Kiai's Polymorphic Leadership at Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

This study aims to provide further studies related to the leadership authority of kiai in Al-Muhsin Islamic boarding school, Pancur Village, Temayang District, Bojonegoro Regency which is still ongoing until now. This research uses power theory that emphasizes domination, knowledge, and social control. The research conducted uses qualitative methods. In collecting data, this study uses interview and observation techniques. Based on data obtained from the results of the interview. Bojonegoro has a traditional Islamic educational institution whose students live together and study under the guidance of teachers who are better known as kiai and have dormitories for students to stay, one of which is the Al-Muhsin Islamic boarding school in Pancur Village, Temayang District, Bojonegoro Regency. The leadership of the kiai at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School is authoritative and paternalistic, where the kiai has full authority in decision-making and acts as a father figure who guides students with affection but remains firm.

Keywords: Islam; Islamic boarding school; Kiai; Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The development of young people in this day and age is very rapid, influenced by unlimited technological and information advances. This research is important to discuss because it can provide a deeper understanding of the role and influence of kiai leadership in Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School in shaping the character of students, maintaining scientific traditions, and facing social challenges and changing times. In the midst of this modernization, many young

people are exposed to various new values and cultures, which sometimes contradict existing norms and ethics. It is important for parents to ensure that their children have a strong moral and spiritual foundation. Religious education is one of the effective ways to equip young people with good values, help them navigate the challenges of the times, and develop positive character (Hajri 2020).

Sending children to Islamic boarding schools is a strategic step that parents can take to support their children's religious and spiritual development. In Islamic boarding schools, children are not only taught religious knowledge, but also taught discipline, responsibility, and togetherness through various structured activities. A supportive environment and guidance from the kiai, children can grow up to be individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also have noble morals. The experience of living in boarding school can also help them to appreciate traditional and spiritual values more, so that they can become a generation with character and able to face future challenges (Fahmi 2015).

Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that focus on learning Islamic religious knowledge, which is under the guidance of a religious teacher or kiai. In a cultural context, Islamic boarding schools have an important role as a development of morality, social skills, spirituality, and an educational center. Boarding school does not only teach knowledge about hadith, the Qur'an, and *fiqh* but also provides teaching aspects of life including independence, morals, and ethics. With a community-based education system, boarding school designs an environment where students can interact, develop together and learn (Setiawan and Velasufah 2020).

Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools are actually one of the oldest models of Islamic education in Indonesia, which emphasizes the teaching of classic books (yellow books) and maintains Islamic scientific traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. This boarding school has existed since the early days of the spread of Islam in the archipelago and continues to develop until now, although it may have undergone revitalization or changes in the face of modern challenges. This Salafiyah Islamic boarding school is usually located in a rural area, therefore there is a simplicity, sincerity and very pure modesty. As time goes by and the development of the times, boarding school is required to adapt and develop new thinking related to an education system that includes various things such as curriculum and democratic collective leadership patterns. Change is often undesirable because it can affect the existence of kiai, such as in terms of respect, shifting roles, and leadership influence (Zuhriy 2011).

Boarding school apart from being a formal educational institution also functions as a place to foster character and strengthen the values of togetherness. In the boarding school, students are taught to live a disciplined life, contribute to social activities, and develop a sense of responsibility for the surrounding environment. The education provided is not only academic, but also includes non-formal education that supports the development of life skills and leadership. Boarding school thus becomes one of the pillars in producing a young generation with noble character and ready to face the challenges of the times, as well as playing an active role in society (Hendri and Halimi 2018).

Efficient and effective leadership can be realized if it is carried out according to the goals and functions that have been set. A leader must be a part of the situation of the organization or group he leads. Realizing the functions and objectives of leadership internally will take place a leadership activity and these activities must be sorted and selected, it will be clear that the leadership pattern of each will be clearly seen. A leader is a creature created by God who has different characters that can go his own way (Mattayang 2019).

The leadership of the boarding school must always change and develop the vision, mission, and concept of the Islamic boarding school until it is able to compete with all educational institutions. The ability to design a strategy can help face a change where the vision becomes better, so that it can maintain flexibility, stability and correlation well in the surrounding environment (Ahmad 2021). Vision is a future to create a success of an educational institution. Mission describes what you want to achieve and what you want to contribute to the community or the surrounding environment. The existence of a vision and mission in managing Islamic boarding schools can make it remain respected and influential for the community. There is pressure on the vision and mission is very important so that it is not easy to stop in implementing a strategy that has been made (Umam 2020).

Kiai always emphasizes the importance of consensus deliberation in every decision-making because he believes that by listening to various views and considering common interests, decisions taken will be wiser, fairer, and more acceptable to all parties. This principle also reflects the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation that are the foundation of community life, where each individual is given space to contribute to finding the best solution. Kiai also focuses on Islamic boarding school education on strengthening Islamic values based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, with the aim of producing a generation that is not only religious, but also able to practice Islamic teachings in daily life. Islamic boarding school education is directed so that students have noble morals, understand Islamic science in depth, and play an active role in

building a just and civilized society in accordance with Islamic principles. Boarding school thus became an important forum in producing cadres of the ummah who are ready to face the challenges of the times without leaving their Islamic identity (Saugi, Suratman, and Fauziah 2022).

The difference between adolescents who live in Islamic boarding schools and those who live with their parents lies in the learning and discipline environment, where Islamic boarding school adolescents tend to live in a more orderly atmosphere with a focus on religious education, while those who live with their parents are closer to the influence of their family and daily social environment (Fatnar 2014). To meet their daily nutritional needs, the students get food rations from the boarding school administrators. Every day, students get 2 meals a day in the morning and evening (Khusniyati, Sari, and Ro'ifah 2016). The life of Islamic boarding schools in the past and now has undergone significant changes, although it still maintains the essence of education and the formation of student character. Boarding school in the past emphasized more on teaching religious science traditionally, with students living in a simple atmosphere and focusing on memorizing the yellow books, while today, many boarding school have begun to integrate modern curricula, technology, and old activities (Makmun 2016).

The presence of the education system in modern Islamic boarding schools is a necessity in the development of the education system in Indonesia, along with the need for integration between religious and general sciences. Modern Islamic boarding schools not only focus on teaching religious sciences, but also introduce a curriculum that includes science, technology, and practical skills needed by students to compete in the modern world. Modern Islamic boarding schools with this approach are able to prepare a generation that is not only obedient in carrying out religious teachings, but also has a balanced intellectual capacity to face global challenges. This education system is an effort to adapt and innovate that remains rooted in traditional Islamic values, but is open to the progress of the times. In the midst of the demands of modernization and globalization, modern Islamic boarding schools provide educational alternatives that are able to produce students who excel in both academic and spiritual fields, so that they can play an active and significant role in building the nation (Abdul Tolib 2015).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research theory uses Michel Foucault's theory of power which views power as a capital, capacity, and tool that must be held or owned by a person in achieving a desire.

Submissiveness and domination are sometimes carried out with a repressive approach, urging that dominance be truly visible. Implementation through repressive methods does not continuously produce a reaction in the form of resistance because of the continuation of asymmetrical power. Domination and submission are not carried out by violence, but hegemony that controls the thoughts and behavior of students voluntarily (Kamahi 2017).

This research was conducted using a qualitative method. This is because there are several factors and reasons in conducting this research. First, different social settings have different understandings, which triggers researchers to describe how to understand social situations with different characteristics from each person. Second, this study conveys several efforts made in meeting the dominance of the problem. Third, this study conveys the process of social interaction with different situations (IAIN, n.d.).

Qualitative research methods occur because of a paradigm shift in seeing a reality or phenomenon. Social reality is seen as something changeable, whole, and full of meaning. Qualitative research method is a research method used to research a natural condition of an object. The data collection technique is carried out by analyzing data that is inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize a meaning rather than a generalization. Data collection in qualitative research is not guided by theory but guided by facts found during field research (Somantri 2005).

This research was carried out in Pancur Village, Temayang, Bojonegoro. This research is a development of previous research. Previous information was obtained from sources to obtain information on important and considerable problems. The point of interest of the study is the authority of the kyai at the Al-Muhsin Islamic boarding school, Pancur Village, Temayang, Bojonegoro. The analysis is achieved repeatedly at the same time as in the field. Ethnographic analysis is the re-examination of disciplinary records in order to look for signs of a culture (which may be commonly expressed in local languages) and to look for relationships between these symbols. Ethnographic evaluation starts from the perception that an informant already understands a series of culture (Wijaya 2018). The standard informants in this study are the administrators of the Islamic boarding school, the students of the Al-Muhsin Islamic boarding school, and the Pancur village network.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Al-Muslim Islamic Boarding School

This research obtained data on the power possessed by a kiai in the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School. This Islamic boarding school is in Pancur Village, Temayang, Bojonegoro. This Islamic boarding school was established on August 27, 2004, but on January 31, 2007, the Al-Muhsin Islamic boarding school was only registered with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Ahmad Roqib or commonly called Abah roqib is an alumnus of the Al-Ishlah Kediri Islamic Boarding School, the founder of this Islamic boarding school.

Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School used to be one of the well-known Islamic boarding schools in the area with many students who came to study religion. As time goes by, people's interest in going to this boarding school begins to decline. Various factors such as the development of the times and the decreasing attractiveness of Islamic boarding schools among the younger generation are the main causes of the decline in the number of students. Currently, there is only one student left who is still active in the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School.

Although the number of students who are in school has decreased drastically, this boarding school still carries out its function as a religious education institution. One of the parts that has survived and is even well known in the community is TPQ (Al-Qur'an Education). TPQ Al-Muhsin is still one of the best and most famous in the area. Children from various walks of life routinely participate in Qur'an learning activities at TPQ, showing that even though Islamic boarding schools have lost many of their students, TPQ remains a vital center of religious learning in the community.

The success of TPQ Al-Muhsin in maintaining its good reputation is a hope for this Islamic boarding school to continue to play a role in educating the younger generation in the field of religion. TPQ continues to grow showing that Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School still has great potential as a center for religious education even though the number of students who are enrolled is very minimal. The local community also still appreciates the existence of this TPQ as a quality place in teaching religious values to children. People continue to register their children at TPQ Al-Muhsin because many admit that the quality of education there is better compared to other TPQ.

Kiai Leadership Model

The leadership model of kiai in Islamic boarding schools has a great influence on the discipline and obedience of students in carrying out daily activities. At the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School, the kiai, who is known as a charismatic and authoritative figure, has succeeded in creating an environment that prioritizes the values of obedience and obedience. The students not only obey the rules set, but also feel responsible for helping the kiai's homework, such as washing clothes, washing dishes, and sweeping. This paternalistic leadership model encourages students to consider kiai as a father figure who must be respected and obeyed.

This model of leaders tends to be authoritative by giving direction and making key decisions, but with the aim of protecting and ensuring the well-being of the people they lead. The leadership of the kiai at the Al-Muhsin Islamic boarding school is paternalistic in nature who not only acts as a decision-maker, but also cares about the personal and professional welfare of their subordinates, often considering them as part of a big family. While there are positives such as the creation of high loyalty, this leadership model can also curb the creativity and initiative of subordinates because they rely too much on the leader's direction.

The leadership model of kiai in Islamic boarding schools is not only to organize and lead, but also to educate and foster the character of students. Kiai who is able to establish a good relationship with students will create a positive atmosphere, where students feel comfortable and inspired to contribute. Through various household and agricultural activities, students not only learn about religious science, but also life values that will shape them into independent, responsible, and ready individuals to face challenges in society. This makes Islamic boarding schools a holistic educational institution, where spiritual education and character education go hand in hand.

Life in Islamic boarding schools is filled with regular routines. Every day, the students focus on learning religious knowledge and deepening the values of spirituality. Learning the Quran, hadith, books and other worship activities that are an important part of the students' daily lives, which aims to strengthen their understanding of religious teachings. Students are also educated to be disciplined, independent, and build a sense of togetherness in addition to studying religious knowledge. Daily activities such as congregational prayers, reciting, and additional activities such as discussions and deliberations are a means to develop these values. All of these activities help students not only in the academic aspect, but also in the formation of strong character. The boarding school environment based on the spirit of cooperation and

cooperation creates an in-depth learning atmosphere. The students are guided to become independent, noble individuals, and ready to serve the community after completing their education.

Islamic Boarding School Activities

Al-Muhsin students' activities every day begin with reciting the book after the dawn prayer, where students gather from 04.30 to 05.30 to learn Islamic teachings from books. This activity is not just a routine, but also a strong spiritual foundation for the students. In the calm of the morning, they can reflect and delve into the values contained in the books they study, as well as strengthen the sense of togetherness between them. After the morning recitation, the students continued their respective activities such as school, college and so on.

The activity continued after the Maghrib prayer, namely with the reciting of the *Yasin*. This tradition has a deep meaning, where the students not only read the Qur'an, but also pray together for the safety and welfare of themselves, their families, and the community. This activity is a form of gratitude to Allah for all the blessings given. Students are trained to understand the importance of prayer and worship in daily life, which then becomes an internalized habit in them.

After the reciting of *Yasin*, the students continued to the *diniyah* which lasted until 20.00. This activity is an integral part of the organizational culture at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School. The students gain additional knowledge about religious teachings, including the correct worship procedures and moral values in Islam. *Diniyah* is a forum for students to ask and discuss various relevant religious issues, so that they can have a better understanding and can practice them in their daily lives. This activity also strengthens the relationship between students and teachers, where open and active communication is highly valued.

The activity of *diniyah* at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School is one of the important traditions that is carried out every night after the Maghrib prayer. The students gathered to learn various aspects of religious teachings, ranging from the interpretation of the Qur'an to *fiqh*. The calm evening atmosphere supports the learning process, allowing students to focus more and delve into the material delivered by the teacher. This activity not only aims to increase religious knowledge, but also strengthen the bond between students, build a sense of togetherness and support each other in undergoing the learning process.

During the fasting month, the schedule of *Diniyah* activities has been adjusted. This activity was carried out after the Asr prayer to provide opportunities for students to carry out their fasting better. This change in time provides an opportunity for students to prepare themselves ahead of breaking the fast and still maintain the spirit of learning. The moment of *diniyah* after Asr is also the right time to discuss spiritual values and increase religious understanding before they enter a more intensive worship time at night. This adjustment of the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School ensures that learning continues to run well, even in the atmosphere of the blessed holy month.

Overall, the organizational culture at Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School is manifested through the active involvement of students in various regular and continuous activities. Based on daily activities such as reading letters, and *diniyah*, the students are taught not only to master religious knowledge, but also to live in a community that supports each other. Weekly and annual activities further enrich their spiritual and social experience, so that they grow into independent, responsible individuals and have noble character. Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School thus succeeded in forming a strong and sustainable organizational culture, supporting the development of the character of students who can provide benefits to the community.

Religious traditions

Religious traditions at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School are a cultural heritage that has been closely intertwined in the daily lives of students and the surrounding community. This Islamic boarding school not only functions as a religious education institution, but also as a center for the development of spirituality that prioritizes deep religious values. Various routine activities carried out by this religious tradition have shaped the character and morals of students, making them individuals who are committed to Islamic teachings and contribute positively to the surrounding community. One of the religious traditions at Islamic boarding schools that is still going on from the past to the present is Friday Pon.

The tradition of Friday Ponan at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School Mosque has become one of the most important and anticipated religious rituals by the local community. Every Friday night, the mosque in this cottage is not only a place of worship for the students, but also a gathering center for the surrounding community to jointly carry out a series of sunnah worships. Tonight is a special moment for residents, because accompanied by a solemn and wise atmosphere, people come to carry out various kinds of congregational prayers, starting from the

Isha prayer, followed by other sunnah prayers. After the implementation of the congregational Isha prayer, it is usually followed by sunnah which is carried out as a complement to the mandatory prayer.

On the night of Friday *Pon*, the series of sunnah prayers is an important part of this religious ritual, considering the magnitude of virtues that are believed to be obtained from doing these sunnah prayers. This activity is also considered an effort to get closer to Allah through more intense worship on a blessed night. After completing the Isha prayer the worshippers did not stop there, they continued with the Repentance prayer, which was specifically intended to ask Allah for forgiveness for all the sins and mistakes that had been made. This repentance prayer is carried out in congregation, accompanied by the chanting of solemn prayers, inviting each individual to reflect on their life journey and commit to living a better life in the future. In addition to repentance prayers, there are also various kinds of prayers that are carried out such as witir prayers, hajat prayers, and others.

This tradition is not only a place of worship, but also a means of self-introspection for the people present. The night was also filled with the reading of Surah Yasin, which was carried out together after the implementation of the sunnah prayer. *Yasinan*, which is an inseparable part of the Friday *Pon* tradition at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School, becomes a moment where every participant can feel a strong spiritual power. The chanting of the holy verses of the Qur'an that are read simultaneously creates an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. In addition to strengthening the relationship with Allah, *Yasinan* is also considered a form of togetherness in prayer, where each worshipper prays for the good of themselves, their families, and the entire community.

The tradition of Friday *Pon* at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School Mosque has been going on for many years, and has become an inseparable part of the spiritual life of the surrounding community. More than just a place to carry out worship, this mosque is a center for strengthening social and religious ties among worshippers. Various worship activities carried out on the night of Friday Pon, this tradition continues to be inherited from generation to generation, maintaining the values of togetherness, spirituality, and submission to Allah SWT which are the foundation of community life in this Islamic boarding school environment.

Participation of Students in Social and Economic Activities

Students at Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School in social and economic activities are an integral part of their learning and character development. Students not only learn religious knowledge, but are also involved in various social activities in the community. For example, they often participate in tahlilan events, recitations, and other social service activities, which aim to help the surrounding community. This activity not only provides direct experience in interacting with the community, but also instills the values of care and social responsibility. Through involvement in social activities, students learn to respect each other and appreciate the role and contribution of everyone in the community.

Students at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School also participate in economic activities that support the welfare of the Islamic boarding school and the community. They are involved in the management of small businesses managed by Islamic boarding schools. Through this participation, students not only acquire practical skills in business management, but also understand the importance of economic independence and community empowerment. This economic activity not only helps meet the financial needs of Islamic boarding schools, but also provides opportunities for students to learn entrepreneurship and actively contribute to improving the local economy.

The leadership of this kiai also involves the students in various collaborative activities, including in managing agriculture in the kiai rice fields. When the number of students is still large, they are directly involved in agricultural activities that not only aim to help kiai, but also as a learning to develop a sense of responsibility and hard work. Through this activity, students learn about the importance of cooperation, discipline, and a sense of belonging to the place where they study knowledge. The participation of students in agricultural management is a form of contribution that shows the closeness of the relationship between kiai and students.

Kiai's Relationship with the Community

The relationship between Kiai Abah Roqib and the community is very close and harmonious. Abah Roqib is known as a figure who not only acts as a spiritual leader for the students, but also as a role model and guide for the surrounding community. Through a familiar and communicative approach, he was able to establish good interactions with residents, so that

many people felt comfortable consulting and asking for advice related to religious issues and daily life. Abah Roqib's involvement in social activities in the community is also very significant.

He routinely fills in recitation in *tahlilan* and wedding events, which not only provides religious insight but also strengthens the bond of friendship between residents. Through his presence and participation in these various events, Abah Roqib succeeded in building a sense of togetherness and mutual respect among the community, as well as showing that boarding school is not separated from the lives of the surrounding community. This makes the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School a center for religious activities that are recognized and respected by residents. Kiai Abah Roqib's presence in social events also reflects his commitment to advancing religious values in society.

He often emphasizes the importance of cooperation, solidarity, and social concern in each of his lectures. Abah Roqib in addition to preaching at the time of *tahilalan* of his residents also preached on the radio as well. Through this method, Abah Roqib not only teaches theory, but also invites the community to apply it in daily life. As a result, the relationship between Kiai Abah Roqib, students and the community has become more and more solid, creating a harmonious and peaceful environment.

Challenges and Obstacles in Kiai's Leadership

Kiai's leadership at the Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School faces various challenges that can affect the effectiveness and sustainability of educational activities in the Islamic boarding school. One of the main challenges is rapid social and cultural change, especially among the younger generation. With the rise of technology and information, students are often exposed to values that are different from those taught in Islamic boarding schools. This can lead to a gap between the traditional values taught by Kiai and the more modern behavior and understanding of students. Kiai must be able to adjust his teaching methods and approaches to remain relevant to the context of the times, without ignoring the basic principles of religion that are the foundation of education in Islamic boarding schools.

Obstacles in the leadership of Kiai can also arise from within the organizational structure of the boarding school itself. The existence of differences of opinion between Kiai and the management or students in terms of the implementation of activities and decision-making can create tension. For example, students may have new ideas or ideas that they want to implement, but Kiai may feel that the existing traditional methods are more appropriate. This incompatibility can cause resistance or dissatisfaction among students, which in turn affects

their discipline and enthusiasm for learning. It is important for Kiai to build good communication and prioritize the principle of deliberation in every decision-making, so that all parties feel involved and valued in the process.

CONCLUSION

Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School, which was established in 2007, has an important role in religious education in the community. Kiai as a leader of the boarding school plays a central role in shaping the character of students, creating an environment that supports discipline, compliance, and active participation in social and economic activities. Despite the decrease in the number of students, the existence of the Al-Qur'an Education Park (TPQ) which is still in demand by the community reflects the potential and value of Islamic boarding schools in educating the younger generation. The involvement of students in various activities, both in the boarding school and in the community, shows that the boarding school remains the center for the development of spirituality and religious values that are important for social life.

The leadership of the kiai, who is charismatic and close to the community, as shown by Kiai Abah Roqib, has a great influence on the success of the boarding school. Kiai not only acts as a spiritual leader, but also as a role model and driver in social activities, which strengthens the relationship between the boarding school and the community. Despite facing challenges from changing times and differences of views in decision-making. This ensures that Al-Muhsin Islamic Boarding School continues to contribute to educating and shaping the character of the younger generation, as well as maintaining its existence as a respectable religious education institution.

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