INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

ISSN 3032-7563
Volume 4, Issue 3, 2026, pp. 233–244
DOI: https://doi.org/10.53639/ijsse.v4i3.178

# Leadership Dynamics and Organizational Culture in the Management of Pesantren-Based PKBM: A Case Study at PKBM Al Aqwiya Langgongsari

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**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article history**
Received : 2026-09-29
Accepted : 2026-11-13
Published : 2026-11-18

**Keywords**
Leadership; Organizational Culture; Pesantren-Based PKBM.

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of leadership and organizational culture in the management of pesantren-based (Islamic boarding school) community learning centers (Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat, PKBM), using PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari as a case study. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving the PKBM head, pesantren caretakers, tutors, administrative staff, and learners. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The results show three main findings. First, leadership at PKBM Al-Aqwiya is shaped by a combination of moral and spiritual role modeling, familial communication, participatory decision-making, and structural coordination with the pesantren foundation. Second, organizational culture develops through the internalization of pesantren values, such as religiosity, discipline, togetherness, respect for the caretakers, and deliberation (musyawarah), which are integrated with the governance of equivalency education. Third, institutional management is supported by the foundation's legitimacy and the pesantren's social capital, but it faces challenges in the form of limited institutional autonomy and the administrative demands of equivalency education. The study concludes that the effectiveness of managing pesantren-based PKBM is determined by the ability to integrate pesantren authority, organizational culture, and managerial professionalism in an adaptive and accountable manner.

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**How to cite:** Astuti. (2026). Leadership Dynamics and Organizational Culture in the Management of Pesantren-Based PKBM: A Case Study at PKBM Al Aqwiya Langgongsari. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Science and Education, 4*(3), 205–218. https://doi.org/10.53639/ijsse.v4i3.178

## Introduction

Nonformal education plays a strategic role in providing learning opportunities for people who have not gained access through formal education. One form of its delivery is carried out by Community Learning Centers (Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat, PKBM) through the Package A, B, and C equivalency programs, literacy education, and life skills development for out-of-school learners of various age groups. On the other hand, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) have leadership and organizational cultural characteristics rooted in the values of sincerity, role modeling, and togetherness. These characteristics have led a number of pesantren to operate PKBM to meet the educational needs of their students (santri) and the surrounding community. The combination of these two institutions presents management challenges, since PKBM require professional and flexible management, whereas pesantren are grounded in cultural authority. According to Schein, as cited in (Lase et al., 2025), leaders play a role in building organizational culture through values that they model and reinforce, while Dhofier, as cited in (Ulfa, 2026), affirms the central position of the kiai in the pesantren. This condition is reflected in PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari, which is pesantren-based.

Previous studies have tended to focus on the governance of formal Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasah and integrated schools, and on the dynamics of kiai leadership in general (Fauzi & Hanif, 2025). Meanwhile, studies on PKBM generally emphasize program and quality aspects rather than leadership relations and organizational culture. The study (Qomariah, 2026) links pesantren-based leadership management with the strengthening of organizational culture at madrasah ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools). (Hamidi et al., 2024) examined the role of the Tuan Guru or kiai in maintaining organizational culture in pesantren environments. The results show that pesantren organizational culture is shaped by Islamic values, such as faith and piety, as well as a spirit of struggle and devotion that guides the behavior of all members of the pesantren community. However, research that addresses the relationship between participatory leadership and organizational culture change in pesantren-based PKBM remains scarce. Earlier studies have also not explained in much detail how leadership patterns in pesantren adapt to the current accountability demands and standards of equivalency education. Yet adjusting organizational culture is essential for an institution to keep growing, survive, and improve the quality of its education(Afkarina & W, 2023).

To fill this gap, this study aims to examine in depth the management practices of PKBM Al Aqwiya Langgongsari. Specifically, the study has three objectives: *first*, to describe the leadership dynamics in managing PKBM Al Aqwiya Langgongsari; *second*, to examine the organizational culture that has developed in the institution; and *third*, to identify the factors that support or hinder cooperation between pesantren management and the delivery of equivalency education.

This study proceeds from the assumption that the successful management of PKBM Al Aqwiya Langgongsari depends on a combination of the charismatic leadership characteristic of pesantren and a professional management system, supported by an organizational culture that is open, responsible, and able to embrace all parties. This combination of pesantren values and management systems will be examined through field research to determine its influence on the quality of educational services.

## 2. Methods

This study was conducted at PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari, located in Langgongsari Village, Ciongok District, Banyumas Regency. PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari was selected for several reasons: *First*, this PKBM operates under the auspices of an Islamic boarding school, so it integrates the management system of nonformal education with pesantren traditions and values within a single organization. *Second,* the institution provides educational services to learners from diverse backgrounds, which requires an organizational culture that is flexible, adaptive, and able to accommodate diversity inclusively. *Third,* the location meets the feasibility requirements for research, namely permission from the managers, accessibility of informants (the PKBM head, pesantren caretakers, tutors, learners), and the availability of institutional documents.

This study applies a qualitative approach using a single case study design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to explore and understand in depth the formation and dynamics of leadership and organizational culture in the management practices of pesantren-based PKBM in a real-life context. The case studied is PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari, which was selected purposively because of its distinctive institutional characteristic, namely being located within a pesantren environment. The case study method gives researchers the opportunity to examine a phenomenon in depth, comprehensively, and in its context within a particular social unit.

This study uses two types of data sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from informants and from phenomena found during the fieldwork. Secondary data were obtained from various relevant documents and literature sources to support and strengthen the analysis. Research subjects were determined using *purposive sampling* techniques, considering direct involvement in leadership, policymaking, and educational services at PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari. The research subjects consisted of the principal, tutors, pesantren caretakers, and learners. Informants were selected based on the criterion of direct involvement in the leadership and organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari.

The data in this study were collected through three techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with the PKBM head, pesantren caretakers, tutors, administrative staff, and learners as the main informants. The interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the informants' experiences, perceptions, and views regarding the exercise of leadership by the PKBM head in the pesantren environment, including the interaction between this leadership practice and pesantren values in shaping the organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya. Second, observation was carried out using a prepared observation guide to directly observe various institutional activities. The aspects observed. All observation results were documented in notes that include descriptions of the events observed and the researcher's reflections on the field findings. Third, documentation was carried out after obtaining approval from the institution and the informants. The documents collected include the institutional profile, organizational structure, work programs, rules or regulations, activity schedules, and photographs of institutional activities. These three data collection techniques were used in an integrated manner through triangulation to check the consistency of information across various sources and methods. In this way, the research is expected to produce an in-depth, contextual, and accountable understanding of the dynamics of leadership and organizational culture at PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari.

The data analysis in this study follows the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three main stages. First, data condensation, which is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation. At this stage, the researcher classified and sorted the information relevant to the research focus so that the data were organized systematically and purposefully and were easier to analyze further. Second, data display, which is the stage of organizing the processed information into a structured form so that the researcher can more easily understand the findings and formulate conclusions and follow-up steps. The data were displayed through written descriptions and descriptive narratives, supported by images and field notes, to present the findings objectively and in line with the focus of the research problem. Third, conclusion drawing and verification, which is the final stage carried out by interpreting the findings, identifying the meanings contained in them, and re-examining the consistency of the conclusions with the evidence and data collected. Through this stage, the researcher can formulate credible and accountable conclusions in accordance with the research objectives. (Qomarudin & Sa'diyah, 2024).

## 3. Literature Review

### Leadership

In theoretical terms, leadership can be understood as an effort to influence other individuals in order to achieve jointly agreed goals. In Islamic educational organizations, the role of a leader is not limited to meeting administrative targets but also includes instilling and applying the moral values and culture that guide the organization, with the leader as the main figure directing their implementation (Ningrum et al., 2022). Leadership in the pesantren environment rests on the social and cultural influence held by the kiai. The kiai is the central figure who shapes values, preserves traditions, and determines the direction of the pesantren's development (Nafi et al., 2026). In the PKBM context, leadership is generally viewed more in terms of institutional management, such as program planning, activity organizing, implementation, and monitoring. The study (Jaya et al., 2026) shows that leadership is carried out through focused planning, a clear division of tasks, good communication, regular supervision, and evaluation of the learning process. These practices contribute to improved discipline, sense of responsibility, motivation, and tutor performance.

(Heenan et al., 2024) examined the factors that support and hinder the implementation of transformational leadership, as well as the role of leadership in building relationships with parents and the school community. The findings affirm that effective school management needs to be supported by a shared vision, relationships grounded in mutual trust, open communication, cooperation, capacity building, and a clear division of roles and responsibilities. (Abdul Aziz & Hanif, 2026) examined the application of transformational leadership in supporting institutional change and development, while enriching the discourse on Islamic educational leadership by positioning this leadership model as an adaptive approach for pesantren facing institutional change. (Sholikhah & Hanif, 2026) analyzed the application of a democratic leadership style at MTs Al Ikhsan, focusing on the dynamics of how power is distributed and used with the participation of various parties. The study also highlights the role of democratic leadership and participatory power relations in driving the development and strengthening of Islamic educational institutions.

### Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a set of basic assumptions, values, beliefs, and habits collectively held by the members of an organization and used as a guide in shaping their attitudes, actions, and behavior within the organizational environment (Schein & Schein, 2017; Khoirunnisa & Aman, 2026). Organizational culture also shapes how leadership is exercised, determines communication mechanisms, influences decision-making processes, and guides the implementation of policies in the field of education (Deal & Peterson, 2016; (Khoirunnisa & Aman, 2026). Organizational culture is not only a distinguishing feature that sets one institution apart from another but also serves as a managerial foundation that guides the stages of planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. Leaders are responsible for maintaining and instilling the values that underlie organizational life. In pesantren environments, Islamic values and institutional traditions are implemented through habituation in daily activities and the role modeling of their leaders. Therefore, in this

study, organizational culture is understood as a set of shared values and habits formed through the role of the PKBM head and pesantren traditions, which serve as the foundation for directing the operation and management of PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari.

Schein classifies organizational culture into three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions that lie beyond individuals' awareness (Schein, 2017;Suheri et al., 2026). (Suheri et al., 2026) explain that artifacts can be manifested through the use of Islamic uniforms, the arrangement of spaces with a religious ambiance, and the routine conduct of religious activities. Next, espoused values include trustworthiness (amanah), sincerity (ikhlas), justice, and Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah). The basic assumptions, in turn, derive from the view that education is a form of worship as well as an effort to shape the insan kamil (the perfected human being). In terms of characteristics, Robbins proposes seven dimensions of organizational culture: innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability (Robbins; Suheri et al., 2026). In Islamic educational institutions, the characteristics of organizational culture are also reflected in a foundation of sharia values, the integration of spiritual and professional aspects, the strengthening of togetherness and ukhuwah, and adherence to religious norms. The core values underlying it include tawhid, amanah, ikhlas, justice, and knowledge, which are expressed through various symbols and habits, such as daily religious rituals, the use of greetings, and spiritual guidance.

**Pesantren-Based PKBM**

A pesantren-based PKBM can be understood as a nonformal education unit operated within a pesantren environment to serve its students (santri) and the surrounding community. According to (Yulaelawati,2011; Sururi, 2019; Wijayanti, 2022), a Community Learning Center (PKBM) can be defined as a venue for various learning activities established from, by, and for the community in order to expand access to educational services, particularly for community groups that have not had the opportunity to attend formal education. Pesantren, meanwhile, are Islamic educational institutions that place the kiai as teacher and mentor, the mosque as the center of religious activity and learning, and the pondok (dormitory) as the residence of the santri. The study (Wijayanti, 2022) shows that the establishment of PKBM Ibnu Ali in Sidoarjo was motivated by the initiative of the pesantren caretaker to provide general education access for the santri. Its educational delivery is supported by an adaptive and flexible curriculum integrated with the values of the Qur'an. In addition, (Feriska et al., 2025) found that learning is scheduled around the pesantren's activity timetable, accompanied by a division of institutional roles and the provision of tutors.

Pesantren-based PKBM are required to meet the educational needs of santri while also implementing the national standards of equivalency education. In terms of institutions and curriculum, the study (Feriska et al., 2025) shows that synergy between the two institutions is realized through a division of institutional responsibilities, the provision of tutors, the use of learning facilities available at the pesantren, and academic administrative support. In addition, learning is designed flexibly, taking into account pesantren schedules and activities, so that equivalency education services can run in harmony with pesantren life. The review (Suresman et al., 2025) identified four categories of pesantren: traditional, semi-modern, modern, and hybrid. Semi-modern pesantren are characterized by efforts to preserve classical learning patterns while making room for general education through the nonformal pathway, one example being the operation of a PKBM. This finding indicates that the presence of PKBM in pesantren environments is one form of institutional adjustment to the demands of the national education system. The review also highlights the central position of the kiai and his authority to preserve pesantren traditions while adapting education to changing times

## 4. Result and Discussion

The first finding shows that leadership practice at PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari unfolds through a combination of moral and spiritual role modeling, familial communication patterns, participatory decision-making, and administrative management carried out in structural coordination with the head of the pesantren foundation. Observations of institutional activities show that the PKBM head builds interpersonal closeness with tutors and learners and takes part in the habituation of religious values. The PKBM head explained, "*a personal approach and moral role*

*modeling are more effective in motivating tutors than giving rigid instructions*". This view was reinforced by Tutor A, who said that the leader's directions are communicated through open deliberation (musyawarah), giving tutors the opportunity to voice their opinions. However, this participatory pattern has limits on its authority, because strategic decisions of the PKBM must still be coordinated with the head of the pesantren foundation. Thus, the observations show that leadership at PKBM Al-Aqwiya is built not only through the formal authority of the PKBM head but also through moral legitimacy, social relationships, and structural ties with the pesantren foundation.

The analysis shows that leadership practice at PKBM Al-Aqwiya is shaped through four interrelated dimensions. First, the dimension of moral and spiritual role modeling, which is manifested through the leader's active participation in various religious and social activities within the institution. Second, the dimension of participation in decision-making, which is shown through the involvement of administrators and tutors in deliberation forums as a space for building shared understanding and determining institutional policy. Third, the dimension of tutor development and supervision, which is carried out with an interpersonal and familial approach as a strategy to sustain motivation, increase responsibility, and foster tutors' self-confidence in carrying out their duties. Fourth, the dimension of institutional relations with the pesantren caretakers, which positions the PKBM head not only as the leader of an educational organization but also as a representative and successor of pesantren values in the delivery of equivalency education.

The leadership process at PKBM Al-Aqwiya is strongly influenced by its location within the Nurul Huda Langgongsari Islamic Boarding School. Because all learners are also santri, the delivery of equivalency education is closely tied to the pesantren's system of care, spiritual guidance, and daily rhythm of life. This situation creates a distinctive pattern of institutional relations compared with independent PKBM in general, because the education program is not merely oriented toward academic aspects but must also be aligned with pesantren policies and norms. The decisive factor lies in the position of the foundation head as the holder of the highest authority over the institution's strategic direction. Although the PKBM head has latitude in managing daily operations, coordination with the foundation remains a necessity. This context gives rise to a style of leadership based on deliberation, personal communication, role modeling, and structural coordination. Ultimately, leadership in this institution represents a dynamic process of compromise among the professional standards of managing equivalency education, the noble values of the pesantren, and the foundation's power structure.

Leadership at PKBM Al-Aqwiya shows that a leader's authority is based not solely on formal position but is also shaped by values and social relationships within the pesantren environment. This is reflected in the foundation's involvement in strategic decision-making as well as in the practice of deliberation and a familial approach in internal coordination. This condition is consistent with the study (Suwanto & Hanif, 2026) on leadership based on Islamic values, which highlights the connections among authority, religious values, and organizational culture. That finding affirms that women's leadership in Islamic educational institutions is shaped by the values and social environment in which the institution develops. In this case, the foundation holds authority based on the pesantren's structure, while the PKBM head manages operational activities. Thus, leadership at PKBM Al-Aqwiya is formed through a combination of formal authority and a social-cultural approach.

Furthermore, the leadership pattern at PKBM Al-Aqwiya shows an adjustment between pesantren leadership values and the professional demands of a nonformal educational institution. The familial and deliberative approach gives tutors and managers room to participate, while coordination with the foundation shows that strategic decision-making remains within the framework of the pesantren's institutional authority. The study (Warisno et al., 2025) reinforces that the management of Islamic education requires the ability to integrate institutional traditions with the demands of change and management development. Along the same lines, the study (Mahmudi,

2025) on kiai leadership in building an innovation ecosystem in pesantren highlights the importance of credibility, creativity, and leadership influence in developing institutions. Critically speaking, the leadership pattern at PKBM Al-Aqwiya has the advantage of maintaining the continuity of values and the stability of organizational relationships. However, dependence on coordination with the foundation head also has the potential to limit the speed of decision-making if it is not balanced by a clear division of operational authority. Therefore, a balance between respect for pesantren authority and room for initiative among managers is an important aspect of developing PKBM leadership.

The second finding shows that the organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is formed through a combination of pesantren values and the governance of equivalency education. This can be seen in patterns of interaction, discipline, communication, and the relationships among managers, tutors, learners, and pesantren caretakers. Religious values, togetherness, respect for the caretakers, and the habituation of religious activities have become part of organizational life. In addition, familial relationships and coordination characterize the implementation of PKBM activities. As one tutor stated: "*In daily activities, the relationship between the leader and the tutors at the PKBM is familial and open. Problems are generally resolved through deliberation, while still upholding pesantren etiquette, especially in communicating and coordinating with the caretakers and the foundation administrators*". This shows that the organizational culture of the PKBM is not separate from pesantren culture but develops through the internalization of pesantren values in the management of equivalency education.

Based on Edgar H. Schein's theory of organizational culture, the organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya can be examined through three interrelated levels. First, at the level of artifacts, namely the forms of culture visible through organizational activities and symbols, such as religious routines, deliberation, daily agendas, rules and regulations, familial communication, and coordination with the foundation. Second, espoused values, namely the principles underlying the conduct of organizational activities, including religiosity, discipline, responsibility, togetherness, respect for leaders, deliberation, and educational devotion. These principles serve as behavioral guidelines for managers, tutors, and learners. Third, basic assumptions, namely deep-seated beliefs accepted as part of organizational life. These are reflected in the understanding that education is a form of pesantren devotion, that leadership must prioritize role modeling and respect for the caretakers, and that the organization's continuity depends on togetherness and adherence to agreements. Thus, the culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is formed from a combination of habits, values, and beliefs that influence the performance of duties, authority, responsibility, and interaction among members.

The organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is formed within a pesantren environment because all of its learners are santri of the Nurul Huda Langgongsari Islamic Boarding School. Therefore, equivalency education activities need to be aligned with the rules and policies of the pondok. This was affirmed by a foundation administrator: "*PKBM Al-Aqwiya is part of the educational environment at the Nurul Huda Islamic Boarding School. Because all of its learners are santri, its management needs to be adjusted to the pondok's activities and rules. Decisions related to institutional policy certainly need to be coordinated with the foundation so that the operation of the PKBM remains in line with the vision and direction of pesantren education*". This statement shows that the organizational culture of the PKBM is influenced by the traditions, norms, and hierarchy of the pesantren. However, as an equivalency education institution, the PKBM is also required to implement orderly administration, division of tasks, and evaluation. The combination of the two forms an organizational culture that is religious and familial while also emphasizing administrative regularity and professionalism in managing education.

The organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is formed through the internalization of pesantren values into the habits and relationship patterns among the institution's members. Values of togetherness, religiosity, respect for the caretakers, and adherence to pondok rules form the foundation for carrying out organizational activities. This is reinforced by the study (Inayah & Hanif, 2026) that discusses how social capital and pesantren values play a role in maintaining institutional

continuity while adjusting governance to change. This similarity shows that organizational culture is maintained not only through formal rules but also through trust, social relationships, and commonly held values. In the context of PKBM Al-Aqwiya, the familial relationship between the leader and the tutors is a form of social capital that supports organizational coordination. However, this social capital still needs to be balanced with a clear administrative system and division of tasks so that it does not hinder professionalism in managing equivalency education.

Nevertheless, the integration of pesantren culture with the organizational culture of equivalency education does not always proceed without challenges. The values of obedience, respect for hierarchy, and togetherness need to go hand in hand with the need for professionalism, open communication, and accountability in institutional management. The study (Amelia et al., 2026) affirms the importance of leadership in maintaining organizational culture while responding to demands for change. Meanwhile, (Qomariah, 2026) discusses the relationships among leadership practices, pesantren values, and the strengthening of organizational culture. Both studies reinforce the understanding that organizational culture requires continuous maintenance and adjustment. In the context of PKBM Al-Aqwiya, the familial and religious culture is social capital that strengthens solidarity and internal coordination. However, this culture needs to be supported by work rules, a division of tasks, and measurable evaluation mechanisms so that it does not create excessive dependence on personal relationships. In other words, the success of organizational culture is determined not only by how strongly pesantren values are internalized but also by the institution's ability to translate those values into orderly and professional management practices.

The third finding indicates that the management of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is influenced by the interplay between the pesantren's social-cultural strengths and institutional governance challenges. The presence of the PKBM within the Nurul Huda Langgongsari Islamic Boarding School provides support in the form of social backing, the internalization of religious values, and integration with the system of santri development. In addition, the familial relationship between the leader and the tutors serves as social capital that strengthens communication, coordination, and organizational commitment. However, the structural ties to the foundation limit the autonomy of the PKBM head, since every strategic decision must be coordinated with the head of the pondok foundation. On the other hand, the demands of meeting administrative standards, managing learning, and fulfilling equivalency education reporting require adaptive managerial capacity. This condition shows that the effectiveness of PKBM management is determined by the institution's ability to optimize pesantren support while balancing institutional authority with the demands of professionalism and accountability in the delivery of education.

The analysis shows that the factors influencing the management of PKBM Al-Aqwiya comprise four interrelated aspects: leadership support and foundation legitimacy, the strength of pesantren organizational culture, internal coordination and participation, and administrative demands and limited institutional autonomy. The foundation head's support provides legitimacy as well as policy direction for the delivery of education, while the values of religiosity, discipline, togetherness, and familial spirit serve as social capital in building organizational commitment. In addition, communication and deliberation among the PKBM head, administrators, and tutors support coordination and the resolution of institutional problems. However, the obligation to meet equivalency education administrative standards and to coordinate strategic decisions with the foundation presents its own challenges. This condition shows that supporting and hindering factors are dynamically interrelated. Foundation support, for example, can strengthen the legitimacy of policy but at the same time limit flexibility in decision-making. Thus, management effectiveness is determined by the institution's ability to balance structural support, the strengths of pesantren culture, and the demands of managerial professionalism.

The dynamics of supporting and hindering factors in the management of PKBM Al-Aqwiya cannot be separated from its position as an equivalency education institution within the Nurul Huda Langgongsari Islamic Boarding School, whose learners are all santri. This condition means that the

delivery of education is closely tied to the policies, resources, and institutional culture of the pesantren. Foundation support provides backing and direction for program delivery, while pesantren values contribute to shaping the character, discipline, and behavior of learners. However, this structural tie requires the PKBM head to balance operational authority with the obligation to coordinate with the foundation head. On the other hand, meeting equivalency education standards requires the institution to manage administration, learning, educators, and evaluation systematically. Thus, the effectiveness of PKBM Al-Aqwiya's management depends on the ability to build institutional coordination, optimize the pesantren's social capital, and develop adaptive and accountable educational governance. The management of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is supported by the foundation's legitimacy, the pesantren environment, the shared identity of learners as santri, and the value of togetherness that has developed in institutional life. These factors form a relatively integrated organizational environment because equivalency education activities can be aligned with pesantren guidance and activities. The foundation's institutional support also provides policy direction and strengthens organizational identity, while the close relationships among the leader, tutors, and learners support coordination in carrying out activities. This is consistent with the study (Waziroh et al., 2026) that discusses the importance of maintaining Islamic values through institutional development. The study (Hermawan et al., 2026) on the integration of ecotheology into the organizational dynamics of Islamic education also shows that religious values can serve as a foundation for building institutional orientation and practice. Based on these findings, pesantren support for PKBM Al-Aqwiya is not only structural but also cultural and social. Critically speaking, this condition is an advantage because the PKBM has a strong environment of guidance and institutional identity. Thus, the social capital and legitimacy of the pesantren can be seen as important resources in sustaining the delivery of equivalency education.

On the other hand, the PKBM's ties to the foundation's structure and policies also present challenges in managing the institution. The obligation to coordinate strategic decisions with the foundation head shows that the autonomy of PKBM managers has certain limits, while the delivery of equivalency education still demands compliance with administrative standards, a division of tasks, and accountable evaluation. This situation reveals a need to balance compliance with pesantren policy against flexibility in managing nonformal education. The study (Karim et al., 2025) on the role of school principals as leaders and managers in boarding institutions and public schools in Indonesia provides reinforcement that leadership functions need to go together with managerial functions. In addition, the study (Warisno et al., 2025) emphasizes the importance of integrating tradition and innovation in Islamic education management. Based on these two studies, the challenge for PKBM Al-Aqwiya lies not in the existence of the foundation's authority itself but in how coordination mechanisms and the division of authority are carried out. If coordination proceeds clearly and proportionally, the foundation's involvement can be a source of institutional strength. Conversely, if all operational decisions depend too heavily on the authority above, managers' flexibility in responding to learning needs is likely to diminish. Therefore, a firm division of authority between the foundation and the PKBM managers is needed so that pesantren values remain preserved without hindering the effectiveness and accountability of equivalency education delivery.

## 5. Conclusion

Leadership at PKBM Al-Aqwiya Langgongsari is formed through a combination of the PKBM head's formal authority and the pesantren's social-cultural approach. This is because the PKBM is located within the Nurul Huda Langgongsari Islamic Boarding School, so leadership relies not only on position but also on moral legitimacy and social relationships. The findings show four interrelated dimensions: moral and spiritual role modeling, participation in decision-making through deliberation, familial tutor development, and institutional relations with the pesantren caretakers. This participatory pattern remains limited because strategic decisions must be coordinated with the foundation head. Thus, leadership at this PKBM is a dynamic compromise among the professional standards of equivalency education, pesantren values, and the foundation's power structure.

The organizational culture of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is formed through the internalization of pesantren values into the governance of equivalency education. This is because all learners are santri, so educational activities must be aligned with the rules and rhythm of pondok life. Based on Schein's theory, the artifacts are religious routines, deliberation, rules and regulations, and familial communication. The espoused values include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, togetherness, and respect for leaders. The basic assumption is that education is a form of pesantren devotion. This culture also demands administrative regularity, a division of tasks, and evaluation. Thus, the PKBM's culture is religious and familial while also seeking to maintain professionalism in management.

The management of PKBM Al-Aqwiya is influenced by supporting and hindering factors that are interrelated and dynamic. The cause is the PKBM's ties to the pesantren foundation on the one hand and the demands of equivalency education standards on the other. The supporting factors include the legitimacy and support of the foundation head, the strength of pesantren culture as social capital, and internal coordination and deliberation. The hindering factors are the limited autonomy of the PKBM head and the obligation to meet administrative, learning, and reporting standards. Foundation support, for example, strengthens the legitimacy of policy but limits decision-making flexibility. Thus, management effectiveness depends on the ability to balance structural support, pesantren culture, and the demands of accountability, through a clear division of authority between the foundation and the managers.

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