



## Building Strong Leadership through Individual Concept in Leading Pesantren

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**Abstract:** Pesantren modern Shabilla Batam, Indonesia combines two different models of educational institutions, Pesantren combines Junior High School under the Ministry of Education with pesantren which is under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This approach is supported by strong pesantren leadership. This study aims to examine the impact of personal conception in the formation of strong leadership to lead modern pesantren. The research method used is qualitative with a case study model. The research was conducted at Pesantren Modern Shabilla Batam with the subjects of the study being foundation leaders, pesantren caregivers, junior high school principals and teacher councils with a total number of participants of ten. The selection of participants was carried out by purposive method with the help of a key person. The data collection techniques used are interviews, observations and studies. The data obtained were analyzed using the Creswell (2015) approach model. The results showed a relationship between personal concepts and strong leadership. For this reason, it is recommended that research be carried out on many similar subjects to get a more complete picture.

**Keyword:** Individual concept, identity of pesantren, leadership.

### INTRODUCTION

Educators become an inseparable part of the development of society and both influence each other (Firdaus, 2009). Education produces change in society. These changes require education to make changes to educational materials and methods to adapt to these changes.

Economic growth has given rise to the middle class muslim. One of the prominent features of this group is the allocation of high education costs in Islamic-based schools and modern islamic boarding schools (Fithri, 2019). The change has 2 implications: first is the growth of modern schools and boarding schools to meet the needs of the middle class and the

impetus for salaf boarding schools to accommodate change. For some managers of formal educational institutions, developing a modern pesantren is an attractive option. They can start from scratch or change an existing school. They can already have the necessary initial facilities and resources.

However, adding boarding school units to formal schools that have been managed in advance still presents challenges. The concept of Islamic boarding school education has a considerable difference from formal education. Combining the two is very possible but requires several things as a condition. In addition to the curriculum content that will determine the category of Islamic boarding schools to be developed (Suharto, 2011), human resources also require a greater portion of attention.

The thing that must be faced by the human resources involved in the pesantren is to translate the content and goals that are commonly owned by the salaf pesantren into a more formal educational format. The concept of formal education opens up opportunities for better organization of the educational process, but on the other hand presents operational technical limitations that do not allow the whole concept, material and method to be accommodated. Finding the most accommodating wedges is the main challenge of operational policy makers together with pesantren leaders, as the collective leadership of pesantren (Mahfud, 2008). Collective leadership in modern pesantren is relatively new and has not become the norm in salaf pesantren where kiai as the leader of the lodge has an authoritative position.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Learning how to build leadership that is able to help modern boarding schools achieve an educational transition is the purpose of this study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Pesantren**

In general, pesantren is accepted as a traditional educational dormitory where students live and study under the guidance of kiai (Maksum, 2001). In this definition, in addition to traditionality being an inherent characteristic, pesantren is education where students and kyai as teachers live in a complex or pesantren. In the pesantren concept, the entire learning process in the pesantren is centered around the kyai as the central figure. Kiai became the overall center of pesantren activity (Zuhairini, 1995). In an environment where kyai is the central figure, all students make kiai advice and admonitions as references or role models (Arief, 2012). Recognition as a central figure makes kiai have full authority over the activities and sustainability of pesantren (Lubis & Rohmatillah, 2018).

Pesantren in Indonesia is not a uniform form, Pesantren in Indonesia is a wealth of treasures because it comes in different forms and approaches, adapting to the culture and regional conditions where pesantren grow (Greg Fealy, 2007). Each region develops a different name and form. However, in general, pesantren still describe the interaction of five elements, namely: kyai, santri, hut, teaching methods and mosques (Dhofier, 1994). The form of interaction of these elements is different for one pesantren with another, which makes pesantren an educational concept that has its own distinctive pattern or form but comes with a variety of uniqueness respectively (Yasid, 2018).

Today's boarding schools face different dynamics with the period up to the 70s. The vagueness of the concept of Islamic education in viewing Islamic scientific disciplines results in an institutional dichotomy (Azra, 1998). Islamic education today recognizes two forms of institutions, namely Pesantren which is under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and formal public schools with special Islamic content under the Ministry of Education. At the higher education level, Islamic education is represented by UIN and public universities.

The dichotomy in pesantren fosters an interesting dynamic. Pesantren has evolved to be more diverse in content and different in form. Suharto (2011) divided pesantren into 5 groups

with different characteristics. The first is the salaf pesantren which maintains the salaf method (wetonan and sorogan) which is run with the classical system. Second, semi-developed pesantren which is a salaf boarding school with 90% of the content of religious lessons and 10% of the general. Third, pesantren is growing, which teaches 70% of the content of salaf boarding schools and 30% of the general. The four modern pesantren, using the Gontor methodology as a reference with Arabic and conversational English superstitions. The five ideal islamic boarding schools, namely modern islamic boarding schools with more complete education to include *life skills*.

On the management side, pesantren has also undergone changes. In terms of leadership, the majority of pesantren face challenges that arise because one of their main advantages: decisions and policies lie in the kyai as the central figure (Hasbullah, 2001). In this pesantren, it is common to find untidy education management and work based on the system. In some other pesantren, the demands of educational diversification, the single leadership of the kyai is considered no longer adequate to control the dynamics. Some then develop collective leadership based on foundation institutions (Mahmud, 2008). This collective leadership, although limiting the role and position of kyai in pesantren, opens up space for more organized and modern management of pesantren (Atiqullah, 2008). This shift or change is one of the main discussions of this study.

## 2. Leadership

The word Leader has a different meaning from the word leadership. If the word 'leader' indicates the role of an individual in the organization, then the word 'leadership' indicates more of a system or governance in the organization (Muhyidin, 2009). Leadership is a unity of many elements that work under the control of the leader to achieve certain goals. Leadership shows the strategic position of management functions in the system and hierarchy of responsibilities within an organization (Bashori, 2019). Leadership explains how functions are organized in parts, how the relationships between sections and how the hierarchy of responsibilities is determined to ensure predetermined goals can be achieved. In a simple form, leadership can describe the management complexion of an organization (Sulisworo, 2012).

Leadership refers to a process, a combination of strategies that function and work within the organization (Thoha, 2004). Therefore, leadership describes how functions are organized, controlled and directed towards achieving goals in an organization. Leadership also describes how organizations organize resources, functions and governance (management) to achieve predetermined goals (Sagala, 2018). Through leadership, goals are set, strategies are drawn up and resources are planned to pursue organizational goals (Wijono, 2018).

Leadership also explains how the identity of the organization is described. On leadership, the values and direction of the organization are established (Faturahman, 2018). Leadership describes how an organization sees itself in its environment and explains its identity to explain its advantages. The identity of the organization is the main focus of the organization's positioning towards its surroundings. The ability to determine direction, map resources, and determine roles is crucial in leadership. In this way, strategies can be developed more precisely and accordingly.

Leadership is also defined as a process of influencing a group of people in an organization to achieve organizational goals (Moehariono, 2012). Leadership determines the effectiveness of the performance of people in the organization, mainly because of the clarity of goals, clarity of roles and goals or targets to be achieved. Overall, such factors provide directions and reasons for achieving the goals of the organization. Therefore, in modern organizations, leadership plays a more important and strategic role (Sulisworo, 2012).

## 3. Individual Concept

The leader and his leadership are influenced by the concept of the individual or the concept of self used. The understanding and choice of individual concepts used largely determines the character of leadership (Zaki and Ermita, 2019). There is a relationship between understanding & mastering individual concepts and one's leadership in relation to one's self-development process.

The concept of the individual is simply the way the individual views himself, how he sees himself (Sunaryo, 2004). The concept of the individual is also understood as an idea that includes a person's beliefs, views and judgments towards himself (Dariyo, 2007). The concept of the individual is the concept of one's own self-awareness. The conception of the individual is a specific way of looking at it, more specifically related to the evaluation of oneself (Santrock, 2010). The individual can make and evaluate himself on the area of his activity: academic, social achievements, personal needs or targets and etc.

The concept of the individual is an organization of self-perceptions (Dayakisni and Yuniari, 2004). The concept is an orderly collection of understandings of physical identity, traits to strongly held principles. This conception is not something rigid. The concept of the individual is a dynamic understanding because it is influenced by the environment (Rahman, 2013). This explains that the concept of the individual it develops and changes following the consciousness that is grown by the influence of the surrounding environment. It can be drawn the general conclusion that an individual's conception is a person's assessment and review of himself based on a dynamic self-awareness and influenced by the surrounding environment

The concept of the individual is not a single thing. This concept consists of at least self-image, self-esteem and *ideal-self* (Gross, 2003). In that view, the concept of the individual is structured by self-image, that is, how our personality traits and our social roles, are also about self-esteem, that is, how we review and judge ourselves and what we should be like. Sunaryo (2004) then adds elements of self-role and self-identity to explain the conception of the individual formulated by Gross.

The dimensions of the individual concept include the internal dimension and the external dimension (Agustiani, 2006). The internal dimension includes aspects of self-identity, the tendency of one's behavior and one's acceptance of one's environment. External dimensions include a person's physical condition, moral handles or references, ethics used, personal needs, position in the family and position in social life). Another theory about the dimensions of individual concepts is knowledge, expectations and judgment (Sunaryo, 2004).

As a dynamic concept, the conception of the individual is influenced by factors, both internal and those of environmental origin. There are six main factors that influence individual consps (Rakhmad, 2005). These factors are: other people, reference groups, self-fulfilling prophecies that are the tendency to act according to one's own conception, self-opening, self-confidence and selectivity that explain the tendency to limit interactions. Sobur (2013) divides the influence factor into: *self-appraisal, reaction and response to other, role taking dan reference group*.

## METHODS

This research is a qualitative with a case study model. The *case study* model focuses research on a "*bounded system*", in the form of one special case or several more detailed cases, which is carried out by deep excavation. Various context-rich sources of information are used for data mining (Cresswell, 2015).

The location of this study is at the Shabilla Islamic boarding school in Batam, Indonesia. Research participants were selected using *purposive* methods with the help of *key-persons*. *Purposive* techniques allow researchers to select participants and research locations that are able to provide an understanding of the main problem under study. Both participants and the location of the study were selected according to the research objectives (Herdiansyah,

2012). The methods used are in the form of interview methods, observations and document studies. Participants in this study were 2 foundation leaders, pesantren caregivers (one person), junior high school heads (one person), and teachers (six people) totaling ten people.

The data were analyzed using the Creswell (2015) approach model where the analysis and interpretation can be carried out in four forms, namely: (1) collection of categories, namely finding examples to get meanings that are relevant to the problem that will arise, (2) direct interpretation, namely looking at one example and drawing meaning from the example, (3) forming patterns and looking for the compatibility of two or more categories and using tools to show the relationship between two categories, as well as (4) naturalistic generalizations using data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Results

Pesantren Modern Shabilla was established in July 2017, located in villa pesona asri block C7 No. 1–7, currently manages 100 mukim students accompanied by nine educational and non-educational staff, led by a pesantren leader. This junior high school-level student is active in 20 study rooms and bedrooms located in a boarding school complex covering an area of nearly 1800 square meters.

This pesantren combines two educational models, namely islamic boarding schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and junior high schools under the Ministry of Education under one roof. Formal junior high school as a basis and added pesantren with huts to strengthen Islamic religious education. The pesantren is led by a 'young kyai' named ustadz Hanief Noer Al-Bughury, an alumnus of the Mathla'ul Anwar (MA) Bogor islamic boarding school, supported by the head of the pesantren who also serves as the head of the junior high school. Thus hierarchically, the junior high school was prepared to be part of the pesantren.

As a pesantren, learning activities use *takhasus* conversational languages (English and Arabic) as found in the Gontor Islamic boarding school (Suharto, 2011). In addition to the *superstition* of language, this pesantren also prepares special programs in the form of tahfiz al-Qur'an and mastery of the yellow book. For the formal junior high school education level, the pesantren follows the governance set by the Education Office in the implementation of junior high school education. In addition, the pesantren prepares physical facilities in the form of separate dormitories (boys / girls), learning facilities, worship rooms, play areas, prayer rooms, and multipurpose rooms.

The choice to become a modern islamic boarding school illustrates the vision of the founders of this pesantren, namely " *the realization of the Modern Shabilla Islamic boarding school in Batam City that is ready to compete, excel based on the five souls of the pesantren (sincerity, simplicity, independence, ukhuwah islamiyah)*". Therefore, the decision to incorporate formal education into the pesantren illustrates the mission of the lodge, namely: (1) to cultivate the next generation who understand, live and practice the Qur'an in daily life, (2) foster a culture of piety (individual, social, cultural, and intellectual piety among students and society, and (3) develop and preserve islamic religious sciences contained in the yellow books and modern literature.

From the narrative of the vision and mission of the islamic boarding school, it is based on the awareness that the community around the pesantren which is a segment of the pesantren has at least two needs. The first is the formal education level at the junior high school level, which will be the basis for taking the next level of education. It is undeniable that a formal school diploma under the Ministry of Education is still an important part of this need. The second is the special needs related to the content of Islamic religious education. It is interesting to observe that in Indonesia, the Muslim middle class shows a tendency to pay more attention to identity as Muslims and religious deepening (Yuswohady, 2014). The

higher the social status, the greater the inclination to religion. This load is becoming a growing necessity among the muslim middle class, whose numbers are increasing.

From the research conducted, it shows that the impact of personal conception in the formation of strong leadership to lead the modern pesantren Shabilla Batam is seen in the output of the implementation of the formulation of the concept of individuals (pesantren identity), namely pesantren being able to determine more precisely its position in the community and among pesantren operating in adjacent areas. Pesantren is able to identify what advantages and services to choose from the available options. Pesantren can identify anyone who needs excellence and services that will be owned, so as to be able to carry out more appropriate and effective communication. One of the results of this process is the magnitude of the response received. The high response shows that pesantren have succeeded in communicating effectively in segments of society that need the existence of pesantren as a solution to the educational needs of junior high school age children.

## 2. Discussion

Strong pesantren leadership is leadership that is able to encourage, motivate, inspire, and challenge teams to produce their best work. Strong pesantren leadership connects teams to common goals and builds relationships that enable effective communication, a high level of creativity, and better problem-solving skills (Chaniago, 2017). According to this explanation, the key to leadership lies in its ability to compile, explain and build a picture of the same goals, as well as how to utilize these goals to build effective communication between teams through a system that is able to accommodate the operational dynamics of pesantren.

Achieving the same goal will be effective if the team has the same awareness of who they are, about the individual concepts they hold and use. The individual concepts in question are: (1) the concept of a person's individual in seeing, evaluating oneself, and his position towards his environment, (2) the concept of an individual being dynamic, because it interacts with the environment, and (3) being influenced by internal and external factors. Because individuals cannot be separated from the environment, in addition to having a limited impact on individuals, it also has an impact on the organization in which the individual is located.

Related to performance, Spencer (1993) explains that one of the main factors that influence individual performance is competence. The element that most influences a person's competence is character, that is, the concept of the individual (*self-concept*). Referring to this opinion, pesantren leadership can reflect two aspects, namely *firstly* an awareness of the leadership and administrators of the pesantren about what they want to go to, what they want to pursue, as well as how they see the contribution they can make to their environment (Santrock, 2011). *The second* is how they structure targets and pursue those targets based on the opportunities and perceptions of excellence they have (Dayakisni and Yuniari, 2004). The target acts as a benchmark, a milestone for measuring the current position. Thus, leadership in the pesantren can simply be seen through two sides, namely the preparation of identities and goal directions that are abstraction and performance in pursuing directions and goals (Wijono, 2018).

The collective consciousness of the individual concepts of the founders and leaders of the pesantren is reflected in the narrative of the pesantren's vision that describes the identity (*self-image*) of the pesantren (Gross, 2003) as well as the mission narrative that reflects the goals to be pursued and the strategies used (Sagala, 2018). The implementation of awareness of the concept of individuals in leading pesantren is to determine the identity of pesantren, determine the vision of pesantren. The narrative of the vision describes the identity of the pesantren that wants to be realized. In the narrative of the vision, the characteristics that make up the identity of the pesantren are explained, which distinguish and are known from other pesantren. The combination of these characteristics illustrates something unique to pesantren.

These characteristics will also be boundaries that cannot be exceeded by pesantren, when explaining who they are to the community. This means that pesantren cannot do things that can bring out different characteristics or change the characteristics that have been set. To build strong pesantren leadership, pesantren leaders are required to master, explain and build perceptions of the vision of pesantren in all pesantren administrators, so that they are able to see the same goals of establishing and running pesantren.

From the existing findings, it shows that in this Modern Shabilla pesantren, the process of building common goals for the establishment and operation of pesantren is carried out in a way, namely the principle of building, building models, setting examples, and building habits. These findings are in line with the opinion of Efendi (2014), namely: 1) the pesantren leader translates the vision narrative into principles of activities and forms of coaching that will produce the desired output in the vision narrative, 2) the pesantren leader as the central figure of the pesantren determines the model or form of coaching to be used, adapts to existing targets and conditions, 3) the pesantren leader uses himself as an example as a set of examples in the coaching process. The lodge leader becomes the first to do the prescribed things and activities and asks the others to follow the example, 4) the pesantren leader uses his authority to force the people in the pesantren to follow and repeat the coaching activities to cultivate habits. This habit continues to be strengthened to become a character that reflects the characteristics of pesantren identity depicted in the vision narrative.

When summarized, leadership is a unity of organizational elements that work on the basis of governance under the control of the leader who organizes a hierarchy of functions aimed at influencing people to pursue predetermined goals. In the leadership can be found the parts that compose, namely: leaders who control the direction and activities, interconnected functions and work regularly, people who work in pursuit of predetermined goals.

In order to prepare a solution for formal education needs with a high religious content, Pesantren decided to provide educational services through two schools under one roof, namely islamic boarding schools under the Ministry of Religion and junior high schools under the Ministry of Education. The management of two schools with two different standards demands the presence of strong leadership.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **1. Conclusion**

In general, Modern Shabilla Batam Islamic boarding school has succeeded in utilizing the process of formulating individual conceptions in determining the reasons for pesantren to stand and operate, correctly recognize the advantages possessed, identify who can and/or need these advantages, and build awareness of the same goals in the human resources of pesantren. This is then put to good use in organizing the organizational functions of pesantren to set goals, compile and organize functions and structures to achieve the goals set.

The benchmark of success includes pesantren being able to determine their identity, the role played, the advantages offered and clear *positioning* to the community. Pesantren is able to identify the advantages needed by the community towards pesantren. In addition, pesantren get an increasing response as the pesantren ages. This shows that people who need excellence and educational services from pesantren get what they need from pesantren. This satisfaction is the result of strong leadership built on pesantren.

### **2. Recommendation**

This research shows a positive relationship between the process of utilizing individual concepts and leadership carried out in Islamic boarding schools. It is recommended that similar research be conducted on more boarding schools, in order to get a better picture of leadership in the context of individual concepts. From the research conducted, it shows that

pesantren are able to communicate well with pesantren stakeholders, especially parents of students.

The findings show that pesantren leadership produces good outputs that are in line with expectations from parents and the community. The author suggests that pesantren strengthen planning and evaluation, in order to be able to get additional benefits directly, or indirectly from the educational and governance process carried out. Operating efficiency and development resources are examples that can be proposed.

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