who come from highly varied backgrounds (Lin & Chiu, 2007), DiLullo et al. accurately stated that millennials are a generation with great diversity in personality, background, and learning styles (DiLullo et al., 2011), so educators must precisely understand the character of each student to prevent pessimistic and withdrawn attitudes. Percival and Keniston revealed that a closed mindset in individuals can lead to radical changes due to ideas acquired during alienation from certain groups (Keniston, 1970; Percival, 2012).

One significant factor is the digital era, with an influx of incomplete, provocative, extreme, and even false information aimed at indoctrinating students and the wider community. Ball et al. noted that the internet has become an open space for terrorism and extremism actors to target three strategic areas: cyber, social media, and attack planning through secret communication (Ball & Montasari, 2025). This condition is supported by analysis showing that most people around the world spend more time on the internet (Edwards & Gribbon, 2013), making online dissemination more effective than real-world propaganda. As a result, several models applied by the pesantren focus on intensifying the student development system as optimally as possible. This includes strengthening effective communication between students, parents, and educators in the pesantren (M. I. Fauzi et al., 2025), conducting both individual and group guidance (Mediawati, 2023), and enforcing strict student selection to prevent radical ideologies from entering the pesantren environment (Rahadi & Khoir, 2025).

In addition, the role of the kyai at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti Gresik is not limited to being a moral and spiritual guide, as he must also strengthen cultural and social aspects within the surrounding community. This allows the spiritual guidance process, which influences the development of religious culture, to run optimally (Alazeez et al., 2024; Muhith et al., 2023; Nugraha et al., 2025; Sartini, 2025). Furthermore, Abdurrahman et al. emphasized that the role of the kyai goes beyond leadership; the kyai is crucial in determining policy direction and control in developing the pesantren's educational system (Abdurrahman et al., 2022). This condition reinforces the role of the kyai at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti Gresik, where continuous habituation is carried out through the reinforcement of the meaning of worship, stories of the Prophet and his companions, and through the implementation of the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, religious brotherhood, and togetherness combined with the four pillars of the pesantren.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the kyai's leadership model in preventing radicalism at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Menganti Gresik is implemented through the nubuwwah (prophetic) leadership model exemplifying the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in guiding his companions by integrating the Panca Jiwa of the pesantren, which include sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, religious brotherhood, and togetherness, with the four pillars of the pesantren: intention, certainty, gratitude, and sincerity. These form part of the local wisdom that strengthens the identity of the students, enabling them to resist the influence of radical ideologies. Despite this, there are several challenges, such as the diverse backgrounds and personalities of students, varying mindsets, individualism, and emotional unpreparedness. In this context, the kyai plays a crucial role as a leader who not only provides moral and spiritual guidance but also acts as an ideological stronghold for the students, strengthens cultural

and social aspects of the surrounding community, and determines the direction of policy and control in the development of the pesantren education system.

The theoretical implication of this study is that the nubuwwah-based kyai leadership model integrated with the pesantren's local wisdom through the Panca Jiwa and the four pillars serves as the main defense mechanism in preventing radical ideologies within Islamic boarding schools. However, the limitation of this research lies in the fact that it focuses on a single research subject. Therefore, culturally, it may still require time to implement the integrated nubuwwah-based kyai leadership model. Future research is advised to develop this model in other pesantren and to provide methodological approaches to test the effectiveness of nubuwwah-based kyai leadership integrated with local wisdom in addressing global challenges and extremist ideologies in Indonesian pesantren.

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