

A CASE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF USTAZ HANAFI'S LEADERSHIP ON POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN PERSATUAN SENI SILAT CEKAK MALAYSIA (PSSCM)

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Abstract: *Ustaz Hanafi founded Persatuan Seni Silat Cekak Malaysia (PSSCM) as a community-based, non-governmental organization (NGO) centered around the martial art of Silat Cekak. However, despite PSSCM's recognition as a reputable NGO in Malaysia, there is a lack of documented evidence showcasing Ustaz Hanafi's impact as its President in elevating Silat Cekak to this status. This study aims to scrutinize Ustaz Hanafi's role as the founder and first President of PSSCM, specifically in shaping the organization's policies and practices. The investigation employs interview-based research involving 15 active members directly taught by Ustaz Hanafi. The findings highlight Ustaz Hanafi's professionalism as a leader, evident in the establishment of a constitution and legal registration under the Malaysian Registry of Societies. Ustaz Hanafi introduced clothing policies tailored to different occasions, a rare practice within Silat associations of his time. Furthermore, he implemented economic sustainability policies, ensuring that both the headquarters and state branches possessed real estate assets. Ustaz Hanafi instilled good practices among PSSCM members, emphasizing the importance of keeping promises, maintaining trust, and avoiding falsehoods. Time punctuality was a focal point for him, demonstrating his commitment to discipline among PSSCM members. He integrated teaching, martial arts, and association as core administration elements to foster unity, successfully distinguishing personal and public interests. Respondents describe Ustaz Hanafi as an open-minded and transparent leader, willing to engage with individuals irrespective of their status or position. This study illuminates Ustaz Hanafi's crucial role in shaping PSSCM into an exemplary NGO, showcasing his professional leadership, innovative policies, and ethical practices while providing valuable insights for organizational development within Malaysia.*

Keywords: *Malay Silat, Martial Art, Leadership, Policy Implementation, Ethical Practices*

Introduction

Silat, a traditional form of martial arts with deep Malay cultural roots, has been a vital component of Southeast Asian civilization for centuries. Silat embodies not just physical combat techniques, but also spiritual and moral principles derived from Islamic teachings and local traditions. Generally, this martial art has traditionally been passed down through generations, often within closely-knit communities where it served both as a means of self-defense and a way to instill cultural values such as discipline, respect, and honor. In Malaysia, Silat has been recognized as a national heritage, with the government and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) playing pivotal roles in its preservation and promotion.

NGOs play a critical role in civil society and are usually founded by individuals or groups with common interests and objectives, focusing on a wide range of social, environmental, and humanitarian issues around the world (Parhad, Pusadkar, Patil, Shinde, & Nalge, 2024). They also serve as effective neutral platforms that bring people together, helping to reduce contradictions and shifts in perspective within a community, which can arise from differences in social status, age, gender, beliefs, or political ideologies (Janudin & Samah, 2020). In Malaysia, NGOs must generally register with the Registrar of Societies Malaysia (ROS) as mandated by the Societies Act 1966 (Ahmad Apandi, Shariffuddin, & Ali, 2016).

There are 84,879 active NGOs in Malaysia, spanning a variety of categories such as welfare, social services, recreation, mutual benefits, human rights, professions, trade, safety, religion, and culture and arts (Malaysia, 2024). Multiple studies have explored the impact of NGOs on Malaysian society, emphasizing their role in promoting community welfare. In a study by (Abiddin, Ibrahim, & Abdul Aziz, 2022), the authors reviewed the role of NGOs in fostering sustainable community development in Malaysia. They suggested several ways to enhance NGO effectiveness, including improved networking and teamwork among stakeholders, capability-building and training for ongoing quality-of-life improvements, robust financial planning, and continuous consultation and advocacy to promote sustainable community development.

A more recent case study by (Ahmad, Arshad, & Zakuan, 2024) examined the roles of NGOs within Malaysian communities. Their study, which included surveys and semi-structured interviews with selected NGOs and gathered public opinion, concluded that NGOs play a critical role at the grassroots level. They help the government achieve its broader national goals, aligning with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2023, which aims to enhance economic growth and ensure benefits reach people across different income groups, races, and geographic regions. However, research on NGOs in Malaysia often lacks a cohesive focus, resulting in limited comprehensive data on their specific activities and impacts. Additionally, despite the existence of around 3,000 registered martial arts associations with the ROS, there are limited studies dedicated to exploring NGOs related to Silat, pointing to an area in need of further investigation.

The development of Silat in Malaysia is closely linked to the formation of organized societies and NGOs dedicated to its practice and teaching. The Persatuan Seni Silat Cekak Malaysia (PSSCM), founded by Ustaz Hanafi in 1971, is one such organization that has gained recognition for its commitment to preserving the authentic form of Seni Silat Cekak while fostering a sense of civilized community among its members. The ROS categorizes Persatuan Seni Silat Cekak Malaysia (PSSCM) under arts and culture, with martial arts as a sub-category. PSSCM, registered in Kuala Lumpur, operates through 13 branches spread across each state in Peninsular Malaysia.

Ustaz Hanafi's structured approach to organizing PSSCM has played a significant role in promoting and sustaining Seni Silat Cekak in Malaysia for over half a century. Through this organization, Seni Silat Cekak not only survives but thrives, gaining acceptance across diverse communities and contributing to the broader narrative of Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia. A prior study on Ustaz Hanafi's leadership in PSSCM was conducted by (Ismail, Ahmad, & Majid, 2023). This study addressed contemporary issues affecting the Malay-Muslim community, including language identity crises, cultural and religious confusion, and social problems, particularly among younger generations. A key motivation behind Ustaz Hanafi's founding of PSSCM was to educate its members and elevate the dignity of the Malay nation through martial arts. This intention is reflected in PSSCM's mission statement, which aims to guide and shape members of PSSCM, and the Malay community in general, to unite in defense of religion, race, and country (PSSCM, 1975). The study further described Ustaz Hanafi's leadership methods through firsthand examples from the author's personal experiences. However, a broader exploration of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership could be achieved by including insights from a more diverse group of PSSCM members who were active during his tenure.

Despite the recognition of PSSCM as a reputable NGO in Malaysia, there remains a dearth of documented evidence explaining the influence of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership on elevating Seni Silat Cekak to its esteemed status. While Ustaz Hanafi's charismatic leadership is acknowledged, there exists a gap in identifying the specific policies and practices he implemented to shape PSSCM's trajectory. This knowledge gap hampers the comprehensive assessment of Ustaz Hanafi's impact on the organization's development and the broader advancement of Seni Silat Cekak within Malaysia. Furthermore, the absence of detailed insights into Ustaz Hanafi's leadership could impede the replication of successful strategies and hinder the organizational growth of similar NGOs or martial arts associations. Thus, there is an imperative need to scrutinize Ustaz Hanafi's role within PSSCM, examining his leadership strategies, policy implementations, and ethical practices to unravel the underlying mechanisms driving the organization's success.

The primary aim of this study is to examine the key competencies and characteristics of Ustaz Hanafi's role in the establishment and development of PSSCM, with a particular focus on how his leadership influenced the organization's policies and practices. By examining his contributions to PSSCM, the study seeks to identify the key elements that shaped the organization's philosophy, governance, and sustainability. This research aims to provide insights into Ustaz Hanafi's professional approach, ethical standards, and innovative policies. The findings will offer a deeper understanding of how effective leadership can promote the growth of community-based organizations like PSSCM, contributing to broader discussions on leadership in NGOs and martial arts organizations.

Methodology

The study on Ustaz Hanafi's leadership in PSSCM was conducted using a qualitative approach, focusing on gathering detailed information to explore the impact of his leadership on the organization's policies and practices. This approach was chosen to gain in-depth insights into Ustaz Hanafi's role in shaping PSSCM's direction and ethos.

To achieve the study's objectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 active members of PSSCM who had direct experience learning from Ustaz Hanafi. The respondents were selected after having a preliminary meeting with 3rd President and Guru Utama of PSSCM, Datuk Haji Maideen Kadir Shah which is based on their close association with the

founder and their long-standing involvement in the organization to ensure that their insights would be credible and relevant. The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed accounts of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership style, his contributions to the organization's structure, and the practices and policies he implemented.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for thorough analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights from the participants' responses (Cernasev & Axon, 2023). This method allowed for the extraction of significant information regarding Ustaz Hanafi's leadership characteristics, such as his dedication, professionalism, and emphasis on ethical practices, as well as specific initiatives he inspired, like clothing policies and economic sustainability strategies.

To ensure reliability and validity, data triangulation was applied by cross-referencing the interview findings with PSSCM's historical documents, including the organization's constitution, mission statements, and records from the ROS. In summary, this study employed a qualitative methodology with semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis, and data triangulation to explore Ustaz Hanafi's leadership and its impact on PSSCM's development.

Result and Discussion

Influence on Organizational Policies

Ustaz Hanafi's policy implementations were pivotal for the growth and sustainability of PSSCM. Feedback from respondents highlighted several key aspects of the policies introduced by Ustaz Hanafi during his tenure as leader. Datuk Haji Maideen Kadir Shah noted:

“Ustaz Haji Hanafi exhibits exceptional competence in management and administration, consistently founding his decisions on constitutional principles and prioritizing compliance with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).”

This statement highlighted Ustaz Hanafi's proficiency in developing and enforcing the organizational constitution within PSSCM. His structured approach ensured that the organization operated with a clear set of guidelines, promoting consistency and accountability. By establishing proper constitution, Ustaz Hanafi not only fortified the organization's foundation but also set a precedent for ethical governance and effective administration, crucial for the long-term success and resilience of PSSCM.

Additionally, Ustaz Hanafi introduced formal clothing attire guidelines for various occasions, which have since become established policies within PSSCM. Dr. Roziyah Abdullah remarked:

“Ustaz Haji Hanafi consistently emphasized the importance of dressing appropriately for different events.”

This focus on appropriate attire not only reinforced discipline and unity among members but also helped project a professional and respectful image of PSSCM to the public. Research indicates that clothing significantly impacts first impressions and initial assessments of individuals (Lennon & Davis, 1989; Lower, 2018). (Wood & Benitez, 2003) suggest that those dressed in formal attire are perceived as more credible, are taken more seriously, and are more likely to be regarded as "upper management material" by top executives. Additionally, (Slepian, Ferber, Gold, & Rutchick, 2015) mentioned that formal attire signals positive occupational

attributes, such as adherence to norms and professionalism. Ustaz Hanafi's attention to detail in dress codes reflected his broader commitment to maintaining high standards within the organization, ensuring that members presented themselves in a manner that honored the traditions and values of Malay culture while also adapting to contemporary professional attire.

Ustaz Hanafi's influence on PSSCM's administration is also evident in the organization's economic development. Economic development and sustainability are paramount for any organization, as highlighted in a recent study by (Ahmad et al., 2024), wherein 73.2% of respondents cited a lack of financial resources as the primary challenge in supporting NGO operations and fulfilling their community roles. Ustaz Hanafi initiated the acquisition of real estate assets for PSSCM, starting with the establishment of the Bangunan Silat Cekak headquarters in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur. This headquarters remains in optimal use today, serving as a central operational hub for the organization. Datuk Haji Maideen highlighted that Ustaz Hanafi's vision of having a dedicated headquarters in Kuala Lumpur during PSSCM's early days inspired similar initiatives in each state branch. As a result of Ustaz Hanafi's efforts to ensure sustainable economic development, all state branches now own land and real estate assets. These assets have become crucial development hubs, facilitating the promotion of Seni Silat Cekak across various communities and contributing to the human capital development of PSSCM members and the broader community. This strategic approach to economic sustainability has not only strengthened the organization's foundation but also enhanced its capacity to promote and preserve the heritage of Seni Silat Cekak.

Influence on Practices and Standards

Ustaz Hanafi instilled numerous ethical practices and standards in PSSCM members. He advocated for firm principles, as Dr. Roziah noted:

“Ustaz Haji Hanafi educates us, both directly and indirectly, to be disciplined, trustworthy, punctual, and clean.”

Mr. Safaran mentioned that Ustaz Hanafi consistently instructed PSSCM members to avoid lying, breaking promises, and shirking responsibilities. This emphasis on honesty, integrity, and loyalty taught PSSCM members the importance of maintaining trust and upholding commitments in all aspects of life.

Ustaz Hanafi's professionalism in separating personal matters from association affairs further demonstrated his integrity and dedication. He ensured that decisions and actions were based on collective interests and organizational objectives, reinforcing his image as a responsible and ethical leader. During an interview, Datuk Haji Maideen shared:

“Ustaz Haji Hanafi will not associate personal matters with the organization's commitments.” This was exemplified by an incident recounted by Dr. Abdul Majid, where Ustaz Hanafi asked his son to learn silat from other instructors during training sessions rather than at home, demonstrating his commitment to maintaining unity by separating personal and public interests.

Moreover, Ustaz Hanafi was described as an open-minded and transparent leader, engaging with individuals regardless of their status or position. Mr. Zafri mentioned:

“Ustaz Haji Hanafi is a wise man, good at capturing the hearts of his students” and “Ustaz Haji Hanafi likes to get along with his students, joking and being friendly.”

This approachability and warmth helped foster a positive and inclusive environment within PSSCM. Such conduct resonates with the principles of servant leadership, as outlined by (Gani, Utama, Jaharuddin, & Maulianza, 2022), which prioritize attributes like attentive listening, empathy, and dedication to fostering personal development.

Ustaz Hanafi's emphasis on ethical practices and standards was integral to the human capital development among PSSCM members. His advocacy for discipline, trustworthiness, punctuality, and cleanliness instilled a strong moral foundation within the organization. By prioritizing honesty, integrity, and loyalty, Ustaz Hanafi equipped members with essential values that transcended their martial arts training, preparing them for broader societal roles. His professionalism in separating personal and organizational matters ensured decisions were made in the best interest of the collective, fostering a culture of responsibility and ethical conduct. Furthermore, his open-minded and approachable leadership style created an inclusive and supportive environment, encouraging personal growth and unity. Through these practices, Ustaz Hanafi not only preserved the integrity of Seni Silat Cekak but also significantly contributed to the development of well-rounded, ethical individuals within PSSCM.

Comprehensive Analysis of Ustaz Hanafi's Leadership

The thematic analysis of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership in the PSSCM unveils four primary themes that encapsulate his approach and impact: Visionary Leadership, Effective Management, Commitment to Discipline, and Ethical Integrity. These themes were derived from interviews with various respondents, who highlighted key aspects of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership style and contributions.

Visionary Leadership and Modernization

Ustaz Hanafi's leadership stands out for its visionary perspective and commitment to modernizing Malay Silat organizations, particularly PSSCM. He had a clear and forward-thinking outlook on the potential and growth of Seni Silat Cekak, demonstrated through his strategic initiatives. One significant contribution was the modernization of Seni Silat Cekak through the official registration of PSSCM with ROS. Ustaz Hanafi also crafted the constitution of PSSCM, ensuring clarity on the organization's mission, vision, and strategies for both current and future members. This proactive measure aimed to prevent any deviation from its original objectives. Through these strategic initiatives, Hanafi ensured that PSSCM remained relevant and accessible to contemporary society, thereby cementing its place in the modern era. The concept of visionary leadership, extensively examined in research, underscores the potential for such leadership to produce long-lasting positive outcomes that are desired (M. Taylor, J. Cornelius, & Colvin, 2014).

Effective Management and Articulate Communication

Effective management and articulate communication was a cornerstone of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership. His ability to manage the organization efficiently, including the acquisition of real estate assets and the establishment of a central headquarters, demonstrated his strategic acumen. The establishment of Bangunan Silat Cekak in Kuala Lumpur was a testament to Ustaz Hanafi's effective management. Additionally, respondents mutually agreed that his articulate communication skills were crucial in conveying his vision and principles to PSSCM members, fostering a unified direction and shared understanding. This clarity in communication helped build a cohesive and motivated organization. Ustaz Hanafi's demonstrated effective leadership and communication skills align with the leadership competencies identified in a qualitative research study conducted by (Masoud & Basahal, 2023) in non-profit organizations.

Commitment to Discipline and Firmness

A significant aspect of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership was his unwavering commitment to discipline. He was known for his strict adherence to high standards and firm enforcement of rules, which played a vital role in maintaining the integrity and professionalism of PSSCM. As Mr. Safaran shared:

“Ustaz Hanafi always emphasized the importance of keeping promises, maintaining trust, and avoiding falsehoods.”

This discipline was not just about maintaining order but also about instilling a sense of responsibility and integrity among members. Respondents consistently highlighted his strictness and firm stance as key factors in shaping their character and commitment to the organization.

Ethical Integrity and Wise Judgement

Ustaz Hanafi's leadership was deeply rooted in ethical integrity and wise judgment. His emphasis on honesty, trustworthiness, and separating personal matters from organizational commitments highlighted his dedication to ethical practices. His ability to make sound, wise decisions reinforced his reputation as a responsible and ethical leader. This integrity was crucial in building trust within the organization and ensuring that actions and decisions were always aligned with the collective interests of PSSCM.

Collectively, Ustaz Hanafi's leadership in PSSCM can be understood through the lens of these four primary themes. His visionary leadership and efforts to modernize Silat organization ensured its relevance and growth. His effective management and articulate communication fostered unity and strategic development. His commitment to discipline and firmness maintained high standards and integrity among members within the organization. Finally, his ethical integrity and wise judgment established a foundation of trust and responsibility. These themes collectively highlight the multifaceted and impactful nature of Ustaz Hanafi's leadership, contributing significantly to the enduring success of PSSCM.

Conclusion

The investigation into Ustaz Hanafi's pivotal role as the founder and first President of PSSCM reveals a profound impact on the organization's trajectory. Through the qualitative analysis method, this study successfully examines Ustaz Hanafi's contributions to policy-making and organizational practices within PSSCM. Ustaz Hanafi emerges as an epitome of professionalism, exemplified by his establishment of a constitution and legal registration under the Malaysian ROS. His innovative policies, such as tailored clothing regulations and measures to ensure economic sustainability through real estate assets, set PSSCM apart within the broader Silat community. Moreover, Ustaz Hanafi's emphasis on integrity and time punctuality practices underscores his commitment to excellence. Respondents' testimonies described Ustaz Hanafi as an inclusive and transparent leader, transcending social hierarchies to engage with individuals from all backgrounds. His leadership ethos, characterized by a balance of personal and public interests, has been instrumental in shaping PSSCM into a model NGO in Malaysia. This study highlights Ustaz Hanafi's essential role in the development of PSSCM, emphasizing his innovative policies, ethical leadership and resourceful characters.

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b. Interviews respondents

1. Datuk Haji Maideen Bin Kadir Shah
2. Ar. Dr. Haji Abdul Bin Ismail Majid

3. En. Safaran Bin Hj Ahmad
4. En Roslin Bin Ali Omar
5. Tn. Haji Ghazali Bin Abdul Rahman
6. Tn. Haji Zafri Bin Miar
7. En. Rosman Bin Mat Deli
8. Dr. Roziah Binti Abdullah
9. En. Mohd Shafie Bin Mohd Johari
10. En. Abdul Karim Bin Mohd Saeid
11. Pn. Faridah Binti Abu Bakar
12. Pn. Sabariah Binti Safar
13. Pn. Norieda Binti Ramli
14. Tn. Hj Mohd Izham Bin Ismail
15. Tn. Hj Zainol Bin Saifuddin