

The role of Kyai in developing Islamic social entrepreneurship as an effort to achieve SDGs in Islamic boarding schools

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Leadership Kyai, Islamic Social Entrepreneurship, Islamic Boarding Schools.</p>	<p><i>Kyai is a leader in an Islamic boarding school institution who has a central role as a founder, driver of change, and decision-maker. Kyai is the key to integrating Islamic values into a sustainable business model that aims not only for profit but also for non-profit. Therefore, The purpose of this study is to understand the role of kyai in optimizing the social function of Islamic boarding school business units, the problems faced in developing social entrepreneurship, and the steps to solve them. This study used a qualitative approach with an ethnographic case study design. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the phenomenon of the role of leadership in Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) in two Islamic boarding schools, namely PABS and PPSD. As a framework for exploring values and culture in two Islamic boarding schools, it had similarities but was different in the development of ISE. The results of this study indicated that the role of kyai as the founder and main driver, strategic policy maker, inspirator, and innovator. Using each leadership style approach conditionally. Visionary, transformational, servant, participatory, and bottom-up (organizationally) were the leadership styles of kyai PPSD, while visionary, autocratic, servant, participatory, and top-down were the leadership styles of kyai PABS. Both Islamic boarding schools implemented different strategies that were adjusted to the geographical, demographic, and cultural contexts. PABS, for example, focused on digitalization adaptation, HR development through training, and regeneration. PPSD implemented a Good Corporate Governance (GCG) strategy by utilizing sky marketing and business unit diversification.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Talking about the role of the kyai in an Islamic boarding school means talking about the role of the leader or the leadership style of the Islamic boarding school itself. This is because a kyai generally becomes the founder and to a certain extent the institution depends on the personal competence of the kyai's leadership (Nursetialloh, 2023). Leaders in non-profit institutions such as Islamic boarding schools have a role to serve their followers (Agard, 2011), p. 471). The role of kyai and management in the development of Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) in Islamic boarding schools is very strong. Kyai is a central figure in the Islamic boarding school, who is considered to have excellence in religious knowledge, which is then disseminated to the students (Sanrego & Taufiq, 2023). Kyai is also the founder of the Islamic boarding school, so the progress of the Islamic boarding school is very dependent on the kyai's ability to lead the Islamic boarding school. In some Islamic boarding schools, kyai plays a role as a leader and main driver in integrating religious values with economic and business activities in the Islamic boarding school (Rahayu et al., 2020).

PABS in West Kalimantan and PPSD in East Java are two examples of Islamic boarding schools that have successfully implemented ISE to support the operational needs of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions, and empower the environmental economy (Husman & Sakti, 2021; Rahayu et al., 2020). Both have developed various business units such as department stores, printing, agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperatives, and international restaurants. However, PABS with a rural geographical background faces challenges in the form of adaptation to digital technology, human resource development, and strengthening management. On the other hand, PPSD with a coastal geographical background has a more organized and professional business structure with support from more diverse business units, and experiences challenges in how to maintain the adequacy of quality human resources for a professional business, maintain current stability, business diversification and most importantly consistency of quality control through transparency in evaluation and monitoring, and this cannot be separated from the encouragement and motivation of the kyai towards the *asatidz* and his students (Asiyah, F., Hanif, M., & Prasetyo, 2024; Husman & Sakti, 2021; Prasetyo, 2024)

These two research objects are known to move and have a group identity based on the role identity of the kyai. It is also known that the entrepreneurial spirit and social spirit of students in Islamic boarding schools are transmitted from the kyai as the main actor in the Islamic boarding school group, (Rahayu et al., 2020), 2021; (Arar et al., n.d.) and (Kamal et al., 2023). Thus, theoretically, the social entrepreneurship and Islamic education activities carried out by PABS and PPSD initiated by the kyai are part of the concept of Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE), which practices Islamic law (benefiting others, maintaining relationships with fellow humans and with Allah) and strives to achieve *maqashid* sharia, (Boulven, F., Ramadani, V., & Hudaefi, 2018; Ramadani, V., Hudaefi, F. A., & Boulven, 2016; Zainol, N. A., Osman, M. H., & Omar, 2014) Studies on social entrepreneurship have been widely conducted in the last few decades. Various studies have explored the concept of social entrepreneurship, the characteristics of social entrepreneurs, and strategies for developing and funding social entrepreneurship (Bretos et al., 2020); (Jaafar & Alwazni, 2019); (Jaafar & Alwazni, 2019); Thompson et al., 2000). However, studies related to the role of kyai in the development of social entrepreneurship are still limited, so the author argues that this study is important, because the success of Islamic boarding schools and social entrepreneurship depends on the involvement of the kyai themselves, (Latipun et al., n.d.) (Samsudin et al., 2022); (Boulven, F., Ramadani, V., & Hudaefi, 2018); (Harrison & Roomi, 2018); (Fozia et al., 2016).

While significant studies have examined leadership roles in organizational and educational settings, the specific contribution of Kyai leadership styles in the development of Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) within Islamic boarding schools remains underexplored. Current literature often generalizes leadership frameworks without delving deeply into how visionary, transformational, and servant leadership styles uniquely influence the success of social entrepreneurship in rural and coastal Islamic boarding schools. Moreover, the interaction between leadership styles and contextual factors such as geography, demography, and cultural identity in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) has yet to be adequately addressed.

This study introduces a novel approach by analyzing and comparing the leadership styles of Kyai in two distinct Islamic boarding schools—PABS and PPSD—with varying geographical and cultural contexts. It highlights how visionary and adaptive leadership fosters the development of sustainable business units aligned with Islamic values and SDGs. By incorporating ethnographic case studies and advanced data analysis tools like NVIVO 12, this research provides fresh insights into the practical application of diverse leadership styles tailored to specific environmental and organizational challenges.

The main objective of this research is to explore the role of Kyai in fostering Islamic Social Entrepreneurship through strategic leadership styles, and to identify the best practices for optimizing business unit development in Islamic boarding schools. The study aims to provide practical recommendations for Kyai, educators, and policymakers to enhance the socio-economic impact of Islamic boarding schools. The benefits include fostering entrepreneurship rooted in Islamic values, empowering students and local communities, and contributing to the broader discourse on leadership and sustainable development in educational institutions.

METHOD

In order to answer the research questions in depth, the researcher used ethnographic research case studies with an inductive approach, which allowed the generation of a theoretical framework based on real facts in the field, as done by Cavalcanti (Cavalcanti, 2021). The data was collected using four methods, namely interviews, observation, data analysis, and data triangulation. The sampling method used was non-probability sampling in the form of purposive/judgmental sampling, which involved all management of boarding schools and business units as the main informants. This sample was selected based on the researcher's considerations and needs by the research's characteristics, involving six informants (Head of the Foundation, Islamic Boarding Schools Supervisor, Economic Supervisor, Head of Economy, and HRD Manager). The analysis in this study used a descriptive inductive method, and the data was processed using NVIVO 12.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the main informants of the PPSD economy, the author conducted a mapping into a table based on the coding results from NVIVO 12 as follows:

Table 1: Triangulation of data on the role of kyai and management in the PPSD economy

Codes	Interview Results	Informant
Initiator	<i>Abah started the business in this Islamic boarding school from the beginning, from the limestone business, fertilizer, and establishing a convenience store with Mother, then continued by us, his children. Abah was very firm in forbidding us from running the proposal. We must carry out the values taught by Sunan Drajat, Wenehono.</i>	Head of Economics PPSD

Codes	Interview Results	Informant
Visioner	<i>Our Abah is a visionary, firm and protective, and can see the future of the business. This boarding school must use management and motivate its subordinates to maximize their potential to think and work, but for educational management, it is returned to the teachers.</i>	Head of Economics PPSD
Visioner	<i>That's from the perspective of the visionary leader and Abah's dictatorship.</i>	Head of Economics PPSD
Loyal and Firm	<i>Our leader is very loyal but firm, let go of those who don't obey the rules.</i>	HR Manager
Strong and good controller	<i>Our leaders hold control firmly and well, an institution can be strong if its leaders are strong.</i>	Economic Manager PPSD

Source: Summary chart by NVIVO12, processed in 2024

Table 2: The role of kyai and management in optimizing the social role of PABS business units

No	Codes	Answer	Informant
1	Building and developing	<i>In the beginning, I built and developed the Islamic boarding school by farming, planting taro, and planting sahang in 2009. I gave the money to the cooperative.</i>	Caregiver
2	Motivating	<i>“Harrik Yadak Turzaq” Move your hand, then you will be given sustenance</i>	Caregiver
3	Visioner	<i>very supportive, very helpful,</i>	Chairman of the Foundation
4		<i>I agree with the improvements made, it is getting better day by day, hopefully, the existing business units will be developed, by improving them using tools (systems).</i>	Caregiver
5		<i>Abah is very supportive, we are the ones who continue Abah's struggle</i>	Chairman of the Economy
6	Final decision maker	<i>The role of the kyai in the Islamic boarding school economy is to be an advisor/motivator to HR so that they can always be consistent in carrying out their duties. Expanding the marketing of the Islamic boarding school Business Unit and the final decision maker.</i>	Manager

Source: Codes dan Word Cloud by NVIVO 12, processed in 2024

Description of Table 1 & 2: Based on the results of the triangulation of the interview results conducted, it can be stated that all informants agree that kyai in PPSD tend to have Visionary, Charismatic, Servant, and Transformative leadership types, while kyai in PABS have Visionary, Charismatic, Servant, and Autocratic leadership. These leadership types play a role alternately in adjusting to the conditions and situations in the field that the author has observed in the last six months.

In the field, the observation results showed that the leadership style of the two kyai has a contrasting leadership style, namely Top Down (PABS), and bottom-up (PPSD), which can also be seen from the results of business development, which the author then describes in the form of a concept as in the previous discussion. Then, to clarify the explanation of the role of kyai and management in the Islamic boarding school business unit theoretically, the author makes the following table:

Table 3: Leadership concepts relevant to research results

Leadership Types				Interview Results		Kyai Characteristics	
Charismatic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Autocratic Leadership	PPSD	PABS	PPSD	PABS
<i>Visioning and Articulation, Sensitivity to Environment, Use of Personal Power, Impression Management, Inspiring Ability, Dominant and Desire to Influence, Self-Confidence, Strong Moral Value, Competent.</i> (Humaisi et al., 2019); (Mazza, 2005); (Squires, 2018)).	<i>Servant, Empowers, Recounter of stories, Visionary, Androgynous, Networker, Team Builder, Morality, Humality, Authenticity, (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Apud, 2020; Mazza, 2005; Zhang et al., 2021).</i>	<i>Idealized Influence, Transformational, Optimistic, Welcome, Energetic, Idealized Influence. Behaviors: Risk-taking, leading from the front, setting an example with purpose, integrity, and consistency with values. Inspirational, Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration ((Mazza, 2005); (Squires, 2018); (Subandi & Hamid, 2021)).</i>	<i>Unilateral Decision Making, Tight Control, Lack of Tolerance to Disagreement, Focus on Status and Power, and Subordinate Dependence, (Body et al., 2017; Bott, 2016; Caillier, 2020; Kezar, 2012; Northouse, 2016).</i>	<i>Abah is visionary, firm, and nurturing and can see the future of the business. The management of this boarding school uses management and motivates its subordinates to maximize their potential to think and work, but for education management it is returned to the teachers.</i>	<i>Very supportive, very helpful. The role of the kyai in the Islamic boarding school economy is to be an advisor/motivation to HR so that they can always be consistent in carrying out their duties. Expanding the marketing of the Islamic boarding school business unit and making final decisions.</i>	<i>Focus on the target, protection, and give freedom.</i>	<i>Supporting Change, Protecting, Final Decision Maker.</i>

Source: Data processed in 2024

The role of kyai and management in the development of ISE in Islamic boarding schools is very strong. In PPSD and PABS, kyai has a role as policymakers, initiators, and facilitators, followed by the management structure afterward. This is because the kyai is a central figure in the Islamic boarding school who is considered to have excellence in religious knowledge, which is then disseminated to the students (Asiyah, F., Hanif, M., & Prasetyo,

2024). The kyai is also the founder of the Islamic boarding school, so the progress of the Islamic boarding school is very dependent on the kyai's ability to lead the Islamic boarding school. In some Islamic boarding schools, the kyai plays a role as a leader and main driver in integrating religious values with economic and business activities in the Islamic boarding school (Rahayu et al., 2020).

In the PPSD and PABS economy, the role of the kyai is very important. Kyai not only function as religious educators, but also as motivators and facilitators in developing entrepreneurship among students. Kyai Abdul Ghofur, for example, is known for his leadership that encourages the spirit of entrepreneurship in the Islamic boarding school (Bashori et al., 2024). Kyai acts as a role model not only in religious aspects but also in the business sector. The spirit of business is deeply embedded in the souls of kyai at PPSD, and they become role models for students in developing an entrepreneurial spirit. Islamic boarding school education through the study of books and making Kiai a role model is an integral part of the formation of Entrepreneur *Rahmatan Lil'alam* (ERA) at PPSD, (Husman & Sakti, 2021).

The reflection of the leadership style of the kyai in these two research objects is also striking based on the values adopted and the governance system applied to the development of the independence of each Islamic Boarding School, but has similarities to uphold the propagation of Allah SWT's religion through the provision of educational facilities, the loyalty of students and alumni, and establishing cooperation between Islamic Boarding Schools. The achievement of SDGs through ISE activities in these two Islamic Boarding Schools is reflected in the program for implementing affordable quality education, providing employment, improving the quality of human resources, gender equality, which are also interconnected, as done in research on the role of Social Entrepreneurship in all fields, (Cagarman et al., 2020); (Diaz-Sarachaga & Ariza-Montes, 2022); (Hermawan et al., 2024); (Boulven, F., Ramadani, V., & Hudaefi, 2018) .

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the role of kyai as the founder and main driver, strategic policy maker, inspirator, and innovator. Using each leadership style approach conditionally. Visionary, transformational, servant, participatory, and bottom-up (organizationally) are the leadership styles of kyai PPSD, while visionary, autocratic, servant, participatory, and top-down are the leadership styles of kyai PABS. Both Islamic boarding schools implemented different strategies that are adjusted to the geographical, demographic, and cultural contexts. PABS, for example, focuses on digitalization adaptation, HR development through training, and regeneration. PPSD implements a Good Corporate Governance (GCG) strategy by utilizing sky marketing and business unit diversification.

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