

THE INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN PESANTREN LEADERSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF NYAI HJ. MASRIYAH AMVA'S LEADERSHIP MODEL

Lulu Alwiyah*¹, Farihin², Ahmad Yani³

^{1,2, & 3}Universitas Islam Negeri Siber Syekh Nujati Cirebon Indonesia

Corresponding author: alwiyahlulu96@gmail.com

Submission Track:

Submission : 31-03-2025

Accept Submission : 01-06-2025

Available Online : 23-06-2025



© 2025 The Author(s). This open-access article is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

Abstract

This study explores the leadership model of Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva, a female Islamic scholar and leader of the Kebon Jambu al-Islamy Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon, Indonesia. Positioned within the historically patriarchal structure of pesantren leadership, her role represents a transformative shift. The research aims to analyze the Islamic spirituality that underpins her leadership, identify the social transformations resulting from her leadership style, and formulate a model of transformational leadership based on the integration of spirituality and social change. Using a qualitative approach and intrinsic case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The findings show that Nyai Masriyah's leadership is grounded in ethical and prophetic spirituality, which functions both vertically (relation to God) and horizontally (social ethics). Her leadership has initiated significant structural and cultural changes in the pesantren environment, such as the inclusion of women in decision-making, gender-sensitive curriculum development, and broader engagement with social issues. The study proposes a conceptual model of Islamic Transformational Leadership rooted in spiritual values, social justice, and gender equality. It offers a contextual and replicable framework that contributes both theoretically to Islamic leadership discourse and practically to the empowerment of women in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Islamic Leadership; Spirituality; Social Transformation; Gender; Pesantren

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi model kepemimpinan Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva, seorang ulama perempuan dan pengasuh Pondok Pesantren Kebon Jambu al-Islamy di Cirebon, Indonesia. Dalam struktur kepemimpinan pesantren yang secara historis bersifat patriarkal, peran beliau merepresentasikan pergeseran yang transformatif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis spiritualitas Islam yang melandasi kepemimpinannya, mengidentifikasi transformasi sosial yang muncul sebagai dampak dari gaya kepemimpinannya, serta merumuskan model kepemimpinan transformasional berbasis integrasi antara spiritualitas dan perubahan sosial. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode studi kasus intrinsik, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan Nyai Masriyah berakar pada spiritualitas etis dan profetik yang berfungsi secara vertikal (hubungan dengan Tuhan) dan horizontal (etika sosial). Kepemimpinan beliau telah memicu perubahan struktural dan kultural yang signifikan di lingkungan pesantren, seperti pelibatan perempuan dalam pengambilan keputusan, pengembangan kurikulum yang sensitif gender, dan keterlibatan luas dalam isu-isu sosial. Studi ini mengusulkan model konseptual Kepemimpinan Transformasional Islam yang berakar pada nilai spiritualitas, keadilan sosial, dan kesetaraan gender. Model ini menawarkan kerangka yang kontekstual dan dapat direplikasi, yang berkontribusi secara teoretis pada wacana kepemimpinan Islam dan secara praktis pada pemberdayaan perempuan di institusi pendidikan Islam.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan Islam; Spiritualitas; Transformasi Sosial; Gender; Pesantren

A. INTRODUCTION

Leadership within the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environment is an integral part of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia. Historically, pesantren leadership structures have been shaped by a deeply rooted patriarchal system. Male kiai (Islamic scholars) have traditionally occupied the pinnacle of religious, social, and symbolic authority, while the role of women—particularly the nyai (female religious leaders)—has often been confined to domestic responsibilities and the care of female students (Azra, 2012; Zarkasyi, 2019). Consequently, female leadership in pesantren remains an exception rather than the norm. Women rarely assume the position of institutional leaders, let alone as agents of social change. However, contemporary realities reveal the emergence of nyai figures who transcend these traditional role constructions. They actively lead pesantren, implement educational innovations, and play pivotal roles in Islamic discourse, both nationally and globally.

One of the most prominent figures in this landscape is Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva, the leader of Pondok Pesantren Kebon Jambu al-Islamy in Babakan Ciwaringin, Cirebon. She is widely recognized not only as a female ulama vocal in advocating for gender justice, pluralism, and Islamic inclusivity, but also as a

pesantren leader who integrates Islamic spirituality with a vision of social transformation. Her life journey offers an unconventional narrative in the tradition of pesantren leadership: from being the wife of a kiai and his partner in managing the pesantren, Masriyah assumed full leadership after her husband's passing. Amidst various limitations, she succeeded in transforming the pesantren into an open, humanist, and socially responsive institution.

Nyai Masriyah Amva's leadership model exhibits characteristics of transformational leadership as conceptualized by Bass and Avolio (1994), namely: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. She inspires both students and the community, promotes critical thinking, and fosters an inclusive spiritual space. What distinguishes her from conventional transformational leadership models is the ethical and prophetic foundation of values she upholds: a form of Islamic spirituality that transcends ritualism and embodies ethical commitment. This spirituality acts as a catalyst for social transformation. She interprets religion as a liberating energy—not as a mechanism reinforcing patriarchal structures; as a beacon of humanity—not as a tool for suppressing reason and intellectual freedom.

In Islam, spirituality is not merely a vertical connection between humans and God but also entails horizontal implications: social ethics, human responsibility, and moral courage (Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Nasr, 2002). Therefore, the form of spiritual leadership demonstrated by Masriyah Amva is neither symbolic nor ritualistic, but a transformative power capable of reshaping social structures within the pesantren. It opens leadership opportunities for women, challenges gender-based power relations, and repositions the pesantren as a dynamic agent of societal change.

As a result of her leadership, various forms of social transformation have occurred. In this context, social transformation refers to shifts in values, structures, and patterns of relationships within the pesantren community—such as the increased participation of female students in strategic domains, the evolution of more inclusive religious narratives, and the active involvement of pesantren in public discourse (Giddens, 2009; Tilaar, 2004). The pesantren is no longer an exclusive domain of the kiai, but a collective, egalitarian, and progressive center of empowerment.

Several previous studies have examined Masriyah Amva's contributions from various perspectives. Munawwaroh, Wajdi, and Fitri (2019) highlighted her democratic and collective leadership style. Anggraeni et al. (2021) emphasized her resilience in leading the pesantren during the COVID-19 pandemic. Istiqlaliyani (2022) focused on her personal character and efforts in women's empowerment. Wulandani (2023) explored her theological interpretation of the equality verse in Q.S. At-Tawbah: 71. Dianti (2022) investigated her ideas on women's education, while Razak and Mundzir (2023) discussed her role in expanding female religious authority within pluralistic discourse. Additionally, Asiyah (2020) showcased the

feminist hermeneutic approach she applied in interpreting gender-related Quranic verses.

Nonetheless, these studies remain largely descriptive and thematic. None has yet synthesized transformational leadership theory with Islamic spirituality to construct a conceptual model of female pesantren leadership. This study seeks to fill that gap by formulating a Spirituality-Based Transformational Leadership Model, which integrates three key theoretical foundations:

1. Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994) – as the framework for leadership style and process,
2. Islamic Spirituality (Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Nasr, 2002) – as the source of core values and ethics,
3. Social Change Theory (Giddens, 2009; Tilaar, 2004) – as indicators of the outcomes and impact of leadership on the pesantren community.

This research complements the existing body of work by advancing an integrative and interdisciplinary framework. It not only captures the figure of a prominent female leader but also constructs a conceptual model grounded in transformational leadership and Islamic spirituality within the pesantren context—offering a systematic and replicable model of Islamic female leadership. The study is expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it expands the discourse on Islamic leadership rooted in values, spirituality, and gender within Indonesia's local pesantren context. Practically, it serves as a strategic reference for pesantren development—particularly in fostering leadership roles for women as agents of socially transformative Islamic change.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design, as the primary focus is to explore the leadership model of Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva within the context of Islamic spirituality and social transformation in the pesantren setting. An intrinsic case study is appropriate when the researcher is particularly interested in a single case that holds intrinsic value, rather than for the purpose of generalization (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the meanings, values, and practices of leadership in a complex cultural and spiritual context. The research site was purposively selected: Pondok Pesantren Kebon Jambu al-Islamy in Babakan Ciwaringin, Cirebon—an institution that serves as the primary setting of the subject's leadership and represents a traditional pesantren undergoing dynamic social change.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Moleong, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit experiences, perspectives, and leadership values from Nyai Masriyah Amva and supporting informants, including senior students (*santri*), pesantren administrators, alumni, and external

colleagues. Observations were carried out during various pesantren activities to understand the daily spiritual and social dimensions of her leadership. Document analysis covered the subject's writings, pesantren archives, public media, and other relevant historical documents.

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflective thematic analysis, which involves the following steps: data transcription, coding, theme identification, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. This method enabled the researcher to identify and reflect on patterns of meaning emerging from the narratives of informants and the documents examined, especially those concerning the relationship between spirituality and social change in leadership practice.

To ensure data trustworthiness, the study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Source and method triangulation were employed to enhance credibility; rich contextual descriptions were provided to support transferability; an audit trail was maintained to ensure dependability; and researcher reflexivity was documented to guarantee confirmability. Ethical principles were rigorously upheld by securing informed consent, protecting the confidentiality of informants, and allowing them to verify the findings as part of scientific accountability (Patton, 2015).

Through this methodological approach, the study aims to formulate a conceptual model of transformational leadership grounded in Islamic spirituality—one that is not only contextually relevant to the pesantren environment but also contributes conceptually to the broader discourse on Islamic leadership and women's studies in education.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore and critically analyze the leadership of Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva at Pondok Pesantren Kebon Jambu al-Islamy, with a particular emphasis on the integration of Islamic spirituality and social transformation within the context of pesantren leadership. Employing an intrinsic case study design with a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Reflective thematic analysis revealed three key findings: (1) Islamic spirituality as the foundation of leadership, (2) social transformation within the structure and culture of the pesantren, and (3) the formulation of a spirituality-based transformational leadership model.

1. RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

1) Islamic Spirituality as the Foundation of Leadership

Nyai Masriyah Amva grounds her leadership in Islamic spirituality, which encompasses not only the vertical relationship between humans and God but also a horizontal dimension expressed through social ethics and justice. Sufi values such as *tawakkul* (trust in God), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabr* (patience), and *'adl* (justice) serve as the foundation of her leadership practice. Her discourse frequently draws

on Qur’anic verses that advocate for equality and justice, such as Q.S. Al-Hujurat:13, which emphasizes human diversity in creation, and Q.S. At-Tawbah:71, which affirms mutual responsibility between believing men and women.

In practice, this spirituality is manifested in her decision-making processes, public sermons, and interpersonal relations within the pesantren community. Interviews with senior students reveal that Bu Nyai consistently prioritizes deliberation (*musyawarah*), patience, and proper ethical conduct (*adab*) in conflict resolution. Her spirituality is not merely symbolic but functions as a practical orientation that shapes the pesantren’s vision as an inclusive and transformative institution. This is also evident in her religious teachings, which are rich with liberatory values and spiritually grounded notions of justice and empowerment.

Table 1. Spiritual Dimensions of Nyai Masriyah Amva’s Leadership

Spiritual Aspect	Manifestation in Source of Islamic Values
<i>Tawakkul</i> and <i>Ikhlās</i>	Steadfastness in facing challenges after the death of her husband Q.S. At-Taubah:51
Gender Equality	Contextual interpretation of gender-related verses Q.S. At-Tawbah:71
Social Justice	Advocacy for diversity and religious pluralism Q.S. Al-Maidah:8
Freedom of Thought	Encouragement of critical thinking among students Hadith on <i>ijtihad</i>

2) Social Transformation within the Pesantren Community

The social transformation resulting from Masriyah Amva’s spiritual leadership encompasses changes in gender structures, curriculum, religious narratives, and social relations within the pesantren. A previously conservative institution has evolved into a more progressive and open space, particularly in addressing contemporary issues related to women and social justice.

Table 2. Social Transformation Aspects

Social Transformation Aspects	Tangible Changes
Gender Structure	Active involvement of female students and administrators in decision-making

Inclusive Curriculum	Integration of gender-based Quranic exegesis and religious pluralism studies
Social Relations	Interfaith dialogue and cross-community collaboration
Institutional Identity	Shift from a traditional pesantren to a moderate and progressive one

3) Formulation of a Spirituality-Based Transformational Leadership Model

Referring to the framework of Bass and Avolio (1994), the four core elements of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—are all present in Nyai Masriyah’s leadership practices. However, what distinguishes her model is the integration of Islamic spirituality as the foundational source of values and ethical orientation. This spiritual grounding provides not only moral legitimacy but also a deeper direction for leadership that emphasizes compassion, justice, and liberation within the pesantren context.

Table 3. Implementasi Kepemimpinan Transformasional Nyai Masriyah Amva

Transformational Element	Implementation by Nyai Masriyah
Idealized Influence	Moral and spiritual role modeling
Inspirational Motivation	Encouraging students to think critically and confidently engage in public spaces
Intellectual Stimulation	Creating space for alternative interpretations and discussions on Islamic feminism
Individualized Consideration	Providing personal guidance and spiritual nurturing

This leadership model positions Masriyah as a prophetic-transformational leader—not only as the caretaker of the pesantren, but also as a thinker, gender activist, and agent of social change. Within the patriarchal context of traditional pesantren, this role represents both a transgression of dominant narratives and a constructive effort to build a more just and inclusive leadership paradigm.

2. DISCUSSION

1) Female Leadership within a Patriarchal Tradition

Historically, the role of women in pesantren leadership has been highly constrained. Structural and symbolic patriarchy positioned male *kiai* at the center of authority, while *nyai* were often relegated to supporting roles or managing female students. Nyai Masriyah Amva transcended these boundaries by claiming legitimate leadership space through spirituality, intellectualism, and devotion.

This affirms that gender roles in pesantren leadership are socio-cultural constructions, not theological imperatives.

As Zarkasyi (2019) argues, resistance to female leadership in pesantren is rooted more in tradition than in religious doctrine. Masriyah has demonstrated that women can legitimately lead within an Islamic framework. Her leadership not only challenges patriarchal structures but does so through educational and transformative approaches. She does not position men as adversaries but instead promotes gender collaboration as part of a collective leadership strategy.

Masriyah's leadership represents a subtle yet effective form of cultural resistance against entrenched patriarchal systems within Islamic institutions. Rather than adopting a confrontational stance, she employs a transformative method grounded in moral exemplarity, education, and critical dialogue. This strategy renders her leadership more acceptable within the traditionally conservative pesantren community. In her sermons, she rarely criticizes gender inequality directly; instead, she draws from Islamic values that support reciprocity, justice, and equality in leadership and social relations.

Her strategic role in reconstructing women's positions is not limited to the pesantren's internal dynamics but extends into the public sphere. She actively participates in national discourses on Islam, citizenship, and gender. Her involvement in national platforms such as the Indonesian Congress of Women Ulama (KUPI) strengthens the legitimacy of women as religious leaders and social change agents. Her leadership thus impacts not only the pesantren community but also symbolizes broader resistance against female marginalization in the landscape of Indonesian Islam.

Moreover, Masriyah's success underscores the importance of leadership rooted in lived experience and local wisdom. Her leadership is not based on imported models but derives from the transformative reinterpretation of pesantren traditions and Islamic spirituality. She practices what can be termed "transformation from within"—a form of change grounded in the internal values of the community rather than external pressure. This makes her transformation more sustainable because it is culturally and religiously legitimate.

Masriyah's leadership also demonstrates that women are not only capable of managing Islamic educational institutions but also of developing them with a strong value orientation and social commitment. In other words, her success provides empirical evidence that women can simultaneously be caretakers, innovators, and spiritual leaders—without compromising their feminine or Islamic identities. On the contrary, she exemplifies the unification of these identities in a charismatic and visionary leader.

2) Spiritual-Transformational Leadership

In Islam, spirituality is understood as an inner awareness that guides ethical behavior. When integrated with transformational leadership, spirituality serves as a moral compass for social change. This model is highly relevant within the

pesantren context, as it combines religious authority with a liberative ethical framework.

Beekun and Badawi (1999) emphasize that Islamic leadership must be rooted in the values of *tawhid* (divine unity), *amanah* (trust), and *adl* (justice). Masriyah contextualizes these principles through liberatory spiritual narratives that uphold social justice. In this sense, spiritual leadership is not passive mysticism but an active force to reshape social order towards greater equity.

Masriyah also dismantles the dichotomy between tradition and modernity in Islamic leadership. She shows that reinterpretation of Islamic spirituality can lead to meaningful structural reform. Her leadership becomes a synthesis of cultural values and critical contemporary thought.

Based on this synthesis, Masriyah's leadership not only adapts normative Islamic traditions but reconstructs them to be more responsive to modern challenges. She reinterprets religious teachings through the lens of social and gender justice, avoiding literalism that confines women's roles. Instead, she presents liberating and progressive readings—such as her interpretation of verses like Q.S. Al-Hujurat:13 and Q.S. At-Tawbah:71—as spiritual and ideological foundations that affirm human equality before God and within social structures.

Her model of leadership proves that spirituality is not an abstract or ritualistic concept; it has practical implications for reshaping the social structure of pesantren. Masriyah's spiritual-transformational leadership is pedagogical, fostering in her students a sense of self-awareness, social responsibility, and intellectual courage. Spirituality becomes a tool for empowerment, not just moral legitimacy. She nurtures *santri* to become critical thinkers and social change agents, not merely memorizers of classical texts.

As a result, Pesantren Kebon Jambu emerges as a socio-religious laboratory that embodies Islamic values through grounded social practices. For instance, values of justice, equality, and respect for diversity are reflected in its inclusive curriculum, interfaith dialogue activities, and the active involvement of female students in religious discourse. In this way, Masriyah's leadership creates a spiritual ecosystem conducive to developing value-based change agents.

Furthermore, her approach opens a space for critiquing the hierarchical and reproductive nature of Islamic education. Through dialogic and participatory leadership, she challenges dominant power relations and replaces them with collaborative and egalitarian dynamics. This mirrors Kuntowijoyo's (2001) concept of prophetic leadership, where a leader is not merely an administrator but an ethical-transformational agent balancing spiritual, rational, and social dimensions.

Altogether, Masriyah's leadership exemplifies a new form of Islamic transformative leadership—a model that emphasizes not only *shariah* and personal piety but also proactive engagement in addressing structural inequalities and patriarchal norms. This model has the potential to reshape contemporary Islamic leadership discourse, particularly within pesantren and value-based

educational institutions. It shows that spirituality is not the antithesis of progressivism, but a bridge between the two.

3) Change as a Marker of Leadership Effectiveness

The social changes achieved under Masriyah's leadership span structural (gender), epistemic (religious narrative), and social (public participation) dimensions. These align with Giddens' (2009) theory of social change, which emphasizes shifts in structure, relationships, and values. Such transformations unfold gradually through sustained educational processes and intergenerational dialogue.

Masriyah's transformation is not merely symbolic—it is substantive. She reconfigures not only formal structures but also the collective consciousness of pesantren members regarding women's roles, the right to education, and social participation. The success of her leadership is reflected in the emergence of a new generation of female *santri* who are critical, empowered, and capable of acting as community change agents.

Her social transformation is rooted in reconstructing the religious understanding of women's roles in Islam, which has long been limited by gender-biased interpretations. She sees education as a means of emancipation—not merely the transmission of knowledge, but a process of self-liberation and critical consciousness-building. In her lectures and sermons, Masriyah consistently urges *santri*, especially women, to become active agents in interpreting their Islamic and social realities. Through this approach, she has created a new epistemic space in pesantren—one where women are not just objects of religious teaching, but producers of progressive Islamic knowledge.

These changes have also impacted the pesantren's institutional structure. Previously male-dominated decision-making forums are now more decentralized, with women actively involved in governance, consultative assemblies, and internal policy formulation. This process is rooted in leadership by example and empowerment. Masriyah does not impose change but cultivates it through educational and relational processes. In Bass and Avolio's (1994) terms, this reflects *individualized consideration*—where a leader nurtures individual capacities as part of a collective transformation agenda.

Additionally, Masriyah's public engagement—locally, nationally, and internationally—broadens the scope of her transformative impact. Her presence as a female religious scholar challenges masculine dominance in Islamic discourse and proves that women's spirituality and intellect significantly contribute to building a civil society. In this frame, pesantren is no longer seen as a conservative institution but as a dynamic site of cultural dialogue.

This process illustrates Tilaar's (2004) concept of multicultural educational transformation: a shift in educational paradigms that not only acknowledges diversity but embraces it as a source of social strength. Masriyah's leadership integrates Islamic values with principles of equity, pluralism, and social inclusion.

The result is a pesantren culture that is more adaptive to contemporary social issues such as environmental concerns, women's rights, and interfaith tolerance.

Her leadership can thus be read as a practice of prophetic-transformational leadership, rooted in the prophetic values of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*—enjoining good and forbidding evil—but carried out through modern transformative methods that foster critical awareness, emancipation, and social change. This aligns with Nasr's (2002) vision of Islamic spirituality as a foundation for public ethics and civilization. Hence, Masriyah's leadership not only functions within pesantren but also points to a new direction in Islamic leadership in Indonesia: inclusive, transformative, and rooted in liberative spirituality.

4) Model Innovation: Contextual Islamic Feminist Leadership

This study affirms that the model of transformational leadership based on Islamic spirituality as practiced by Nyai Masriyah is contextual, replicable, and applicable. It not only creates space for women's leadership but also helps shape a new, more inclusive social structure. This is a significant contribution to expanding the paradigm of Islamic leadership—from one traditionally centered on symbolic male figures to one that embraces values-based, spiritual, and socially just leadership models.

This model also demonstrates that women's leadership in pesantren does not contradict Islamic principles; rather, it reinforces the essence of Islam as a religion of mercy (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*). Accordingly, this study contributes not only to academic literature but also has practical implications for education, women's empowerment, and the development of value-based spiritual leadership within Islamic educational institutions.

Moreover, this leadership model illustrates that institutional transformation can begin with the reformulation of the core values held by leaders, rather than relying solely on external pressures or structural reforms. In Nyai Masriyah's case, spirituality functions not merely as a personal religious identity but as a critical instrument for repositioning power relations and social structures within the pesantren. This approach shows that when spirituality is positioned as the ethical foundation of leadership, social change becomes more than superficial—it reaches the cultural roots of long-established institutions.

Furthermore, the success of this model underscores the importance of integrating gender consciousness with theological awareness. Nyai Masriyah's leadership reconstructs religious texts that were previously used to limit women's roles and reinterprets them as ethical foundations for liberation and equality. In doing so, her approach aligns with the epistemological framework of Islamic feminism, which emphasizes the significance of women's lived experiences in interpreting religion (Badran, 2009). Through sermons, writings, and everyday leadership practices, Nyai Masriyah constructs a new narrative: that being a woman, a religious scholar, and a leader are not contradictory identities, but mutually reinforcing.

This form of spiritual-transformational leadership has implications not only at the micro level (within the pesantren) but also at the macro level. In the context of nation-building, pesantren with such leadership models can become civil society forces that strengthen democracy, tolerance, and community-based development. Pesantren are no longer exclusive domains of male religious elites but shared arenas for building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable civilization. This demonstrates that women's leadership in religious institutions is not only possible but also essential in contemporary Indonesia.

Ultimately, the findings of this study show that leadership transformation is not solely about who leads, but also about how and for what purpose leadership is exercised. Nyai Masriyah Amva offers a compelling example that Islamic leadership can be liberating, rooted in spirituality, and oriented toward social justice—without abandoning tradition or mimicking Western models. This represents a form of social *ijtihad* that is vital to continue developing in response to the challenges of Islamic education in the future.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the leadership of Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva at Pondok Pesantren Kebon Jambu al-Islamy represents a contextual, inclusive, and progressive form of transformational leadership grounded in Islamic spirituality. Drawing upon Sufi values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust in God (*tawakal*), justice, and compassion, Nyai Masriyah established a model of authority that is both religious and socially transformative. She successfully challenged the entrenched patriarchal structures of pesantren leadership and demonstrated that women can be legitimate leaders within an Islamic framework.

The leadership model she developed does not merely follow the transformational leadership framework by Bass and Avolio (1994); rather, it enriches it by integrating a deep spiritual dimension rooted in Islam. Her spirituality is not individualistic, but rather serves as an ethical force that drives real social change within the pesantren—evident in increased female involvement in organizational structures, a more inclusive curriculum, and active participation in public Islamic discourse.

The implications of this model are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research expands the discourse on Islamic leadership by incorporating gender and spirituality within the local pesantren context. Practically, the findings offer a strategic reference for Islamic educational institutions in developing leadership that is ethical, just, and empowering for all—especially women. This model is replicable and applicable and can be adapted across various Islamic education settings while maintaining the Islamic principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation).

The findings also suggest that Nyai Masriyah Amva's spirituality-based transformational leadership model can serve as an inspiration for the advancement of women's leadership in Islamic educational institutions,

particularly pesantren. The model is transferable to other traditional and patriarchal contexts, provided that it is adapted to local cultural and social values. This spirituality-centered leadership has the potential to strengthen the moral integrity of educational institutions because it is anchored in holistic and humanistic religious values.

As a recommendation, pesantren caretakers, educators, and policymakers should create more space for women to actively participate in strategic leadership roles within Islamic educational institutions. In addition, pesantren curricula can be enriched with studies on women's leadership in Islam, contextual interpretations of gender-related verses, and progressive spiritual values. Further research is encouraged to develop evaluative frameworks for this leadership model to assess its long-term impact on social transformation and the empowerment of pesantren communities.

REFERENCE

- Anggraeni, D., Muzayanah, F., & Irfanullah, G. (2021). Pola kepemimpinan Nyai Masriyah Amva terhadap resiliensi pesantren di era pandemi COVID-19. *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 5(2), 147–164. <https://doi.org/10.21009/hayula.005.2.02>
- Asiyah, N. (2020). Tafsir feminis Nyai Masriyah Amva: Studi terhadap wacana kesetaraan gender dalam Islam. *Jurnal Al-Maiyyah*, 8(2), 123–135.
- Azra, A. (2012). *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan modernisasi di tengah tantangan milenium III*. Kencana.
- Badran, M. (2009). *Feminism in Islam: Secular and religious convergences*. Oneworld Publications.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage Publications.
- Beekun, R. I., & Badawi, J. A. (1999). *Leadership: An Islamic perspective*. Amana Publications.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dianti, A. N. (2022). Konsep pendidikan untuk perempuan perspektif Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva. *Oasis: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Islam*, 7(2), 129–143.
- Giddens, A. (2009). *Sociology* (6th ed.). Polity Press.
- Istiqlaliyani, F. (2022). Ulama perempuan di pesantren: Studi tentang kepemimpinan Nyai Masriyah Amva. *Educatio: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan*, 2(2), 112–126. <https://doi.org/10.32332/educatio.v2i2.1670>
- Kuntowijoyo. (2001). *Islam sebagai ilmu: Epistemologi, metodologi, dan etika*. Tiara Wacana.

- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Moleong, L. J. (2019). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif* (ed. revisi). Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Munawwaroh, A., Wajdi, F., & Fitri, V. (2019). Gaya kepemimpinan Nyai Hajah Masriyah Amva di Pondok Pesantren Kebon Jambu. *Eduprof: Islamic Education Journal*, 1(2), 35–50.
- Nasr, S. H. (2002). *The heart of Islam: Enduring values for humanity*. HarperSanFrancisco.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Razak, Y., & Mundzir, I. (2023). Otoritas agama ulama perempuan: Relevansi pemikiran Nyai Masriyah Amva dalam membangun keberagaman yang moderat. *Palastren: Jurnal Studi Gender*, 16(1), 61–84. <https://doi.org/10.24260/palastren.v16i1.5981>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2004). *Multikulturalisme: Tantangan-tantangan global masa depan dalam transformasi pendidikan nasional*. Grasindo.
- Wulandani, S. (2023). Pemaknaan QS. At-Tawbah ayat 71 dalam kepemimpinan Nyai Masriyah Amva (Skripsi, UIN Walisongo Semarang). <http://eprints.walisongo.ac.id/id/eprint/25287>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Zarkasyi, H. F. (2019). Tradisi patriarki dalam kepemimpinan pesantren: Analisis kritis. *Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Misykat*, 29(2), 211–230.