

Islamic Educational Management: Case Study on *Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an*, Wonogiri, Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Management;
Leadership;
Tahfizhul Qur'an

Article history:

Received 2022-06-30

Revised 2022-08-18

Accepted 2022-10-08

ABSTRACT

This article aims to observe Mahad Aly Pesantren Baitul Qur'an, Wonogiri, Indonesia, in educating students to memorize the Qur'an. We investigate Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri using educational management approach and qualitative methods to describe research findings. We lived with informants and interviewed several students, teachers, and pesantren administrators. This article argues that the management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri has unique characteristics based on the Islamic spirit. Respect from students to teachers is the key to memorising the Qur'an quickly. In addition, the Pesantren Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri uses SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) as a strategy to realize the vision and mission. This step is able to turn weakness dan threat into an opportunity. In articulating it, the manager includes all elements of the pesantren to get the best solution. Thus, the leadership model of pesantren has shifted from the individual to the collective. This finding is new in the study of pesantren and the management of Islamic education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to recent scholars, management determines and achieves goals involving human and natural resources (Havinal, 2009, hal. 2; Iriantara & Syukri, 2017, hal. 40). Management, in general, can be identified as the ability to obtain results to achieve goals through various activities. Management consists of planning, organizing, implementing and controlling. The person who manages the schedule of activities and human resources and sets goals is called a manager. In the education sector, management is defined as combining educational resources to achieve predetermined educational purposes (Mubsiroh, 2003).

Management is closely related to leadership. Leadership is a management skill that focuses on developing and disseminating vision, mission and strategy as well as creating a motivated workforce (Marquis & Huston, 2009, hal. 32). The skills that managers must master are (1) certain skills that include areas of analytical ability or using certain tools; (2) the ability to work with other people which allows the manager to help the group to complete its task or work; (3) conceptual skills related to the ability to work with ideas and concepts (Ricketts, 2009, hal. 3).

Meanwhile, pesantren, as Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, are the product of the culture of the Indonesians (Alam, 2018; Asrohah, 2011, hal. 66–90; Chairi, 2019, hal. 70–89). Pesantren has unique characteristics to develop educational institutions and produce independent students in the fields of religion, socio-economics and culture (Ardiansyah, 2019, hal. 1–18; Chotimah, 2014, hal. 114–136). Kiai is the central, authoritative figure and the centre of policy and change. Therefore, changes or innovations carried out by pesantren should depart from their wishes (Masduki, 2008, hal. 3). Recent research found that the management of the Kiai in pesantren significantly impacts the lives of the santri. Thus, students interact and communicate with the Kiai very closely so that students are affected by the management of pesantren (Ismail, 2017).

According to current research, management is essential for pesantren because, recently, many pesantren have had internal conflicts. The conflict is between heirs of leadership such as children, and daughters-in-law fighting for influence. The competition involves other parties, so if it is not managed properly, it will worsen and lead to destruction. On the other hand, if managed properly, it will lead to healthy competition (Qomar, 2004, hal. 46). Therefore, pesantren's leadership model shifts from individual to collective leadership. The change concerns the authority and participation of the teacher, students, and all those involved in the pesantren. Through this collective leadership, the succession system is not based on heritage but is emphasized professionalism. Ideally, the shifting leadership from individual Kiai to collective leadership certainly brings new nuances for the emergence of democracy in pesantren, but the problem is not that simple (Ramli, 2017, hal. 129).

In line with that, the Pesantren Tahfizhul Qur'an Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri has this shifting leadership. Due to this shift, more than 90% of the students had memorized the Qur'an within two years, while 10% completed memorization within three years. This cannot be separated from the management and leadership model applied at the boarding school (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021). Mahad Aly Baitul Quran Wonogiri was initially under the auspices of the Asy-Syura Foundation, which was later changed to the Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri Foundation to improve performance and future development. Next, the management was transferred to the Wonogiri District Da'wah Council Foundation. This higher education institution is not under a specific group, not affiliated with a particular group, and does not stand in a certain sect but runs following Islamic law (Sembodo, 2021). In addition, pesantren Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri also provides to prepare its students to become truly economically independent and provide benefits to the community. It is proven that Pesantren Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri not only memorises the Quran but is also taught soft skills. Santri are also familiar with online media because students must take computer training (Lufthi, 2021).

Based on this background, this research deals with the Baitul Quran Pesantren Wonogiri as a new form of pesantren. In addition, the state of pesantren is no longer traditional but modern, where students get formal legality and can continue their education at universities. In fact, students have soft skills qualified to compete in the industrial era 4.0. This phenomenon is unique and needs to be investigated from the education management perspective. In line with that, scholars began to discuss the management of pesantren. So far, pesantren is synonymous with education, whose authority is only owned by the Kiai, so it does not require development towards a more advanced future. Meanwhile, pesantren has become an alternative institution in neutralizing globalization, so the demands for developing pesantren management are essential (Kompri, 2018, hal. 72). Finally, this research will contribute to the study of management of pesantren.

2. METHODS

2.1. Materials and Approach

The object of this study is pesantren Mahad' Aly Tahfidzul Qur'an Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri. We use the management education approach to observe and obtain a reasonable and systematic interpretation of reality ('Adlimah, 2022, hal. 18–20; Solahuddin, 2018b). This research material is divided into primary and secondary (Solahuddin et al., 2020, hal. 396–418). The primary material was field data obtained through interviews with all elements of pesantren Baitul Qur'an and various documents. While secondary data is collected through previous research, magazines, books, scientific articles, or data-providing institutions (Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy et al., 2020, hal. 191–212; Solahuddin, 2018a). We lived in Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri to collect data through observation, interviews, and documentation (Dunkring, 2018, hal. 67–86; Solahuddin, 2021; M. Syafi'i, 2022, hal. 1–16). The collected data is analyzed into information that explains the phenomenon of Islamic education management at Baitul Quran Wonogiri (Qudsy & Sholahuddin, 2020; Sudaryana & Agusiady, 2022). After all the steps, we identify data in the report using qualitative methods to describe research findings.

2.2. The Theory of Management

Management is a process of achieving goals by working together through people and other organizational resources. According to management academics, management is the art of getting work done by others (Suparlan, 2015, hal. 3). This definition contains attention to the fact that managers achieve an organizational goal by arranging human resources, not by doing the job themselves. Scholars today argue that management is often interpreted as a science, tips, and profession (Fattah, 2017, hal. 3). According to them, management is the ability and skill to achieve goals through activities together. According to another opinion, management is a process of organizing various activities in the context of implementing plans and as the ability or skill of people who occupy managerial positions to obtain results to achieve goals through the actions of others (Marno & Supriyanto, 2013, hal. 1). Management is the process of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling organizational members' activities and using other corporate resources to achieve organizational goals (Kompri, 2018). Therefore, management is defined as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling so that the organization, with all its aspects, achieves goals effectively and efficiently (Fattah, 2017).

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that management is an effort towards achieving goals through a specific process through a cooperative system with a clear division of roles. Management involves allocating human resources, funds, physical, and other resources effectively, efficiently, and optimally. New management can function if the human resources can carry out the organizational tasks following the sequence (Herujito, 2004, hal. 17). Functions in management can be interpreted as several activities covering various types of work that can be classified into one group to form an administrative unit (Kamars, 2004, hal. 23).

Today's scholar mentions four management functions: the first is planning as the basic function of management because this function is the basis for implementing other functions. Planning is the most important initial part of a job. The second is organizing as the following function, where this function is related to human resources. The third is directing, where this function helps management to control and supervise all activities of staff and stakeholders. In addition, this function also provides technical assistance and guidance to all staff. Fourth is control, where this function sets organizational performance standards (Suparlan, 2015).

According to other scholars, management has several roles in organizations: the first is a decision-making role; managers must plan strategies and utilize resources. Second, interpersonal roles, where managers direct and supervise their subordinates, in which managers communicate organizational goals, guidelines, and ethics. In this case, the manager must be an example for all

attendants. Third, the role of information, namely, the manager obtains and transmits data. This role has changed drastically as technology has improved. Managers also play a role in communicating the vision and goals of the organization. Fourth is art's role in fostering its management, but the concept of management developed in building a civilization from a more modern management perspective (Paransyah, 2020, hal. 8–10).

In line with that, pesantren management is essentially a process of structuring and managing Islamic boarding schools that involve human and non-human resources. The management mobilizes resources effectively and efficiently to achieve the goals of the pesantren. Effective and efficient management is the success in achieving the target perfectly, quickly, and precisely. Ineffective management is management that does not succeed in meeting its objectives because of mismanagement. Inefficient management is management that has grown in achieving its goals by wasting energy, time, and money.

Academics explained that the educational management model in pesantren was divided into dualism learning models: modern and traditional. Modern pesantren is marked by entering the *madrasa* model into the pesantren (Kompri, 2018). The first pesantren in Indonesia that uses this model is Pesantren Gontor, Ponorogo. This pesantren model does not have a management mechanism that refers to a modern management system. In contrast, the management of traditional pesantren does not accept madrasas into pesantren. They believe that if Islamic educational institutions aim at goodness, they will develop according to God's blessing and guidance.

The organization's leadership role requires managers to manage resources to develop innovative roles for the betterment of the organization. Most of these roles are held by managers. As for pesantren, most of the roles are held by Kiai. Kiai is a manager who manages resources to develop roles innovatively for the advancement of the pesantren. Managerial pesantren are prioritized in improving the quality of education following predetermined goals. The quality of pesantren services is improving to create a conducive education for students. In addition, pesantren also plays a role in improving the quality management approach that requires a process, and it cannot be done once, but gradually and continuously. Management coaching is a quality process that takes place constantly and involves all parties responsible for providing education (Sagala, 2015).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Management of Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri, Central Java, Indonesia

The Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri is a modern pesantren. The primary curriculum of this pesantren is memorizing the Qur'an, but on the subsequent progress, pesantren is based on the university level. The students must take the diploma level at the pesantren, then continue bachelor level at Mambaul Ulum Islamic Institute Surakarta. Baitul Quran Wonogiri made this program for a better future for students (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

Furthermore, We found several policies that were considered by the pesantren during their collaboration with universities. These policies are (1) to reinforce institutional orientation toward an independent and in-depth academic orientation; (2) to strengthen the mastery of epistemology and methodology; (3) to explore classical Islamic knowledge; (4) to maintain the tradition of mastering and to study classical Islamic books among lecturers and students; (5) to form an institution that functions to provide solutions to religious problems to the surrounding community, such as *bahts al-masa'il*, so that it has a real contribution to broader interests (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

Based on the investigation, several informants have different opinions regarding this case. Some informants stated that the program should be developed reading and writing the Qur'an besides memorizing the Qur'an. Some argue that the program should be designed to strengthen foreign languages. In addition, some argue that Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an must carry out the formation of Islamic student character and moral development. The various opinions were based on the different orientations of each informant. According to one of the leaders of the Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an

Wonogiri, the program that should be developed is to focus on the vision of the pesantren (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

Besides big dreams, the director has high spirituality. He always strengthens the students to believe in Allah continuously. According to him, Allah will provide all he wants when a person intends to do good for many people. That way, never be unsure about what you are trying to achieve for a brighter future. Based on interviews, the management model for implementing Ma'had Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri is following the vision and mission of the establishment of the pesantren. Some stakeholders say that it is better if the pesantren is developed in collaboration with similar pesantren in Central Java. The director of Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri has big dreams and the courage to take a stand for the development of the institution (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

Pesantren leaders must be able to make changes. In addition, leaders must be educative to improve the quality of education. By maintaining the principles of the pesantren, the vision of the pesantren can be realized. In essence, the fundamental statement regarding the values, aspirations, and goals of the pesantren institution is the vision of the pesantren. Therefore, vision is the key to the success of a professionally managed institution (Lufthi, 2021).

The leaders of pesantren should have a clear vision in developing the institution. Pesantren must take programmed steps to achieve the common vision. Pesantren must also carry out measurable and collaborative programs (Black & Morrison, 2014, hal. 183–204). Kyai, with visionary insight, is a worthy leader to be obeyed by the teachers, students, and parents of students (Kusmana, 2019, hal. 23–35). The characteristics of the Kiai have a visionary-transformative perspective and will build future organizations with a basic foundation on the articulation of the vision and mission. Pesantren must be based on a healthy organization, more work, and the intellectual milieu of an advanced pesantren (Bashori, 2017, hal. 269).

Based on our data, we found that Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri management is appropriate to be applied as a pesantren in memorizing the Qur'an. The management of Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri has succeeded in educating students to complete memorizing the Quran within 2 to 3 years. In that short time, the students could memorize the Qur'an well. Similar Islamic boarding schools around the world should follow conditions like this.

3.2. Strategy for Better Management of Pesantren

Strategy comes from the Greek verb. As a noun, *strategos* is a combination of the words "*stratos*" (military) with "*ago*" (to lead). As a verb, *Stratego* means to plan (Sudjana, 2000, hal. 5). According to current academics, strategy is the process of determining the plans of top leaders that focus on the long-term goals of the organization, accompanied by the preparation of ways or efforts so that organizational goals can be achieved (Umar, 2001, hal. 31). Strategy is a careful plan of activities to achieve specific goals. The education strategy is to utilize the resource factor to achieve the target by looking at the situation and conditions and paying attention to physical and non-physical barriers.

The strategy to realize good management of Pesantren Baitul Qur'an is to conduct a SWOT analysis: *strengths*, *weaknesses*, *opportunities*, and *threats*. The first step is to identify the internal weaknesses of Islamic education and external and global threats. This is the most urgent to be addressed in all components of education. Based on our interviews, the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School identified the pesantren's weaknesses, not to find out who was at fault but to fix the problem. Fixing problems is a fundamental step to improve pesantren in a better direction (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

The second step is the identification of internal strengths and external opportunities that are considered suitable to overcome the weaknesses and threats identified in the first step. Based on our interviews, the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School identified the internal strengths of the pesantren to seize external opportunities. The actualization of this step is that the manager cooperates

with universities outside the pesantren to improve the students' competence (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

The third step is formulating recommended strategies to deal with weaknesses and threats. In addition, the management must also have a plan for problem-solving, improvement, and further development. Based on our interviews, the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School identified the problems of the pesantren through deliberation. The deliberation event was egalitarian; all parties were allowed to express their opinions. Pesantren Baitul Qur'an upholds democracy to solve problems so that all aspirations are accepted in the forum and decided together. Solving problems using deliberation makes pesantren Baitul Quran more advanced than other pesantren (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

The fourth step is to determine priorities for handling weaknesses and threats which are prepared through a plan to carry out the handling program. Based on our interviews, the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School identified weaknesses and threats through various meetings. These meetings plan strategies as solutions to these weaknesses and threats. Through this step, the problems that arise in the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Wonogiri can be found solutions (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

The fifth step is to conduct a SWOT analysis as an advanced form after knowing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. With a SWOT analysis, it is hoped that pesantren will realize a management model that can take strategic steps (Tobroni, 2012). SWOT analysis can be articulated in several strategies. The first is the SO (strength and opportunity) strategy. This is the most desirable strategy, where the management model can consolidate and mobilize the power of resources in the form of integrity, human, governance, organizational, information, financial, physical, and facilities. This strategy takes advantage of existing opportunities to expand. This is called luck, which is the meeting of readiness and opportunity. Based on our investigations, the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is always ready to seize opportunities that often come suddenly. The management realizes that opportunities will be wasted if the pesantren is not prepared. Therefore, managing resources well is the best way to seize opportunities (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

The second is the WO (weakness and opportunity) strategy. This is a strategy of eliminating weaknesses to exploit opportunities further. Pesantren abstains from lamenting weaknesses because it only makes opportunities lost. Based on our investigation, the manager makes an analogy for the pesantren as a trader who does not have capital but seeks profit. Based on this condition, the pesantren's strategy focuses on creating a profit while trying to find capital (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

The third is the ST (strength and threat) strategy. This is a way to consolidate, increase, and utilize strengths and neutralize, avoid threats or turn threats into opportunities. In reality, what is defined as a threat is not necessarily a real threat. This awareness is shared by the Baitul Quran Wonogiri Islamic Boarding School, where the management abstains from lamenting threats but calls threats new opportunities that have not been able to be well articulated by the pesantren. The management always makes peace with threats because threats are new opportunities for a more advanced future (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

Fourth is the WT (weakness and threat) strategy. This is a way of minimizing weaknesses to avoid threats. This is the least expected situation. Many private pesantren and madrasas face this problem, where internally they have weaknesses in almost all components. In contrast, externals face threats, such as intense competition or a crisis of public trust. Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri's strategy to deal with this problem is to change the leadership of the individual pesantren into a collective one. Pesantren does not depend on one figure, but all elements of the pesantren have a shared responsibility to solve existing problems (The Management of Pesantren Baitul Quran Wonogiri, 2021).

Based on the description above, this study finds that Pesantren Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri can articulate the SWOT strategy well. Managers have advanced minds that are not confined by time- Pesantren articulates threats as opportunities. Next, the pesantren builds management by gathering all elements of the pesantren to be asked for aspirations. The various aspirations are then compiled into a plan to solve the existing problems. Thus, pesantren have shifted from individual leadership to collective leadership because collective leadership is better than individual leadership. Through collaborative leadership, problems are easier to solve because all elements of the pesantren support them.

3.3. Discussion

Recent research states that pesantren is a place that can answer today's needs, namely to form a strong character. This is because the santri are trained by the kiai for 24 hours in the pesantren. This makes it faster for students to have an independent character. The students are always motivated by the kiai, because the kiai not only speaks but sets an example for his students (I. Syafi'i, 2020, hal. 218–240).

Another research states that the success of the kiai in gathering strength in the pesantren is due to the strong social, cultural and emotional relationship between the kiai and the santri. The kiai can maintain integrity and togetherness and are part of the effort to avoid division between each other because of rivalry within and outside influences. A number of weaknesses experienced by kiai in social, cultural, and political organizations today are due to the low quality of Indonesia's democratic process, especially in the economy and education (Dhofier, 2019, hal. 9).

Pesantren management and leadership is essentially a process of structuring and managing Islamic boarding school educational institutions that involve human and non-human resources in mobilizing to achieve the goals of education effectively and efficiently. The continuity of the existence of the pesantren is very dependent on the relay of its leadership. The leadership relay is decisive but certainly not the only one. To maintain the continuity of the existence of the pesantren, it is required to manage this institution according to a neat and planned management (Hafidah & Ma'ruf, 2020).

Other research on the management and contribution of kiai leadership to the quality of pesantren education states that kiai leadership is formed in a network of personal and social meanings through a variety of creativity and local wisdom. So dominant is the role of the kiai towards the santri, so the attitude of respect for the santri is extraordinary. Santri views the kiai as versatile in various ways (*polymorphic*) and becomes a source of reference in the behavior of students' daily lives. Under the leadership of the kiai, pesantren can produce outputs in the form of young generations who can understand their identity as humans (Syarif, 2017, hal. 529).

Other research argues that the figure of a kiai have two or three characteristics simultaneously, for example a combination of charismatic-rational, and traditional-rational, or charismatic-traditional-rational. Pesantren is an educational institution that cannot be separated from the figure of the kiai as its leader. The figure of the kiai largely determines the progress or decline of a pesantren as the central figure. Thus, pesantren and kiai have a mutually influencing relationship. Pesantren can develop because of the figure of the kiai who can lead (Kesuma, 2014).

Based on currently thesis above, this research finds new novelty that the management of Pesantren Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri is able to apply management concepts theoretically and combine them with the ethical culture of the pesantren to produce quality graduates. From the description, there is a unique administration and management at the Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri. This uniqueness is due to the distinctive characteristics in the educational process that match the vision of the organization. The management model of Pesantren Baitul Qur'an is not centered on the Kiai but is supported by all elements of the pesantren. The administration of pesantren is not much different from the management of educational institutions. Thus, Pesantren Baitul Qur'an has shifted from individual to collective leadership. This finding is certainly different from currently thesis, where most previous studies have found that pesantren leadership is always individual, centered on the

kiai. Finally, the novelty of the research will be a new finding for pesantren studies and the management of Islamic education.

4. CONCLUSION

Islamic boarding school education management is essentially a process of structuring and managing pesantren educational institutions that involve human and non-human resources in mobilizing to achieve pesantren goals effectively and efficiently. Effective and efficient management successfully completes the target perfectly, quickly, precisely, and safely. The educational management model of the Tahfizhul Qur'an Mahad Aly Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri Islamic boarding school combines modern and traditional pesantren management models.

Based on our investigation, this study argues that the leadership model of the Baitul Qur'an Wonogiri pesantren is visionary, charismatic and transformational. According to working on thesis, there are several models of Kiai leadership in pesantren: religio-paternalistic leadership, paternalistic-authoritarian leadership, legal-formal leadership, and natural-style leadership. The leadership of the pesantren has a clear vision, mission, and charisma that can be an example and role model for the students. In addition, the managed management is accountable in a transparent manner in many ways. Therefore, it is easy for students to memorize the Qur'an in a short period.

The management of pesantren Baitul Qur'an emphasizes institutional orientation in the independent and deep academic sector. The pesantren is trying to strengthen the mastery of epistemology and methodology, explore classical Islamic knowledge, and the institution functions as a solution for the surrounding community. Therefore, institutions have a real contribution to the broader interests. Everything can be realized because the director of the pesantren has a clear vision and mission and dares to make decisions. In addition, the strategy to realize the vision and mission, pesantren Baitul Qur'an uses a SWOT analysis: *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats*. This step can turn weaknesses and threats into opportunities. In articulating SWOT, the management includes all elements of the pesantren to get the best solution. Thus, the pesantren leadership model has shifted from the individual to the collective. This finding differs from the previous thesis, where the pesantren leadership model is more individual than collective. This finding is new in the study of pesantren and the management of Islamic education.

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