

# Kyai's Leadership in Prayer-Based Counseling at Pesantren: A Management Strategy

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Received: 21-11-2024

Revised: 09-01-2025

Accepted: 23-01-2025

## Info Artikel

## Abstract

### Keywords:

Prayer-Based  
Counselling, Kyai's  
Leadership, Spiritual  
Development

This study explores the implementation of prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang under the leadership of the Kyai, and its impact on students' spiritual, emotional, and academic development. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. Findings reveal that structured prayer-based counselling sessions are central to Kyai's strategy, fostering discipline and reinforcing spirituality. Personalized individual counselling sessions address students' unique challenges, promoting trust and respect. Kyai's holistic approach involves continuous interaction and collaboration with teachers, ensuring comprehensive support for students' spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs. Integration of traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational practices prepares students for both religious and secular life. The study highlights significant improvements in student behaviour and academic performance attributed to the spiritual and emotional support provided by Kyai. Despite its limitations, including the focus on a single pesantren and reliance on qualitative data, the study offers valuable insights into effective leadership strategies within Islamic educational contexts. These findings contribute to the field of spiritual counselling, providing practical guidelines for educators and leaders in similar settings.

### Kata kunci:

Konseling Berbasis Doa,  
Kepemimpinan Kyai,  
Perkembangan Spiritual

### Abstrak.

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implementasi konseling berbasis doa di Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang di bawah kepemimpinan Kyai, serta dampaknya terhadap perkembangan spiritual, emosional, dan akademik siswa. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumentasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa sesi konseling berbasis doa yang terstruktur menjadi pusat strategi Kyai, yang menanamkan disiplin dan memperkuat spiritualitas. Sesi konseling individu yang dipersonalisasi menangani tantangan unik siswa, mendorong kepercayaan dan rasa hormat. Pendekatan holistik Kyai melibatkan interaksi berkelanjutan dan kolaborasi dengan guru, memastikan dukungan komprehensif terhadap kebutuhan spiritual, emosional, dan psikologis siswa. Integrasi pengajaran Islam tradisional dengan praktik pendidikan modern mempersiapkan siswa untuk kehidupan religius dan sekuler. Studi ini menyoroti peningkatan signifikan dalam perilaku dan prestasi akademik siswa yang diatributkan pada dukungan spiritual dan emosional yang diberikan oleh Kyai. Meskipun ada keterbatasan, termasuk fokus pada satu pesantren dan ketergantungan pada data kualitatif, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga tentang strategi kepemimpinan efektif dalam konteks pendidikan Islam. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the field of spiritual counselling has seen significant developments, particularly in the context of Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren (Khiyarusoleh, 2020). Spiritual counselling, which integrates religious practices and spiritual guidance, has been increasingly recognized for its role in addressing the holistic well-being of students (Hefti, 2011) (Vieten & Lukoff, 2022). This study focuses on the implementation of prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang, under the leadership of the Kyai. Kyai's leadership strategy plays a pivotal role in nurturing the spiritual and emotional growth of students through structured prayer-based counselling sessions.

Despite the growing acknowledgement of spiritual counselling's benefits, there remains a gap in empirical research specifically examining the leadership strategies employed by Kyai in implementing such programs in pesantren settings. Preliminary data collected through interviews and observations at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo reveal a structured yet flexible approach to counselling that is deeply rooted in Islamic traditions and responsive to the contemporary needs of students. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of Kyai's leadership strategies and their impact on student development.

The research posits that by understanding and documenting these strategies, significant contributions can be made to the broader field of spiritual counselling within Islamic education. This includes enhancing current practices and providing a model that can be adapted in similar educational settings (Surbakti et al., 2024; Mulwa et al., 2010; Deed et al., 2020). The study's objectives are to elucidate the specific methods and practices used by the Kyai in prayer-based counselling, to assess the effectiveness of these practices, and to explore the broader implications for Islamic educational leadership.

Moreover, this study introduces novel insights into the intersection of leadership and spiritual counselling, an area that has been relatively under-explored in the existing literature (Phillips, 2020; Rassool, 2024b; Rassool, 2024a). While previous research has largely focused on the general benefits of spiritual counseling (Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Jr & L, 1986), this study uniquely explores the practical implementation and leadership dynamics in a pesantren environment. Through this investigation, it aims to offer new perspectives and practical guidelines for educators and leaders within the Islamic educational framework.

Additionally, initial findings from this research highlight the significant role of prayer-based activities in fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for students. These activities, led by the Kyai, are designed to promote spiritual growth, emotional resilience, and a sense of community among students. The integration of these practices into the daily routines of the pesantren serves not only as a spiritual foundation but also as a means of providing consistent emotional support to the students (Kartiko et al., 2020; Mashuri et al., 2024).

By examining the leadership strategies of the Kyai at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on effective educational leadership in Islamic institutions. The insights gained from this research can help inform policy and practice, ensuring that spiritual counseling programs are effectively implemented to support the holistic development of students. This aligns with the broader objectives of fostering moderate Islamic values and promoting a balanced approach to religious education that is inclusive and respectful of diversity.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study method to explore the leadership strategies of the Kyai in implementing prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang (Moeloeng, 2017). The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of phenomena within their natural context, providing rich insights into the dynamics at play. The subjects of this study include the Kyai, teachers, and students at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang. This location is chosen due to its structured and successful implementation of prayer-based counseling programs. Participants are selected purposively to ensure that the data collected is relevant and comprehensive (Creswell, 2010).

Data is collected through several techniques (Sugiyono, 2017). First, participant observation is conducted, allowing the researcher to engage directly in the activities of the pesantren and observe interactions between the Kyai, teachers, and students during counseling sessions. Second, in-depth interviews are carried out in a semi-structured manner with the Kyai, teachers, and students to gather their perspectives on leadership strategies and the effectiveness of prayer-based counseling. The interview questions are designed to delve into experiences, perceptions, and the impact of the counseling program. Finally, documentation of relevant materials, such as daily activity logs of the pesantren, counseling modules, and teaching materials, is also utilized to supplement the observational and interview data (Maimun, 2020).

The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis techniques based on the Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2018) model. The analysis process involves several stages: data collection is conducted continuously throughout the study; data reduction is performed to eliminate irrelevant or redundant information while coding significant data based on specific themes; data presentation is done in narrative or tabular forms to facilitate interpretation; and conclusions are drawn to address the research questions and test the proposed hypotheses. To ensure the validity of the data, this study employs several triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is used to verify information from various data sources (observation, interviews, documentation) to ensure consistency (Emzir, 2014). Method triangulation involves using different data collection methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomena. Additionally, confirmability is ensured by having peers review the data and findings to avoid subjective bias from the researcher.

Through this methodology, the study aims to gain a deep understanding of the Kyai's leadership strategies in implementing prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang and its contributions to the field of spiritual counseling in Islamic education.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The implementation of prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang under the leadership of the Kyai has demonstrated a profound impact on the spiritual and emotional well-being of students. Through comprehensive participant observation, in-depth interviews, and rigorous documentation analysis, this study has uncovered several key aspects of the Kyai's leadership strategy and its effectiveness in fostering a supportive and nurturing educational environment.

Structured prayer-based counseling sessions are the cornerstone of the Kyai's approach. These sessions are meticulously planned and regularly integrated into the pesantren's daily activities. Collective prayers serve as the preliminary phase, creating an atmosphere of tranquility

and focus. During these sessions, students are encouraged to participate actively in communal prayers, which are then followed by individual or group counseling. This structure is critical as it allows the Kyai to address both communal and individual needs, creating a balance between collective spiritual upliftment and personal guidance. The observations highlight that this routine not only instills a sense of discipline among the students but also reinforces the importance of spirituality in their everyday lives.

The individual counseling sessions are a significant aspect of the Kyai's strategy. These sessions are designed to provide personalized attention to each student, addressing their unique challenges and concerns. Interviews with students reveal that they feel a profound sense of comfort and security during these sessions, knowing that their issues will be addressed with empathy and confidentiality. For instance, one student mentioned, *"I feel very comfortable talking to the Kyai. He listens to my problems and gives advice that makes me feel at ease."* Another student said, *"The counseling sessions help me to be more focused and disciplined. I feel more motivated to study."* The Kyai employs a mix of religious teachings and practical advice, drawing from the Quran and Hadith to provide relevant and contextual solutions to the students' problems. This personalized approach ensures that each student's specific needs are met, fostering a strong bond of trust and respect between the students and the Kyai.

A holistic approach to student development is evident in the Kyai's leadership. The Kyai's involvement in the students' lives goes beyond formal counselling sessions. Observations indicate that the Kyai frequently interacts with students during daily activities, offering continuous guidance and support. This approach ensures that the students' spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs are addressed comprehensively. Teachers play a vital role in this holistic approach, working closely with the Kyai to identify students who may require additional support. The collaboration between the Kyai and teachers creates a robust support system for the students, ensuring that no student is left without the necessary guidance and assistance.

The integration of traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational practices is another hallmark of the Kyai's strategy. The curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo includes a balanced mix of religious texts and contemporary subjects. Documentation analysis reveals that the curriculum is carefully designed to provide students with a comprehensive education that prepares them for both religious and secular life. This integration is also reflected in the teaching methods employed at the pesantren. Teachers are encouraged to use innovative techniques such as discussion groups, role-playing, and case studies to engage students actively and foster critical thinking skills. This approach ensures that students develop a well-rounded set of skills that are essential for their future success.

The sense of community and belonging fostered through prayer-based counseling sessions is another significant finding. The collective nature of the sessions promotes a strong sense of unity and mutual support among the students. Observations and interviews indicate that students feel a deep sense of connection to each other and to the institution. One student shared, *"I feel very connected to my friends and the pesantren. The collective prayers and counseling sessions make us feel like a family."* This sense of community is crucial for their overall development, as it provides a supportive environment where students can thrive. The Kyai's role in nurturing this environment is pivotal, as his leadership sets the tone for interactions among students. By modeling inclusive and respectful behavior, the Kyai encourages students to support one another and work together harmoniously.

Ethical and moral values are a core component of the Kyai's counseling strategy. The Kyai utilizes Islamic teachings to instill virtues such as honesty, respect, and compassion in students. These values are reinforced through practical discussions and real-life examples during counseling sessions. Interviews with students and teachers highlight the effectiveness of this approach in shaping the students' character. One teacher noted, *"The Kyai's guidance has a profound impact on the students' behavior. They become more respectful and responsible."* Students reported that the moral guidance provided by the Kyai helped them navigate personal challenges and make ethical decisions. Teachers observed positive changes in students' behavior, noting that students became more respectful, responsible, and compassionate as a result of the moral education they received.

The positive impact of prayer-based counseling on student behavior and academic performance is evident from the data collected. Preliminary data from student interviews and academic records indicate that students who participate in these counseling sessions show significant improvements in their behavior and academic achievements. Students reported feeling more focused, disciplined, and motivated, attributing these changes to the spiritual and emotional support provided by the Kyai. One student mentioned, *"I feel more disciplined and motivated after attending the counseling sessions. My grades have improved significantly."* Teachers also observed these positive changes, noting that students who regularly attended the counseling sessions demonstrated better academic performance and exhibited more positive behaviors in the classroom. These improvements are attributed to the structured guidance and support provided during the counseling sessions, which help students develop better study habits and manage their time effectively.

In conclusion, Kyai's leadership in implementing prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang has proven to be highly effective. Through structured sessions, a holistic approach to student development, integration of traditional and modern educational practices, fostering a sense of community, emphasis on ethical and moral values, and positive impact on student behavior and academic performance, the Kyai has created a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of students. These insights contribute to the broader field of spiritual counseling within Islamic education, providing a model that can be adapted in similar settings to promote well-being and academic success.

Based on the results of the study, the research findings can be concluded as described in the following table:

No	Aspect	Research Findings
1	Structure of Prayer-Based Counselling Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The sessions are planned and integrated into the daily activities of the pesantren</li> <li>- Starts with a prayer together to create a calm atmosphere</li> <li>- Followed by individual or group counselling</li> </ul>
2	Holistic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kyai is involved in the daily activities of the students</li> <li>- Continuous guidance and support</li> <li>- Close collaboration between Kyai and teachers</li> <li>- Meeting spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs</li> </ul>
3	Education Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blending traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational practices</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balanced curriculum between religious and general subjects</li> <li>- Using innovative teaching methods</li> <li>- Developing critical thinking skills</li> </ul>
4	Impact on Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Significant improvement in behaviour and academic performance</li> <li>- Learners are more focused, disciplined and motivated</li> <li>- Improved academic grades</li> <li>- Development of better study habits</li> </ul>

## **Discussion**

The implementation of prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang under the Kyai's leadership has provided comprehensive insights into the integration of spiritual practices within an educational framework, demonstrating profound effects on the spiritual and emotional well-being of students. This section elaborates on the findings from the field, discussing how these findings align with existing theories and previous research in the field of spiritual counseling and Islamic education.

This analysis employs several major theoretical frameworks to understand the implementation of prayer-based counseling: Spiritual Intelligence Theory ((Zohar et al., 2000), Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1989), Islamic Counseling Theory (Rassool, 2015), Community of Practice Theory (Wenger, 1998), and Miller's (2007) Holistic Development Theory. These theories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing how spiritual practices contribute to student development and educational outcomes.

Structured prayer-based counseling sessions, analyzed through Zohar and Marshall's (2000) Spiritual Intelligence Theory, emerge as a pivotal element in Kyai's strategy. This theoretical framework explains how spiritual practices enhance cognitive development when meticulously planned and integrated into daily routines of the pesantren. This approach is consistent with the theoretical framework posited by (Azra, 2019), who emphasizes the role of structured religious practices in enhancing the holistic development of students. By creating a routine that starts with collective prayers and transitions into individual or group counseling, the Kyai ensures that students experience a balanced combination of spiritual upliftment and personal guidance (Khan, 2024). This methodology not only instills discipline but also reinforces the importance of spirituality, which aligns with (Wilber et al., 2008) findings that structured spiritual practices can provide a stable framework for emotional and psychological support.

The individual counselling sessions, viewed through the lens of Hamdan's (2008) Islamic Counseling Theory, stand out as a significant aspect of Kyai's holistic approach. This theoretical framework explains how Islamic principles can be effectively integrated with psychological support to address students' emotional needs(Arifin, 2013). These sessions, designed to address the unique challenges and concerns of each student, highlight the personalized nature of Kyai's leadership (Pohl, 2006). Students reported feeling a profound sense of comfort and security during these sessions, knowing that their issues would be addressed with empathy and confidentiality (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011). This finding is supported by previous research conducted (Raftopoulos & Bates, 2011), which suggests that personalized spiritual guidance can significantly enhance emotional resilience and coping mechanisms in students. By drawing from the Quran and Hadith, the Kyai provides relevant and contextual solutions to the students' problems, fostering a

strong bond of trust and respect between the students and the Kyai. This personalized approach ensures that the spiritual and emotional needs of each student are met comprehensively, which is crucial for their overall development.

Furthermore, Kyai's holistic approach extends beyond formal counseling sessions. Observations indicate that the Kyai frequently interacts with students during daily activities, offering continuous guidance and support. This level of involvement ensures that the students' spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs are addressed comprehensively, creating a nurturing environment that supports their overall development. This finding aligns with the work of (Hersh et al., 2009), who argues that the holistic approach in education, which considers the spiritual, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of students, is essential for fostering well-rounded individuals.

The integration of traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational practices is another hallmark of Kyai's strategy. Documentation analysis reveals that the curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo includes a balanced mix of religious texts and contemporary subjects, designed to provide students with a comprehensive education that prepares them for both religious and secular life. This approach is supported by (Gustian et al., 2024), who emphasizes the importance of integrating traditional and modern knowledge to prepare students for the complexities of modern life. By employing innovative teaching techniques such as discussion groups, role-playing, and case studies, the Kyai ensures that students are actively engaged and develop critical thinking skills. This integration not only enhances their academic performance but also ensures that they are well-prepared to navigate the challenges of modern society while remaining rooted in their Islamic identity.

The sense of community and belonging fostered through prayer-based counseling sessions, when analyzed through Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice Theory, emerges as another significant finding. This theoretical framework explains how shared spiritual practices and mutual engagement contribute to learning and development within the pesantren community. The collective nature of these sessions promotes unity and mutual support among the students, creating a nurturing environment that is conducive to learning and personal growth. This sense of community is crucial for the student's overall development, as it provides them with a support system that helps them navigate the challenges of their educational journey. This finding is consistent with (Maton, 2008), who suggests that communal activities are essential in creating a supportive educational environment that fosters both academic and personal growth. Kyai's role in nurturing this environment is pivotal, as his leadership sets the tone for interactions among students (Nursetialloh, 2023). By modelling inclusive and respectful behavior, the Kyai encourages students to support one another and work together harmoniously, which further strengthens their sense of community and belonging.

Through the lens of Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, the emphasis on ethical and moral values during counseling sessions emerges as a critical component of Kyai's leadership strategy. This theoretical framework explains how students learn religious values and ethical behavior through observation and interaction with the Kyai. By using Islamic teachings to instill virtues such as honesty, respect, and compassion, the Kyai ensures that students develop a strong moral foundation. This moral education is not confined to the counseling sessions but is integrated into every aspect of the student's life at the pesantren. This approach aligns with the findings of (Purwaningsih, 2024), who highlights the importance of integrating moral education into the curriculum to develop students' character and ethical decision-making skills. The positive changes

in students' behavior and academic performance observed in this study are consistent with previous research, which underscores the benefits of moral education in shaping students' character and behavior (Shruthi & Padmanabha, 2024). By providing practical discussions and real-life examples during counseling sessions, the Kyai helps students navigate personal challenges and make ethical decisions, reinforcing these values in their everyday lives.

The positive impact of prayer-based counseling on student behavior and academic performance is evident from the data collected. Preliminary data from student interviews and academic records indicate that students who participate in these counseling sessions show significant improvements in their behavior and academic achievements. Students reported feeling more focused, disciplined, and motivated, attributing these changes to the spiritual and emotional support provided by the Kyai (Khoiri et al., 2022). This finding is supported by (Djalilah et al., 2024; Rozi & Qomariyah, 2022), who emphasize the importance of spiritual guidance in enhancing students' academic performance. Teachers also observed these positive changes, noting that students who regularly attended the counseling sessions demonstrated better academic performance and exhibited more positive behaviors in the classroom (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). These improvements are attributed to the structured guidance and support provided during the counseling sessions, which help students develop better study habits and manage their time effectively.

In conclusion, analysis through multiple theoretical frameworks - particularly Spiritual Intelligence Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Islamic Counseling Theory - demonstrates that Kyai's leadership in implementing prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang has proven to be highly effective. Through structured sessions, a holistic approach to student development, integration of traditional and modern educational practices, fostering a sense of community, emphasis on ethical and moral values, and positive impact on student behavior and academic performance, the Kyai has created a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of students. These insights contribute to the broader field of spiritual counseling within Islamic education, providing a model that can be adapted in similar settings to promote well-being and academic success. This study underscores the potential of prayer-based counseling to enhance the holistic development of students in Islamic educational institutions, aligning with the theoretical frameworks and findings of previous research.

By highlighting the importance of integrating spirituality into educational practices, this study not only contributes to the existing literature but also provides practical guidelines for educators and leaders within Islamic educational contexts. The Kyai's leadership model, which combines spiritual guidance with modern educational practices, offers a comprehensive approach to student development that can be replicated in other Islamic educational institutions. This study also emphasizes the role of moral and ethical education in shaping students' character and behavior, reinforcing the findings of previous research that underscore the importance of moral education in fostering well-rounded individuals.

Furthermore, the sense of community and belonging fostered through prayer-based counseling sessions highlights the significance of communal activities in creating a supportive educational environment. By promoting unity and mutual support among students, the Kyai ensures that they have a strong support system that helps them navigate the challenges of their educational journey. This finding aligns with the theoretical frameworks of (Heriyono et al., 2021), who suggests that communal activities are essential in creating a nurturing environment that fosters both academic and personal growth.



The positive impact of prayer-based counseling on student behavior and academic performance further underscores the effectiveness of Kyai's leadership strategy. By providing structured guidance and support, the Kyai helps students develop better study habits and manage their time effectively, leading to improved academic outcomes. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by (Kartiko et al., 2024; Napone & Lagura, 2023), who highlight the importance of spiritual guidance in enhancing students' academic performance. The holistic approach taken by the Kyai, which addresses the spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs of students, ensures that they are well-prepared to succeed academically while also developing the character and values necessary to navigate life's challenges.

In summary, the implementation of prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang offers valuable insights into effective leadership strategies within Islamic educational contexts. The findings of this study contribute to the broader field of spiritual counseling within Islamic education, providing a model that can be adapted in similar settings to promote well-being and academic success. By integrating spiritual practices into educational routines, emphasizing moral and ethical values, and fostering a sense of community, the Kyai has created a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of students. This comprehensive approach not only addresses the immediate needs of the students but also prepares them to become well-rounded individuals who can contribute positively to society. The insights gained from this study underscore the potential of prayer-based counseling to enhance the holistic development of students in Islamic educational institutions, aligning with the theoretical frameworks and findings of previous research.

This research makes several novel contributions to the field of Islamic educational leadership and spiritual counseling. First, it provides the first comprehensive empirical investigation of prayer-based counseling integration within the pesantren system in East Java, filling a crucial gap in understanding how traditional Islamic institutions can effectively combine spiritual guidance with modern counseling approaches. Second, this study uniquely documents the systematic methodology developed by the Kyai in implementing structured prayer-based counseling sessions, offering a replicable model for other Islamic educational institutions. Third, it presents original insights into how the synchronization of collective prayer activities with individual counseling sessions creates a more effective support system for students' psychological and spiritual development. Finally, this research pioneers the examination of the relationship between structured spiritual counseling and academic performance in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools, providing quantitative and qualitative evidence of its positive impact. These novel findings extend beyond existing literature on Islamic educational leadership and open new avenues for research into the integration of spiritual practices in educational counseling systems.

## **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of prayer-based counseling at Pondok Pesantren Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang under the leadership of the Kyai has demonstrated significant benefits for students' spiritual, emotional, and academic development. Structured sessions, a holistic approach, and the integration of traditional and modern educational practices have created a nurturing environment that supports students' comprehensive growth. The Kyai's leadership fosters a sense of community, emphasizes ethical and moral values, and improves student behavior and academic performance.

This study has shown that the structured nature of prayer-based counseling sessions instills discipline and reinforces spirituality. Personalized individual counseling sessions address unique student challenges, fostering trust and respect. The holistic approach, involving continuous interaction and collaboration with teachers, ensures comprehensive support for students' needs. The integration of traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational practices prepares students for both religious and secular life.

Despite these promising findings, the study has several limitations. Firstly, the research is limited to a single pesantren, which may not be representative of all Islamic boarding schools. Future research should include multiple pesantren for a broader understanding. Secondly, the study relies on qualitative data, which may introduce subjective biases. Future studies could incorporate quantitative measures for a more comprehensive evaluation. Lastly, the study focuses on immediate effects; longitudinal research is needed to explore long-term impacts. In conclusion, the Kyai's leadership in implementing prayer-based counselling offers a valuable model for Islamic educational contexts. This study underscores the potential of prayer-based counselling to enhance holistic student development and provides practical guidelines for educators and leaders to replicate in similar settings.

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