KYAI'S LEADERSHIP MODEL IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PONDOK PESANTREN: A LITERATURE STUDY

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Kyai's leadership model applied to Islamic boarding schools. The method used is literature study. Related primary data were obtained from reference books and secondary data from several scientific articles from international and reputable national journals. Data analysis was carried out by collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions. The analysis results can be concluded that the Kyai leadership model applied to Islamic boarding schools consists of individual and collective leadership models. Some of the findings also found that there were spiritual leadership styles and charismatic leadership applied by Kyai in Islamic boarding schools. Further discussion is discussed on the subject matter of each topic.

Keywords: *Kyai leadership model, Islamic education, Islamic boarding school*

A. Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia (Azra et al., 2007; Hafidzi, 2020; Mu'izzuddin et al., 2019; Mukhibat & Ghafar, 2019) which historically are not only synonymous with the meaning of Islam but also contain the meaning of Indonesian authenticity (indigenous). In this case, Abdurrahman Wahid (2001) describes pesantren as a subculture with many uniqueness in the way of life, the way of life, the values adopted, and the hierarchy of power that is fully embraced. With such a pattern of life, Islamic boarding schools can survive for centuries using their values. The existence of pesantren as an Islamic educational institution in the modern era cannot be separated from the leadership role of the *Kyai* in maintaining the pesantren tradition from outside cultural influences (Fauzi, 2012; Alam, 2018; Hanafi et al., 2021; Permana et al., 2022).

Along with the development of information technology and the industrial revolution 4.0, Islamic boarding schools as community-based religious education institutions are fascinating to study from various sides with all the obstacles and challenges (Baharun et al., 2021; Rahman, 2022). Currently, Islamic boarding schools as religious educational institutions amid globalization and modernization face various problems according to the conditions and readiness of their human resources (Hayati, 2015; Yunus et al., 2019; Khaeroni et al., 2021). The readiness of human resources is a benchmark for whether the Islamic boarding school remains steadfast in maintaining its dignity as a Tafaqquh fi al-din institution or begins to adapt by making breakthroughs in modernizing the learning system, starting from curriculum changes to its management. It, of course, depends on *Kyai*'s leadership model applied in Islamic boarding schools.

Islamic boarding schools as religious educational institutions are exciting to observe from all aspects, especially when the modern or global era appears (Hutagaluh et al., 2020; Musaddad, 2021). The focus of questions from many groups is how the position of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions in the modern era, whether they still maintain their position as traditional religious institutions or follow the

modernization system process, such as curriculum improvements and management changes. According to Kasful (2015), this condition depends on *Kyai*'s management and leadership model in an Islamic boarding school to respond to changing times. In general, the leadership of Islamic boarding schools is still centralized and hierarchical in *Kyai*. As the central element in the pesantren, the *Kyai* organizes the pesantren with his skills, knowledge, and charisma. As a result, Islamic boarding schools do not have good education management because everything depends on the thoughts and decisions of the *Kyai*.

In general, the leadership of the *Kyai* applied to Islamic boarding schools has a centralized pattern. It means that in managing the institution, the *Kyai* plays a dominant role in regulating life and learning applied in Islamic boarding schools. *Kyai* is an element that dominates the life of the pesantren with its charisma, knowledge, and skills. Some researchers believe this centralized leadership pattern to be the cause of the untidy management of educational institutions because all policies implemented lie in the decisions of a *Kyai*. On the other hand, the *Kyai* not only acts as a scholar, educator, and caregiver, but he also acts as the leader and manager of the Islamic boarding school. Therefore, it is necessary to have a *Kyai* who can manage his institution effectively. This study describes *Kyai*'s leadership model in Islamic boarding schools.

B. Method

This study uses a type of library research, namely research in which the object of the study uses library data in the form of books and reputable scientific articles as the data source. Sources of data collected come from primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from books published with an ISBN, while secondary data comes from reputable international and national journals. Furthermore, the categorization of library sources is carried out as needed before the data is taken.

After that, the study data are displayed as findings, then abstract data findings as facts. The facts derived from these findings are then

analyzed and described as new knowledge. In summary, the flow of this study is illustrated in the following chart.
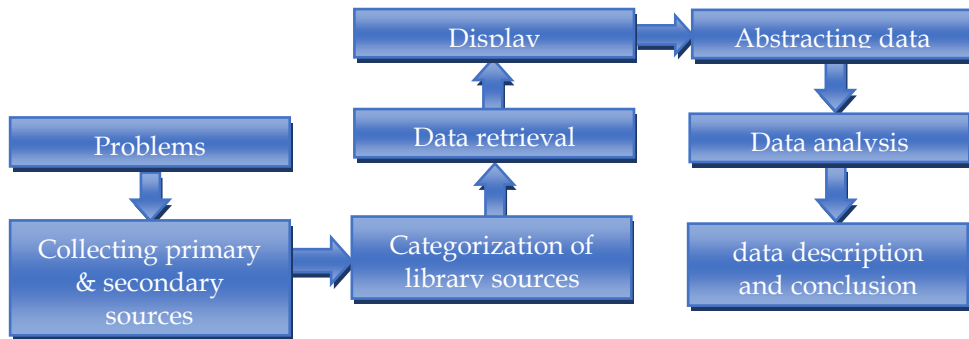

Figure 1. Flow Of Literature Study

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

Leadership is the art of influencing others to achieve specific goals (Duke, 1986; DePree, 2011; Bell, 2013; Ab Samad et al., 2017; Manning & Curtis, 2019; Juhji, 2020; Meraksa et al., 2022). Leadership is an activity that influences other people so that people work together (collaborate and elaborate on their potential) to achieve the goals that have been set (Nusantara et al., 2022; Umiarso, 2011). One of an organization's success factors lies in the leader's role (Mulyadi et al., 2020; Salim et al., 2021; Thaiyibi, 2020). The leader becomes a barometer of the group's success in planning, implementing, motivating, and supervising to achieve the group's shared goals. Because the role of the leader is so important, the leader is considered a role model for its members. Every leader certainly has a different style in Islamic boarding schools.

Leadership is also a process of influence between a person and society (Antonakis, 2012; Toyib et al., 2020). He engages in unusual behavior and can display a substantial level of skill, otherwise known as charisma. Charisma has played a central role in theories about leadership (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Nikezić et al., 2013; Abbasiyannejad et al., 2015). Naturally, people will attribute charisma to a

leader when the leader shows unusual behavior (Bell, 2013). However, it seems that perceptions of leadership are not simply submerged and may or may not produce specific outcomes.

A *Kyai* in Islamic boarding schools has many roles, such as educator and caregiver, community liaison, leader, and manager of the cottage (Kasful, 2015). Complex roles require *Kyai* to be able to adapt to various situations (Fauzi, 2012; Falah, 2021). For that, we need a *Kyai* with the ability, dedication, and commitment to carry out these roles. Leadership is the most vital role because it cannot be separated from the importance of *Kyai*'s leadership in managing Islamic boarding schools. *Kyai* is a critical figure that determines the success or failure of education. In addition, *Kyai* is also a model, representation, and idol of the surrounding community.

Kyai is the central figure of every Islamic boarding school. The central figure of the *Kyai* is not only because of his knowledge, but the *Kyai* is the founder, owner, and interpreter of the pesantren. The *Kyai*'s struggle is not limited to knowledge, energy, time, land, and other materials, but all are given to advance Islamic symbols (Jatmikowati et al., 2019). In addition, Islamic boarding schools are seen as charismatic by the community, and the role of *Kyai* can also be agents of change in society in the process of social change. Based on the explanation of the role and existence of *Kyai*, it can be said that *Kyai* plays a role in the resilience of the pesantren, in addition to having a high contribution to social change in society.

The position of a *Kyai* causes absolute power. According to Zamakhsyari, as quoted by Kasful (2015), most *Kyai* in Java think that *Pesantren* is like a tiny kingdom where *Kyai* is the source of absolute power and authority in the pesantren. Therefore, all pesantren policies such as objectives, implementation, and evaluation are decided by the *Kyai*. A *Kyai* masters all fields in the pesantren. Teachers and students must ask permission from the *Kyai* before doing anything, especially out of the ordinary.

The classical role of the *Kyai* as a source of knowledge, educators, and caregivers has been distorted by changes in the *Kyai*'s leadership. For example, the role of the *Kyai* as the head of the Islamic boarding school turned into a social and political role. As a result, a *Kyai* has little time to perform his duties as a teacher, while the *Kyai*'s social and political activities are for the advancement of the pesantren. However, it has negative implications for the management of Islamic boarding schools. For example, the recitation of "*Kitab Kuning*," which is the uniqueness of the *Pesantren*, is no longer taught by the *Kyai*. Instead, it is taught by *Kyai*'s assistant. Likewise, the management of Islamic boarding schools is left to the principal, who has a different charisma from the *Kyai* (Z. Arifin, 2017).

The title of *Kyai* is not easily achieved by Muslims and is not obtained from formal education. The title of *Kyai* is a gift from the community because it fulfills several conditions. Steenbrink, as quoted by Arifin (2017), explains that in a traditional society, a person can become a *Kyai* due to: (1) being accepted by the community, (2) many people coming to ask for advice, and (3) many parents sending their children to school. Several factors that cause a person to become a great *Kyai* are (1) knowledge, (2) piety, (3) genealogy from the previous *Kyai*, and (4) many students (Z. Arifin, 2017).

A *Kyai* with his assistants is the only hierarchy of power explicitly recognized in the pesantren. This power is absolute so that many students feel attached to the *Kyai* for life, at least making the *Kyai* a source of inspiration and moral support in their personal lives (Rohmaniyah & Woodward, 2012). The *Kyai*'s power comes from a combination (tradition) of Islamic education and charisma, which is acquired and inherited from the previous *Kyai*'s charismatic leadership. The power that comes from *Kyai*'s charisma has firm persuasion in instilling ideology. This charismatic power is called ideological (normative power).

2. Discussion

Based on the literature, as quoted by Kasful (2015), there are two Kyai leadership models in Islamic boarding schools. First individual leadership, namely the leadership model of Islamic boarding schools managed by one Kyai. Second collective leadership, namely the leadership model of Islamic boarding schools managed by two or more Kyai.

Individual Leadership

Judging from the role and function, the existence of *Kyai* as the leader of the Islamic boarding school is an exciting phenomenon because he does not only act as a leader of educational institutions but also as a guide and community educator. At the Islamic boarding school, the cleric prepares the curriculum, makes rules and regulations that his students must follow, carries out learning, and evaluates the learning process that has been carried out. Meanwhile, in the community, *Kyai* guides and educates the community and even becomes a leader in their lives. It means that in this individual leadership, *Kyai* has a dual role as a leader of Islamic boarding school educational institutions and leaders in the community. The *Kyai's* dual-centralized role is thought to cause the difficulty in developing Islamic boarding schools.

Kyai's leadership model strongly influences the development of Islamic boarding schools. Kharisma *Kiyai* can provide suggestions and encouragement for the community to study together in Islamic boarding schools so that the educational institutions they develop are in great demand by the community, not only by the surrounding community but also by outsiders. *Kyai's* leadership has been going on for a long time, even since the Islamic boarding school was founded in Indonesia. However, this leadership model is casuistic and does not apply in general. However, the individual leadership of the Kyai has the impression that the Islamic boarding school is *Kyai's* personal property because of the leadership model he has developed. Therefore, the individual leadership of the Kyai has given colour to the Islamic boarding school.

The individual leadership of the *Kyai* gives the impression of an exclusive Islamic boarding school so that there is no room for ideas or

ideas that come from outside the Kyai. The idea or idea is a form of thought that is so important for Islamic boarding schools' goodness, development, and progress. However, the *Kyai's* central role dominates so that the authority for the development and advancement of Islamic boarding schools is the absolute right of the Kyai. This leadership model will affect the existence of Islamic boarding schools. Based on observations, several Islamic boarding schools were hit by problems when the Kyai left them as the founder. It is because *Kyai's* children do not have the skills to manage the institutions left by their parents in terms of knowledge, charisma, and management.

A leadership crisis can occur in Islamic boarding schools if the Kyai, the institution's leader, also plays a role in the world of political parties. His political busyness can give society a negative stigma on the existence of the *Kyai* because the *Kyai* is busy with the affairs of his political party while the *Santri* is neglected, so the activities of the Islamic boarding school are neglected. The leadership change can be carried out by the eldest sibling, the eldest brother, or the son or daughter-in-law of the Kyai if the Kyai has died. Generally, there is a cadre of Kyai to continue the leadership of the Islamic boarding school. Therefore, this individual leadership model lasts a lifetime.

Based on the description above, it is illustrated that the individual leadership of the Kyai is centralized and can determine policies and decisions related to the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools so that the Kyai's authority becomes absolute. However, this individual leadership model generally occurs in traditional Islamic boarding schools (some call them *Salafi* boarding schools), which hold absolute authority and cannot be contested by anyone. This individual leadership model usually occurs in the charismatic leadership of the Kyai, where the Kyai has authority in the Islamic boarding school. It differs from the *Khalaf* (modern) Islamic boarding school, where the general leadership model is collective.

Collective leadership

Collective leadership can be interpreted as a collaborative leadership process (collaboration) that provides mutual benefits (mutualism). In this collective leadership, all levels of Islamic boarding school institutions take part in providing ideas to develop and build Islamic boarding schools. It means that all ideas conveyed by the ranks of the Islamic boarding school are accommodated for the same purpose. In Hadari and El Saha (2004) opinion, "the most important thing is that everything is done in the sense of togetherness and mutual support."

The collective leadership model is the best and most strategic solution for dealing with each other according to their duties, functions, and roles. A Kyai does not bear much moral responsibility for the future sustainability of the institution. It was exemplified by one of the well-known Islamic boarding schools in Java, namely Pondok Pesantren Tebuireng. The boarding school is a boarding school that significantly impacts the people of Java and Madura. The boarding school, founded in 1984, is within the scope of the Hasyim Asy'ari Foundation, whose management is carried out collectively (Arifin, 1993).

However, not all Kyai can respond well to collective leadership. Some reveal their weaknesses rather than their strengths. The existence of the foundation is interpreted as a way to shake and shake the position of the *Kyai*. The existence of the foundation wants to relieve moral and academic responsibilities. This collective leadership model is more in demand and is run by modern Islamic boarding schools (*Khalaf*), which is inversely proportional to traditional Islamic boarding schools (*Salafi*). Thus, the *Kyai* who apply the collective leadership model is generally more democratic than the *Kyai* who apply the individual leadership model, which tends to be more authoritarian.

The foundation's development and changes certainly have consequences where the Kyai is not authoritarian, and his policies are not absolute but collective, which are handled together according to their respective job descriptions. The foundation's members mutually agree upon provisions related to educational policies. Foundations play a

significant role in the division of tasks and responsibilities related to Islamic boarding schools' sustainability of life and education. Changes in the individual leadership model to a collective leadership model significantly impact the relationship between Islamic boarding schools and the community.

E. Conclusion

Kyai leadership is the process of impacting others so that they have a similar vision and mission in achieving the goals that have been set. Leadership theory has been developed and explained by experts. In his leadership model in Islamic boarding schools, Kyai applies individual and collective leadership models. Individual leadership is generally applied to traditional Islamic boarding schools (Salafi), while collective leadership is generally applied to modern Islamic boarding schools (Khalaf). Applying two leadership models in Islamic boarding schools will undoubtedly impact the institution's progress in facing global challenges and the 4.0 industrial revolution. In addition, some Islamic boarding school leaders apply spiritual and charismatic leadership styles.

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