Leadership in Learning Organization of Islamic Boarding School After Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This article aims at providing an institutional landscape analysis resting on aspects of leadership as a boarding school education policy amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The study is carried out qualitatively using analysis survey methods. Data is critically analyzed through various relevant kinds of literature. Data analysis was reinforced by the results of interviews on boarding school leadership in Aceh. The results of the study found the conceptual framework of the effectiveness of boarding school leadership in facing pandemic situations. The politics of leadership policy consist of four organizational areas that were usually arenas of policy-making, namely structural change, inter-departmental coordination, success management, and resource allocation. Whereas the learner organizational leadership strategy namely (1) the readiness of long-term program blueprint; (2) the degree of focus in building, caring, and developing a working mechanism; (3) the experience of the Boarding Board in executing financial strategies refers to less optimal field operational aspects due to pandemic; (4) strengthening partnership-based cooperation networks accompanied by systemic evaluation of the implementation of boarding school education and teaching and to oversee how the consequences system work in the middle of a covid-19 pandemic. The expected implications can extend the conceptual insight of effective leadership and the politics of education policy in general.

Keywords:
Effective Leadership; Learning Organization; Politics of Educational Policy; Covid-19

Kata Kunci:
Kepemimpinan Efektif; Organisasi Pembelajar; Politik Kebijakan Pendidikan; Covid-19

Covid-19. kepemimpinan pondok pesantren menghadapi situasi pandemic. Politik kebijakan pimpinan mencangkup empat wilayah organisasi yang biasanya merupakan arena pengambilan kebijakan, yaitu perubahan structural, koordinasi antar departemen, sukses manajemen dan alokasi sumber daya. Sedangkan strategi kepemimpinan organisasi pembelajaran yaitu (1) kesiapan cetak biru program jangka panjang; (2) konsentrasi membangun, merawat dan mengembangkan sistem kerja; (3) pengalaman Pesantren dalam melaksanakan strategi keuangan mengacu pada aspek operasional lapangan yang kurang optimal akibat pandemic; (4) penguatan jaringan kerjasama berbasis kemitraan disertai evaluasi sistemik terhadap pelaksanaan pendidikan dan pengajaran pesantren serta bagaimana sistem konsekuensi di tengah pandemic covid-19. Implikasi yang diharapkan dapat memperluas wawasan konseptual kepemimpinan efektif dan politik kebijakan pendidikan secara umum.

INTRODUCTION

It is evident that modernization of boarding schools has been carried out holistically in Indonesia. Leadership as a primary aspect is no longer singular but rather is done collectively and correctly. The pattern makes boarding school a modern and visionary educational institution. The spirit of equality among organizational individuals in improving competency-based learning becomes so effective in learning organizations that organizational development runs effectively and efficiently.

Since March, Indonesia has been impacted heavily by Covid-19. Educational institutions (schools, madrasah, boarding schools) have been affected in the implementation of the learning process. This situation has challenged the education system in Indonesia in many ways, thus, forcing educators (teachers) to adapt to virtual

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learning immediately. Many educational institutions in the country are still struggling to shift from the traditional pedagogical approach to online learning.⁴

Existing educational institutions in Asian countries have already been integrating information technology in learning systems.⁵ In Indonesia, educational institutions are constantly experiencing the problems of the increasingly complex global challenge of science and technology.⁶ In the case of boarding school education institutions, as demands for change continue to force educators to adapt and make changes, ranging from organizing educational policies as the result of development in science and technology.

Many means of information and communication technology are applied by educators to carry out teaching and learning activities remotely.⁷ Unfortunately, it is not in line with the concept of boarding school education. Some of the things were constraints in the implementation of online education in boarding schools, until before covid, the majority of boarding schools carried out learning activities traditionally by face to face interaction.⁸ In addition to that, the lack of technological resources in boarding schools became another factor of less effective online learning in boarding schools and madrasah.⁹

Islamic discourse on education can never be separated with the political and cultural dynamics of a society.¹⁰ In the context of the Boarding Board, the dynamics of Islamic education cannot be separated, even shackled by the political policies of the state

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and the pluralism of the community. Including in the covid-19 period where boarding school policies were intervened by the government.\textsuperscript{11}

Another issue that pesantren encounter is the death of their leader as a result of Covid. Due to the limited number of successor cadres who meet the requirements of their predecessors, this criterion does not guarantee the pesantren's readiness. Learning the yellow book is synonymous with pesantren.\textsuperscript{12} The unified pattern of integration of the pesantren curriculum with the service curriculum has resulted in less-than-optimal pesantren output.\textsuperscript{13} Observations of this occurrence inspire pesantren to engage in leadership and intellectual renewal. Succession to these difficulties necessitates a paradigm shift in leadership in terms of developing strategies and shifting governmental priorities. Strategic decisions are no longer sectoral in character, but rather accommodate institutional needs that lead to the pesantren's vision.\textsuperscript{14}

Political intervention to education policy in times of pandemic through political party, policy, and funds leads to some negative sides of the education system thus affecting the quality of graduates. Today, demands and interventions against educational institutions are more vicious as the educational institution becomes the main instrument to which the leadership in boarding school is determined.\textsuperscript{15}

One of the determining factors for success affecting others is the effectiveness of leadership styles, and key to the effectiveness of this style, is to harmonize the interests of boarding schools with stakeholders in order for boarding schools to implement the educational process optimally.\textsuperscript{16} However, the essential problem with the effectiveness


of this leadership styles is how to understand the human element that is believed to be extremely complex and how to achieve organizational goals through the completion of tasks. Both problems can affect the way managers implement various concepts of leadership styles.\footnote{Simon Reese, “Taking the Learning Organization Mainstream and Beyond the Organizational Level,” \textit{The Learning Organization} 27, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 6–16, https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-09-2019-0136.}

In the context of educational organizations, research conducted by Taylor and Prasetyo et al\footnote{Colette M. Taylor, Casey J. Cornelius, and Kate Colvin, “Visionary Leadership and Its Relationship to Organizational Effectiveness,” \textit{Leadership & Organization Development Journal} 35, no. 6 (July 29, 2014): 566–83, https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-10-2012-0130; Muhammad Anggung Manumanoso Prasetyo, “Pesantren Efektif: Studi Gaya Kepemimpinan Partisipatif,” \textit{Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam} 3, no. 1 (June 10, 2022): 1–12, https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v3i1.159.} generally addresses the effectiveness of leadership roles in achieving organizational goals, whereas this study aims to find a conceptual framework of leadership effectiveness of boarding school education that can be relied in the face of pandemic covid-19 situation. Research methods are qualitative in type with survey approaches. Data analysis is carried out critically and amplified using relevant studies sourced from books as well as journals.

The results of this study could later be utilized by academics, researchers, and practitioners as an ideal policy-building tool for boarding school managers so as to be able to maintain their existence in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, it can be a strategic framework in developing high competitive boarding schools organizations in the future.

\textbf{METHODS}

The study is carried out qualitatively with analysis survey methods. In collecting various necessary data, there are used various methods, namely observation, interviews, and analysis of documentation materials. This study tends to avoid any highly structured data collection tools in the approach. Data analysis was reinforced by the results of interviews conducted online on six boarding schools leadership in Aceh. Analysis done to data by using logic, both deductive and inductive. Acting as the informant was the leader of modern boarding schools in the southeastern Aceh district of Aceh Province. The specified source of informants represents boarding schools with
Accreditation “A” and executes the educational and teaching process in the middle of Covid-19. Data analysis used data triangulation techniques.\textsuperscript{19} Data triangulation is an attempt to check data correctness or information obtained by the researchers from different points of view while reducing as much as possible any bias found out during data collection and analysis.\textsuperscript{20}

RESULTS

Based on the Covid-19 data reported, although the recovery rate continued to show an increase, mortality has steadily increased. Increased alertness was constantly committed by boarding school, in order that those staying inside the school were not contracted. Through dynamic patterns of organizational life, boarding schools constantly learn how to hold on to sudden changes including the existence of Covid-19, boarding schools are able to survive in carrying out learning processes. It was this condition that later led to the manager of the educational institution becoming adaptive in facing social changes, the data review is conducted objectively and amplified using applicable research from Harris\textsuperscript{21} and Bahroni\textsuperscript{22} as journals.

Moral and character building is one of the bargaining power of an educational institution including boarding school. Prevention is better than treatment, supervising the potentially infected santri, boarding school has to hold regular checks, if there is a santri forced to be discharged, the school needs to give special requirements when he is about to return to boarding school.

It is necessary for any pesantren to show its characteristic identity by not eliminating its unique characteristics of pesantren as Islamic values-based educational institutions with its function as filters. This program has a plus value in the education of faith namely emphasis on sensitivity and sharpness of mind. By this plus value, it is

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{19} Michael Huberman and Matthew B Miles, The Qualitative Researcher’s Companion (Sage, 2002).
\textsuperscript{22} Imam Bahroni and Muammar Ansori, “Methods of Implementing Kulliyatul Mu’allimin Al-Islamiyah Disciplinary Character Education For Sixth Grade Students at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution,” Jurnal Al-Ta’alib Vol 14, no. 1 (2019).
\end{footnotesize}
expected that pesantren will be presented as a pioneer of character education projects in answering all educational problems.

In the context of research, changes refer to the aspect of education quality, this is influenced by level of institution ability to optimally manage all of its potentials ranging from education, students, learning processes, educational advice, finance and including its relationship with society. On this occasion, Islamic education institutions must be able to change the paradigm of education which is oriented towards the quality of all the activities that interact in it.

Various types of research on organizational innovation show its fundamental role in improving school organization performance. On the other hand, misunderstanding of values taught in organizational culture leads to ambiguity among school administrators, which in turn it can give obstacles to education implementation process. Even, schools having no cultural characteristics are seen as incompetent ones.

All the elements laid out in Islamic educational institutions become the responsibility of the leader. Together these efforts helped eliminate barriers and began to encourage higher learning on the organization’s agenda. They also suggest a subtle shift in focus, away from sustainable improvement and toward a commitment to learning.

The most fundamental difference between a learning organization with a traditional organization lies in the attitude between the two that should lead to resource development. The learning organization is a dynamic organization, an organization capable of providing encouragement and facilities to people within the organization to always improve its competence. Nevertheless, to be able to become such a learning organization, the organization should be able to change its way of viewing things in particular aspects of adaptive management to change.

Learning Organization as a tool for better and more effective schools. Organizational learning can be defined as a relatively permanent attitude or behavior to make changes as the ultimate result of the organizational experience. Learning is also interpreted as to how individuals always prepare to change by performing endless

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activities. Funding research is conducted objectively using applicable research from Fedai et al.\textsuperscript{24} and Salabi.\textsuperscript{25}

**DISCUSSION**

**The Response of Islamic Boarding School as a Learning Organization in Times of Covid-19**

Boarding schools are continually learning how to maintain unexpected changes, including the presence of Covid-19, through complex organizational life patterns. Boarding schools are able to survive in the conduct of learning processes. It was this situation that later led the educational institution's manager to become adaptive to social changes.

The learning organization is a dynamic organization, an organization able to provide people inside the organization with support and facilities to enhance their competence at all times. However, in order to become such a learning organization, the organization should be able to adjust its way of seeing things to change specific aspects of adaptive management.

In the current situation for example, on the basis of public accounting audits, each boarding school effectively used funds from donors such as parent groups, school operations aid funds, or funds from other institutions so they were not trapped in unethical practices such as bribery and budget misappropriation, administrative negligence, and so on.

Related to the implementation learning organization or implementation stage, there are three phases of activities taken namely observe, inquiry further and seek to explain. Description of the activity of each stage above briefly is as follow: In the observe stage, quality assurance visits faculty in which there is developing innovation program. In this opportunity, Quality Control Team (QCT) will listen to and see various events, issues and reactions from lecturers and students to the program implementation. The visit in this stage can be seen as a closer orientation to know more about related program.


Values held by the organization for its own organizational needs. Meaning that the values in the organization play an urgent role for organizational development which then it is reflected in normal forms and also in the basic belief of organizational members. In the field of education, human resource capacity growth is a series of interventions aimed at enhancing the performance, efficacy and responsiveness of government by concentrating attention on development, human capital, organizational improvement and institutional or environmental change.

Improvement of Islamic boarding schools must start by an intention to realize excellence schools. Thus, it is necessary for supports given by all components including teachers by showing good performance. Correlatively, if there is a good individual performance, then there will be also well-organization performance.

In this issue, as stated Argote \(^{26}\) and Salabi\(^{27}\) Boarding school as a organization of learning organization is a dynamic organization, an organization capable of providing encouragement and facilities to people within the organization to always improve its competence. Thus, effective leadership occurs only if leadership ethics and values become a leading principle of a leader in implementing his leadership.

Principals as leaders of organization need to construct commitment basis of organizational members through a learning organization which is designed with organizational adaptation and acculturation management with surrounding environment. In a strong learning organization, organizational members have a high commitment to realizing organizational mission and also in implementing organizational strategies to face competitive environment and other external forces.

Commitment to an educational organization in this framework is a condition that causes a member of an educational organization to take advantage of an organization and its organizational goals and intends to maintain its membership in the educational organization. However, commitment is an easy word to pronounce for a discourse, but in fact, it is often difficult to implement as a psychological aspect of educational


organization members. Here, it is greatly necessary for a transformational leader to standardize the commitment of educational organization members as a measure or parameter. Measuring the level of commitment of organizational members can be done by the readiness level of educational organization member capacity to suffer, to fight, and to sacrifice to ensure the realization of organizational vision and mission.

Usually in order to develop commitment of educational organization members, leaders have a tendency of transactional thinking shifting the whole ideality of educational organizations. It means that educational organization members will provide the highest commitment if they obtain reciprocal compensation such as visible or invisible rewards.

It is different from the transformational leadership in generating commitment of educational organization members. It is not using such types of transaction, since transformational behavior is against transactional behavior. One of the ways taken by this transformational leader is by empowering all organizational resources. This assumption is supported by the research conducted.

The pesantren method also results in the regeneration of leadership. Because a significant number of peasant leaders have perished from Covid-19. The regeneration program is implemented in many phases, including the institutional network phase, the recruitment phase for pesantren cadres, the program implementation phase, and the evaluation phase for pesantren cadres. Leadership cadre results in an increase in academic programs or scholarships for teachers of peasant schools. Teachers who pursue additional education are able to develop institutional networks and alter their conceptual frameworks. For this reason, a series of steps are taken, beginning with the establishment of partnerships with educational institutions. The subsequent step is the recruitment of cadres with superior loyalty standards, who meet academic requirements, and are prepared to return to boarding schools. The subsequent phase is implementation, during which pesantren create programs based on needs. During the evaluation phase, monitoring is conducted using existing academic outcomes.

The management of Islamic education institutions is an inseparable issue from political dynamics and public culture. In the context of pesantren, policymaking is also inseparable from political decisions which accommodate the interests of a group. There will be standards of behavior when organizational community understands
organizational goals derived from the organization but in a more specific manner. Another important role is the means as a form of medium to achieve goals including specialization of labor, compensation systems and organizational structures.

Six special methods that can be a succession of leadership in covid-19 handling and help overcome rejection of the boarding school policies, the leaders can use education and communication, participation and engagement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, manipulation and co-optation, explicit and implicit coercion.

The change strategy provides a strong basis for building learning organizations. In the practical order of stages that boarding schools perform as a learner organization.

First, as policy makers, it is important for leaders to prepare for the blueprint of the long-term program. Communication activities being a truly important component occur informally before and after every organized activity. Strong-cultured principals need to go further than just statements of bliss and statistical analysis in confirming organizational values. Second, the leadership of concentration on concepts and measures in building, caring for and developing a working system already structured in a Long-term program. The implementation of the program is done with systemic principles. As a practical and effective step in building a management team. The leadership also has a strategy in creating a positive culture through a more written understanding in meaning, management, and measurement of learning (MP2).
Third, the boarding school’s experience in executing financial strategies refers to operational aspects of the field that are optimally faceted due to the pandemic. Leaders are expected to realize that they not only cooperate but also dynamic human resources with the same future goals, and they need to develop opportunities to achieve organizational goals as a collective learning community of organizational societies. Fourth, strengthening partnership-based cooperation networks accompanied with systemic evaluations of the implementation of boarding school education and teaching as well as how the consequence system amid covid-19 pandemics. Models and strategies in this study are expected to provide a functional basis for the development of effective leadership concepts according to local wisdom as well as contribute to the development of organizations (capacity building) specially to boarding schools that have been considered less competitive.

The advent of boarding school educational institutions with strong leadership characteristics became a guarantee for the boarding school existence and help to leverage incompetent leaders and teams in nurturing and strengthening organizations. Thus, this concept also became a useful strategy for the practice of collective leadership.

Pesantren need time to develop post-covid system stability; in this case, education and the economy are the revitalization’s focal points. Anticipation of the covid circumstance in which all operational activity at Pesantren ceases in order to block the entrance door. Therefore, pesantren managers create priority projects aimed at fostering pesantren autonomy by bolstering business units. Cooperatively with several traditional institutions and local cooperatives, business units are strengthened.

The second objective is to modernize the yellow book learning system. In this instance, Pesantren implements innovation by purchasing digital libraries as online resources. The online collection of resources includes both paid and unpaid sources. The digital library's book sources are then categorized into core curriculum resources and supplementary curriculum materials.

Effective yellow book learning can be attained through unique learning techniques. Pesantren in Aceh Tenggara struggle to combine the official curriculum with the official curriculum. The diminished proportion of yellow book learning is insufficient to generate ulama. The integration plan has not yielded optimal results; coordinated efforts and policy innovation are required. The yellow book learning is
modernized using technology-based learning policies and the development of more diverse and adaptable teaching techniques.

Therefore, some Islamic boarding schools with superior infrastructure attempt to change learning using technology, whilst Islamic boarding schools with insufficient infrastructure prioritize human resource development.

Several Pesantren, like Darul Amin, Darul Iman, and Darul Azhar, have improved their human resources by implementing regeneration programs. Senior teachers in Pesantren are encouraged to pursue master's degrees. Meanwhile, those who have not been inspired to participate in the teacher relocation program. Following Covid, some pesantren formed institutional collaborations to collaborate in learning through teacher exchanges and requests for adiwiyata (dedicated teachers).

The Dayah Education Office also contributes to the rehabilitation of post-pesantren by providing operational support and facilities. The external response of the organization to pesantren has two important features: (a) intergovernmental organizations respond synchronously, and (b) the pandemic triggers widespread non-mainstream adaptation to the changing pesantren environment, providing opportunities for legitimizing work and program planning of existing activities.

External parties' responses are also explained using a rational choice viewpoint and a sociological institutionalist perspective. The government's justification is that the government does not provide much operational help because it is heavily in debt, and the pesantren have a private status. From a sociological standpoint, the pandemic is viewed as a shock of uncertainty, and its impact on pesantren organization is an adaptation and revitalization strategy to ensure that education in pesantren stays quality and empowered during the day.

An ideal leader will emerge from the awareness of his weakness. The results of personal analysis become a critical factor for learning, commitment to change, and refers to the value of self-moving and self-pretentiousness to build a solid example for organizational members. The results of this study show a construct of contextual leadership transformation, where leadership coaching and strengthening is carried out indirectly through third-party assistance namely society and the organizational environment.
The expected implications can extend the conceptual insight of effective leadership and the politics of education policy in general. Whereas the social implications are expected for boarding school educational institutions to be able to survive and perform maximally in carrying out the educational process thus contributing positively to the revitalization of post-covid-19 education.

CONCLUSION

The most fundamental difference between a learning organization with a traditional organization lies in the attitude between the two that should lead to resource development. The learning organization is a dynamic organization, an organization capable of providing encouragement and facilities to people within the organization to always improve its competence. Through six special methods (education and communication, participation and engagement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, manipulation and co-optation, explicit and implicit coercion) that can be constructive efforts in covid-19 handling. The effectiveness of the learning organization's leadership is accomplished with a series of stages through the building of the concept of learning organization. namely (1) the readiness of the long-term program blueprint; (2) the concentration of building, treating, and developing a working system; (3) the experience of the boarding in executing financial strategies refers to less optimal operational aspects due to pandemic; (4) strengthening the partnership-based cooperation networks accompanied by systemic evaluation of the conduct of education amid covid-19 pandemics. After articulating various perspectives of organizational insight, learning organizations developed through associations between past actions, their effects, and future operations. Findings can also be used as a framework for understanding and analyzing boarding school strategic policies amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

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