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Individualized Consideration in Amsilati Program Leadership: Strategies and Perceived Outcomes for Kitab Kuning Reading

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Abstract

This study examines how individualized consideration operates in the leadership of the Amsilati Special Agency (BANSUS) at Al-Mushlih Islamic Boarding School, Karawang, and how participants perceive its contribution to kitab kuning reading. A qualitative single-case study was conducted with six purposively selected informants: the BANSUS chair, an organizational coach, two Amsilati instructors, and two students. Data were generated through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and program documents and analyzed using the interactive procedures of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings identify five leadership strategies: intensive communication, personal support and active mentoring, needs-responsive coaching, routine instructional monitoring, and collaborative problem solving. These practices formed a cascading pathway in which support from the BANSUS chair strengthened instructors' responsiveness, which was then reflected in more individualized teaching practices. Participants reported greater accuracy in applying nahwu and sharaf, translating Arabic texts, and understanding kitab kuning, together with stronger motivation and confidence. These outcomes represent observed and perceived changes rather than standardized measures of learning gain. The study's novelty lies in explaining individualized consideration as a program-level, mediated leadership process rather than only a direct leader-follower interaction. The findings suggest that individualized consideration can support pesantren learning when it is institutionalized through regular monitoring, differentiated coaching, and collaborative support.

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Introduction

Pesantren are among Indonesia's longest-standing Islamic educational institutions and remain central to the transmission of religious knowledge, moral formation, and scholarly traditions. A defining feature of pesantren education is the study of kitab kuning, a broad corpus of classical Arabic Islamic texts commonly printed without vowel marks. Reading these texts requires more than lexical recognition: students must apply Arabic grammar (nahwu), morphology (sharaf), translation skills, and contextual interpretation (Kamal, 2020; van Bruinessen, 1995).

The Amtsilati method was developed by K. H. Taufiqul Hakim as a structured and practice-oriented approach to learning nahwu and sharaf for kitab kuning reading. Previous studies have reported that the method can facilitate students' grammatical understanding and reading performance when instruction is intensive and systematically organized (Misbah, 2006; Putri et al., 2024). At Al-Mushlih Islamic Boarding School in Karawang, the Amtsilati Special Agency (Badan Khusus Amtsilati, BANSUS) was established to coordinate the program, support instructors, monitor implementation, and assist students who experience learning difficulties.

Program effectiveness, however, depends not only on instructional materials but also on leadership processes that shape instructors' work and students' learning experiences. Transformational leadership provides a relevant framework because it explains how leaders mobilize commitment, develop followers, and improve organizational practices. Bass and Avolio (1994) identify four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The present study focuses on individualized consideration, defined as a leader's sustained attention to followers' differing needs through listening, mentoring, coaching, delegation, and developmental support (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Harsoyo, 2022).

In a pesantren learning program, individualized consideration may operate through more than direct interaction between a leader and students. The program chair primarily supervises instructors and organizational members, while instructors interact with students in the classroom. Leadership support may therefore be transmitted across organizational levels: the chair responds to instructors' needs, and instructors subsequently provide more responsive guidance to students. This mediated pathway is important because leadership research recognizes that transformational practices can cascade through intermediate actors rather than remain confined to a single leader-follower dyad (Murphy, 2005).

Previous research has examined transformational leadership at the level of pesantren leaders and kiai. Akmal (2024) describes how transformational leadership can foster organizational change, commitment, and member development at Darussyifa Al-Fithroh Islamic Boarding School. Fathiyyah and Khusna (2024) similarly show that transformational leadership in a salaf pesantren is expressed through vision, motivation, role modeling, and personal guidance. Other studies have assessed the Amtsilati method's contribution to kitab kuning reading, including research conducted at Al-Mushlih Islamic Boarding School (Putri et al., 2024). These two strands of scholarship remain insufficiently integrated: leadership studies generally examine the pesantren as a whole, whereas Amtsilati studies tend to emphasize instructional implementation or outcomes without explaining the program-level leadership mechanism that supports instructors and students.

This study addresses that gap by asking three questions: (1) How does the BANSUS chair enact individualized consideration in managing the Amtsilati program? (2) What specific strategies are used to support instructors and organizational members? and (3) How do participants perceive the pathway through which these strategies relate to kitab kuning reading, motivation, and confidence? The study's novelty lies in conceptualizing individualized consideration as a cascading, program-level process linking chair-level support, instructor responsiveness, and student learning experiences. Because the research uses a qualitative single-case design, it examines perceived and observed processes rather than estimating a causal effect or standardized learning gain.

Method

This study employed a qualitative single-case design to examine individualized consideration within the bounded context of the BANSUS Amtsilati program at Al-Mushlih Islamic Boarding School, Karawang. A case-study design was appropriate because the research sought to explain a contemporary leadership process in its institutional setting rather than isolate it from the relationships, routines, and learning practices through which it operated.

Participants were selected purposively on the basis of direct involvement in the program and their capacity to provide information about leadership, instruction, or learning experiences. The study involved six informants: the BANSUS chair, one organizational coach, two Amtsilati instructors, and two students. Role-based codes were used to protect participants' identities: CH-1 for the chair, CO-1 for the coach, IN-1 and IN-2 for instructors, and ST-1 and ST-2 for students. Table 1 summarizes the participant groups and their contribution to the dataset.

Table 1. Participant Profile and Data Contribution

Code	Role	Number	Data contribution
CH-1	BANSUS chair	1	Observation and semi-structured interview
CO-1	BANSUS organizational coach	1	Semi-structured interview and program documents
IN-1–IN-2	Amtsilati instructors	2	Observation, semi-structured interviews, and program documents
ST-1–ST-2	Student participants	2	Observation and semi-structured interviews

Source: Authors' field data.

Data were generated through three complementary techniques. Participant observation documented interactions among the BANSUS chair, instructors, organizational members, and students during program activities. Semi-structured interviews explored participants' experiences of communication, mentoring, monitoring, problem solving, instructional support, and learning change. Program records, activity notes, and documentation of mentoring activities supplied contextual and corroborating evidence. All quotations presented in this article were translated from Indonesian into English by the authors.

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). First, field notes, interview accounts, and documents were condensed into units

concerning leadership behavior, instructional response, and student experience. Second, the units were coded and organized into preliminary categories. Third, the categories were compared across informants and data-collection techniques and displayed in matrices. Fourth, patterns were refined into two principal themes: the enactment of individualized consideration and its perceived learning-related outcomes. Conclusions were reviewed iteratively against the source material. Credibility was strengthened through comparison across participant roles and across observation, interview, and documentary evidence. The study did not use a standardized pretest-posttest assessment; consequently, changes in reading competence are reported as observed and perceived outcomes rather than causal effects.

Results

The analysis produced two interconnected findings. First, the BANSUS chair enacted individualized consideration through five recurring leadership strategies. Second, these strategies operated through a cascading pathway in which instructor support was associated with more responsive teaching and with perceived changes in students' reading, comprehension, motivation, and confidence. This section reports the empirical evidence; its theoretical meaning is examined in the Discussion.

Enacting Individualized Consideration in BANSUS Leadership

Observation and interview data show that individualized consideration was embedded in the chair's routine involvement in program activities. The chair did not rely solely on written or verbal reports, but visited classes, participated in weekly evaluation meetings, and discussed emerging problems with instructors and organizational members. This presence enabled the chair to identify differences in instructors' conditions and to adjust support accordingly.

The chair described this practice as follows:

"By holding weekly meetings and making sure that I visit each class during attendance checks, I obtain first-hand information about what is happening."
(Interview, CH-1, 18 May 2026)

The evidence indicates that communication was proactive rather than merely reactive. When instructors encountered complex difficulties, the chair joined problem-solving discussions and, when necessary, coordinated substitute teaching so that learning could continue. An instructor emphasized the difference created by this support:

"Previously, we did not have a forum in which to communicate our difficulties. After BANSUS was formed, we had a place to do so. The chair also does not treat everyone in the same way; he considers each person's circumstances." (Interview, IN-1, 18 May 2026)

The instructor's account shows that individualized consideration was experienced through accessible communication, differentiated treatment, and practical assistance. Table 2 synthesizes the five strategies identified across the dataset.

Table 2. Individualized Consideration Strategies and Their Empirical Manifestations

No.	Strategy	Empirical manifestation	Evidence
1	Intensive communication	Weekly evaluation meetings and direct class visits during attendance checks	Observation; CH-1 interview
2	Personal support and active mentoring	Joint discussion of instructors' difficulties and immediate response to classes without an instructor	Observation; IN-1 interview
3	Needs-responsive coaching	Coaching adjusted to differences in members' and instructors' circumstances and capacities	CH-1 interview
4	Routine instructional monitoring	Active monitoring of program implementation and rapid response to classes requiring attention	Observation; program documents
5	Collaborative problem solving	Open evaluation forums in which the chair acts as a discussion partner rather than a unilateral decision maker	IN-1 and CO-1 interviews

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis of observation, interviews, and program documents.



Figure 1. Amtsilati Learning Activity at Al-Mushlih Islamic Boarding School

A Cascading Pathway from Leadership Support to Teaching Practice

The five strategies converged in two broader patterns: sustained support and mentoring, and recognition of individual differences. The chair's attention was directed primarily toward instructors and organizational members rather than delivered continuously to students. Instructors then translated the support they received into classroom practices such as repeating explanations, providing additional reading exercises, correcting errors individually, and inviting questions.

A student described this change in the classroom climate:

"When we do not understand, the ustadz does not immediately continue. He repeats the explanation, and that makes us less afraid of making mistakes."
(Interview, ST-1, 18 May 2026)

The pattern identified in the data can therefore be represented as a cascading pathway: the chair's individualized support strengthens instructors' capacity and responsiveness; instructors enact more individualized teaching practices; and students experience a more dialogical learning environment. Figure 2 summarizes this empirically derived pathway.

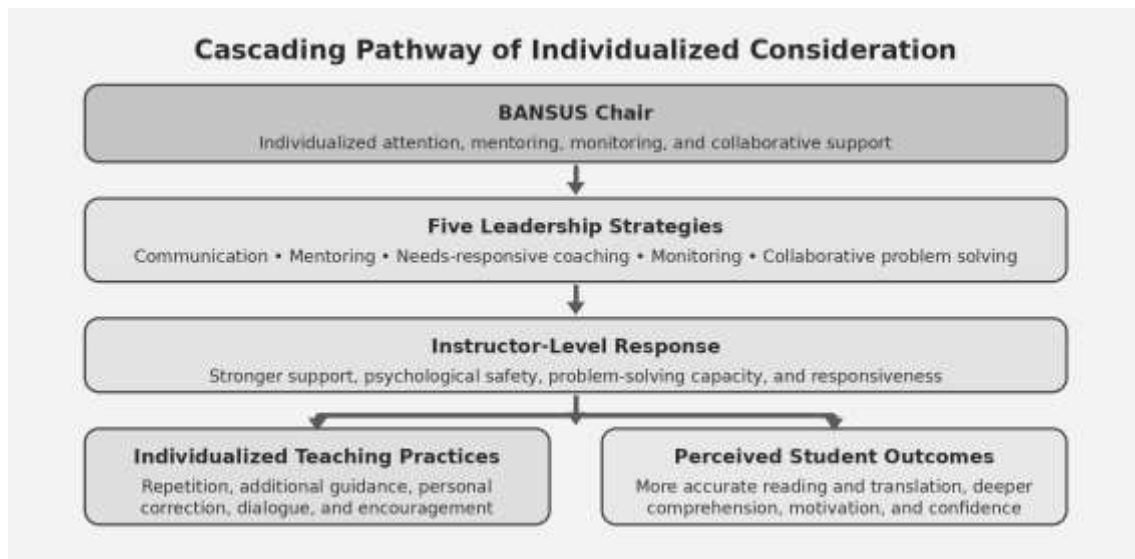


Figure 2. Cascading Pathway of Individualized Consideration in the Amtsilati Program

Perceived Outcomes for Kitab Kuning Reading and Learner Motivation

Participants associated the more responsive classroom practices with gradual changes in three areas of kitab kuning reading: applying nahwu and sharaf more accurately, translating Arabic passages with greater contextual precision, and understanding textual content more deeply. Students also reported greater willingness to ask questions and less fear of making mistakes. One student explained:

“The ustadz now pauses and asks, “Do you understand?” That rarely happened before. Now, when someone does not understand, the explanation is repeated immediately.” (Interview, ST-2, 18 May 2026)

The organizational coach evaluated the program positively while identifying a need for further institutionalization:

“The attention and guidance have worked well, but they have not yet reached an optimal level. A more structured mentoring system still needs to be developed.” (Interview, CO-1, 18 May 2026)

Table 3 presents the cross-source synthesis of conditions reported before and after the leadership practices became established. The table does not represent standardized pretest-posttest scores; it summarizes qualitative comparisons made by participants and supported, where indicated, by observation and documentation.

Table 3. Qualitative Synthesis of Reported and Observed Student Changes

No.	Aspect	Earlier condition	Reported/observed change	Evidence
1	Application of nahwu-sharaf	Inconsistent; frequent errors in grammatical position	More consistent and precise identification of word functions	Observation; ST-1 interview

2	Arabic text translation	Limited; recurrent errors in meaning	More accurate and context-sensitive translation	ST-1 and ST-2 interviews
3	Comprehension of kitab kuning	Predominantly surface-level understanding	Deeper and more contextual understanding	Observation; program documents
4	Learning motivation	Tendency to disengage when material became difficult	Greater persistence and participation	ST-1, ST-2, and IN-1 interviews
5	Confidence	Reluctance to ask questions and fear of mistakes	Greater willingness to ask questions and discuss difficulties	ST-2 and IN-2 interviews
6	Openness with instructors	Predominantly one-way interaction	More dialogical instructor-student interaction	Observation; IN-1 interview

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis. Changes are qualitative and should not be interpreted as standardized learning gains.

Discussion

Individualized Consideration as Program-Level Leadership

The findings extend individualized consideration from a general leadership attribute into a set of observable program-management practices. Bass and Riggio (2006) describe individualized consideration through listening, coaching, mentoring, and attention to followers' developmental needs. In BANSUS, these functions were enacted through weekly evaluation, class visits, differentiated coaching, collaborative problem solving, and direct assistance when instruction was disrupted. The contribution of the case is therefore not the identification of attention or mentoring in isolation, but the specification of routines through which such attention became operational.

This interpretation is consistent with Harsoyo's (2022) account of individualized consideration in Islamic educational leadership and with pesantren studies showing that transformational leaders combine vision with personal guidance and member development (Akmal, 2024; Fathiyyah & Khusna, 2024). The present findings add a meso-level perspective. The relevant leader was neither solely the kiai nor a classroom instructor, but the chair of a specialized learning unit positioned between institutional leadership and classroom practice. This organizational location enabled individualized consideration to connect management with instruction.

The Cascading Mechanism of Leadership Support

The most important theoretical contribution is the cascading mechanism identified in the case. The BANSUS chair's attention was mediated by instructors: support at the leadership level influenced how instructors responded to students. This pattern corresponds with the proposition that transformational leadership can be transmitted through organizational levels as intermediate actors reproduce supportive behaviors in their own sphere of responsibility (Murphy, 2005). In this case, the chain was not automatic. It depended on frequent communication, visible monitoring, accessible problem

solving, and instructors' willingness to translate organizational support into classroom action.

The mechanism also clarifies why individualized consideration should not be reduced to interpersonal kindness. The chair's support created conditions in which instructors could diagnose difficulties, adapt explanations, and give students additional time. These practices resemble the developmental and coaching orientation described by Northouse (2021). Their value lies in building instructional responsiveness, not merely positive sentiment. At the same time, the single-case evidence cannot determine the independent contribution of each strategy or exclude other influences, including the Amtsilati curriculum, instructors' competence, student effort, and the wider pesantren learning environment.

Interpreting the Perceived Learning and Motivational Outcomes

The reported changes in grammatical accuracy, translation, comprehension, motivation, and confidence are plausible within the instructional conditions documented in the study. Earlier research at Al-Mushlih found that structured Amtsilati instruction can support kitab kuning reading (Putri et al., 2024), while Mariyam (2021) emphasizes the relationship between nahwu-sharaf mastery and reading competence. The present study adds that leadership may help sustain the relational and organizational conditions under which such instruction is delivered.

The motivational findings can also be interpreted through self-determination theory. Ryan and Deci (2020) argue that motivation is strengthened when learning environments support competence, relatedness, and appropriate autonomy. Repetition, individualized correction, accessible dialogue, and reduced fear of mistakes may support students' sense of competence and relatedness. This theoretical correspondence does not establish mediation or causality, but it provides a defensible explanation for why participants associated responsive instruction with stronger persistence and confidence.

Claims about outcomes must nevertheless remain proportionate to the evidence. Table 3 is a qualitative synthesis of participant accounts, observations, and documents, not a statistical comparison. The term "improvement" should therefore be understood as a perceived and observed trajectory within the case. Demonstrating effect size, durability, or attribution would require standardized assessment and a design capable of comparing performance over time or across groups.

Practical Implications

For pesantren that operate specialized kitab kuning programs, the findings suggest that leadership development should include interpersonal and instructional-support competencies alongside administrative expertise. Program leaders require skills in listening, coaching, observation, constructive feedback, and collaborative problem solving. These competencies should be supported by formal routines, including scheduled mentoring, documented follow-up, and clear referral or substitution procedures when classes encounter difficulties.

The case also suggests that leadership evaluation should examine what occurs beyond the leader's immediate interactions. A program chair may support student learning indirectly by improving instructors' capacity to respond to diverse learning needs. Monitoring systems should therefore document both instructor development and student

experience. Such systems should be developmental rather than punitive so that instructors can disclose difficulties without fear and seek timely assistance..

Conclusion

The BANSUS chair enacted individualized consideration through five interrelated strategies: intensive communication, personal support and active mentoring, needs-responsive coaching, routine instructional monitoring, and collaborative problem solving. These strategies transformed individualized consideration from an abstract leadership quality into recurring organizational practices within the Amsilati program.

The practices operated through a cascading pathway. The chair primarily supported instructors and organizational members; instructors then translated that support into more responsive teaching through repetition, additional guidance, personal correction, dialogue, and encouragement. Participants associated these practices with more accurate application of nahwu and sharaf, improved translation and comprehension, and stronger motivation and confidence. Because the study did not use standardized outcome measures, these findings should be interpreted as perceived and observed changes within a single case rather than proof of causal impact.

The study contributes a program-level explanation of how individualized consideration may connect leadership with classroom experience in pesantren education. Its practical value lies in showing that personal attention becomes educationally meaningful when institutionalized through regular monitoring, differentiated coaching, and collaborative support. Testing the model's effectiveness and transferability requires multi-site, longitudinal, and mixed-method research.

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