

REGENERATION OF LEADERSHIP MODELS IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS: KHIDMAH-BASED INTEGRATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

Leadership regeneration in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) does not always follow hereditary succession; it may also be organized through structured selection mechanisms grounded in noble religious values. One such mechanism is khidmah, the disposition of santri to dedicate themselves to service to the kiai as a means of deepening tafaqquh fi al-din while simultaneously preparing them for future leadership responsibilities. This tradition resonates with the broader orientation of Islamic education toward the internalization of values and the cultivation of leadership character. This study aims to (1) describe the philosophical foundation underlying leadership regeneration in pesantren, (2) construct a model of khidmah-based leadership regeneration, and (3) analyze how this model contributes to administrative efficiency in pesantren governance. Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary review at Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat in Kudus and Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah in Surabaya, both of which exhibit a distinctive approach to instilling leadership values through the khidmah tradition. The findings show that both pesantren employ a non-genealogical, criteria-based mechanism for appointing caretakers of their branch institutions, in which khidmah functions simultaneously as a vehicle for religious cadre formation and as an administrative instrument that distributes managerial authority across the domains of leadership, institutional governance, entrepreneurial skill, and pedagogy. This distribution of responsibility reduces institutional dependence on a single charismatic figure and strengthens the administrative sustainability of pesantren as they expand into multiple branches.

Keywords : *leadership regeneration; Islamic boarding school; khidmah; administrative efficiency; non-genealogical succession*

Abstrak

Regenerasi kepemimpinan di pondok pesantren tidak selalu berlangsung secara genealogis, melainkan juga dapat diselenggarakan melalui mekanisme seleksi yang terstruktur dan berlandaskan nilai-nilai keagamaan yang luhur. Salah satu mekanisme tersebut adalah khidmah, yaitu kesediaan santri untuk mengabdikan diri kepada kiai sebagai sarana untuk memperdalam tafaqquh fi al-din sekaligus mempersiapkan diri mengemban tanggung jawab kepemimpinan di masa depan. Tradisi ini selaras dengan orientasi pendidikan Islam yang menekankan internalisasi

nilai-nilai dan pembentukan karakter kepemimpinan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mendeskripsikan landasan filosofis regenerasi kepemimpinan pesantren, (2) menyusun model regenerasi kepemimpinan berbasis khidmah, dan (3) menganalisis kontribusi model tersebut terhadap efisiensi administrasi tata kelola pesantren. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif pendekatan fenomenologi, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan telaah dokumentasi di Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat Kudus dan Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah Surabaya, dua lembaga yang memiliki kekhasan dalam menanamkan nilai kepemimpinan melalui tradisi khidmah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua pesantren menerapkan mekanisme pengangkatan pengasuh cabang yang bersifat non-genealogis dan berbasis kriteria, di mana khidmah berfungsi sekaligus sebagai wahana kaderisasi ulama dan sebagai instrumen administratif yang mendistribusikan otoritas manajerial ke dalam ranah kepemimpinan, tata kelola kelembagaan, kecakapan wirausaha, dan pedagogi. Distribusi tanggung jawab ini mengurangi ketergantungan kelembagaan pada figur karismatik tunggal serta memperkuat keberlanjutan administratif pesantren seiring perluasan cabangnya.

Kata Kunci: *regenerasi kepemimpinan; pondok pesantren; khidmah; efisiensi administrasi; suksesi non-genealogis*

INTRODUCTION

The kiai's position as leader of a pesantren carries strategic and symbolic meaning that extends well beyond conventional educational administration. The kiai is often described metaphorically as the sun that provides light, the cloud that gives shade, the water that sustains life, and the star that determines direction (Muthohar, 2002); as the central figure, the kiai holds authority to plan, organize, and control the entire institutional stakeholder network. It is therefore unsurprising that the growth and continuity of a pesantren are widely regarded as contingent upon the personal capacity of its kiai (Dhofier, 1994).

Beyond administrative authority, the kiai functions as a source of knowledge, a mentor, a facilitator, a motivator, and an inspirer of character formation—roles indispensable to preparing santri to become complete human beings. The presence of pesantren as an educational institution has undeniably contributed to the preservation of religious, ethical, and cultural values, as well as social responsibility, all of which constitute the spiritual foundation of intelligence in confronting the challenges of the times.

A distinguishing characteristic of pesantren that sets it apart from other educational institutions is the mechanism of leadership regeneration. The relay of pesantren leadership has historically occurred within the founder's immediate family, following a lineage of founder–children–son-in-law–grandchildren–senior santri (Mastuhu, 1994). Dhofier (1994) terms this pattern the social genealogy of pesantren leaders: the eldest son is customarily positioned as the crown prince and granted priority as principal successor; in the absence of a son, succession typically passes to a son-in-law.

Empirical evidence, however, points to a governance problem that this genealogical pattern alone cannot resolve. Monitoring data from LAZISNU and RMI (Rabithah Ma'had Islamiyah) in Situbondo Regency show that 202 pesantren are registered with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, of which 25 have no students at all and 30 have fewer than 15 students—leaving only 147 institutions still genuinely active. In Cilacap, 60 of 300 traditional pesantren have been forced to close due to insufficient formal education infrastructure in the surrounding areas. These figures point to a structural contradiction: while the number of pesantren continues to expand, the administrative and leadership capacity required to sustain them does not always keep pace, exposing a governance and administrative-efficiency gap that leadership regeneration mechanisms must address.

Alongside this development, a growing number of pesantren are no longer organized around a single genealogical line but are instead managed by foundations or affiliated higher education institutions. In such institutions, the regeneration of leadership has become an increasingly urgent administrative problem, because succession can no longer rely on kinship; it must instead be carried out through appointment mechanisms based on demonstrated qualifications and proficiency in the religious sciences.

This is precisely the context in which a modern mechanism for preparing pesantren leadership regeneration becomes necessary: *khidmah*. The *khidmah* tradition refers to the santri's willingness to dedicate themselves to serving the kiai to strengthen the process of *tafaquh fi al-din*. Among contemporary pesantren, the style of *khidmah* has increasingly been oriented toward cultivating educational, leadership, and vocational values, marking *khidmah* as a new phenomenon aimed at preparing superior human resources rather than merely performing domestic service.

Preserving pesantren leadership, then, is inseparable from preserving the *khidmah* tradition itself—understood as santri's obedience and compliance in carrying out tasks assigned by the kiai (Waryono, 2005). The internalization of devotion and sincerity has become an integral part of the pesantren educational process. Importantly, *khidmah* among santri is not interpreted as a posture of weakness or subordination; rather, it is regarded as an honorable endeavor that, when undertaken willingly, is believed to bring blessing (*barakah*) to one's life and learning.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Prior research on kiai leadership and pesantren succession has largely emphasized the charismatic and genealogical dimensions of authority. Dhofier's (1994) classic account of pesantren tradition established the notion of social genealogy as the dominant mode of succession, while subsequent studies have continued to document pesantren's vulnerability to authority vacuums when a kiai

dies or is no longer able to lead actively, reinforcing the need for systematic cadre-formation strategies. Suryana (2019) similarly stresses that a structured *pengkaderan* (cadre-formation) system—rather than kinship alone—is central to sustaining *pesantren* leadership over time.

Recent scholarship has begun to reframe *khidmah* not simply as an act of personal devotion but as an evolving institutional practice. Fathurrohman and Arifi (2024), for instance, demonstrate that the concept of *khidmah* has expanded well beyond domestic service to encompass administrative, entrepreneurial, and even political roles performed by *santri* on behalf of *kiai* with multiple social positions. Abdillah and Maskuri (2022) further examine *khidmah* through the combined lenses of *'urf* (customary norm) and psychology, showing that the practice carries normative legitimacy within *santri* communities. These studies confirm that *khidmah* is a living, adaptable tradition—yet they stop short of connecting it explicitly to the administrative dimension of institutional governance.

From the standpoint of organizational and educational administration theory, leadership succession is widely recognized as a determinant of institutional continuity and effectiveness. Fink and Brayman (2004) show that principal succession directly shapes the pace and depth of educational change, while Suharto and Pribadi (2023) argue that the effectiveness and efficiency of Islamic educational institutions depend on the application of modern management principles—planning, organizing, directing, and controlling—adapted to Islamic values. Administrative efficiency in this sense refers not merely to bureaucratic streamlining, but to the extent to which an institution can distribute authority, delegate responsibility, and sustain its core functions without over-reliance on a single individual.

Positioned against this literature, the present study identifies a gap: existing research tends to treat *khidmah* either as a cultural-religious phenomenon or as an isolated succession mechanism, without systematically analyzing how *khidmah*-based regeneration functions as an administrative strategy that distributes leadership, governance, entrepreneurial, and pedagogical responsibilities across a widening network of branch institutions. This study addresses that gap directly.

Novelty of the Study

This research offers two principal contributions relative to prior studies. First, it situates its analysis within the realm of *khidmah*, a phenomenon directly relevant to *pesantren* governance dynamics, demonstrating how preserving the *khidmah* tradition supports the development of superior *santri* human resources and enables leadership regeneration.

Second, the study explores in depth the urgency of *khidmah*-based leadership regeneration as an instrument for preparing superior human resources across four interlocking domains—leadership, institutional governance, entrepreneurial skill, and pedagogy—and, in doing so, articulates for the first time how this configuration

functions as a mechanism of administrative efficiency that allows pesantren to expand into multiple branches without leadership discontinuity.

Research Objectives

Building on the problem and gap outlined above, this study is directed at three objectives: (1) to describe the philosophical foundation underlying leadership regeneration in pesantren; (2) to construct a model of khidmah-based leadership regeneration as practiced at the two research sites; and (3) to analyze how this model contributes to administrative efficiency in pesantren governance.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Qualitative research examines the condition of natural objects in which the researcher serves as the key instrument; sampling of data sources is purposive and through snowballing; data collection relies on triangulation; data analysis is inductive; and the resulting findings emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2016). A phenomenological approach was selected because it foregrounds how informants experience khidmah and leadership regeneration directly, rather than treating them as abstractions to be measured numerically; this allows the description of Islamic boarding school leadership regeneration to remain grounded in the lived, naturalistic reality of the research subjects.

Fieldwork was conducted at two pesantren purposively selected for exhibiting a distinctive style of instilling leadership values through the khidmah tradition: Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat in Kudus, Central Java, under the Arwaniyah Foundation, together with its seven cooperative branch institutions; and Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah in Surabaya, together with its branch institutions in Semarang, Indramayu, and Tulungagung. Informants were selected purposively and through snowball sampling, comprising caregivers (pengasuh) of the central and branch institutions, khidmah santri who had completed or were undergoing the khidmah process, and administrators responsible for the day-to-day governance of the branch institutions.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques applied in triangulation: (1) in-depth, semi-structured interviews with caregivers, khidmah santri, and branch administrators; (2) participant observation of khidmah activities, including the delegation of managerial, business-unit, and teaching responsibilities; and (3) documentary study of institutional records, including foundation regulations governing the criteria and qualifications for branch caretaker appointment. The combination of these three techniques was intended to complement, strengthen, and mutually verify the data obtained.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1985), comprising three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, in which

interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were selected and simplified around the themes of leadership, governance, skill, and teaching; data display, in which condensed data were organized into descriptive and diagrammatic form to reveal patterns across the two research sites; and conclusion drawing and verification, in which emerging patterns were continuously checked against the raw data and cross-checked across sources until a stable interpretation of the khidmah-based regeneration model was reached.

The credibility of the findings was safeguarded through source and technique triangulation—comparing accounts from caregivers, khidmah santri, and administrators, and cross-checking interview data against observation and documentary evidence—together with prolonged engagement at each research site and informal member-checking with key informants to confirm that the researchers' interpretation of the khidmah mechanism accurately reflected the informants' own understanding.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Regeneration at Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat and Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah

As the oldest form of Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, pesantren possess characteristics that distinguish them from other educational institutions, chief among them the centrality of the kiai as founder and owner. Consequently, pesantren leadership has historically been genealogical, with leadership succession in individually owned pesantren occurring within the immediate family: founder–children–son-in-law–grandchildren–senior santri (Mastuhu, 1994).



Figure 1. Khidmah learning activity for santri at Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Kudus

In step with the broader dynamics of pesantren development, leadership regeneration is no longer confined to hereditary succession; the relay of leadership may also be extended to senior santri through an agreed institutional mechanism.

Pesantren today therefore has two available regeneration pathways—genealogical and non-genealogical—which frequently operate side by side within the same institution as it expands.

Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat is an educational institution focused on tahfizh al-Qur'an, operating under the Arwaniyah Foundation of Kudus. Over time, it has grown to encompass not only its managed units but also seven cooperative branch institutions distributed across several regions of Indonesia. The leadership-regeneration model applied in these cooperative branches follows a non-genealogical approach: the appointment of branch caretakers (*pengasuh cabang*) is determined by criteria and qualifications established by the central foundation leadership, foremost among them the requirement that the candidate be a *khidmah santri* who has demonstrated competence and is judged capable of managing the branch.

A comparable pattern is found at Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah, which likewise uses a non-genealogical approach to appoint caretakers for its branch institutions in Semarang, Indramayu, and Tulungagung. The criteria and qualifications set by the Al-Fitrah Foundation management require that candidates be senior *santri* of Ma'had Aly Pondok As-Salafi Al-Fitrah who have completed the *khidmah* process in full.



Figure 2. Arabic Language Festival activity at Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah, Surabaya

Table 1 summarizes the comparative pattern of leadership regeneration across the two research sites, showing that although both institutions retain a genealogical line at the level of the central *kiai*, both have institutionalized a parallel, criteria-based non-genealogical pathway to govern their expanding branch networks.

Aspect	Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat, Kudus	As-Salafi Al-Fitrah, Surabaya
Institutional authority	Arwaniyah Foundation, Kudus	As-Salafi Al-Fitrah Foundation, Surabaya
Central leadership pathway	Genealogical (founder's family)	Genealogical (founder's family)
Branch leadership pathway	Non-genealogical, criteria-based	Non-genealogical, criteria-based
Branch locations	7 cooperative branches across Indonesia	Semarang, Indramayu, Tulungagung
Appointment criterion	Khidmah santri is deemed competent to manage the branch	Senior santri of Ma'had Aly who completed khidmah

Table 1. Comparative Pattern of Leadership Regeneration at the Two Research Sites

Khidmah as a Vehicle for Ulama Cadre Formation

Organizing khidmah as a learning process is significant from the perspective of Islamic education for two interrelated reasons. First, the khidmah tradition in pesantren is not merely a habit passed down through generations; it serves as a source of values that shape santri leadership attitudes and behavior. This is consistent with Fathurrohman and Arifi's (2024) finding that khidmah has evolved into a multidimensional practice spanning teaching, business, academic, and even political service to the kiai, rather than remaining confined to domestic duties. Second, the khidmah tradition—sustained over a long period within the pesantren environment—generates benefits not only for the institution but also for santri individually, a pattern also documented by Abdillah and Maskuri (2022) in their normative and psychological analysis of the tradition's legitimacy.

The khidmah learning model developed at both Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra and Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah no longer relies principally on khidmah bi al-nafs—physical service through the santri's willingness to dedicate time, energy, and thought for the benefit of the institution—but is instead oriented toward four interlocking aspects that build leadership capacity: leadership, pesantren governance, entrepreneurial skill, and pedagogical teaching. Rather than presenting these four aspects as isolated categories, Figure 3 depicts them as a circular, regenerative model radiating from khidmah as the central value from which all four domains are cultivated simultaneously.

Figure 3. Circular Model of Aspects Developed through the Khidmah Tradition



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Within the leadership dimension, khidmah santri are given authority and responsibility to manage pesantren activities—including financial administration and event organization—thereby deepening their leadership experience directly through practice. A structured delegation program positions khidmah santri as administrators, serving simultaneously as an educational and leadership-training mechanism for those judged to have future leadership potential, while ongoing character and personality development equips them with the moral integrity expected of pesantren leaders through the teaching and practice of adab, akhlak, and character.

Within the pesantren-governance dimension, the practice of khidmah introduces santri to institutional and community-facing responsibilities through wazhifah tasks—order, cleanliness, security, and tidiness—that encourage a deeper understanding of pesantren governance as a lived administrative practice rather than an abstract concept. Within the entrepreneurial-skill dimension, the placement of khidmah santri in cottage business units such as the cooperative, the printing unit, and the KHQ mineral-water enterprise builds business-management ability and entrepreneurial competence. Finally, within the teaching dimension, the delegation of tahlif instruction to junior santri, together with teaching assignments at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah levels, cultivates the pedagogical skill that khidmah santri will require once they assume leadership of a branch institution.

Khidmah values thus constitute the basic principle that must be applied in pesantren leadership regeneration. Khidmah—meaning devotion—emphasizes the importance of serving and providing the best for the institution; in the pesantren context, these values become the moral and ethical foundation upon which leaders commit to developing santri and the pesantren environment. By understanding and internalizing khidmah values, khidmah santri are expected to create a harmonious, productive atmosphere and foster a spirit of collaboration between santri and caregivers.

Circular Model of Genealogical and Non-Genealogical Regeneration Pathways

To synthesize the comparative pattern presented in Table 1, Figure 4 depicts the two regeneration pathways as complementary halves of a single circular model that converges on the continuity of pesantren leadership. The genealogical pathway—founder, children or son-in-law, and grandchildren or senior santri—continues to govern succession at the level of the central kiai, consistent with Dhofier's (1994) concept of social genealogy. The non-genealogical pathway, by contrast, governs succession at the level of branch institutions through a sequential process of khidmah-based selection, competency and qualification assessment, and formal appointment as branch caretaker.

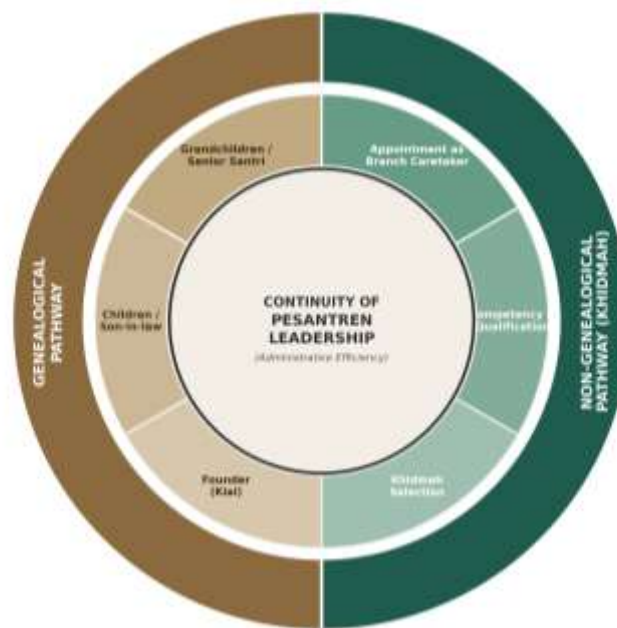


Figure 4. Circular Comparative Model of Genealogical and Non-Genealogical (Khidmah-Based) Leadership Regeneration Pathways

This circular framing makes explicit what a simple dichotomy between 'genealogical' and 'non-genealogical' succession tends to obscure: the two pathways are not mutually exclusive alternatives but operate concurrently within the same institution, with the non-genealogical, khidmah-based pathway absorbing the administrative load that a purely genealogical model cannot bear once an institution expands beyond a single campus. This finding resonates with Fink and Brayman's

(2004) observation that principal succession is a determinant of an institution's capacity for institutional change: when succession is structured and criteria-based, an institution is better positioned to sustain its core functions through periods of leadership transition.

Khidmah-Based Regeneration as a Strategy for Administrative Efficiency

The central argument of this study is that khidmah-based leadership regeneration functions not only as a vehicle of religious cadre formation but also as a concrete mechanism of administrative efficiency in pesantren governance. Administrative efficiency, following Suharto and Pribadi (2023), is achieved when an institution applies the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling functions in a manner aligned with its values while sustaining institutional productivity. In the pesantren context observed at both research sites, this is realized through the deliberate distribution of managerial authority away from a single kiai figure and toward khidmah santri who have been prepared, through the four aspects depicted in Figure 3, to carry specific administrative responsibilities.

This distribution of authority is consistent with the organizational principle of delegation, which reduces managerial overload and increases organizational responsiveness (Robbins, 2002). At Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat, delegation is visible in the assignment of financial management for the cooperative business unit, the printing unit, and the KHQ mineral-water enterprise to khidmah santri, freeing the central kiai from routine operational oversight of seven branch institutions simultaneously. At As-Salafi Al-Fitrah, the requirement that branch caretakers be senior santri of Ma'had Aly who have completed khidmah similarly ensures that branch governance in Semarang, Indramayu, and Tulungagung does not depend on the central kiai's physical presence. In administrative terms, khidmah functions as a decentralization instrument: it converts a charismatic, person-dependent leadership structure into a criteria-based, role-distributed structure capable of supporting institutional expansion (Sagala, 2012).

Seen this way, the four aspects of khidmah in Figure 3 correspond to four administrative functions that a single kiai would otherwise have to perform alone: leadership development corresponds to succession planning; pesantren governance corresponds to operational administration; entrepreneurial skill corresponds to financial and business management; and teaching corresponds to academic administration. The circular, mutually reinforcing arrangement of these four functions—rather than a rigid hierarchical chain—allows the institution to absorb the administrative demands of growth without a proportional increase in dependence on the central kiai, which directly addresses the governance gap identified in the introduction, where pesantren expansion has outpaced administrative capacity in several documented cases.

Technology Integration in Khidmah-Based Leadership Regeneration

Innovation within solemn-value-based leadership models must also be considered. Effective pesantren leaders are expected to adapt to contemporary developments, including the use of information and communication technology, which can support the leadership-regeneration process by facilitating information exchange and enabling online training and mentoring programs. By integrating technology into khidmah-based administration, pesantren can reach more santri and expand collaboration networks with other institutions, thereby extending khidmah values into a broader administrative and educational context and further strengthening the administrative-efficiency function described above.

Institutional Implications and Sustainability of Khidmah Values

The role of the pesantren as an institution in implementing khidmah values is vital, since values-based leadership of this kind is not merely an individual responsibility but involves all elements of the pesantren community. Through empowerment programs, santri are drawn into leadership roles that encourage initiative and accountability; this step not only prepares them as future leaders but also cultivates a sense of ownership of the pesantren, ensuring that khidmah values are upheld and renewed across successive generations. In administrative terms, this generational renewal is precisely what allows the non-genealogical pathway in Figure 4 to remain a durable, self-sustaining source of institutional leadership rather than a one-time appointment mechanism.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to describe the philosophical foundation of pesantren leadership regeneration, to construct a model of khidmah-based regeneration, and to analyze its contribution to administrative efficiency in pesantren governance. The findings show that leadership regeneration in pesantren does not occur solely through genetic succession via the kiai's descendants; the relay of pesantren leadership can also extend to senior santri through an agreed-upon institutional mechanism, such that pesantren today operate through two complementary regeneration pathways—genealogical and non-genealogical.

At both Pondok Tahfizh Yanbu'ul Qur'an Putra Pusat Kudus and Pondok Pesantren As-Salafi Al-Fitrah Surabaya, leadership regeneration is carried out through a combination of genealogical succession at the level of the central kiai and non-genealogical, khidmah-based succession at the level of branch institutions. The khidmah-based pathway carries a very significant urgency for pesantren governance, particularly in preparing leadership regeneration: khidmah—meaning devotion—emphasizes leadership, institutional governance, entrepreneurial, and pedagogical values among santri, and in doing so functions simultaneously as a vehicle of religious cadre formation and, as this study demonstrates, as an instrument of administrative efficiency that distributes managerial responsibility, reduces institutional dependence on a single charismatic figure, and sustains

harmonious relationships among khidmah santri, caregivers, junior santri, and the surrounding community.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on pesantren leadership by demonstrating that khidmah should be understood not only as a religious-cultural practice but as an organizational mechanism comparable to structured succession planning in modern educational administration. In practice, the circular models developed in this study (Figures 3 and 4) may serve as a reference for pesantren foundations seeking to formalize criteria-based branch leadership appointments as their institutions expand.

This study is limited by its focus on two pesantren with established, well-resourced khidmah traditions; the model's transferability to smaller or less institutionalized pesantren, including many recorded as struggling in Situbondo and Cilacap, remains to be tested. Future research is therefore recommended to examine the khidmah-based regeneration model across a wider and more varied sample of pesantren, including institutions currently experiencing leadership or enrollment decline, and to explore the extent to which the administrative-efficiency gains identified here can be measured quantitatively, for example, through indicators of branch survival, financial sustainability, or continuity of academic programs following leadership transition.

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