

Building Santri Character Through Leadership Based on Islamic Boarding School Culture: A Holistic Approach at Syaikh Zainuddin NW Anjani Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the problem of low good character among students, which has an impact on immoral actions. The purpose of this investigation is to identify the leadership style of tuan guru in shaping the character of students and to analyze the methods and approaches used by tuan guru in the character formation process. Research is important to provide new insights and solutions related to the character of students, cultural leadership, and a holistic approach. Several previous studies such as: Building Creative, Tolerant, and Responsible Student Characters. Independent Character Development Strategy for Students. The Role of Modern Islamic Boarding Schools in the Formation of Leadership Character. Contribution of Islamic Boarding School Education in Character Formation. Character Education Patterns in Islamic Boarding Schools. Shows that Islamic boarding schools have an important role in shaping the character of students through an integrated approach between academic education and moral values. With the right strategy, students can develop into creative, tolerant, responsible individuals, and have good leadership skills. Research on student character, cultural leadership, and a holistic approach has not specifically explored the integration of character development with cultural leadership and the synergy between local values and character education. This confirms the novelty of this manuscript. The hypothesis proposed in this study is that there is a contribution of cultural leadership and a holistic approach to the character of students. The results of the study indicate that the paternalistic leadership style of Tuan Guru and exemplary behavior in daily behavior have a significant impact on the formation of students' character. In addition, learning methods that integrate local cultural values have proven effective in supporting the characterization process. The conclusion of this study confirms that cultural-based leadership in Islamic boarding schools contributes significantly to building students' character holistically.

Keywords: Santri Character, Cultural Leadership, Holistic Approach

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools have a very important role in the character building of santri, who are the next generation of the nation with strong religious values (Muzaki et al., 2024). In this context, the research titled "Building Santri Character Through Culture-Based Leadership of Islamic Boarding Schools A Holistic Approach" aims to explore how effective leadership in Islamic boarding schools can contribute to the character building of students.

Character building of santri through the leadership of Tuan guru in preserving the pesantren tradition by teaching and maintaining the pesantren tradition to santri. The preservation of traditions is carried out with daily practices strengthened by bai'at which contains oaths and promises to continue the traditions in pesantren to children and grandchildren, continue the way of learning and the books studied, maintain the

tradition of talaqqi face-to-face in teaching books with students, and apply the principle of sami'na wa atho'na listening and being loyal to the master teacher and the organisation, by seeking and obtaining blessings (Arifin, 2022).

Character education in Islamic boarding schools is not just about teaching norms and ethics, but also a deep habituation process. Santri are taught to internalise good values through daily experiences in the pesantren environment, known as "pancajiwa". These five souls include sincerity, simplicity, independence, ukhuwah Islamiyah, and responsibility. Through this approach, santri not only learn theory but also practice in daily life (Hanina et al., 2024).

Leadership in pesantren is often seen as a key factor in the success of character education. A Tuan Guru as a leader has a central role in providing examples and directions to santri. Tuan Guru's example becomes a model for santri in

fostering positive attitudes and behaviours. However, there is often a view that challenges arise when the leadership style tends to be autocratic and less inclusive, which can hinder the development of santri character. Whereas the presence of Tuan Guru as the leader of Pondok Pesantren gives its own meaning to the formation of santri character, the daily activities that take place for a long time instil an attitude of sincerity, strength, and simplicity.

The holistic approach to education in pesantren includes the integration of spiritual, social, and academic aspects. This means that education is not only focused on formal teaching but also on the development of deep moral and ethical values. The tradition in Syaikh Zainuddin NW Anjani's boarding school, especially in Ma'had, is to only study the book of thurats. The study activity lasts for four years for thullab (male students) and three years for Thalibat (female students). Learning activities are adopted from the learning system of the shaulatiah madrasa, where the founder Al-magfurulah Maulana Syaikh TGKH. Zainuddin Abdul Majid studied. Learning in Ma'had by sitting cross-legged (halaqah) facing the masyaikh (teacher) by studying books that are also taught at the Shaulatiah.

Every day, students study from eight in the morning until fourteen in the afternoon. Such routines and moral learning at any time practised by the teachers, namely respect for the teacher, bowing the head when meeting the teacher, kissing the teacher's hand, obeying and obeying, sami'na wa atho'na to the teacher, are teachings that are given every day. So that the tradition that lasts for a long time becomes a culture and forges students to behave in an Islamic manner both within the boarding school environment and outside when they are in the community. Thus, santri are expected to be able to apply these values in their daily lives and contribute positively to society.

The results of this study are consistent with previous literature that emphasises the importance of character education in the context of Islamic education. Research by Isnawati et al.

(2023) showed that the habituation of prayer can improve the discipline and responsibility of santri. This finding strengthens the argument that the integration of spirituality through culture-based and spiritual approaches in education can result in better character development, individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have good morals. Culture-based leadership in Islamic boarding schools can increase students' engagement in the learning process. For example, research by Asror et al. (2024) revealed that the traditional approach to education in pesantren is able to effectively shape the character of santri through social interaction and religious activities. This research is relevant to the need to strengthen the character of the younger generation amid the challenges of globalisation and rapid social change. By understanding how culture-based leadership can effectively shape the character of students, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to the development of educational programmes in Islamic boarding schools and improve the quality of leadership in these environments as well as provide recommendations for pesantren managers to improve the quality of character education in the future.

Although the results of the study show a positive relationship between culture-based leadership and santri character building, it is possible that other factors such as family support and social environment also contribute to their character development. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted to explore the influence of these external factors.

METHODS

In this study, we will use a qualitative approach to explore how culture-based leadership in Islamic boarding schools can shape the character of students. The population in this study consists of: Santri: Santri who are currently studying in the selected boarding school. Tuan Guru/Teachers: Leaders and teachers in the boarding school who have experience in leadership and character education. The

sampling method used was purposive sampling, where researchers selected respondents based on certain criteria: Santri who have studied in the pesantren for a minimum of two years to ensure a deep understanding of culture and leadership. Tuan Guru or teachers who have at least five years of experience in managing pesantren and play an active role in the character building of santri.

The instruments in this study include: Semi-structured Interview Guide: Open-ended questions designed to explore the experiences, views, and leadership practices of Tuan Guru and their impact on the character of santri. Observation Sheet: A tool to record interactions between Tuan Guru/teachers and santri, as well as daily activities at the boarding school. Documentation: Collection of official documents from the boarding school, such as curriculum, character education policies, and activity records. The research procedure was designed with the stages of Preparation: Contacting the boarding school to obtain research permission. Data Collection: Conducting interviews with master teachers/teachers and students. Collecting documents related to character education. Data analysis is carried out after data collection is complete, data analysis is carried out simultaneously. This research is planned to last for 3 months: Preparation, data collection, data analysis. Interview and observation. Data analysis and report writing.

Data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Interview Transcription to facilitate analysis. Data Coding by identifying key themes from the interview and observation data by assigning codes to segments of data. Theme Clustering to find relevant patterns. Validity and reliability of the research was done by triangulating various data sources (interviews, observations, documentation) to verify information. Member Check by confirming interview results with respondents to ensure accuracy of interpretation. Audit Trail by keeping detailed records of the research process to enable other researchers to assess the

reliability of the results. The research location is a particular boarding school that has a good reputation in shaping the character of students through culture-based leadership. The findings are expected to provide insights for other pesantren managers. Limitations of this study include: Generalisation of the research results may not be generalisable to all boarding schools due to differences in culture, size, and educational approaches. Researcher subjectivity for Interpretation of data may be influenced by the subjective perspective of the researcher, although efforts have been made to minimise bias through triangulation. Short research time may limit the depth of data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that Syaikh Zainuddin NW Anjani Islamic Boarding School applies culture-based leadership that is effective in building the character of santri. The results showed that there are character values taught through the tradition of praying before and after learning, *berhizib*, obeying and being loyal (*sami'na wa atho'na*) to teachers and organisations, sincere, simple. The value of religiosity is the most dominant in the formation of santri character. In addition, the *kyai's* inclusive and participatory leadership style encourages santri to be actively involved in pesantren activities. Likewise, the participatory leadership style in pesantren contributes to the character building of santri (Prasetyo, 2022). The role of Tuan Guru in guiding, creating an environment, instilling moral values and role models is also effective in the formation of santri character (Gunawan, 2023; Safinah & Arifin, 2024).

A very important aspect of the culture at Ma'had Darul Qur'an wal Hadith (MDQH) NW Anjani is the deep respect for the teachers and scholars. Santri usually bow their heads when the master teacher passes in front of them and shake hands by kissing the back of the hand and the palm of the hand, accompanied by holding or rubbing the head as a sign of asking for the blessing and pleasure of the master teacher. For

female santri, they bow without shaking hands and rubbing their heads as they do with santri. MDQH is not concerned with formal diplomas, but a very valuable diploma is termed a community diploma, where the diploma obtained from the educational process at MDQH cannot be used to apply for a job, but rather an acknowledgement that the alumni have thoroughly studied the books of thurats/yellow books. The community diploma in question is the implementation or practice of religious knowledge obtained from MDQH in the community.

This finding shows that the tradition of praying, halaqah, studying every day, respecting the master teacher is not only a spiritual ritual but also a strong character education tool. Islamic religious education is the pillar of character education in Pondok Pesantren (Putro, 2022). This is important because character education in pesantren can help santri develop positive attitudes and good behaviour in daily life. Character is formed by routines that take place every day for a long period of time in pesantren in the form of halaqah learning methods and prayer traditions (Basri, 2019; Muslim et al., 2021).

The tradition of behaving well in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith is a demand for behaviour, morals, akhlakul karimah. MDQH dresses simply from all-white batik, implying a simple life accompanied by a pure white heart to avoid attitudes of envy, *riya'* and *sum'ah*, with all-white clothes educating students to become people of faith and piety which is reflected in the clothes worn (Dahlan, 2022).

By integrating character values in religious practices, pesantren contribute to the formation of individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have good morals. MDQH NW Anjani effectively integrates Islamic educational traditions with the culture of the Sasak community on the island of Lombok, producing alumni who understand religious knowledge and its application in society. This reflects the important role of Islamic boarding

schools in developing and strengthening the character of students in the contemporary era.

Values such as religiosity, discipline, and responsibility become the foundation for the development of santri character. This shows that character education in Islamic boarding schools can run holistically, integrating spiritual and moral aspects in the daily lives of santri. The implication of this study is the importance of strengthening the tradition of prayer, the halaqah method, learning every day, respect for teachers as an integral part of the character education curriculum in Islamic boarding schools. Pesantren managers are advised to continue developing teaching methods that prioritise cultural and spiritual values so that santri can grow into individuals with strong character.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that culture-based leadership at Syaikh Zainuddin NW Anjani Islamic Boarding School has a significant impact in building the character of santri. The boarding school plays a crucial role in the character building of santri through the tradition of prayer, halaqah, and respect for the master teacher. These practices not only serve as spiritual rituals, but also as effective character education tools. Culture-based leadership in pesantren, which includes the integration of the values of religiosity, discipline, and responsibility, contributes to the development of positive attitudes and good behaviour of santri in daily life. This study recommends strengthening teaching methods that emphasise cultural and spiritual values to improve the quality of character education in the future.

ADVICE

For researchers who focus on boarding schools, they can develop their research on the ability of teachers to accommodate local potential in supporting the development of boarding schools to be more open and increasing community participation.

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