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Kiai's Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education at the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools are the most varied Islamic educational institutions, because they depend on the dominant Kiai leadership as the central figure and basic element of Islamic boarding schools. Kiai leadership, which is varied and carried out from generation to generation, is a particular problem in Islamic boarding schools. Apart from that, the focus on religious knowledge and lack of openness to modernization makes Islamic boarding schools less attractive to modern society. The quality of education that is used as a public opinion when choosing a school means that Islamic boarding schools need to improve so that they can survive in the modern era. Therefore, there is a need for a Kiai leadership role in improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools. This research aims to describe the leadership role of Kiai in improving the quality of education at the Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic Boarding School and identify obstacles in implementing the Kiai's leadership role in improving the quality of education at the Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic Boarding School. The approach used in this research is qualitative research with the type of research being field. with a phenomenological approach. Meanwhile, using observation data collection techniques, document studies and interviews. The data analysis techniques use data reduction, presentation and verification. The researchers found that: Kiai leadership applies a democratic leadership style in terms of its authority, and a paternalistic style in terms of its characteristics, and it can be seen that there is an autocratic style indirectly when seen from the way it influences subordinates. Kiai's leadership role when drawn from E. Mulyasa's theory is: as educator, manager, leader, innovator, supervisor, motivator. The kiai's influence as a central figure in the Islamic boarding school is responsible for ensuring the quality of education as well as changes and developments in accordance with the goals of the Islamic boarding school.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important aspect of human life, which not only plays a role in individual development but also in shaping the civilization of a nation (Wulandari, 2024). In Indonesia, education in Islamic boarding schools has a very large contribution to the development of the nation's character, with the main goal of forming individuals with noble character and competence in the fields of science, technology, and skills (Mujahid, 2021). Islamic boarding school education is able to provide strong debriefing to students, so that they not only focus on religious aspects, but also have the ability to adapt to the times. Education based on character and morality is a very important foundation for the progress of the nation. Thus, the existence of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is not only as an educational institution, but also as a center for social and cultural development of the community that prioritizes noble values.

The success of Islamic boarding schools in producing quality next generations is greatly influenced by various factors, one of which is leadership. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the leadership in question is the leadership of the kiai who has a central role in the management and development of the educational institution. Kiai leadership not only focuses on the spirituality aspect, but also includes a role in improving the quality of education, managing human resources, and creating a conducive learning atmosphere (Elis Nursetialloh, 2023). Success in leading Islamic boarding schools requires visionary kiai, able to inspire and bring positive changes in the educational environment. Without strong and wise leadership, the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools will be difficult to develop optimally. Thus, the leadership of the kiai has a very important role in determining the direction and sustainability of the Islamic boarding school in the future.

The success of Islamic boarding schools in improving the quality of education is also greatly influenced by the vision, mission, and strategy implemented by the leadership, namely kiai. As a figure who has authority and authority in directing the policies of educational institutions, kiai has a great responsibility in managing all educational activities in Islamic boarding schools (Faruq et al., 2023). Kiai must be able to formulate strategies that are in accordance with the challenges and needs of the times, while maintaining the traditional values that are the hallmarks of Islamic boarding schools. Effective and innovative leadership from kiai will have a positive impact in improving the quality of education, both in terms of academic and non-academic. Therefore, it is very important to understand how the leadership role of the kiai in the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School can contribute to improving the quality of education, as well as understand how the strategies implemented can strengthen the quality of education in the institution.

The Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School has a good reputation among the surrounding community as an educational institution that prioritizes the quality of religious and general education. However, in the face of the challenges of the increasingly dynamic development of the times, the Islamic boarding school is faced with the need to continue to improve the quality of education in order to produce students who are not only proficient in religious science but also competent in the field of science and technology (Huda et al., 2021). One of the main factors that is the key to improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools is how a kiai can manage the institution effectively and efficiently. Although Islamic boarding schools already have a strong foundation, the challenges that arise in this modern era require leadership that is more adaptive and responsive to change. With strong and visionary leadership, Islamic boarding schools can continue to innovate and improve the quality of education in accordance with global needs. Therefore, it is important to assess and analyze the leadership of kiai in the context of improving the quality of education at the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School.

According to (Muharyanto et al., 2022) kiai as leaders in Islamic boarding schools must be able to adapt to the times and changing educational needs. In this case, the leadership of the kiai not only

prioritizes the teaching of religious science, but must also pay more attention to curriculum development, improving the quality of teaching, and fostering the character of students. This is certainly in line with the vision of national education which emphasizes the formation of character and competence of students as a whole. Education based on religious values must be combined with the teaching of science and technology, so that students are not only able to understand religion well but also be ready to face the challenges of the increasingly complex world of work. Therefore, the role of kiai is very important in creating a relevant and effective curriculum to develop the potential of students optimally. The education provided in Islamic boarding schools must be able to answer global challenges without losing their identity as a religious educational institution.

The Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School has great potential to continue to develop in improving the quality of education, especially through proactive and innovative leadership. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research to dig deeper into the role of kiai leadership in improving the quality of education at the Islamic boarding school, as well as the strategies implemented in order to achieve the goal of quality education (Setiawan & Prasetiya, 2023). Proactive leadership not only focuses on routine, but is also able to create policies and innovations that drive positive change in educational institutions. Innovation in learning, both in terms of methods, media, and technology used, will greatly determine the extent to which Islamic boarding schools can adapt to the times. This research is expected to provide new insights into the effective application of kiai leadership in improving the quality of education and producing quality students.

The success in improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools is also influenced by the active participation of all elements of the institution, ranging from kiai, caregivers, ustadz, to the students themselves. As leaders, kiai need to build a harmonious relationship with all parties involved in the educational process to create a conducive learning atmosphere and support the achievement of maximum educational goals (Syafi'i, 2019). The active participation of all these elements will strengthen the relationship between leaders and members of the institution, as well as accelerate the realization of educational goals. In addition, the involvement of students in decision-making related to education policy can also create a greater sense of responsibility in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, collaboration between kiai, caregivers, ustadz, and students must continue to be improved to create a more productive and competitive educational environment.

In this study, the author will analyze how the leadership of kiai in the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School can affect the improvement of the quality of education. This research is expected to provide deeper insight into the role of kiai leadership in creating quality education, as well as provide strategic recommendations for the management of Islamic boarding schools in the future. It is hoped that the results of this research can make a positive contribution to improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools in general, as well as provide an overview of effective leadership models that can be implemented in various religious education institutions. That way, this research will provide benefits for the development of education in Indonesia, especially in the context of pesantren education.

This research will also look at the challenges faced by the leadership of kiai in improving the quality of education, such as limited resources, social challenges, and changes in national education policies that must be responded to appropriately by the leadership of Islamic boarding schools (Mukhtar et al., 2020). The challenges faced by kiai in leadership in Islamic boarding schools are not only limited to the management of educational institutions, but also related to social changes that affect the mindset and behavior of students. Therefore, it is important for kiai to continue to update existing strategies and policies to face these challenges. Adaptive leadership of kiai will greatly determine the extent to which Islamic boarding schools can survive and develop in the midst of existing challenges.

By understanding these challenges, this research can provide actionable solutions to overcome existing obstacles.

In this context, this study aims to identify the role of kiai leadership in improving the quality of education at the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School and provide an overview of the impact of the leadership on the development of Islamic boarding school educational institutions in Indonesia in general. This is in line with the goal of national education which emphasizes improving the quality of education as the key to the nation's progress (Fitri et al., 2024). With this research, it is hoped that it can provide a better understanding of the importance of the role of kiai in improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools, as well as encourage related parties to be more serious in developing Islamic boarding school-based education. Improving the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools will have a significant impact in forming a young generation that is qualified, noble, and ready to face global challenges.

2. METHODS

This type of research is field research which means that the researcher goes directly to the field in making direct observations of facts and events at the location. This study deepens the research location at the Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic Boarding School. Banyumas, Pringsewu in looking for a description of the data and various events in it. Through the object of research in the form of the individual concerned in the pesantren system. The author made this thesis using a phenomenological descriptive research approach. This research focuses on social experiences by exploring the meaning of their social behavior and exploring social perceptions of their experiences. Researchers look at phenomena in the reality of social groups. In this study, the author uses forms of qualitative data collection in the form of interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Observations were carried out with a focus on Kiai, aiming to only observe and collect data related to the leadership role of kiai at the Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic Boarding School. Banyumas, Pringsewu. through activities, especially in improving the quality of education. The interviews were aimed at the components of the pesantren, namely students, ustadz, the community, and kiai. In this study, the validity of the data used was tested through triangulation of sources, methods, and times. Source triangulation is a data validity technique that functions to check from various sources obtained. Meanwhile, triangulation techniques are data validity techniques used to test and check data obtained using different techniques on the same source, for example through interviews, observations and documentation studies. Triangulation of time to check the validity of the data through a time span, so that the assessment of validity is seen from the source information whether it is still the same as before. In this study, the validity of the data used was tested through triangulation of sources, methods, and times. Source triangulation is a data validity technique that functions to check from various sources obtained. Meanwhile, triangulation techniques are data validity techniques used to test and check data obtained using different techniques on the same source, for example through interviews, observations and documentation studies. Triangulation of time to check the validity of the data through a time span, so that the assessment of validity is seen from the source information whether it is still the same as before.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Kiai's Strategy in Building Public Trust

In building public trust, a kiai in Islamic boarding schools has a very important role, both in spiritual and social aspects. Kiai as a central figure is not only a leader in the context of religious education, but also as a figure trusted by the community to provide guidance in various aspects of life. Based on the results of research conducted by (Arifin et al., 2024), kiai in Islamic boarding schools often use a personal and integrity approach as the main basis for building trust relationships with the

community. In addition, a transparent approach in the management of Islamic boarding schools and active involvement in social activities are also the main strategies that are relied on to maintain good relationships with the surrounding community. In this case, kiai is not only a religious teacher, but also a leader who is respected for his ability to manage human resources and pesantren organizations effectively (Munir et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the kiai's strategy in building public trust is also seen in their ability to manage conflicts and maintain harmony between Islamic boarding school elements. According to (Winoto et al., 2022), the leadership of kiai that prioritizes open communication and discussions involving various parties has proven effective in creating a sense of mutual understanding and trust among pesantren administrators, ustadz, students, and the community. This is strengthened by the existence of social programs that involve the community, such as public recitation and other community activities that not only have an impact on improving the quality of education, but also strengthen the relationship between Islamic boarding schools and the community. Thus, the role of kiai as a leader of Islamic boarding schools is not only limited to internal aspects, but also has a significant impact in strengthening public trust in the educational institution.

Kiai is the most essential element in the pesantren and its influence is not only among students or students, but also the community around the pesantren. In the leadership of Kiai in the Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic boarding school, the structure has its own order, the leadership that a Kiai has that is different can affect his role. It was explained in the previous chapter that pesantren is a form of informal pesantren, and if withdrawn from the role that Kiai has, it can be related to the role of the head of the pesantren. From the researcher's analysis and taking a comparison from E. Mulyasa's theory about the leadership role of the head of the Islamic boarding school, the researcher obtained the following results:

a. As an educator

   Kiai's role is the main role model in Islamic boarding schools and has an influence on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of education. The form of the role is that all pesantren leaders have formal teaching hours, in addition to being a form of educational supervision, namely with evaluations that are held almost every day. As a form of designing the strategy that has been explained, Kiai formed the KMI institution as the implementer of formal education in Islamic boarding schools. In every formal and non-formal event at the pesantren, Kiai as the head of the pesantren has a role in providing moral and spiritual values to students. In the preparation and formation of prospective teachers, Kiai provides an outline of the competence of prospective teachers and is involved in their selection

b. As a manager

   Kiai plays an active role in organizing, empowering, and making decisions in pesantren democratically. The form of its application is the formation of a special forum, namely the syuro council which contains the leaders of institutions where the sustainability of policies and leadership is decided. More generally, Kiai held an asatidz forum to periodically evaluate, and report on the progress of activities from teachers, employees, and institutional leaders. On the personal side, Kiai as a manager who knows firsthand the abilities and interests of subordinates divides tasks and positions according to their potential. In addition, the holding of the above periodic deliberations still depends on the decision of Kiai

c. As an administrator

   The role of kiai administratively is not in line with where administrative duties and roles are charged through subordinates. Kiai provides direct management to subordinates or elected leaders according to their potential. This is not in accordance with the theory described. In the form of existing finances, they are managed directly through their subordinates or deputy leaders. In terms of preparing short, medium, or long-term programs, it is decided through coordination meetings,

but decision-making is carried out directly. In addition, because the management used is standard, there are not many changes in it.

d. As a leader

Kiai takes advantage of his charismatic leadership style by directing to the vision and mission of the pesantren. In the form of his role, the kiai himself is active in carrying out his leadership firmly and is responsible for all his decisions. In addition, Kiai has a clear vision and authority among subordinates so as to emphasize the character of the leader in it. Even so, as a wise leader, Kiai prioritizes deliberation to all elements before providing the best solution

e. As an innovator

The role of kiai as an innovator looks not too significant and a little passive due to his long leadership period. The form of its role in maintaining, improving, and improving the educational apparatus of the kiai pesantren forming a research and development institution is an advancement that has a big impact on the pesantren. In addition, in the pesantren curriculum following the changing times, adjustments are made with changes such as making modules, adjusting existing regulations and facilities

f. As a supervisor

Kiai plays an active role in educational supervision activities and is a direct supervisor of the course of activities. In the implementation of kiai, direct supervision through controlling and charging supervisory duties through senior teachers and forums. In addition, the implementation of Microteaching/ or called amaliyah tadris which is escorted and tested directly by the kiai.

g. As a motivator

Kiai as a central figure and preacher has a great influence on motivation to subordinates, especially in the field of religion and morals in accordance with education. Examples applied in daily life and advice through wise delivery are the main strategies. The procurement of motivational programs in the religious and general fields provides encouragement to subordinates in improving the quality of resources. In addition, encouragement is given through rewards and punishments in the field of religion and academics.

From the role of leadership itself, it has a great influence on all aspects of education, one of which is the quality of education. The quality of education explained that the Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic boarding school itself has its own quality parameters, including:

a. Facilities

The role of pesantren facilities affects the process and output of education in terms of management and availability. The influence of facilities and facilities, especially on the educational process where quality assurance depends on how the formation process is. The development of facilities in Islamic boarding schools is explained to always follow the development of education, especially in terms of the rooms that already have laboratories and multimedia. In addition, because the preparation of the output is an entrepreneurial spirit, Kiai formed a garden and shop that is managed by students independently and all existing facilities are maintained not only by employees but also by the entire pesantren community. Although the facilities have not been fulfilled 100%, Kiai as a facility provider is determined to always support all the needs of Islamic boarding schools.

b. Milieu

Regarding the environment, it is closely related to the culture of the pesantren, which is related to implementation and supervision. In the application of pesantren culture, Kiai pays special attention to discipline and manners. Among them are the creation of rewards and punishments for students. In addition, students and the pesantren community are always encouraged by Kiai to apply manners in daily life through lessons or recitations. The environment influences the formation

of educational output through habituation and instillation of values and the formation of a conducive climate in learning

c. Human Resources

Miftahul Huda 453 Islamic Boarding School directs its students to be able to become preachers and teachers. In the implementation of the briefing in accordance with their abilities or interests, with an outline of morality. The quality and output desired here are students who are advanced in the academic and religious fields. In the assessment of pesantren, emphasis is placed on morals and then academics. So that the quality of graduates has morals and manners that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. Regarding educators in producing quality output, pesantren have their own qualifications, namely a minimum of S1 education and also test the feasibility of teachers. And to maintain and supervise is always evaluated and gets full guidance from the kiai himself. In addition, in maintaining the implementation of training programs, seminars, and studies.

From the relationships that occur, leadership has a great influence on the quality of the situation. It is explained that the parameters are inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes in determining quality in accordance with the explanation above, showing a considerable contribution of the figure of kiai. The realization of quality education is inseparable from the central figure who has a role, namely as teachers, motivators, leaders, and managers in Islamic boarding schools. Without Kiai, movement or quality change will not run. Kiai guarantees education that is able to develop spiritual and academic potential with programs and institutions and further provides benefits to the surrounding

Kiai's Obstacles in Building Public Trust at the Miftahul Huda Islamic Boarding School 453 Banyumas Pringsewu

In building public trust, the kiai at the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School faces several obstacles that affect the process of building relationships between the pesantren and the community. These obstacles can be divided into two main categories: internal obstacles that come from within the pesantren organization itself and external obstacles that come from outside, especially from the community and the surrounding environment. Each of these obstacles requires a wise approach so that they can be solved and public trust in Islamic boarding schools can increase (Irfana et al., 2023).

Internal obstacles are related to the problem of ineffective communication between the kiai and other pesantren administrators. Most of the kiai find it difficult to convey the vision and mission of the pesantren to all elements, including ustadz, students, and the surrounding community. Lack of a common understanding of common goals can lead to disharmony in the implementation of policies that have been set. This has the potential to reduce the level of public trust that should support Islamic boarding school activities. In addition, the lack of time for kiai to interact directly with the community is also an obstacle. Kiai as the main leader often focuses too much on the internal affairs of the pesantren so that external relations with the community are neglected (Umam, 2020).

In addition, obstacles in building public trust are also caused by the unstable organizational structure of Islamic boarding schools. Frequent changes in management can disrupt the continuity of existing policies, which in turn affects the credibility of Islamic boarding schools in the eyes of the community. Uncertainty about the sustainability of programs that have been implemented before has created doubts among the public. The community needs assurance that the pesantren will continue to function properly in the long term and that the educational and social programs that have been started will continue (Khoirunnisak et al., 2023).

From the external side, the obstacles faced by kiai in building public trust are also related to the changing times that are increasingly modern. Today's society is increasingly critical and needs

transparent information about Islamic boarding school activities. Not a few people feel pessimistic about the effectiveness of education in Islamic boarding schools, especially in terms of the readiness of students to face the increasingly competitive world of work. Therefore, kiai needs to update its educational approach to be more relevant to the needs of the times, one of which is by integrating technology in the learning process. This is in line with the findings by (Yanti et al., 2024) which stated that the modernization of pesantren education can be a driving factor to rebuild public trust in the institution.

Another obstacle stems from the challenge of limited funding to support educational programs and the development of Islamic boarding schools. The public generally hopes for transparency and accountability in the use of funds received by Islamic boarding schools, both from community donations and other donations. When people feel that they do not get clear information about the flow of funds and their use, this can reduce their level of trust in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, limited resources to expand educational facilities and social activities that can involve the community are also obstacles. Therefore, good and transparent financial management, as well as a more inclusive approach are needed to involve the community in the development of Islamic boarding schools (Fauziyah et al., 2024).

Overall, although the kiai at the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School have tried hard to build public trust, the existing obstacles, both internal and external, still need to be overcome more systematically. Strengthening internal communication, organizational stability, and adapting to the times as well as increasing financial transparency are important steps that must be taken by kiai and pesantren administrators. This is important so that public trust in Islamic boarding schools is maintained and growing, so that Islamic boarding schools can play a more optimal role in producing a quality generation.

In the application of Kiai's leadership role to develop the quality of education, of course, it is not spared from the obstacles that occur. The summary of some obstacles other than those expressed earlier, among others: *first*, the change of times. The development of the times greatly affects the world of education in Islamic boarding schools. This can be an opportunity and challenge in the implementation of education itself. Pesantren through kiai is concerned with developments that follow and utilize existing communication developments, for example in the introduction of pesantren, as well as communication between asatidz. In seeing the challenges in the form of the use of cellphones in the pesantren area, the kiai has a firm policy to regulate and discipline. *Second*, Kiai's participation. As has been explained from Kiai's leadership role, although he often takes part in being a speaker, but in his daily life Kiai is considered to have not been able to lead effectively. Kiai is a central figure in society and in Mastuhu it is explained that they have a da'wah area so that this is an advantage and a disadvantage. *Third*, membership. The change in membership instability in the form of a change of management every year sometimes causes obstacles in the organization. Although it is explained that the management is already standard, the entry of new people causes difficulties in communication between leaders and members. So the adaptation stage needs an approach from leaders or subordinates. *Fourth*, funding. In meeting the need for funds because it is a large educational organization, the need for pesantren is quite large. In meeting the needs of funds, it is not enough to rely only on tuition fees for students and donors. Therefore, kiai seeks the establishment of waqf institutions and the procurement of cooperation in the field of entrepreneurship. The proof is that in recent years development funding and activities have been fulfilled and realized well.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion and analysis of data regarding the role of kiai leadership in improving the quality of education at the Miftahul Huda 453 Banyumas Pringsewu Islamic Boarding School, it can be

concluded that the leadership of kiai plays a vital role in creating a quality educational atmosphere. Kiai applies a democratic and paternalistic leadership style that is effective in influencing students and managing institutions, with the roles of educators, managers, leaders, innovators, supervisors, and motivators. Improving the quality of education is carried out through the development of facilities and infrastructure, the establishment of a conducive environment, and the cultivation of religious values and discipline according to Islamic teachings. However, there are obstacles to the implementation of internal and external leadership, such as a lack of effective participation of the kiai and changes in organizational structure and limited funding. Therefore, more attention is needed in the aspects of leadership and management of Islamic boarding schools to ensure the quality of education that continues to develop.

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