



**BUGIS CULTURE-BASED LEADERSHIP IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN
TRANSFORMING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: A
STUDY AT DDI UJUNG LARE ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL, PAREPARE**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze pesantren leadership based on Bugis cultural values in transforming the religious character of students at DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School, Parepare. The primary focus of this research lies in how Bugis cultural values such as siri', lempu', sipakatau, and pacce are integrated into leadership practices and their impact on shaping students' religious character. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Data were collected through interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The informants consisted of the pesantren leader, teachers, dormitory supervisors, and students. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the school leadership functions not only as a policymaker but also as a primary role model in the internalization of religious values. This exemplary leadership is reflected in active involvement in religious activities, consistency between words and actions, and a humanistic and participatory communication style. The integration of Bugis cultural values in leadership is evident in the application of lempu' (honesty and integrity), sipakatau (mutual respect), pacce (social empathy), and siri' (discipline and self-respect). These values are not merely taught theoretically but are also implemented in the daily practices of the pesantren. Bugis culture-based leadership has proven effective in fostering a strong and sustainable religious culture. This is reflected in the habituation of worship practices, ethical social interactions, and increased student participation in religious and social activities. The process of value internalization occurs through habituation, observation, and imitation of the behaviors demonstrated by leaders and the pesantren environment. Furthermore, adaptive and persuasive leadership contributes to social stability, minimizes conflict, and fosters harmonious relationships among leaders, teachers, and students. In conclusion, this study affirms that pesantren leadership grounded in Bugis cultural values plays a strategic role in transforming students' religious character. The integration of local cultural values into leadership practices serves as an effective model for contextual character education, rooted in local wisdom and relevant in addressing the challenges of modernization. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on culturally grounded educational leadership by integrating Bugis local wisdom into character education, while practically it provides a contextual leadership model that can be adopted by Islamic boarding schools and other educational institutions to strengthen students' religious character through local cultural values.

Keywords: Bugis Culture, Leadership of DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School, Religious Character, Religious Culture, Value Internalization



INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school education plays a strategic role in shaping the religious character of the younger generation (Manaf et al., 2026; Rizki Amanda Harahap et al., 2025) amid the ongoing challenges of modernity and globalization (Anto et al., 2025). Rapid social change requires Islamic educational institutions to adaptively integrate tradition and innovation through visionary and responsive leadership. In this context, school leadership management is no longer oriented solely toward administrative aspects, but also toward the ongoing internalization of values and the continuous formation of students' character (Fahrub et al., 2025; Suzanni, 2026). Conceptually, educational leadership encompasses the functions of planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision, all of which are directed toward achieving the institution's vision and mission (Rofiq & Sonia, 2026). However, the effectiveness of leadership is strongly influenced by the socio-cultural context surrounding the educational institution (Hasan Luthfi et al., 2025). Islamic boarding schools, as value-based institutions, require a leadership model capable of harmonizing spiritual, cultural, and managerial dimensions. The integration of local cultural values becomes essential in strengthening institutional identity while maintaining the relevance of pesantren education. Therefore, the study of leadership management based on local culture is crucial for the development of contextual Islamic education.

Various studies indicate that Islamic boarding schools face modernization pressures that have the potential to erode local wisdom (Rosiana & Nugraha, 2026; Suryani & Nadira, 2025), therefore, adaptive leadership is required to preserve the institution's religious and moral identity (Azizah & Ridlowi, 2026; Najiburrahman et al., 2024). The integration of local values, religious values, and educational culture has also not been optimally implemented in school management practices (Jamaluddin & Manda, 2023). Traditional leadership models in Islamic boarding schools often encounter difficulties in responding to social change and the demands of modernity (Ghofur et al., 2026). The development of a religious culture has also not been optimal without the active involvement of leaders in implementing effective and systematic leadership strategies (Siswanto, 2022). Furthermore, the integration of local wisdom into learning processes and pesantren culture remains weak and has not been comprehensively structured (Syahrudin et al., 2025). The impact of school culture on students' religious character also needs to be examined holistically, particularly regarding the role of the principal as a cultural leader (Fauzi et al., 2023). The phenomenon of declining student participation in pesantren traditions due to the influence of modernity further reinforces the urgency of this research (Kemal Husen & Muhammad Husni, 2025). Therefore, this study is important for formulating a model of principal leadership management based on Bugis culture in transforming students' religious character.

Table 1. Synthesis of Research Problems and Urgency

Aspect	Brief Description
Role & Challenges of Islamic Boarding Schools	Shaping students' religious character amid modernity and globalization, which have the potential to erode local values
Leadership Needs	Visionary, adaptive, and responsive leadership toward social change
Management Focus & Functions	Not only administrative, but also the internalization of values through planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision functions
Context & Characteristics of Leadership	Influenced by the socio-cultural environment and integrating spiritual, cultural, and managerial dimensions
Problems & Weaknesses	The integration of religious values and local culture is not yet optimal; traditional leadership tends to be less adaptive
Impact of Modernity	Declining student participation in pesantren traditions



Aspect	Brief Description
Research Urgency & Objectives	Developing a Bugis culture-based leadership model for transforming students' religious character

Source: Data processed by author (2026).

In Bugis society, the values of siri', pacce, lempu', and sipakatau serve as relevant ethical foundations (Ardiyansyah et al., 2025) for leadership practices, as they strengthen moral legitimacy and foster emotional closeness within educational organizations. The integration of these local cultural values constitutes a contextual approach to developing models of Islamic educational leadership (Ibrahim et al., 2025) that are not merely administrative but also transformative. As an Islamic educational institution in Parepare, DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School possesses strong historical and cultural roots in both Islamic tradition and Bugis culture. The pesantren functions as a center for the transmission of religious knowledge as well as the formation of students' social and moral identity. However, the dynamics of modernization, digitalization, and the demands for professional governance in education present new challenges in institutional management. These conditions require school leaders to manage the institution strategically without neglecting local values as the foundation for character development. Bugis culture-based leadership is expected to sustain tradition while simultaneously promoting directed institutional innovation (Yurni Ulfa et al., 2025). Therefore, the study of leadership management in this institution holds scientific urgency in efforts to strengthen the transformation of students' religious character.

The transformation of students' religious character is a primary objective of Islamic boarding school education, encompassing the development of morality, discipline, responsibility, and spiritual commitment (Iskandar et al., 2025). Religious character does not develop instantly, but rather through continuous processes of habituation, exemplary conduct, and consistent reinforcement of values (Dessy Wahyuni & Suparto, 2025). The principal, as the highest leader within the educational institution, plays a central role in creating a conducive religious culture. The policies implemented, the communication patterns established, and the guidance systems applied significantly determine the success of this transformation. The synergy between religious values and local cultural values has the potential to produce a more contextual educational model that is rooted in the social realities of students (Balkis et al., 2025). This study aims to analyze a model of principal leadership management based on Bugis cultural values in transforming students' religious character in a systematic, contextual, and sustainable manner at DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School.

This study examines how managerial functions are carried out by internalizing local cultural values in leadership practices. The research focuses on leadership strategies, implementation, and their impact on the formation of students' religious character. The findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic educational leadership models based on local wisdom. Practically, the results may serve as a reference for pesantren administrators in designing more contextual and effective policies. In addition, this study is relevant in strengthening cultural identity within the national education system. The reinforcement of religious character rooted in local culture is expected to produce a generation with integrity and competitiveness. Therefore, this research holds both scientific and social urgency in the development of Islamic boarding school education. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine indigenous leadership as a general cultural or organizational phenomenon, this study addresses the research gap by developing a conceptual model of Bugis culture-based pesantren leadership that explains how local cultural values are systematically integrated into leadership practices to transform students' religious character within the context of Islamic boarding school education.



RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach (M. Anwar, 2019) with a case study design (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Fadli, 2021) to gain an in-depth understanding of principal leadership management practices based on Bugis cultural values in transforming students' religious character. This approach is chosen because it enables the exploration of meanings, processes, and social dynamics that occur naturally within the pesantren environment. The research was conducted at DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School as an institution characterized by leadership grounded in local and religious values. The research subjects include the principal, teachers, dormitory supervisors, and students, selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the character development process. Data collection techniques include interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies of institutional policies and programs. Data validity is ensured through source and method triangulation techniques to maintain the consistency of information (Adhi Kusumastuti, 2019). The research process is carried out in stages while adhering to research ethics and obtaining informants' consent (Mardalis, 2020). With this design, the study is expected to produce a comprehensive description of the leadership practices under investigation. Data analysis in this study was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, which proceeded continuously from the beginning of the data collection process (Kusumastuti, A., & Khoiron, 2019). The researcher systematically organized data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation (Yusanto, 2020) into thematic categories relevant to managerial functions and the process of internalizing Bugis cultural values. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying essential information to align more closely with the research objectives (Abdussamad Zuchri, 2021). Subsequently, the data were presented in descriptive narrative form, enabling the researcher to understand patterns and relationships among variables more deeply (Salim dan Haidir, 2019). In this process, the researcher also interpreted the meanings embedded in each field finding. Conclusions were drawn gradually, with continuous verification of the data obtained (Sukmadinata, 2020). This process was cyclical in nature, allowing for adjustments and deeper analysis in accordance with the dynamics of the data in the field (Sari et al., 2023). Thus, the results of the data analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive and contextual understanding of Bugis culture-based leadership in Islamic boarding schools in transforming students' religious character.

Table 2. Classification of Research Informants

Informant Category	Type of Informant	Role
Primary	Principal & Boarding School Leaders at DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School, Parepare	Source of policy and leadership
Supporting	Teachers, dormitory supervisors, and educational staff	Implementers of guidance and program execution
Complementary	Students, alumni, and parents	Perspectives on experiences and impacts
Contextual	Community leaders and foundation administrators	External perspectives and local cultural insights

Source: Data processed by author (2026).

The interpretation process was conducted by examining the interrelationships between leadership practices, organizational culture, and the formation of students' religious character. The categorized data were then presented in an analytical descriptive narrative to illustrate the management patterns applied. The validity of the findings was strengthened through member checking with key informants to ensure the accuracy of



interpretations. In addition, the researcher engaged in critical reflection to minimize subjective bias throughout the analysis process. The results of the analysis were directed toward formulating a conceptual model of Bugis culture-based leadership within the context of Islamic boarding school education. Thus, this method enables the development of an in-depth and contextual understanding in accordance with the research objectives. The researcher selected DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School purposively due to its strong preservation of Bugis cultural values in leadership practices, gained access to participants through formal institutional permission and ethical consent, and maintained reflexivity throughout the study by continuously evaluating personal assumptions and their potential influence on data collection and interpretation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Integration of Bugis Cultural Values in Leadership

The integration of Bugis cultural values in leadership at DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School, Parepare, serves as the primary foundation in the process of transforming students' religious character. Leadership in the pesantren is not only carried out within an administrative framework, but is also oriented toward the cultural values embedded in Bugis society (Rahmawaty & Eli, 2023). The values of *siri'*, *pacce*, *lempu'*, and *sipakatau* function as normative bases for every policy and leadership action (Suhra, 2019). The pesantren leadership positions cultural values as guiding principles in shaping students' behavior to be religious and morally upright. The management system of the pesantren operates systematically and involves all institutional elements in student development. An interview with the pesantren leader, Ustadz Nursan, revealed that (Nursan, 2026): "Bugis cultural values serve as the main foundation in guiding students to develop strong character and integrity." This finding is consistent with the conceptual framework of culturally responsive leadership, which posits that leaders who integrate local cultural values into organizational practices are more effective in shaping institutional culture and fostering sustainable character development among learners.

Planning in pesantren leadership is directed toward the formation of students' religious character based on Bugis cultural values. Student development programs are designed not only to enhance academic aspects but also to build moral and spiritual awareness (Saleh et al., 2023). The value of *siri'* is internalized as a form of self-control, encouraging students to feel a sense of shame when committing violations. Planning is carried out through collective deliberation, reflecting the active participation of all elements within the pesantren (Subri, 2016). A clear system of rules serves as an important factor in supporting the success of student development. This approach demonstrates that cultural values have been systematically integrated into the policy formulation process.

Organizing in pesantren leadership is carried out through a systematic division of tasks in accordance with the competencies of each educator. The organizational structure of the pesantren includes the leader, principal, dormitory supervisors, and staff, each with distinct yet complementary roles (Labibah et al., 2022). The placement of human resources is conducted professionally, thereby supporting the effectiveness of student development. An interview with the student affairs supervisor, Ustadzah Nurhikmah, indicated that (Nurhikmah, 2026): "ach supervisor has clear responsibilities, ensuring that the guidance process is well-directed." The principle of *lempu'* is reflected in transparency and honesty in carrying out institutional duties (N. A. Azis et al., 2015). This condition strengthens coordination among different units and minimizes overlapping tasks. The implementation of student development programs in the pesantren demonstrates the integration of Bugis cultural values into daily life. Activities such as congregational prayers, religious study sessions, and moral guidance are carried out routinely and in a structured manner (Karimah et al., 2023). The value of *pacce* is manifested in attitudes of



empathy and solidarity among students in their social interactions (Darussalam, 2021). An interview with one of the students, Muhammad Ilham, revealed that (Muhammad Ilham, 2026): “We are taught to help one another and to care for our peers.” The exemplary conduct of leaders and teachers serves as a crucial factor in the successful implementation of these cultural values. Clear directives from leadership also facilitate the effective execution of student development programs.

Supervision in pesantren leadership is carried out intensively through an educational and persuasive approach (Firyal Rafidah Lesmana, Hanun Salsabilah, 2021). The supervision system does not merely emphasize obedience to rules, but also focuses on the moral and spiritual development of students (Farid et al., 2022). Supervision is conducted regularly both in classroom and dormitory environments to ensure that student discipline is consistently maintained (Nabila & Rahmanto, 2024). The value of *siri'* functions as a form of social control that encourages students to maintain behavior in accordance with social norms (A. Azis et al., 2020). The approach used continues to consider humanitarian aspects so that it does not create psychological pressure. The implementation of this supervision can be seen in various concrete activities, such as daily attendance in congregational prayers supervised directly by dormitory supervisors, night patrols to ensure students remain in their rooms during rest hours, and monitoring of study discipline through night study programs (*mudzakarah*). Other activities include weekly evaluations of student violations conducted through guidance forums involving dialogue between supervisors and students, so that mistakes are not only punished but also understood. In addition, habituation of greetings, manners in speaking, and dress etiquette are directly monitored in daily activities. Supervision is also carried out through an *ibadah* and behavior control book filled in regularly by students and verified by supervisors. Thus, supervision is not merely administrative, but becomes an integral part of the process of religious character education. Evaluation in pesantren leadership is oriented toward a comprehensive assessment of students' development, both in academic aspects and religious character. The evaluation process is conducted periodically to determine the effectiveness of the implemented programs (Arifin et al., 2023). The pesantren leadership emphasizes that evaluation does not only focus on learning outcomes, but also on changes in students' attitudes and behavior. The values of *sipakatau* and *pacce* serve as the foundation for providing fair and humane assessments (Abdollah & Sulo, 2018). This approach creates an evaluative atmosphere that is educative and encourages students to continuously improve themselves. Comprehensive evaluation strengthens the ongoing process of religious character development (Katon et al., 2020).

Table 3. Integration of Bugis Values in Pesantren Leadership

Managerial Aspect	Form of Implementation	Bugis Cultural Values	Impact on Students
Planning	Formulation of character-based religious development programs through deliberation	<i>Siri'</i> , <i>Sipakatau</i>	Development of moral awareness, discipline, and a sense of responsibility
Organizing	Task distribution based on competencies and a clear institutional structure	<i>Lempu'</i>	Creation of transparency, professionalism, and effective coordination
Implementation	Routine activities (worship, religious study, moral guidance) and leadership by example	<i>Pacce</i> , <i>Sipakatau</i>	Growth of empathy, solidarity, and mutual respect
Supervision	Monitoring discipline, evaluating violations, and providing persuasive guidance	<i>Siri'</i> , <i>Pacce</i>	Formation of self-control and compliance without coercion



Managerial Aspect	Form of Implementation	Bugis Cultural Values	Impact on Students
Evaluation	Periodic and humane academic and character assessment	<i>Sipakatau, Pacce</i>	Students are encouraged to improve themselves and develop holistically
Leadership Impact	A religious, disciplined, and conducive boarding school environment	<i>Siri', Pacce, Lempu', Sipakatau</i>	The formation of strong and integrity-based religious character transformation

Source: Data processed by author (2026).

Bugis culture-based pesantren leadership has proven to have a significant impact on the transformation of students' religious character. Students show improvements in discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect. The cultural values integrated into pesantren management are able to strengthen students' religious and social identity. The pesantren environment becomes more conducive to shaping behavior that aligns with Islamic teachings. Most students also express satisfaction with the applied development system. This impact indicates the success of culture-based leadership in shaping students' character (Arifin et al., 2023).



Figure 1. Implementation of Bugis Values in the Management of Islamic Boarding Schools

The integration of Bugis cultural values in pesantren leadership demonstrates that local culture can serve as a strategic instrument in the management of Islamic education. The values of siri', pacce, lempu', and sipakatau function not only as cultural identity but also as operational guidelines in the development of students. Leadership that emphasizes cultural values is able to create an educational environment that is religious, disciplined, and humane (Katon et al., 2020). A structured management process strengthens the implementation of these values in every pesantren activity. Interviews with three key informants reveal a strong alignment between concept and practice in the field. This leadership model represents an important contribution to the development of contextual and sustainable pesantren education.

Exemplary Leadership in the Transformation of Religious Character

The exemplary conduct of the school principal at Pesantren DDI Ujung Lare Parepare serves as a fundamental foundation in the ongoing process of transforming students' religious character. The principal does not merely function as a policy maker but also as a central figure who embodies values in everyday life practices. The consistency between values conveyed in formal forums and actual behavior becomes a key indicator of leadership quality (Asdlori, 2023). Active participation in congregational prayers, religious study sessions, and moral development activities demonstrates authentic spiritual commitment. Discipline in time management and administrative responsibility reflects seriousness in carrying out leadership duties (Syahbuddin & Sarnandes, 2021). An interview with the pesantren leader, Ust. Nursan, revealed that (Nursan, 2026): "I strive to be present in every religious activity not merely as a leader, but as part of the educational process, because students tend to imitate what they see more easily than what they hear." This exemplary leadership creates strong moral legitimacy in the eyes of both teachers and students in implementing pesantren rules and values.

The presence of the school principal in various religious activities is not merely symbolic, but also serves as a direct educational medium for students. Students are able to observe concretely how religious values are practiced in everyday life. This pattern strengthens a contextual and applied learning process (Liriwati et al., 2021). The principal positions himself as part of the pesantren community, rather than merely an external supervisor. Such involvement strengthens the emotional relationship between the leader and the students. This situation fosters respect that is based on exemplary conduct rather than solely structural authority (Ahmad Muzakki, 2022). This active engagement is reflected in the principal's presence as an imam or regular congregant in the five daily prayers, particularly the Fajr and Isha prayers. The principal also actively leads or attends routine religious studies, such as classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), sermons after Maghrib prayer, as well as collective dhikr and prayer sessions. Other involvement is seen in direct mentoring during students' muhadharah (speech training), where the principal provides guidance and immediate evaluation. In addition, the principal attends special religious events such as Islamic holy day commemorations, Islamic boarding school intensive programs, and i'tikaf during Ramadan. Character-building activities through morning assemblies or brief moral advice before classes also serve as real spaces of exemplary leadership. Through this direct involvement, the principal not only conveys religious values theoretically but also demonstrates concrete practices that can be emulated by students in their daily lives.

The value of *lemphu'* in Bugis culture is strongly reflected in the integrity and honesty of the school principal in carrying out leadership duties. Every policy is based on principles of fairness and transparency. The principal demonstrates consistency between words and actions, thereby fostering trust within the pesantren environment. Teachers and students observe that honesty is not only taught but also practiced in real life. This integrity becomes a reference point in building a healthy organizational culture (Nizarani et al., 2020). This condition strengthens the continuous internalization of moral values in students' daily lives. Students perceive that a consistent leader is easier to follow than a leader who merely provides normative instructions (Syahrudin et al., 2025). The process of internalizing religious values takes place through mechanisms of observation and imitation of the leader's behavior. Exemplary conduct becomes an effective learning medium because it is direct and contextual (Kemal Husen & Muhammad Husni, 2025). Values that are demonstrated in real practice are more easily understood and internalized by students. This situation accelerates the formation of a deeply rooted religious character. Thus, exemplary leadership serves as an educational strategy that is not only effective but also highly sustainable.



The principal's exemplary conduct is also evident in a humanistic and participatory communication pattern within the pesantren environment. The principal emphasizes the value of *sipakatau* by respecting and honoring every individual regardless of background (Herlin et al., 2020). Open interaction creates a healthy space for dialogue between leaders, teachers, and students. The communication pattern is not one-way but involves active participation from all members of the pesantren community. This condition creates a psychologically safe environment for students to grow and develop. An interview with the dormitory supervisor, Ustadzah Nurhikmah, stated that (Nurhikmah, 2026): "The leader always opens space for discussion. Even when students commit violations, he does not immediately punish them, but invites dialogue so that students understand their mistakes and develop awareness from within." This harmonious relationship strengthens the collective process of religious character development. The value of *pacce* is reflected in the principal's concern for students' academic and personal conditions (Wahyudi Gani & Abdul Gani, 2024). The principal demonstrates empathy toward the problems faced by students, both related to learning and dormitory life. A persuasive approach is prioritized over a coercive approach in addressing various issues. Teachers and dormitory supervisors are encouraged to emulate this attitude in their daily mentoring practices. This sense of care creates a strong atmosphere of togetherness within the pesantren environment (Nizarani et al., 2020). A culture of mutual assistance and respect grows as an integral part of students' lives.

Principle	 1. Spiritual Example	 2. Integrity & Consistency	 3. Discipline & Responsibility	 4. Social Relations & Communication	 5. Caring & Development	 6. Value Internalization
Implementation in Leadership	• Leaders set a religious and moral example • Active in worship and religious activities • Consistency between words and actions	• Transparent and fair leadership • Adherence to rules and pesantren policies • Accountability in decision-making	• Clear roles and duties • Punctuality and discipline • Task commitment and follow-up	• Open and participatory communication • Listening to input and aspirations • Respecting students as individuals	• Personal approach to students • Empathy for students' needs and problems • Mentoring and guidance	• Internalization of cultural and religious values • Habituation of good character • Development of Islamic worldview
Bugis Values	– (Spiritual Primacy)	Lempu' (Honesty / Integrity)	Getteng (Firmness / Determination)	Sipakatau (Mutual Respect)	Pacce (Compassion & Solidarity)	(Internalization of Teachings)
Impact on Students' Religious Character	• Strong worship habits • Internalization of religious values • High moral awareness	• Trust in leaders • Sense of justice • Moral strength and integrity	• Disciplined character • Responsibility for duties • Strong independent character	• Ethical social interactions • Tolerance • Conducive climate	• Social empathy • Solidarity and brotherhood • Social stability	• Strong religious identity • Upholding good character • Maturity in faith and attitude

Figure 2. Exemplary Application of Bugis Values in Religious Character

The exemplary approach implemented by the principal has a significant impact on increasing students' moral and spiritual awareness. Students demonstrate behavioral changes in aspects of worship discipline, politeness, and social responsibility. The direct involvement of the principal in the mentoring process strengthens the moral messages being conveyed. Exemplary leadership creates a balance between firm rules and a gentle approach (Syahrudin et al., 2025). The transformation of religious character occurs through a consistent and structured habituation process. The pesantren environment becomes a conducive space for the deep growth of religious values.

Table 4. Exemplary Leadership in the Formation of Students' Character

Main Aspect	Implementation	Bugis Values	Impact
Spiritual Exemplary Leadership & Engagement	Congregational prayers, religious study sessions, dhikr, and student guidance	–	Habituation of worship practices and religiosity
Integrity & Consistency	Alignment between words and actions, honesty in policy-making	<i>Lempu'</i>	Trust and moral exemplarity
Discipline & Responsibility	Punctuality and commitment to duties	<i>Getteng</i>	Development of disciplined and trustworthy character
Social Relations & Communication	Open, participatory dialogue and mutual respect	<i>Sipakatau</i>	Emotional closeness and a conducive environment
Care & Guidance	Persuasive approaches and empathy toward students	<i>Pacce</i>	Self-awareness and solidarity
Internalization of Values	Observation and imitation of exemplary behavior	–	Sustainable development of religious character

Source: Data processed by author (2026).

The integration of exemplary leadership with Bugis cultural values strengthens the effectiveness of leadership in shaping students' religious character (Kemal Husen & Muhammad Husni, 2025). The values of *siri'*, *pacce*, *lempu'*, and *sipakatau* are not only taught conceptually but are lived out in daily practices. Leadership based on exemplary conduct is able to bridge cultural values and religious values in a harmonious way. Students not only understand religious teachings but also internalize them in their actual behavior. This leadership model serves as a concrete example of how local culture can enrich Islamic educational practices (R. N. Anwar, 2022). Thus, the principal's exemplary conduct becomes a key element in the successful transformation of students' religious character in the pesantren.

The Impact of Leadership on Religious Culture at Pesantren DDI Ujung Lare

The principal's leadership at Pesantren DDI Ujung Lare Parepare has had an impact on strengthening a religious culture that develops systematically (Sirojuddin et al., 2022). Structured leadership grounded in Bugis cultural values is able to create an educational environment rich in daily spiritual habituation (Dewi et al., 2025). Policies that emphasize discipline in worship, ethical interaction, and collective responsibility foster a consistently religious atmosphere. The value of *siri'* encourages students to maintain behavior in accordance with religious and cultural norms. The values of *lempu'* and *sipakatau* build honest, polite, and respectful interactions among all members of the pesantren community. An interview with the pesantren leader, Ust. Nursan, revealed that (Nursan, 2026): "We instill a religious culture not only through rules, but through continuous habituation, so that students feel that practicing religious values is part of their life, not merely a formal obligation." The religious culture that has developed is not only reflected in the performance of formal rituals, but also in students' daily attitudes and behaviors (Hidayatullah, 2022). Students demonstrate disciplined habits in worship, maintain ethical social interactions, and show respect toward teachers and peers. The pesantren environment becomes a conducive social space for the growth of authentic religious values (Burhanuddin, 2024). The principal plays a key role as the main driving force in ensuring that these values are implemented consistently. Continuous habituation strengthens the internalization of values within students. This condition shows that leadership has a strategic role in building a living and deeply rooted religious culture (Chandra, 2020). The strengthening of religious culture is also evident in the integration of Bugis cultural values within various institutional activities of the pesantren (Darwis, 2020). These values are not only taught in theoretical form but are also implemented in



daily life practices. Every pesantren activity is designed to support the formation of a holistic religious character. The interaction between teachers, students, and leaders reflects values of politeness and mutual respect (Muhamad Reza Atqia et al., 2022). The environment that is formed serves as an effective social learning space for students, showing that local culture makes a significant contribution to character education.

This integration can be seen in the habituation of sipakatau culture through the tradition of greeting with salam, kissing the teacher's hand (mappatabe'), and using polite language in daily communication. The value of siri' is reflected in disciplinary practices such as maintaining cleanliness of the pesantren environment, wearing modest clothing according to rules, and orderly participation in all religious activities. The value of pacce is embodied in mutual cooperation (massabbara) in cleaning dormitories and the pesantren environment, as well as caring for friends who are sick or experiencing difficulties. In addition, student deliberation activities within internal pesantren organizations reflect values of togetherness and collective responsibility. Moral development is further strengthened through routine activities such as sermons, classical Islamic studies, and daily etiquette evaluations conducted by supervisors. Thus, institutional activities are not merely administrative in nature but become a space for the actualization of Bugis cultural values. The impact of leadership is also evident in the increased active participation of students in various religious and social activities (Sadiah, 2022). Character-building programs designed in a managerial manner are able to foster collective awareness of the importance of religiosity (Fathoni & Rohim, 2019). The presence of the principal in strategic activities strengthens the motivation and commitment of the pesantren community. A culture of mutual reminder in doing good grows as part of the internalization of the pacce value. The consistent mentoring pattern creates discipline that is not coercive, but based on self-awareness. An interview with the dormitory supervisor, Ustadzah Nurhikmah, stated that (Nurhikmah, 2026): "The direct involvement of the leader makes students more motivated, because they feel genuinely guided and cared for in every activity." Students' active participation in religious activities shows a significant change in attitude in their daily lives (Maulidin, 2024). Students do not merely carry out these activities as obligations but also as spiritual needs. This awareness grows through consistent mentoring. Religious activities serve as a means of deep internalization of religious values. The pesantren environment supports the formation of repeated positive habits (Kariyanto, 2020). This condition strengthens the development of religious character that becomes firmly embedded in students' personalities. Bugis culture-based leadership also contributes to the creation of stability and harmony within pesantren life. Internal conflicts can be minimized through a persuasive approach and deliberation that respects individual dignity (Agus Yasin, Wiwik Dwi Febriana Wati, 2022). A fair system of rewards and guidance strengthens the sense of belonging to the institution. Religious culture develops as a shared identity that distinguishes pesantren from other educational institutions. Modernization and external influences do not immediately displace the core values that have been embedded. Adaptive leadership is able to integrate innovation without abandoning the traditions that serve as its cultural foundation (Mita Silfiyasari & Ashif Az Zhafi, 2020).





Figure 3. Integration of Bugis Values in Islamic Boarding School Education

Social stability within the pesantren strengthens the effectiveness of the religious character development process. Harmonious relationships between students, teachers, and leaders create a conducive learning atmosphere. The value of *sipakatau* plays an important role in maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships (Sofii, Imam., 2022). Every individual feels valued and acknowledged within the pesantren community. This condition increases students' comfort and psychological safety. A stable environment becomes a key supporting factor in the success of character education.

Table 5. Religious Culture of DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School

Aspect	Implementation	Bugis Values	Impact
Religious Policy	Discipline in worship, ethics, and collective responsibility	<i>Siri', Lempu', Sipakatau</i>	The formation of a consistent religious culture
Habituation & Internalization	Routine worship, religious sermons (<i>tausiyah</i>), study sessions, and evaluation of conduct	–	Religiosity becomes a necessity rather than an obligation
Cultural Integration	Greetings, <i>mappatabe'</i> (gesture of respect), polite language, and mutual cooperation	<i>Sipakatau, Siri', Pacce</i>	Development of polite, disciplined, and caring character
Student Participation	Involvement in religious, social, and organizational activities	<i>Pacce</i>	Increased awareness and engagement
Stability & Harmony	Deliberation, persuasive approaches, and fairness	<i>Sipakatau</i>	A conducive environment with minimal conflict
Adaptation & Sustainability	Integration of tradition and modernization	–	A strong and sustainable religious culture

Source: Data processed by author (2026).



The transformation of students' religious character shows tangible results through measurable behavioral changes. Students become more disciplined in performing religious practices and more responsible in their social life. The values taught are not only understood but also practiced in daily activities. This transformation process takes place through consistent habituation and continuous exemplary leadership. Leadership plays an important role in directing and sustaining this process. These results indicate that culture-based leadership has a high level of effectiveness in character development.

Bugis culture-based leadership at Pesantren DDI Ujung Lare Parepare demonstrates that the integration of local values into educational management can significantly strengthen religious culture. The values of *siri'*, *pacce*, *lempu'*, and *sipakatau* serve as the foundation for building a sustainable development system. Leadership does not only function as a system regulator but also as a value-driven force within pesantren life. The religious culture that is formed becomes a distinctive identity that strengthens the institution's existence. This process shows that culture-based education has strong relevance in the modern context. Adaptive and value-oriented leadership is the key to building a strong and sustainable religious culture.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Bugis cultural values in leadership at DDI Ujung Lare Islamic Boarding School, Parepare, demonstrates that the values of *siri'*, *pacce*, *lempu'*, and *sipakatau* function as the primary foundation in the systematic and sustainable transformation of students' religious character. Leadership is not only carried out within an administrative framework, but also within a cultural dimension that directs the entire management process of the pesantren. The processes of planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation are integrated with cultural values, thereby forming a holistic system of student development. The principal's exemplary conduct becomes a key factor in strengthening the internalization of religious values through real practices in daily life. The active involvement of leaders in religious and social activities creates effective contextual learning for students. Humanistic and participatory communication patterns strengthen the emotional relationships among leaders, teachers, and students. Educational supervision and humane evaluation ensure that character development proceeds without psychological pressure. The impact of leadership is reflected in the increased discipline, responsibility, and religious awareness of students in their daily lives. The religious culture that is formed is not merely formal, but has become a habit and a collective identity within the pesantren environment. Thus, Bugis culture-based leadership has proven to be effective as a model of Islamic educational management that is capable of integrating local values with the formation of students' religious character.

Theoretically, this study enriches the framework of culturally grounded leadership in Islamic education by demonstrating how Bugis cultural values can be systematically integrated into leadership practices and character education, while also providing a conceptual foundation for future research to examine its applicability in pesantren with different local cultural contexts. Practically, the findings may serve as a policy reference for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, pesantren organizations, and Islamic educational institutions in developing leadership models based on local wisdom, as the integration of Bugis cultural values into leadership practices offers a contextual approach to strengthening character education, promoting culturally responsive educational management, and preserving local cultural identity amid the challenges of contemporary Islamic education. Accordingly, this study proposes a Bugis Culture-Based Islamic Leadership Model that conceptually links the values of *siri'*, *pacce*, *lempu'*, and *sipakatau* with leadership and management functions, the development of a religious culture, and the transformation of students' religious character within the pesantren environment.



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