

# IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN LEADERSHIP CHARACTER BUILDING AND ISLAMIC MANAGEMENT IN MADRASAH STUDENTS (CASE STUDY AT DARUNNAJAH ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL)

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**Abstract:** *In the midst of leadership crisis challenges at the local and national levels, the Muslim community faces an urgent need for prospective leaders with integrity and Islamic character. History records many great figures, such as Sutan Syahrir, Buya Hamka, and General Sudirman, who have demonstrated strong and visionary non-formal leadership. However, currently, it is difficult to find national leadership figures who were born from Islamic boarding school circles. Great hopes are now focused on Islamic educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools, which have great potential in producing future leaders. This research examines the implementation of the education system at the Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School, which has adopted the concept of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People from Stephen R. Covey. This approach is in line with Islamic teachings and leadership inspired by Indonesian Muslim figures. By dividing education into junior and senior phases, this Islamic boarding school focuses on developing character, personal habits, as well as leadership and management skills. Senior students at Darunnajah are given responsibility for managing Islamic boarding school life, which is a place for them to develop leadership, management skills and problem-solving abilities. This system aims to produce future leaders who are not only competent, but also have a strong foundation of Islamic character. The conclusion of this research confirms that the problem-solving-based approach applied at Darunnajah has great potential in producing quality leaders. The implication of these findings is the importance of continuous evaluation in the Islamic education system in order to strengthen leader cadre formation. It is hoped that future research can further examine the role of Islamic boarding school students in the context of national politics.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Leadership, Character Formation, Leader Cadreiiation*

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## Introduction

Indonesia is currently facing great challenges in terms of leadership, as stated by Wiwoho, Rector of Sebelas Maret University (UNS) (Khoirunisa, 2022). As a Muslim-majority country, expectations for the emergence of leaders who are able to bring benefits and goodness to the entire community are very high. However, in recent years, leader figures from among santri have rarely been present in the Pilkada and Pilpres events. At the local and national levels, the challenge of finding leaders with strong character and integrity from among Muslims, especially santri, is still significant. This shows that although Islamic education plays an important role in building society, it still faces challenges in producing the expected national leaders.

In the past, many figures had a religious background, such as General Soedirman, Prince Diponegoro, K.H. Agus Salim, Buya Hamka, HOS. Cokroaminoto, Muhammad Hatta, and Sutan Syahrir. They were not only based on strong religious values, but were also known for their leadership qualities in line with Islamic teachings: *sidiq* (honest), *amanah* (trustworthy), *fathonah* (intelligent), and *tabligh* (communicative or conveying the truth). These values made them respected and influential leaders in the national arena. After this era, santri figures on the national stage became increasingly rare, with Gus Dur (KH. Abdurrahman Wahid) as one of the santri figures who made it to the presidency, despite the challenges of his time.

West Java, as the province with the largest number of pesantren in Indonesia, has great potential in producing prospective leaders from among santri. According to 2021 data, there are 8,728 pesantren spread across 27 districts and cities in West Java, with the largest concentration in Tasikmalaya and Bogor. In Tasikmalaya, there are 1,344 pesantren, while in Bogor there are 1,093 (Alhamidi, 2022). This condition provides a great opportunity for these areas to produce local leaders with santri characters, especially those who prioritise the values of *sidiq*, *amanah*, *fathonah*, and *tabligh*.

Although Islamic teachings remain consistent and Islamic boarding schools continue to grow throughout the country, in reality, the Islamic education system has not fully produced national figures who are able to become role models in accordance with the demands of the times. This raises interesting questions related to how Islamic education is implemented to form leadership characters. This paper is a case study that discusses the implementation of Islamic education in Pesantren Darunnajah, especially in shaping the character of leadership and management of santri, by emphasising the importance of Islamic values, such as *sidiq*, *amanah*, *fathonah*, and *tabligh*, in facing today's leadership challenges.

## Discussion

### Islamic Education

According to Abdurrahman Al Nahlawi, education is defined as Al tarbiyah. Etymologically, the word Al tarbiyah comes from three (3) words. First, *Rabba-yarbu* which means to add, develop, grow. This definition is based on Surah Ar Rum verse 39. In this interpretation, education is defined as a way to develop the potential of students. The second meaning, derived from the word *Rabiya-yarba-tarbiyah* which means to grow (*nasya'a*) to become big / mature. In this context, education serves to mature the physical, psychological, spiritual and social aspects of students. The third meaning is *Rabba-yarubbu-tarbiyah* which means to repair, maintain, maintain, manage, guide both physically, psychologically, spiritually and socially.

According to Al Nahlawi, Islamic education implied in Al Tarbiyah contains four elements of approach. Namely first, maintaining and maintaining the fitrah of students towards adulthood. Second, developing all the potential of students towards perfection, third, directing all the nature of students towards perfection, fourth, carrying out education in a planned and gradual manner. (Mappasiara, 2018).

This opinion is in line with Quroish Shihab's explanation that *rabb* is rooted in the word *tarbiyah*, which means to direct step by step towards perfection. (Shihab, 2002) According to Mohamad Hatta, Islamic education is a construction of religious thought and modern science consisting of sociology, history and philosophy. His thinking was implemented by establishing the Islamic College in 1945. (Ilham Nur Utomo, 2020). The high school founded by Hatta was an effort to build an Islamic Education system that was able to produce leaders who were religious, respected tradition and at the same time understood their society. Hatta was well aware that Indonesian society is a multicultural society that has many differences. These differences, if not managed, will create problems for the rift of the nation. Hatta received a coherent Islamic education, where he grew up in a large religious family environment, strong Minang customs, and modern western education. Hatta's views are in line with the concept of Islamic education pioneered by Ahmad Dahlan. Islamic education according to Ahmad Dahlan is an effort to form Muslims who are of noble character, knowledgeable in religious and general sciences, broad in their views and willing to fight for their society. (Balqist, 2021)

It can be concluded that Islamic Education can be interpreted as a process of behavioural change marked by growth and development, potential after going through the process of teaching and learning so as to produce knowledge, skills and social care as a stage towards the perfection of a Muslim self.

### **Leadership and Management Concepts of Indonesian Islamic Leaders**

Leadership according to the large Indonesian dictionary is defined as about the leader, how to lead while management is the concept of how a leader manages an organisation effectively in order to achieve its goals. Management skills will enable leaders to increase productivity, facilitate decision making, increase collaboration and objectivity. (Uma.ac.id, 2021). One type of leadership that is interesting to study is KH Ahmad Dahlan. He has relativist inclusive leadership, which is a leader who sees differences as positive. Ahmad Dahlan was a transformative leader who continued to innovate and move forward. (Rasyid, 2018). Ahmad Dahlan has the characteristics of a leader who uses individualised consideration and inspirational motivation, idealised influence and intellectual stimulus. Ahmad Dahlan believed that education was the root of the problem that was the reason why the Indonesian nation, especially Muslims, was left behind. Ahmad Dahlan through Muhammadiyah has transformed society. Dahlan made the Muhammadiyah organisation move to purify (puritanism) while constructing the economic and social structure of the people. KH Ahmad established Muhammadiyah as a puritanical movement but he himself was a moderate figure. He sought to cleanse the community of superstition, heresy and khurafat while carrying out a charity movement that offered solutions to the problems of the people. Muhammadiyah has business units in the fields of economy, education, orphanages, health centres and various social charities. Currently Muhammadiyah is known as the richest Islamic organisation in the world. (Nurdin, 2024)

The Muhammadiyah movement is imbued with the spirit of Al Ma'un, namely the development of general welfare for the orphans and the poor. It can be said that KH Ahmad Dahlan's

leadership invites a leader to be able to overcome problems that pollute tawhid while solving the economic and social problems of Muslims, especially among the marginalised. He is a leader who invites people to become rich and empowered. Being economically capable and enriching Muhammadiyah so that it can expand its role in serving the ummah, instead of seeking wealth by hijacking Muhammadiyah. In this context, the leadership teachings that he exemplified are relevant to the current situation. Indonesia needs leaders who strive to serve the people. What is reflected in Ahmad Dahlan's leadership character is a type of leadership called *servant theory*. *Servant theory* emphasises the concept of leadership that is oriented towards serving its members/followers.

The characteristics of leaders according to Hatta are that those who become leaders should have religious as well as modern qualifications and respect for adat. Religious education alone may be able to produce ulama but without being equipped with other sciences, they will not have a sharp understanding of the relationship between religion and society. This is why leadership from among Muslims did not surface. Hatta explained the importance of the coherence of religion and sociology. An understanding of sociology will sharpen religious views in the society he wants to lead. (Ilham Nur Utomo, 2020) The type of leadership developed by Hatta is a type of cultural intelligence approach leadership that emphasises the importance of cultural intelligence to understand cultural differences, intercultural communication, and adaptation in global situations.

According to behavioural theory, good leaders are those who successfully provide role models so that the leader's behaviour is adopted by their followers. In this theory, good leaders are those who are able to appreciate their followers, inspire, provide moral and material support. According to this theory, leaders can be moulded through training and experience to improve leadership effectiveness. Prince Diponegoro is one of the leaders who has these criteria. This is inseparable from his social background who was a noble blood but used to live with commoners. Diponegoro was able to build warm social relations with various groups. (Cahyo Wibowo, 2023)

KH Hasyim Asy'ari showed self-sacrificing leadership, firm against the colonisers by issuing a resolution of jihad against the Dutch, issuing a fatwa haram to join the Dutch mercenary army but he was also a moderate. Hasyim Asy'ari along with other mass organisations including Muhammadiyah joined the GAPI (Indonesian Political Association) to fight in the Dutch parliament. (Fathurijal Muhlisin, 2022). As a leader Hasyim Asy'ari not only educated the people in matters of worship and morality but also engaged in political struggle. The realm that is currently barely touched by the santri because of the assumption that politics is not a clean area. Asy'ari is a charismatic leader but in leadership theory his characteristics show a leader with a spiritual leadership approach. In spiritual leadership theory a leader is able to motivate his followers and direct them to find the purpose of life through their work and work in the organisation. His followers were not afraid to wage jihad against the Dutch because as a spiritual leader he had guided his followers to find their true purpose.

According to Wiwoho, in facing the challenges of the 21st century, we must equip ourselves with the necessary skills. These skills *include complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility*. (Khoirunisa, 2022) Hasyim Asy'ari, Ahmad Dahlan, Mohammad Hatta, Prince Diponegoro they all have the competencies mentioned above. In other words, the regeneration of leadership concepts of

Islamic leaders in the era of the independence struggle is still relevant to be applied in the current Islamic Education system. The Islamic Education system is required to produce leaders who have skills in solving complex problems, are able to think critically, have creativity, are competent in people management, are able to coordinate with others, have emotional intelligence, are able to make judgements and make the right decisions, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility.

The theories and perspectives of the experts above can be conveyed that leadership based on Islamic values, as exemplified by figures such as KH Ahmad Dahlan, KH Hasyim Asy'ari, Mohammad Hatta, and Prince Diponegoro, is still very relevant to the leadership challenges in the modern era. Leadership characteristics that are inclusive, *servant leadership*, culturally intelligent, and based on spirituality and good management skills are key in overcoming the leadership crisis faced by Indonesia today. Islamic education needs to be more adaptive and innovative in implementing these leadership values in order to produce leaders who are not only morally and spiritually strong, but also competent in facing global social, economic and political dynamics.

### **Character Building of Leadership and Management in Darunnajah Students**

Darunnajah is committed to producing a generation of *mutafaqqih fiddin* or a generation that studies religious knowledge with the aim of forming a cadre of leaders of the people and nation. This institution instils the spirit of sincerity, simplicity, independence, ukhuwah Islamiah, as well as freedom of thought and behaviour based on the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, in order to increase piety to Allah SWT.

One of Darunnajah's big visions is to become a leader regeneration institution that is *mutafaqqih fiddin*. This effort to produce leaders is a strategic choice in the task of preparing Indonesia's future generation. In the process of leadership character education, students are trained to "want to be led and ready to lead."

In the junior education stage (grades 1-4 of TMI), the focus of santri character development lies in the formation of a good and righteous personality. Santris are taught to become active members of society, starting from members of the room, class, rayon, to extracurricular clubs. In this phase, santri practice living in the dynamics of a very dynamic pesantren, learning to be ready to be led by seniors and administrators, making them the object of an educational system that educates them to be ready to become leaders.

Interestingly, the concept of character education in Darunnajah has actually long practised ideas similar to the theory proposed by Stephen R. Covey in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The habits taught by Covey, known as the 7 Habits of Effective People, are in line with the values and system of TMI that have been implemented in Darunnajah. The seven habits are:

1. *Be Proactive*
2. *Begin With End In Mind*
3. *Put First Things First*
4. *Think Win-Win*
5. *Seek first to understand, then to be understood.*
6. *Synergy*
7. *Sharpen the Saw* (Stephen, 1989)

In one of his derivative books that specifically discusses leadership, *Leader in Me*, it is explained that leadership starts from building the quality of oneself. building habits that become the foundation for oneself to be able to lead others (Stephen, 1997). This is in line with what is taught at the cottage:

إِنْدَا بِنْفْسِكَ

"Start with yourself" (HR. Muslim)

In the early phase of boarding school life (grades 1-4 TMI), santri are taught to recognise themselves and build good habits. The three main habits introduced are:

1. **Be Proactive** - Students are trained to take responsibility for their own decisions and understand that every action has consequences.
2. **Begin with End in Mind** - Students are taught to have a vision and purpose, not only in this world, but also for the hereafter.
3. **Put First Things First** - Students learn to prioritise, prioritising the important and useful things.

In the TMI (*Tarbiyyatul Mu'allimin/at Islamiyyah*) education system, santri start as objects in grades 1-4, where they follow a set system. They learn through highly structured boarding school rules, similar to a public boarding school. However, upon entering grades 4-6 of TMI, the role of the santri changes to subject, where they are responsible for guiding their younger siblings. At this stage, santri learn to be leaders and *servants* for their juniors, a concept of subjectivity education that distinguishes the TMI system from other educational institutions.

After building character through self-focused habit formation, they are taught how to interact with others and build a pattern of living together. Santri are positioned as part of the educational process of managing life in the hut. They begin to learn to work with other santri partners in the structure, build work patterns with the Darunnajah Cipining Santri Organisation (OSDC) or the Scout Movement Coordinator (KGP), and learn to drive and work within the system. Santri are grouped based on various backgrounds, such as residence (room, dormitory, or council), education (class, language club, or academic club), activities, interests, and others.



**Image 1:** Inauguration of Darunnajah Cipining Student Organisation (OSDC) and Scout Movement Coordinator (KGP) Management



**Image 2:** Oath-taking in the Inauguration of Darunnajah Cipining Santri Organisation (OSDC) and Scout Movement Coordinator (KGP)

The change in the role of santri from objects to subjects at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah has a huge impact on their self-confidence. Senior santri are given the responsibility to manage the daily life of the pesantren, from planning to programme evaluation, with the guidance of teachers. This is in accordance with 21st century leadership skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and people management (Khoirunisa, 2022).

Santri also learn to deal with co-operation, conflict and competition. They are trained to think "win-win" (finding the best solution for all parties), listening before speaking, and synergising with others. These habits help students become wise and empathetic leaders, able to work together and understand others.

At the end of the education period, santri conduct a reflection process through the habit of "Sharpen the Saw," where they refresh their lessons and final preparation before the exam (Mahrus Amin, 2022). With this approach, Darunnajah succeeds in producing leaders who are able to manage themselves and others effectively.

### Conclusions

This journal examines the leadership crisis in Indonesia, especially among students and graduates of Islamic education, despite the existence of many Islamic boarding schools. Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School faces this challenge by implementing an integrated education system Tarbiyyatul Mu'allimin/at Islamiyyah (TMI) that aims to produce leaders of the people and nation who understand religion deeply (*mutafaqqih fiddin*). This system adapts Stephen R. Covey's *"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"* concept, which is in line with Islamic teachings and the leadership of Islamic figures such as KH Ahmad Dahlan, Mohammad Hatta, and KH Hasyim Asy'ari.

Darunnajah divides education into two phases: junior (grades 1-4 TMI) and senior (grades 4-6 TMI). In the junior phase, santri focus on character building, self-habits, and readiness to follow

the pesantren system. In the senior phase, they act as managers of pesantren life, honing leadership, management, and problem-solving skills through various internal organisations.

Santri are trained in social skills such as "win-win" thinking, empathetic listening and co-operation. At the end of their education, they are asked to relinquish their structural positions and reflect on the lessons learnt. The system is designed to produce leaders of Islamic character, with the managerial and leadership skills needed to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Through this approach, Darunnajah seeks to answer the leadership crisis by preparing a generation of leaders who not only understand religion but are also competent in managing modern society and providing innovative solutions for the people and the nation.

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