



THE NYAI LEADERSHIP MODEL: Integrating Humanistic Strict Parenting Principles for Santri Character Development in Pesantren

Maritsa Naila Zulfa^{1*}, Naufal Ahmad Rijalul Alam²

^{*1, 2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^{*1}email: maritsa.naila.fai23@mail.umy.ac.id

²email: naufal.ahmad@umy.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received: June 24, 2026 Revised: July 28, 2026 Accepted: August 16, 2026 Available Online: September 10, 2026	In Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the Nyai plays a pivotal role in shaping students' character and preserving the institution's educational culture. However, empirical studies examining female leadership in pesantren from the perspective of a humanistic strict parenting approach remain notably limited. This study aims to analyze the Nyai's leadership style through a humanistic strict parenting framework and evaluate its contribution to santri character development. Employing a qualitative case study design, this research was conducted at the Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Hadi Pesantren in the Al-Hamra Complex, Yogyakarta. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving six key informants, including the Nyai, school administrators, and santri. The collected data were analyzed iteratively through data reduction, categorization, matrix display, and source triangulation to ensure credibility. The findings demonstrate that the Nyai's leadership successfully integrates firm adherence to principles and structural discipline with a humanistic, communicative, and exemplary (uswah hasanah) approach. Consistent supervision, structured routines, and delegated responsibilities effectively cultivate santri's discipline, obedience, responsibility, independence, and moral integrity without causing psychological pressure.
Keywords: Nyai; Leadership; Humanistic Strict Parenting; Character Building; Santri.	
Please cite this article: Zulfa, M. N., & Alam, N. A. R. (2026). The Nyai leadership model: Integrating humanistic strict parenting principles for santri character development in pesantren. <i>Integrasi: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora</i> , 4(3), 149-173	
	ABSTRAK Di pesantren, Nyai memainkan peran sentral dalam membentuk karakter santri dan melestarikan budaya pendidikan lembaga tersebut. Namun, studi empiris yang mengkaji kepemimpinan perempuan di pesantren dari perspektif pendekatan pengasuhan humanistik yang tegas masih sangat terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gaya kepemimpinan Nyai melalui kerangka kerja <i>humanistic strict parenting</i> serta mengevaluasi kontribusinya terhadap pengembangan karakter santri. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini dilakukan di Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Hadi di Kompleks Al-Hamra, Yogyakarta. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi yang

	melibatkan enam informan kunci, termasuk Nyai, pengelola pesantren, dan santri. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis secara berulang melalui reduksi data, kategorisasi, penyajian matriks, dan triangulasi sumber untuk memastikan kredibilitas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan Nyai berhasil mengintegrasikan kepatuhan yang tegas terhadap prinsip-prinsip dan disiplin struktural dengan pendekatan humanistik, komunikatif, dan teladan (<i>uswah hasanah</i>). Pengawasan yang konsisten, rutinitas yang terstruktur, dan pendelegasian tanggung jawab secara efektif menumbuhkan disiplin, ketaatan, rasa tanggung jawab, kemandirian, serta integritas moral para santri tanpa menimbulkan tekanan psikologis.
Page: 149-173	This is an open acces article under the CC-BY-SA lisencc (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

A. Introduction

The Islamic boarding school (pesantren) is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that serves an important role in forming the character and morals of students, known as *santri* (Hasbi et al., 2020). As a religion-based educational institution, the pesantren serves not only as a location for imparting religious information but also as an atmosphere that fosters the santri's moral character, discipline, responsibility, and independence through a 24-hour integrated lifestyle (Fikri et al., 2025). Character development in Islamic boarding schools is consistent and involves habit formation, setting a good example, supervision, and the enforcement of rules and regulations in the santri's daily lives. As a result, Islamic boarding schools are regarded as competent educational institutions for teaching moral and spiritual values despite the different problems of social change in contemporary society (Apiyah & Suharsiwi, 2021).

Strict parenting continues to be a major concern in many educational systems across the world. According to a 2015 YouGov study in the United Kingdom, the majority of respondents across all age categories agreed that parents should continue to be firm in raising their children, despite the fact that the practice of very severe parenting is declining among younger generations. These findings suggest that firmness is still considered an important aspect in instilling discipline, accountability, and self-control in youngsters. Internationally, rigorous parenting is defined as a parenting

strategy that emphasises adherence to rules, behavioural surveillance, and the constant application of discipline in forming character (Basit et al., 2023). Although some industrialised countries are beginning to exhibit a trend toward a more democratic approach, the significance of firmness remains vital for shaping individual morals and behaviour among the difficulties of modern times (Al-Muttaqin & Sembodo, 2021).

At the national level, Indonesia is currently seeing a significant drop in moral standards among adolescents, including a rise in deviant behaviour, juvenile gang battles, drug misuse, and a breakdown in discipline and social responsibility. These circumstances make character development an urgent goal in the national school system (Fauzi et al., n.d.). Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) function as important Islamic educational institutions that shape *santri*'s character through a strategy focused on noble principles, habit development, excellent leadership, and discipline (Sadullah, 2025). According to Firyal Rafidah Lesmana et al. (2023), Islamic boarding schools excel at character development because they can comprehensively integrate formal, informal, and non-formal education through consistent habit formation, supervision, and behavioural guidance for *santri*.

In the *pesantren* setting, a tough leadership style is inextricably linked to the Kiai and Nyai's duties as major players in *Santri*'s education and upbringing. *Pesantren* leadership is typically charismatic and centralised, with *pesantren* leaders holding significant influence in defining the culture of discipline and the character of the *santri* (Berbasis & Maryono, 2022). The evolution of modern *pesantren* implies that the Nyai's role has expanded beyond that of the Kiai's companion. Nyai now play an increasingly crucial role in managing *pesantren* and guiding *santri*, particularly female *santri* (Sciences, 2016). Eva Maghfiroh's research demonstrates that female leadership in Islamic boarding schools is capable of implementing an ideal leadership style and actively participating in the boarding school's social life (Maghfiroh, 2024). Meanwhile, Moh Zammil Al Muttaqin and Sigit Priyo Sembodo found that Nyai's leadership is transformational and has a major impact on social and educational growth inside the *pesantren* setting (Al-Muttaqin & Sembodo, 2021).

In practice, Nyai's leadership style in the pesantren can be analysed through the lens of "strict parenting," which emphasises discipline, adherence to rules, behavioural supervision, and the instillation of moral and religious values (Asy'arie et al., 2023). This methodology is accomplished by supervising worship and study activities, enforcing rules and regulations, imposing educational consequences, and including structured activities as part of the character-building process (Yasin, 2022). The purpose is to create *santri* who are disciplined, self-sufficient, responsible, rule-followers, and of noble character. Muhammad Nasrom's research confirms that the character development of *santri* is achieved through role modelling, habit formation, discipline, and persistent supervision, leading in good behavioural improvements (Jannah et al., 2021).

However, if a tough and controlling leadership style is not balanced by a humanistic interpersonal approach, it has the potential to have negative psychological consequences. On the one hand, firm leadership can help *santri* become more disciplined, independent, and responsible. However, severe discipline can cause psychological tension, dread, and limitations in self-expression. As a result, striking a balance between firmness and emotional sensitivity is critical in the process of developing Santri's personality.

To date, most studies on female leadership in Islamic boarding schools has concentrated on transformational, managerial, and social factors. There have been few studies that directly examine Nyai's leadership from the standpoint of severe parenting and its impact on Santri's character development. Santri's social, emotional, and spiritual growth is significantly influenced by leadership styles that emphasise discipline, behavioural control, and obedience. As a result, this study provides a unique perspective by concentrating on Nyai's leadership style, which employs a severe parenting approach, and its impact on the character development of *santri* in Islamic boarding schools. This study aims to analyse Nyai's leadership style through the strict parenting approach and its impact on the character development of *santri* at Islamic boarding schools. The results of this study are expected to enrich the body of research on female leadership in Islamic boarding schools while also serving as a basis for evaluating the

development of *santri* guidance programs that maintain the value of discipline without neglecting the *santri*'s psychological well-being.

B. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate Nyai's leadership style through a humanistic strict parenting strategy and its impact on *Santri*'s character development. The study was conducted from November to December 2025 at the Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Hadi Islamic Boarding School in the Al-Hamra Complex, Yogyakarta. This design was chosen to enable a comprehensive, contextual analysis of character development and leadership styles in an authentic pesantren setting.

Six informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their leadership, rule enforcement, and daily interactions at the boarding school. The informants consisted of ZA, MA, and NR as *santri*; NI and AR as school administrators; and NM as the caretaker (Nyai). Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation of daily educational activities, and relevant documentation. While observations documented communication patterns, monitoring strategies, and rule enforcement, interviews focused on informants' experiences with strict parenting leadership and character development.

The data analysis approach involved iterative data reduction, categorization, thematic matrix construction, and interpretation. The major themes of discipline, firmness, supervision, moral direction, responsibility, and independence were identified through coding. To ensure data credibility and eliminate subjective bias, this study employed source triangulation, which included comparing the perspectives of the caretaker, administrators, and *santri*, as well as prolonged field involvement over a two-month period.

Table 1. Research Themes and Informant Mapping

No	Theme	Respondent
----	-------	------------

1.	Understanding and Perspectives on <i>Humanistic Strict Parenting</i>	NM
2.	Leadership Style (Humanistic Strict Parenting)	AR, NI, ZA
3.	Assertiveness	AR, NR, ZA
4.	Discipline	AR, ZA, MA
5.	Control over santri's behavior	AR, ZA, MA
6.	Character development of santri	NI, AR, MA
7.	Obedience	AR, ZA, NR
8.	Responsibility	AR, ZA, NR
9.	Independence	AR, NI, NR
10.	Ethics and Morality	AR, NI, ZA

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

C. Result and Discussion

Understanding and Perspectives on Humanistic Strict Parenting

According to respondent NM, the parenting style she practices is not based on any particular theory, as it stems from her personal experience as a caregiver. She explained:

Specifically, I don't follow any particular leadership style, because I see myself simply as a caregiver. So the focus is more like that of a mother to her children. (interview with NM, November 28, 2025).

Based on the interview results, Nyai said that her leadership style is not specific to any leadership philosophy. This leadership is better seen as a nurturing method, with Nyai serving as a mother figure to the santri. Nyai attempts to develop close ties with the santri by taking a mother approach that emphasises guidance, mentorship, and support. This data suggests that Nyai's leadership at the pesantren is based on experience and daily caring activities rather than the use of any specific formal leadership framework. This finding is consistent with prior study on pesantren management, which found that leadership techniques in pesantrens frequently change based on the demands of the pesantren setting and the carers' experiences, rather than strictly adhering to a certain leadership philosophy.

Leadership Style (Strict Humanistic Parenting)

Leadership style refers to aspects related to how a leader treats subordinates. In this regard, AR stated that Nyai's leadership is like a hidden curriculum:

In my opinion, her leadership is more like a hidden curriculum. She leads with gentleness and a family-oriented approach but remains firm in she principles. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

NI adds that Nyai's leadership style emphasizes openness and solution-oriented evaluation without blaming any party:

Herteach leadership style combines firmness and openness. As board members, whenever we have a meeting, she provides guidance that I find very open. If there's a problem, she immediately points out where the mistake lies nothing is swept under the rug, and no one feels blamed. She evaluations are truly very open, so that in the future we can perform our duties even better every day. (Interview with NI on December 10, 2025).

This character is reinforced by the santri' perception of leadership as a blend of discipline and setting a good example, as expressed by ZA:

In my opinion, Nyai's leadership style and firmness revolve around setting a good example, discipline, attention to detail, and her firmness all for the greater good and without a harsh tone. The distinctive aspects of sheleadership that I feel most strongly are discipline and setting a good example. She leads by example, so her rules and firm stance align with what she demonstrates and communicates. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

Nyai's leadership style, which includes leading by example (*uswah hasanah*), illustrates that rule enforcement at the *pesantren* is not one-sided. This strategy combines the voluntary instillation of virtues such as discipline, accountability, and effective time management among the *santri*. The findings of this study show that Nyai's leadership in the *pesantren* context blends principled firmness and regulatory discipline with openness, a family-like atmosphere, and *uswah hasanah* in everyday life. This firmness is not expressed through intimidating monitoring or one-way communication, but rather through clear direction, transparent evaluation, constructive guidance, and consistent exemplary behaviour by both *santri* and administrators. This

finding affirms Nyai's leadership as a humanistic "strict parenting" style that combines harsh regulations with an emotive, communicative, and educational approach. Through this framework, the virtues of discipline, accountability, and morality are ideally internalised to assist the character development of Santri in the pesantren (Al-Muttaqin & Sembodo, 2021).

Assertiveness

Assertiveness in leadership styles is frequently misinterpreted as physical punishment (Wahrudin, 2023). However, in the context of Islamic boarding schools managed by Nyai, the definition of firmness changes. Firmness is not practiced through verbal abuse or pressure, but rather through consistent behaviour, clear standards, and emotional sensitivity, which create self-awareness among the santri (Pendidikan et al., 2020). In this regard, AR states:

My mother's firmness is not demonstrated through a loud voice or severe punishment, but rather through consistent behavior and clear rules. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

This data indicates that the firmness applied by Nyai avoids a one-way or intimidating communication approach (Puadi, 2024). By eliminating a harsh tone and degrading threats of punishment, the caregiver instills rules that are tolerable, as perceived by NR:

Even when there are rules that seem really burdensome, once you actually follow them, they're still tolerable there's always some leeway. They're not as bad or as strict as I initially thought when they were first announced. I wasn't surprised because I've been living in a boarding school my whole life. (Interview with NR on December 15, 2025).

The use of flexibility and tolerance in these standards demonstrates democratic and responsive leadership. The carers do not see the restrictions as absolute tools that ignore the santri's specific circumstances, but rather as recommendations that can be altered to ensure the santri's psychological balance and comfort within the boarding school atmosphere (Afandi, 2024). The positive impact of this consistent firmness and

exemplary behavior ultimately succeeded in bringing about a change in the santri's behavior, as expressed by ZA:

She firm stance on discipline, as well as his attention to detail and sensitivity to his surroundings, have had a profound impact. This motivates us, as santri, to prepare early so we can be on time, manage our time effectively between campus and the boarding school, and learn responsibility. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

The results of this interview coincide with the positive benefits of ideal disciplinary control, where the continuous enforcement of rules has been found to encourage self-discipline, responsibility, good time management, and perseverance among students experiencing scholastic obstacles (Supriatna & Barat, 2021). The findings of this study show that the firmness advocated by Nyai is not represented through physical punishment, frightening acts, or oppressive communication styles. Rather, this firmness is demonstrated through persistent rule enforcement, clear boundaries, and emotional sensitivity to the santri's situation. Flexibility in the form of tolerance and regulatory changes under particular conditions allows the disciplinary system to function harmoniously without forgetting the needs and psychological well-being of the santri (Fauzi et al., n.d.). These data suggest that Nyai's leadership is a responsive sort of firmness, with disciplinary habituation built on self-awareness rather than fear. A persistent pattern of assertiveness mixed with exemplary behaviour has been demonstrated to positively impact santri's character development, notably in terms of discipline, accountability, time management, and flexibility to academic expectations and pesantren dynamics.

Discipline

Discipline serves as the primary foundation within the pesantren environment, playing a role in supporting the continuous character development of santri (Murobbi et al., 2024). Under Nyai's rigorous yet humane leadership, disciplinary procedures are enforced in a flexible manner. Instead, discipline is cultivated as a constructive habit via exemplary everyday behaviour, constant prayer times, and a humanitarian approach

(Wahrudin, 2023). AR, a member of the administration, explained that the caregivers do not use rigid methods when instilling the value of discipline:

Disciplinary rules at the pesantren are enforced using a humane approach. The teachers instill discipline not only through written rules but also through habits and real-life examples. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

Instilling discipline, habits, and direct role modelling (uswah hasanah) has been scientifically demonstrated to motivate santri to comply with rules of their own volition (Haris, 2025). A prominent indicator of disciplinary success in this boarding school environment lies in the management of time for worship and daily activities, as explained by ZA:

The most prominent rule is punctuality, particularly regarding congregational prayer and the timely execution of activities. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

Nyai's steadfast attitude on essential tasks like collective prayer is a stringent principle for keeping spiritual integrity (Rohdiana et al., 2023). This organised boarding school atmosphere correlates with the beneficial impacts of optimal disciplinary control, accountability, and flexible time management abilities (Jannah et al., 2021). With the development of a psychologically developed moral conscience, the severe restrictions there do not feel like a burden or a constraint, but rather serve as a catalyst for genuine personal change for the santri, as stated by MA:

The implementation of this discipline has had a profound impact on me, because the changes have been extraordinary. Once the rules were put into practice, the impact was more positive than negative, and I didn't feel like I was missing out. (Interview with MA, November 28, 2025).

This subjective assessment by the santri informant demonstrates that the use of firm disciplinary methods, combined with Nyai's maternal approach, successfully fostered beneficial behavioural improvements in the santri while minimising stress.

Theoretically, the data on the discipline theme suggest that Nyai's leadership model successfully balances tough monitoring with the psychological well-being of the Santri. Through a combination of exemplary behaviour and well-crafted rules, the santri become accustomed to valuing time independently, demonstrating that the boarding

school management is capable of transforming a humanistic "strict parenting" style into a supportive guidance model that aligns with psychological development and effectively builds a strong moral foundation to face challenges outside of the boarding school (Prasetyo, 2022). The findings of this study suggest that the establishment of discipline in Islamic boarding schools is achieved through a synergy of *uswah hasanah*, habituation mechanisms, and the Nyai's constant enforcement of regulations. Discipline is not internalised through a doctrinal or prescriptive approach, but rather through concrete exemplary behaviour in daily activities and the creation of a boarding school ecosystem that promotes the formation of positive habits. Santri's accountability and time-management abilities are primarily honed through the stress on punctuality, especially in the context of communal prayer and the pesantren's schedule (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, 2024). These findings demonstrate that the mentorship model efficiently promotes santri compliance through internal awareness rather than fear of punishment. This highlights Nyai's leadership's ability to balance regulatory firmness with a humanistic approach, which ultimately supports positive behavioural transformation and advances Santri's growth as a disciplined, autonomous, and responsible individual.

Control Over Santri' Behavior

In Islamic boarding schools, control over Santri's behaviour is not conducted through harsh supervision or fear-inducing methods, but rather through the creation of a supportive environment, establishing examples that foster awareness, and the application of suitable consequences (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, 2024). This approach aims to foster santri compliance rooted in awareness and shared commitment. This was conveyed by AR, a boarding school administrator:

As administrators, we carry on this approach by offering gentle and consistent reminders; the santri become accustomed to obedience because the environment shapes them, not because of coercion. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

This behavioural control, achieved through subtle and consistent reminders, reveals that santri's daily activities are monitored without psychological strain. Furthermore, the well-organised atmosphere of the pesantren has a part in forming positive habits, and behavioural changes emerge as a result of the santri's self-awareness (Kh & Chalim, 2021). Furthermore, when santri commit infractions, the form of reprimand from the caregivers does not take the form of anger or harsh scolding, but rather through setting a good example that fosters the santri's self-awareness, as expressed by ZA:

When a santri breaks the rules, the caretaker doesn't immediately get angry but sets an example first. For instance, if there's a duty to sweep the courtyard in the afternoon but no one is on duty by the time Maghrib approaches, the mother or father will sweep it themselves, and the santri who see this will take the hint on their own. then the teacher will advise and remind us not to forget our responsibilities and encourage all santri to help remind one another. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

The deployment of behavioural control through gentle and consistent reminders indicates surveillance of the santri's everyday activities while avoiding psychological strain. The supportive environment of the pesantren also encourages the formation of positive habits, resulting in behavioural change as a result of self-awareness. To preserve order in the boarding school, a clear division of tasks is also adopted, coupled by personalised treatment of santri who breach rules through a face-to-face approach, as explained by MA:

The caretaker disciplines santri who violate the rules; when there is a minor violation, it is handled by the boarding school administration it does not need to reach the caretaker's level but when there is a serious violation, the punishment is administered by the caretaker, so that the caretaker is the one to discipline the santri. As far as I know, when a santri commits a serious violation, the caretaker will implement an intensive disciplinary process specifically, a face-to-face discussion with the santri in question. (Interview with MA on November 28, 2025).

The intense monitoring of Santri's behaviour through direct communication between supervisors and Santri displays a balance between imposing discipline and caring for Santri's psychological well-being (Supriatna & Barat, 2021). Through this

personal and communicative approach, the process of applying punishments serves not just as a form of discipline enforcement, but also as an instructional instrument that promotes Santri's development while not jeopardising their psychological well-being. According to the findings of this study, educational supervision, *uswah hasanah*, persuasive communication, and advice centred on self-awareness development are used to control santri's behaviour in the *pesantren* setting. These findings show that behavioural control is utilised not only to preserve institutional order, but also as a tool for character development, accelerating Santri's accountability, self-regulation, and psychological maturity.

Character Development of Santri

The process of character building for Santri within the Islamic boarding school atmosphere evolves as a holistic 24/7 way of life (Habibah & Amirudin, 2023). The Nyai's leadership style, which employs a "strict in principle, humane in approach" system, does not rely on intimidation. Structured rituals, persistent firmness, and exemplary behaviour shape the santri's mental resilience and moral character (Afandi, 2024). The carers develop important character qualities in the santri, ensuring that they do not grow up to be weak persons, but rather independent, fearless women prepared to confront the difficulties of the times. This is consistent with what NI, a member of the administration, indicated :

In character development, our teacher also teaches us to become women with courageous character, a sense of responsibility, and a strong mindset. When we frequently participate in organizations at this boarding school, we often pay visits to elders, and during those times, our teacher sometimes shows a firm side. In my opinion, that's one of the ways she instills character values in us, so that we don't become cowards. In the future, there will be so many things we'll have to face, and we'll realize that within the organization, we must be strong and resilient. And for the new santri, we also read out the rules both written and unwritten so that they know what is permitted and what is not permitted at this boarding school. (Interview with NI on December 10, 2025).

According to AR, the "gentle firmness" technique effectively connects Nyai's exemplary behaviour to the moral development of the santri. The santri implements values of civility and mutual respect without force by directly observing and imitating Nyai's maternal figure. In addition to exemplary behaviour, character development in the present era demands a balanced perspective; consequently, Nyai mixes spiritual education based on the Qur'an with general knowledge to foster the santri's personal growth, as expressed by MA :

When she instilled moral values in the santri, he didn't focus solely on a single field of study not just on the study of the Qur'an. So even though this is a Qur'anic boarding school, she also provided a bridge in the form of general knowledge, as part of a collaborative approach to educating the santri. When this approach began when she educated us by instilling moral values I didn't feel burdened; in fact, it positively influenced both the quality and quantity of our learning. She taught us that everything must be balanced. (Interview with MA on November 28, 2025).

According to MA's statement, the absence of feelings of pressure among the santri illustrates the carers' efficient use of situational and transformational leadership. The balanced curriculum established demonstrates that the pesantren's disciplinary system may be linked with the santri's emotional requirements while also meeting the intellectual standards of formal schooling. The findings of this study show that the formation of santri's character in the pesantren setting occurs through the integration of firmness, *uswah hasanah*, habituation processes, and structured guidance into the dynamics of daily life. The Nyai's leadership focuses not only on implementing institutional norms, but also on increasing mental resilience, accountability, courage, independence, and the establishment of religious virtues through a humanistic and educational approach (Pasaribu et al., 2023). The internalisation of these character values is hastened by the santri's active engagement in organisational activities, the socialisation of norms and regulations, the model behaviour of carers, and the harmonisation between the Qur'an curriculum and general knowledge (Maghfiroh, 2024). These findings show that this guidance approach effectively promotes the absorption of values based on Islamic moral principles and self-awareness without

causing psychological stress, ensuring that santri mature spiritually and academically while also developing a strong, adaptable character prepared to face future challenges.

Obedience

In Islamic boarding schools, obedience is considered as more than just a type of acquiescence motivated by dread of punishment. The Nyai's leadership style, which blends firmness with a humanistic approach (strict humanistic parenting), defines compliance as the Santri's self-awareness (Fauzi et al., n.d.). The 24-hour boarding system at the pesantren converts disciplinary regulations into good habits that Santri embraces voluntarily and without compulsion. A caring system that balances warmth and clear boundaries promotes positive relationships between carers and Santri. According to AR, a pesantren administrator, obedience increases when santri feel personally cherished :

Santri feel close to and valued by their caregivers, yet they also understand the boundaries. From this, santri learn to obey not out of fear, but out of respect and habit. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

These findings indicate that a humanistic approach to firmness promotes beneficial interpersonal connection. This strategy reduces psychological stress and impediments to santri's self-expression. As a result, the santri's obedience develops into a sense of personal moral responsibility. In addition to moral closeness, the santri's obedience is motivated by their adaptation to a demanding schedule of activity. ZA, a santri, discussed how to manage time for daily worship and study:

At first, I had a hard time adjusting, but I kept trying to get used to the schedule of activities and learned to manage my time well. The impact on my discipline and obedience is that I've come to value study time more to be punctual and take responsibility. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

These early difficulties in the adjustment phase are frequent in a pesantren setting. However, by consistently enforcing rules, santri can learn self-regulation skills, a sense of time value, and a sense of academic responsibility without being overwhelmed. Santri develop a firm foundation of obedience when they are fully spiritually aware of

their identity and the major purpose of their time at the pesantren. This principle of self-awareness was emphasised by NR, a santri at the boarding school :

Since I am aware that I am a santri, and I came to this boarding school of my own free will, yes, I must be able to follow the rules of life here. (Interview with NR on December 15, 2025).

The santri's compliance is substantially shaped by a measured supervisory style, ideal firmness, and Nyai's humanistic leadership via a 24-hour boarding system that encourages self-regulation. This method successfully builds the Santri's character resilience voluntarily (Pasaribu et al., 2023). The findings of this study show that santri obedience in Islamic boarding schools is not based on intimidation or fear of punishment, but rather on mechanisms of habituation, emotional closeness, and self-awareness triggered by Nyai's leadership style, which is based on humanistic strict parenting. Firmness paired with respect for the santri promotes positive interpersonal interactions, so that compliance arises from a sense of respect and moral awareness (Prasetyo, 2022). This research shows that compliance founded on internal awareness and an existential knowledge of the purpose of boarding school life is more sustainable than obedience based on external control.

Responsibility

The formation of a sense of responsibility in Islamic boarding schools occurs through constant efforts rather than pressure. According to AR, a school administrator, the construction of a favourable environment by school administrators is the foundation for the development of a sense of responsibility:

As administrators, we carry on this approach by offering gentle and consistent reminders; santri become accustomed to obedience because the environment shapes them, not because of coercion. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

Nyai's solid leadership is demonstrated by the formation of a stable, consistent atmosphere for the santri, as well as her exemplary conduct, thereby raising the santri's awareness of their tasks without putting them under psychological pressure. Entrusted duties shape the attitudes and behaviours of the santri, fostering responsibility. The

boarding school's management reinforces these ideals and encourages positive behaviour. According to ZA, a Santri at the boarding school:

The boarding school's guidance in fostering independence involves assigning responsibilities such as daily duty shifts, cooking, teaching at the TPQ, serving on committees, and holding administrative roles. The goal is for us to become resilient women, capable of being placed anywhere, and to manage our time through these activities which encourages us to think about not neglecting the responsibilities entrusted to us. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

The findings presented above show that the range of tasks and organisational roles serve as an excellent "hidden curriculum" for shaping santri's self-control under the supervision of their mentors. This structure of obligations trains the santri's flexibility in balancing their concentration on the academic curriculum with non-formal activities (Rohdiana et al., 2023). This positive assessment of the importance of the daily timetable is empirically reinforced by the perspectives of otshesantri, who see adherence to the duty roster as a concrete manifestation and internalisation of the santri's sense of responsibility, as represented by NR:

In this boarding school, there's a duty roster, and through that duty roster, our sense of responsibility becomes evident; this is one of the ways our teachers educate us. (Interview with NR on December 15, 2025).

Instilling the ideals of responsibility and independence in Santri is intimately incorporated into the 24-hour boarding school care system, which acts as a foundation for moral instruction (Triyono et al., 2023). In this setting, a humanistic "strict parenting" leadership style applied through regulations is positioned as an indispensable instrument for training Santri in behavioural control and obedience (Al-Muttaqin & Sembodo, 2021). The findings of this study show that the development of accountability as a character trait in Islamic boarding schools occurs through mechanisms of habituation, delegation of responsibilities, and the structuring of an ecosystem that stimulates santri's self-awareness in carrying out their obligations. Nyai's leadership, which is based on humanistic strict parenting, is carried out through consistent parenting practices, exemplary behaviour (uswah hasanah), and a structured distribution of

authority that includes daily duty rotations, meal preparation, TPQ instruction, and participation in committees and administrative roles. These findings demonstrate that the santri's sense of responsibility is internalised as a daily ethical value rather than just viewed as a burden of duty. As a result, regulated routines in the pesantren setting have a tangible impact on forming Santri's character, making them more responsible, disciplined, and capable of completing varied responsibilities autonomously.

Independence

The notion "strict in principles, humanistic in approach" demonstrates how carers use a humanistic "strict parenting" approach to independence (Sultan & Tirtayasa, 2025). This is demonstrated in how monitoring is carried out in a measured but helpful manner for the santri's development, as expressed by AR, a boarding school administrator:

The supervision model at this pesantren places greater emphasis on trust. Santri are given the space to learn independently but are still provided with guidance. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

In addition to using a trust-based supervision strategy, the boarding school encourages Santri's independence by delegating structural responsibilities inside the boarding school setting. According to NI, central functions normally performed by supervisors are proportionally allocated through the internal organization.

The approach to developing independence and responsibility is that in this boarding school, there are many rotating leadership roles it's not just one person, but all santri experience it, taking on responsibilities such as duty shifts or leading TPQ teaching groups. This isn't merely a burden but can have a positive impact it develops skills, not just hard skills but soft skills as well, When someone becomes a project leader, they must be able to communicate with their team members how they communicate, how they lead, how they take responsibility for their tasks, and how they carry out their duties effectively. This influences many aspects of their development, broadening their perspective. They come to realize that during an event, there will inevitably be struggles and challenges, and that will shape their character how they exercise patience, better understand situations and circumstances, comprehend the desires of many people, and manage their own desires. All of this will influence the character of the santri. (Interview with NI on December 10, 2025).

According to conversations with administrators, carers adopt a strict yet humane parenting style to encourage the santri's independence by incorporating trust-based supervision and authority rotation throughout the organization. This mechanism conceptualises a concealed curriculum aimed to develop self-regulation, as well as the santri's communication and leadership skills in a humanistic fashion (Murobbi et al., 2024). As stated by NR:

Santri sense of responsibility is also shaped through their involvement in committees and administrative roles at the pesantren. Through these responsibilities, santri learn leadership, build communication with others, and effectively manage and guide group members. Furthermore, the santri' self-awareness in managing their daily lives at the pesantren plays a crucial role in fostering independence. Santri recognize that their presence at the pesantren is a personal choice, which fosters a sense of responsibility to adhere to the established rules. This independence is also evident in the performance of the Dhuhr and Asr congregational prayers, which are not always monitored through attendance checks but are carried out based on self-discipline. Through this practice, santri learn to manage their time, including in organizing their rest periods and daily activities. (Interview with NR on December 15, 2025).

Santri's independent character is developed through self-regulation, and they recognise that their participation at the pesantren is a personal decision (Mariaty Podungge et al., 2025). In this situation, the humanistic strict parenting style might be converted into a strict yet humanistic model inside the organisational structure. The findings of this study show that the growth of santri's independent character is achieved through trust delegation, calibrated monitoring, and the santri's active participation in organisational matters and the boarding school's agenda. Santri's participation in organisational administration, committee work, and pedagogical responsibilities such as teaching serves as a learning medium that accelerates self-regulation, time management, leadership abilities, and mental resilience (Riski & Kunci, 2023). According to research findings, the development of Santri's independence is achieved through the giving of trust, measured guidance, and active participation in numerous organisational tasks and boarding school activities.

Ethics and Morality

Santri's character development is built on internalising values through a combination of exemplary behaviour (uswah hasanah) and counsel. This strategy transforms Nyai's humanistic "strict parenting" style into a firm yet humane approach that promotes moral awareness. The combination of measured monitoring and emotional sensitivity leads Santri to accept ethical ideals as a sort of self-regulation (Habibah & Amirudin, 2023), as explained by AR:

In shaping the santri' character, mothers set an example more often than they issue direct commands. Moral values such as politeness, responsibility, and mutual respect are instilled through daily behavior. This gentle firmness ensures that santri do not feel pressured but rather feel guided. In my opinion, this approach makes it easier for santri to accept the pesantren's values and apply them with self-awareness. (Interview with AR on December 2, 2025).

In addition to providing a physical example, book study forums are used extensively to internalise moral concepts. Informant NI indicated that Nyai has adaptive situational communication abilities, which allow her to contextualise religious teachings in a realistic and factual way within pesantren living :

She shapes our behavior, character, and moral conduct by giving us guidance during Quran recitation sessions and during counseling sessions such as at the beginning or end of the semester. In my opinion, she always offers us advice on maintaining proper etiquette, behavior, and moral conduct both inside and outside the pesantren, and she doesn't state it directly but provides implicit examples, such as when discussing a topic in a religious text, she'll relate it to phenomena occurring at our boarding school. To me, this comes from the heart, even though it might seem like, "Why does this have to be discussed in public?" Perhaps she wants us to know that certain incidents are wrong, that we should act this way, and that our behavior should be like this. As for behavior and moral character, she often gave us guidance during counseling sessions and Quran study. (Interview with NI on December 10, 2025).

A personal, humanistic, and emotive approach provides spiritual guidance for the santri. The constancy of this firm-humanistic leadership style positively corresponds with changes in Santri's behaviour (Habibi & Sholikha, 2025). Based on what ZA

shared, the internalization of this leadership style is effective in transforming aspects of worship into practical social ethics within the boarding school environment:

The moral values taught by Bu Nyai in daily life such as good manners, respecting teachers, avoiding arrogance, and caring for others, especially fellow santri at the pesantren have inspired me to strive to remain humble, respect others, and maintain good manners toward teachers and parents. (Interview with ZA on December 3, 2025).

The ZA statement emphasises Nyai's forceful yet humanistic leadership style, which transforms normative religious principles into practical social virtues like as humility, civility, and a fresh feeling of compassion for others. This parenting approach, which emphasises personal intimacy and effectiveness, produces a supportive environment, allowing the drive to demonstrate noble character to grow from the santri's internal motivation (Prasetyo, 2022). The results of this study align with the findings of (Pasaribu et al., 2023), this suggests that exemplary behaviour (uswah hasanah) and consistent monitoring are the most effective ways to promote character and positive behavioural transformation in santri.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the Nyai's leadership style at Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Hadi Islamic Boarding School in the Al-Hamra' Complex blends principled and regulatory toughness with a humanistic, communicative, and exemplary approach. This leadership paradigm is put into action by instilling discipline, providing consistent supervision, educationally enforcing regulations, delegating responsibilities, and developing moral character through guidance and uswah hasanah. These data demonstrate that the firmness used is not aimed at punitive acts or psychological intimidation, but rather at increasing Santri's self-awareness in internalising the boarding school's basic ideals.

This leadership style has a favourable correlation with Santri's character development, as evidenced by greater discipline, compliance, responsibility, independence, and moral perfection. This character development is achieved by habituation mechanisms, uswah hasanah (positive role modelling), the santri's active

participation in organisational dynamics, and the promotion of an educational ecology conducive to the internalisation of Islamic ideals. Thus, Nyai's leadership is not only focused on the institution's management governance, but it also serves as a strategic tool in producing santri who are noble in character, autonomous, responsible, and adaptive to future life dynamics.

This study's findings add theoretical value to the literature on women's leadership in pesantren settings, confirming that a combination of firmness and a humanistic approach can serve as a successful framework for character development. Practically, the study's findings highlight the importance of striking a balance between enforcing discipline, setting a figurative example, and showing concern for santri's psychological well-being in character development management in order to maximise character education acceleration in Islamic boarding schools.

E. Bibliography

- Afandi, M. A. N. K. (2024). Mengenal Pola Kepengasuhan Santri : Kontribusi Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Di Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Cholil Samarinda Pascarsarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 04(01), 71–82.
- Al-Muttaqin, M. Z., & Sembodo, S. P. (2021). Pola Kepemimpinan Perempuan di Pondok Pesantren Darut Thayyibah dan Peran Sosialnya Di Masyarakat. *IRSYADUNA: Jurnal Studi Kemahasiswaan*, 1(3), 273–288.
- Apiyah, & Suharsiwi. (2021). Pendidikan Karakter Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Studi Kasus Di Pesantren Al Ihrom Jakarta Barat. *Seminar Nasional Penelitian LPPM UMJ*, 1–17.
- Asy'arie, B. F., Aziz, M. H., & Kurniawan, A. (2023). Strategi Pengembangan Karakter Mandiri Santri Pondok Pesantren Hidayatul Qur'an Batanghari, Lampung Timur. *Jurnal Penelitian Agama*, 24(2), 153–172. <https://doi.org/10.24090/jpa.v24i2.2023.pp153-172>
- Basit, A., Mutiara, D., Karimah, U., Adilla, T. N., & Istiqomah, A. (2023). Collective Leadership of Islamic Boarding Schools on the Element of Educators. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(4), 5223–5233.

<https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.2987>

- Berbasis, P., & Maryono, P. (2022). Dwija Cendekia: Jurnal Riset Pedagogik Budaya Pesantren dalam Pembentukan Karakter pada Santri Sekolah Menengah. *DWIJA CENDEKIA :Jurnal Riset Pedagogik*, 6, 297–305.
- Fauzi, A., Fauzi, A., Safuri, B., & Kultsum, U. (n.d.). *Peran Pesantren Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri : Tinjauan Aspek Psikologis*. 1–12.
- Fikri, A. M., Hanafiah, & Fatkhullah, F. K. (2025). Manajemen Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning dalam Rangka Membina Karakter Santri di Pesantren. *Jurnal Educatio*, 11(1), 277–286. <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v11i1.12816>
- Habibah, M., & Amirudin, N. (2023). Pengaruh Menghafal Al- Qur ' an Terhadap Pembentukan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Al-Ilmi*, 6(2).
- Habibi, N., & Sholikha, M. (2025). Kontekstualisasi Teori Bourdieu dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri di Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati. *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2), 261–273. <https://doi.org/10.58577/dimar.v6i2.397>
- Haris, Y. S. (2025). *Pola Asuh Strict Parent dalam Perpspektif Islam : Model Intervensi Untuk Mencegah Kenakalan Remaja dan Membangun Karakter Yang Baik*.
- Hasbi, F., Diani, Y. P., Islam, U., Imam, N., & Padang, B. (2020). *Model Kepemimpinan Di Pondok Pesantren*. 2, 63–78.
- Jannah, A. M., Arni, I. H., & Jaisyurohman, R. A. (2021). Kepemimpinan Dalam Pesantren. *J-CEKI : Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah*, 1(1), 42–49.
- Kh, P., & Chalim, A. (2021). *Pascasarjana magister manajemen pendidikan islam institut pesantren kh. adul chalim mojokerto 2021*.
- Maghfiroh, E. (2024). Kepemimpinan Pengasuh Perempuan di Lingkungan Sosial Pesantren : Studi atas Kepemimpinan Pengasuh Perempuan PP Manbaul Khoiriyatil Islamiyah (MHI) Jember. *Equality*, 2, 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.58518/equality>
- Mariaty Podungge, Kasidi, K., & Basri, B. (2025). Pembentukan Karakter Santri melalui Pembiasaan Kegiatan Harian di Pondok Pesantren Khairul Hikmah. *IQRO: Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(2), 484–498. <https://doi.org/10.24256/iqro.v8i2.7305>
- Murobbi, M. N., Mardiyah, L., Ir, J., No, H. J., Tim, K. C., Selatan, K. T., No, J. A. Y., Utara, K. P., Tengah, J., Murobbi, M. N., & Mardiyah, L. (2024). *Analisis*



INTEGRASI

JURNAL STUDI ISLAM DAN HUMANIORA

E-ISSN: 2986-0474

Vol. 4, No. 3 (2026)

Kepemimpinan Nyai dalam Manajemen Pondok Pesantren (Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Uzlifatil Jannah Kota Tangerang). 25(2), 291–305.
<https://doi.org/10.24090/jpa.v25i2.2024.pp291-305>

Pasaribu, M., Qorib, M., Abdul, H., Pohan, S., & Arifin, S. (2023). Model Pendidikan Karakter Santri di Pesantren Modern Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu. *Edukasi Islami : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(November), 3141–3152.
<https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i04.5268>

Pendidikan, J., Islam, A., Kajian, J., Islam, P., Pendidikan, P., Kepemimpinan, P., Karismatik, K., Akademik, K., Ahmad, N., Alama, R., Ahmad, N., & Alam, R. (2020). *Machine Translated by Google Machine Translated by Google Muhammad Ramli , “ Manajemen Dan Kepemimpinan Pesantren : Dinamika Kepemimpinan Kiai Di Pesantren ,” Al Falah.* 2, 195–212.

Prasetyo, M. A. M. (2022). Pesantren Efektif: Studi Gaya Kepemimpinan Partisipatif. *Munaddhomah*, 3(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v3i1.159>

Puadi, H. (2024). Tipologi Kepemimpinan Kyai Pesantren. *Jurnal Studi Pesantren*, 4(2), 55–76. <https://doi.org/10.35897/studipesantren.v4i2.1529>

Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, I. I. J. (2024). Manajemen Program Tahfiz Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri: Studi Di Sekolah Menengan Pertama Plus Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan. *Re-JIEM*, 2(2), 306–312.

Riski, S. A., & Kunci, K. (2023). *Gaya Kepemimpinan Ibu Nyai dalam Mengembangkan Manajemen Pondok Pesantren Roudlotul Qur ' an Kecamatan Balung Kabupaten Jember.* 2(1), 63–74.

Rohdiana, F., Suhartono, & Marlina. (2023). Budaya Pesantren dan Pendidikan Karakter Santri pada Pondok Pesantren Darussalamah. *Al-I'tibar : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(1), 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.30599/jpia.v10i1.1843>

Sadullah, M. L. (2025). Adaptasi dan Inovasi: Fragmentasi Sosial dalam Transisi Kepemimpinan Pesantren. *Visionaria: Journal of Educational Innovation Management*, 1(1), 1–17.

Sultan, U., & Tirtayasa, A. (2025). *Peran pola asuh strict parents dalam pembentukan perilaku mahasiswa pendidikan sosiologi universitas sultan ageng tirtayasa* 1.2. 4(2), 229–234. <https://doi.org/10.55123/sabana.v4i2.5146>

Supriatna, U., & Barat, K. (2021). *Urgensi Manajemen Pesantren Dalam Pembentukan.* 2(02), 277–288.



INTEGRASI

JURNAL STUDI ISLAM DAN HUMANIORA

E-ISSN: 2986-0474

Vol. 4, No. 3 (2026)

- Triyono, B., Mediawati, E., Miftahul, Y., Dago, K., Indonesia, U. P., & Artikel, I. (2023). *Transformasi Nilai-Nilai Islam melalui Pendidikan Pesantren: Implementasi dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri*.
- Wahrudin, B. (2023). *Kepemimpinan Transformasional di Pondok Pesantren*. 4(2), 131–148.
- Yasin, M. (2022). Pelaksanaan Manajemen Kurikulum Pesantren Dalam Membentuk Karakter Mandiri Santri. *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 1(1), 72–79. <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v1i1.192>