

## KIAI'S LEADERSHIP IN FOSTERING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract.** *This study explores the pivotal role of Kiai leadership in nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among students in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). By integrating traditional religious values with modern entrepreneurial principles, Kiai leaders create a unique educational environment that encourages innovation and self-reliance. Through qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and observations, the study examines how Kiai leadership fosters a culture of entrepreneurship, equipping students with the skills and mindset necessary for success in the contemporary business world. The findings highlight the effectiveness of Kiai leadership in balancing religious teachings with practical entrepreneurial education and training, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of the community.*

**Keywords:** *Boarding school, Entrepreneurial skills, Kiai, Leadership.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are one of the religious educational institutions and also as a gathering place for students to seek knowledge. Islamic boarding schools have their own programs in implementing education, one of which is independent living training. In accordance with this goal, the value of independence in students is one of the views that superior human resources (HR) are those who have a faithful and pious character, noble morals, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic citizens. Existing religious educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools, have implemented one of the points of independence for their students. Because the independence of students in life in Islamic boarding schools has started since they first entered. From various things, students must start to get used to being independent, without parental supervision in Islamic boarding schools. Furthermore, in addition to independence in daily activities, students are also given independence in business, this is related to the economy and also entrepreneurship. The problem of lack of employment opportunities is the responsibility of every educational institution so that students have knowledge in entrepreneurship. Therefore, a religious educational institution must be able to prepare the next generation with skills and an entrepreneurial spirit (Prastyaningtyas, 2019).

The success of educational institutions is determined by various factors, including leadership. Alan Tucker stated that: "Leadership is the ability to influence or encourage a person or group of people to work voluntarily to achieve certain goals or targets in certain situations (Hermanto, 2018). Leadership is still a benchmark for the success of an organization or group. Its role is not enough to influence or encourage someone, but starting from the planning, implementation, supervision to evaluation process is also one of the responsibilities of a leader. Therefore, a leader certainly has a certain strategy to do the best for the organization and its groups. The role of the kiai in the leadership of the Islamic boarding school is a central actor for the organization. The role of leaders in Islamic boarding schools, apart from managing education, is to be caregivers, motivators,

educators, managers, decision makers, leaders, and role models. The kiai's efforts to improve quality are by formulating the vision, mission, goals of the Islamic boarding school, designing programs to improve the quality of education, bringing in professional teachers, and making students have the characteristics of Islamic boarding school graduates (Wildan Saugi, 2022). In carrying out the duties of a leader, Kiai has the best strategy given so that Islamic boarding schools can make students superior so that many Islamic boarding schools have their own strategic concepts that are carried out for their foundations.

Leaders are the spearheads that determine the success of an organization. Indeed, the role of the parties below is not free from calculation. However, the command from the leader will guide the direction and goals of the organization. Likewise, what happens in educational institutions. The role of the leader or director seems to be the key to the success of an educational institution, so that what is produced, both graduates and innovations can provide added value for the development of the nation and country. This is a phenomenon of study of science and practice regarding behavioral science seems to believe that leadership is a real phenomenon and an important thing in organizational effectiveness. The Qur'an also talks about leadership. in the word of Allah: Meaning: "O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) and the ulil amri (holders of authority) among you. If you differ in opinion about something, return it to Allah (the Qur'an) and the Messenger (his Sunnah) if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better (for you) and the consequences are better (in this world and in the hereafter)" (Qs Annisa: 59).

The leader as the person in charge is able to create a good learning and teaching situation, so that teachers and students can carry out learning activities and work in the best situation. Of course, the Kiai in the Al-Hassan Educational Institution also has a strategy that is adjusted to the results of discussions with senior teachers and junior teachers. Then the next discussion with the teachers, as well as a complete explanation of the objectives of the policy until finally the policy is implemented in implementing an entrepreneurial spirit in students. Islamic educational institutions have various levels in general that have been established in Indonesia. Although in Islamic boarding schools, the leadership element of the kiai is an important factor in the organization, because it is considered the owner, manager, and teacher of the yellow book as well as the imam (leader) at every event (Dhofier, 1982). This leadership character is inherent in every Islamic boarding school. However, over time, the entry of more modern Islamic education, with a different curriculum and called the Modern Islamic Boarding School. Related to the instillation of an entrepreneurial spirit in students, researchers are interested in conducting research at the Al-Hasan Islamic Boarding School in Bekasi. Al-Hasan Islamic Boarding School is a school that instills characteristics by making students have excellence in academic and non-academic fields that are characterized by Islamic culture.

In addition to the delivery of ideas from a leader, there is a charismatic leader and support from his followers. This pattern of life between leaders and charismatics often occurs in Islamic boarding school educational institutions. Kiai becomes an imam in the field of *ubudiyah*, religious ceremonies and is often asked to be present to resolve difficulties that befall the community (Turner, 1984). The charisma of this kiai gets support from the community because he has moral stability and scientific quality, so that it finally gives birth to a form of personality that is attractive (full of attraction) for his followers, even though this process begins from the closest circle, around his place of residence. Then it spreads outward, to distant places. For example, like Kiai Ahmad Dahlan in the spirit of devotion in the field of education. In implementing entrepreneurial character, the formal Islamic Boarding School educational institution is expected to have several programs in carrying out educational activities and processes. In connection with future predictions, members of society must be enlightened. As a result of the piling needs, difficult to meet with their own means as a result of the influence of foreign civilization,

educational institutions must often try so that graduates have superior souls and characters. In relation to fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, researchers are interested in the Al-Hassan Islamic Boarding School in Bekasi. Al-Hassan Islamic Boarding School is a school that prioritizes superior spiritual and character education in academic and non-academic fields characterized by Islam. Al-Hassan Islamic Boarding School is located on Jalan Jambu Ujung, Jatimakmur, Bekasi City.

The next interesting thing in researching at the Al-Hassan Islamic boarding school is the Kiai's leadership strategy in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in the Islamic boarding school. The Kiai of the Al-Hassan Islamic boarding school implemented his strategy to be able to foster an entrepreneurial spirit in the students. So that graduates, alumni, guardians of students, and also stakeholders feel proud of the entrepreneurial spirit they have as the main capital since being at the Islamic boarding school or having graduated. Based on initial observations, the data obtained on the progress of the school under the leadership of the Kiai, shows positive developments from year to year. It can be seen from the various positive achievements achieved by students at the City, Province and National levels. And the graduation rate of 60% is accepted at state universities in Indonesia. The Kiai's leadership according to his characteristics also has a big role in making the Islamic boarding school an educational institution that continues to exist with the development of technology to provide students with life skills, foster relationships with other institutions and also all levels of society. The shift in individual leadership patterns in organizational collectivity has an impact on change. This change affects the authority of the kiai and the participation of the ustadz and students. The new atmosphere of strengthening the participation of ustadz has an impact on the emergence of a democratic system in Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, kiai leadership is needed as a step taken to foster an entrepreneurial spirit. Based on the focus of the research, the sub-focus of this research is based on the role and character of the kiai as a leader in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in students at the Al-Hassan Bekasi modern Islamic boarding school which will be studied further.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Leadership in Islamic Boarding School***

The importance of the figure of the kiai as a role model so that the students understand the importance of an entrepreneurial spirit. The importance of leaders having an entrepreneurial spirit also makes their members follow, so the best way to get the quality of students is to see the Ustad and Kyai (Yayat Suharya, 2018). The characteristics of behavioral leadership in Islamic boarding schools are a reflection of the leader's personality. Leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia through a psychological perspective with gentleness and low profile. The characteristics of Islamic boarding school leadership behavior are leaders who can reflect a visionary personality, firm stance, good listener, empathy, credibility, attention, persuasion, conceptualization, responsibility, calm, commitment, humorous, religious, religious, fair, patient, honest, open and trustworthy (Aldo Redho Syam, 2023). preservation of three genetic leadership and the function of the leadership of "Trimurti" in Javanese culture and its ancestors in the Majapahit and Pajajaran palaces. Here he includes the category of ideal leaders in Augustine's Perennialism philosophy, the criteria for effective integrated leadership in Gary Yulk's theory, the task of an effective leader. Based on the discussion in the management of Islamic Boarding Schools can be done through the correct leadership of the kiai (doing the right thing) so that it has an impact on good management of Islamic Boarding Schools. success in achieving the goals that have been carried out by K.H. Zarkasyi's leadership (Nur Nida Karimah, 2022).

The role of kyai towards concern in developing the spirit of nationalism. The function of Islamic boarding schools on the border of Indonesia and Malaysia, although concern for nationalism on the border is very weak. Islamic boarding schools in the border areas of Kalimantan and Malaysia are Educational Institutions, Islamic Propagation Institutions,

and also Social Institutions are still very weak in providing material on statehood, including the values of Pancasila, NKRI. Because the function of Educational Institutions is only teaching through lectures (Misdah, 2020).

## *2.2 Entrepreneurial Skills and Spirit*

Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education Learning through theoretical concepts and also practices in making products to making sales. Students are given experience. The importance of entrepreneurship education as a program in schools, because it has an impact on increasing entrepreneurial knowledge, learning and knowing how the entrepreneurial process is, improving character and behavior (Lelahester Rina, 2019). Entrepreneurial values will experience indirect strengthening towards the formation of business independence if moderated by entrepreneurial behavior, so that the main treatment towards the formation of business independence is the need for increased business by creating self-confidence and career development for small business actors in order to realize strong entrepreneurial behavior. Strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit will have an impact on strengthening entrepreneurial behavior. This increase will have an impact on business independence, although it has not become something meaningful (Sukirman, 2017).

The last few decades the emergence of start-ups is one of the stimulations of Entrepreneurship Education. Although its relevance cannot be ascertained whether it is true or not. But there is potential for the development of Entrepreneurship Education. So far, knowledge provides graduates with knowledge that continues to develop from one stage to the next. In general, Entrepreneurship Education and its practices make how graduates develop into entrepreneurs or Company workers. This education also provides growth where Uncertainty occurs, graduates can face it and become problem solvers (Kurczewska, 2022). Characteristics of caring and friendly teachers who have entrepreneurial skills can provide self-confidence to students, so that the quality of learning is successful in instilling a spirit of self-confidence. Most entrepreneurship education is not only limited to literature, but also needs additional textbooks, such as visiting several entrepreneurial centers. And it needs to be strengthened with concepts and designs that are adjusted to the country's socio-economic ecosystem and also the provision of human resources and funds (Obeng-Koranteng, 2021).

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research series was conducted at the Al-Hassan Islamic Education Foundation. The selection of this location was based on the researcher's consideration of the uniqueness and advantages of the Al-Hassan Islamic Education Foundation Bekasi, both in terms of the concept of educational institution management implemented through the Panca Jiwa which is run, in the form of instilling an entrepreneurial spirit for students who are well-guided in this educational institution. Furthermore, this study uses a qualitative approach. This is because the method of observation and data collection is carried out in a scientific setting in the sense that the data presented is based on what it is without engineering the research subject. The data or information collected is related to the instillation of an entrepreneurial spirit through the Panca Jiwa of Islamic boarding schools. Through the instillation of this spirit, it has been carried out at the Al-Hassan Islamic Education Foundation Bekasi by conducting interviews with Kiai and also Islamic boarding school teachers..

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Address the research questions and objectives, explain whether/ how the results of the analysis answer the problem statement. Discuss the relationship of the results of the analysis with previous studies or/and the relationship between the results of the analysis with the theories used in the study. Present arguments that you can convey based on the results of the analysis/ findings and discussion. Explain the implications

of the results of the analysis/ findings on existing theory and/ or practice. Explain the importance of the results of the analysis/research findings, how the results of the analysis/ findings contribute to the relevant research area.

Al-Hassan Islamic Boarding School is an Islamic boarding school with modern education, which uses a government curriculum system, currently using the independent curriculum and also a combination of the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School curriculum in Ponorogo. Several general subjects such as Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Mathematics, English, Indonesian, Citizenship, Information and Communication Technology use the government curriculum under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the SMP level and the Ministry of Religion for the MA level. The combination of the Islamic boarding school curriculum in religious subjects is certainly more than state schools and schools in general, religious lessons are sourced from the Darussalam Gontor Islamic Boarding School curriculum and also adjustments from the Husnul Khotimah Kuningan Islamic Boarding School. Some of the lessons taken from the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School are Arabic, Mutholaah, Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, Tauhid and Akhlak, Nahwu, Shorof, Ushul Fiqh, Faraidh, Balaghah, and Mahfudzot. AlHassan is a pesantren with a modern system in preparing young scholars and leaders. In short, AlHassan has the following programs and characteristics: 1) Has a 30 juz tahfidz program, 2) Has an integral Arabic language teaching program, 3) In semester 2 and onwards, all religious subjects are delivered in Arabic, 4) All religious teachers at the Al-Hassan pesantren must be able to speak Arabic, 5) Al-Hassan pesantren has an integrated curriculum to train student leadership starting from the organizational system in each room, class, preaching club, sports club, scouts, and so on, and 6) Al-Hassan pesantren is a pesantren that cares about the environment and carries out many programs for the environment such as making hundreds of biopores, many infiltration wells, recycling waste and so on.

The need for education for Muslims is expected to produce a young generation of Muslim rabbani who are well-educated, guided by the sharia of Allah properly and correctly who are able to present the best generation in providing exemplary aqidah and morals and are able to compete in the global world. Meanwhile, Islamic educational institutions that are expected to play a greater role in fulfilling the above hopes and needs are still far from sufficient. Aware of this reality, we opened the Islamic educational institution, Pondok Pesantren Modern Al-Hassan. Pesantren is an educational institution based on Islam whose existence is a solution for parents to help educate their children to become better people, useful for religion, nation and state. In the leadership of a pesantren, a leader will be successful if the election system is clear and professionally oriented. Pesantren will not be separated from a kyai, because a pesantren will live and develop if there is a kyai. Kyai is depicted as a generator, where the machines that are driven include the community and the car is the pesantren itself. Kyai is the leader of the Islamic boarding school who plays a role not only as a leader, but also as a manager, innovator, evaluator and also a motivator. The progress of an Islamic boarding school can be seen from the extent of the role of the kyai in building the Islamic boarding school. Positive and rational thinking is the most important factor in the effectiveness of a kyai's leadership. With a clear vision, mission and optimistic attitude, a goal will be easily achieved. In addition, the strategy used by the kyai in making a decision must be right, because if it is wrong or inappropriate in making a decision, it will have fatal consequences for the continuity of the organization in the Islamic boarding school.

Leadership in Islamic boarding schools is very important in determining the success of Islamic boarding school education. Kyai, apart from being a cleric, also helps organize, manage, and design the success or failure of Islamic boarding school education. The Kyai leadership model was initially implemented as an effort to facilitate educational programs and systems in Islamic boarding schools. In holistic Islamic boarding school education, Islamic boarding school education also helps to transmit

and influence its students in implementing leadership patterns taken from the Kyai. There are four important things taught by the Kyai in leadership education in Islamic boarding schools, namely exemplary education, skills education, knowledge education, and experience education. Islamic boarding schools indirectly shape the mentality of future leaders. Students are expected to be at the forefront of society and also ready to become future leaders (Shamin, 2022) by training students' independence through entrepreneurial activities. An entrepreneurial spirit is very important to have in this digital era, because challenges and competition are getting tougher. With an entrepreneurial spirit, a person can find promising business opportunities, plan effective strategies, manage finances well, market products or services online, and continue to innovate to improve the quality and performance of their business. In addition, not only in the business sector, but when in an organization or a work unit. An entrepreneurial spirit is one of the most important things in our lives, especially in the digital era which is full of changes and challenges. An entrepreneurial spirit can help us to create opportunities, solve problems, innovate, and contribute to the progress of ourselves and society. An entrepreneurial spirit can also give us freedom, independence, and satisfaction in work. The following will explain the definition of an entrepreneurial spirit according to figures (Tio Prasetyo, 2023).

From the results of the analysis of findings and interviews conducted, the Al Hasan Islamic Boarding School Foundation has a strategy implemented by Kyai by instilling Panca Jiwa (sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood, and tholabul ilmi) which is different in how to manage the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the program of instilling the soul and character. Leadership in Islamic boarding schools is very important in determining the success of Islamic boarding school education. Kyai, apart from being a cleric, also helps to organize, manage and design the success or failure of Islamic boarding school education. The Kyai leadership model was initially implemented as an effort to facilitate the program and education system in Islamic boarding schools. In holistic Islamic boarding school education, Islamic boarding school education also helps to transmit and influence its students in implementing leadership patterns taken from the Kyai. There are four important things taught by the Kyai in leadership education in Islamic boarding schools, namely exemplary education, skills education, knowledge education, and experience education. Islamic boarding schools indirectly shape the mentality of future leaders. The students are expected to be at the forefront of society and also ready to become future leaders (Shamin, 2022).

At the Islamic Boarding School, Santi learns to recognize her passion or desires. This is in accordance with the statement (Diandra, 2019) namely that an entrepreneur must have a strong motivation to run his business. Therefore, an entrepreneur must know what his interests, talents, and goals in life are. Sharpen the soft skills he has. An entrepreneur must have various skills needed to run his business, such as communication, negotiation, time management, teamwork, leadership, and others. Thus, an entrepreneur can continuously improve his abilities. Many experiences will be gained in working. An entrepreneur will face various situations and challenges in his business, both positive and negative. From there, an entrepreneur can learn from mistakes, correct shortcomings, and develop strengths. In other words, entrepreneurship is a soul that can be learned and taught. A person's entrepreneurial spirit is reflected in various things such as leadership skills, independence, teamwork, creativity, and innovation. The creative and innovative process is closely related to entrepreneurship. The interesting thing to study from Al-Hassan Islamic Boarding School is about the implementation of the kiai's leadership strategy that is able to foster the souls of the students. The kiai formulated the implementation of Panca Jiwa (sincerity, simplicity, independence, brotherhood, and seeking knowledge). Apart from Panca Jiwa, the formulation of character formation for its alumni. This is in line with the mission and mission of the Islamic Boarding School, namely "to become a quality

Islamic Institution as a leading contributor in producing superior generations".

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Kiai leadership plays a crucial role in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit among students in Islamic boarding schools. By effectively blending traditional religious values with modern entrepreneurial practices, Kiai leaders create an environment conducive to innovation and self-reliance. This leadership approach not only equips students with essential entrepreneurial skills but also contributes to the socio-economic development of the community. The findings underscore the importance of Kiai leadership in balancing religious teachings with practical business training, highlighting its potential to drive positive change and development within the pesantren system.

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