

## Leadership of the Kiai in Building a Culture of Discipline in the Santri Organization of Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA) at Pondok Pesantren Rafah Bogor

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### ABSTRACT

*The highest authority in an Islamic boarding school organization is the leadership, commonly called Kiai. There are various types of Kiai leadership, including charismatic, transformational, and autocratic. The object of this research is the Rafah Islamic Boarding School, where the Kiai at this object plays a role as a central figure in building the Islamic boarding school's organizational culture of discipline. The research method used was descriptive qualitative by conducting observations, interviews, and documentation of several informants, including the Education Bureau, the student organization, and several other students outside the organization. The research results obtained were that Kiai Rafah agreed to the rules and prohibitions in student discipline by positioning himself as that party, such as the obligation to pray in congregation at the mosque. When implementing these rules, he also set an example by carrying out this habit at all times, namely, praying in congregation. Likewise with other rules. This habit is what generates a culture of discipline among organizational members in the Islamic boarding school, both the Islamic boarding school management and the Islamic boarding school organization. Apart from being an exemplary example in implementing discipline, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Rafah's other roles are as an educator, as a religious leader, as a social servant, as a caregiver and guide, and as a Koran teacher. Kiai Pondok Pesantren Rafah also involved members of the Islamic boarding school organization in deliberations with considerations for the future progress of the Islamic Boarding School. He listened to suggestions from the staff under him. If the suggestion is good for the Islamic boarding school, then he will consider the suggestions from his subordinates. He did this solely to achieve what had been the goal of this Pondok since its inception.*

**Keywords:** Kiai Leadership, Organizational Discipline Culture, Santri Organization

### Informasi Artikel

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Boarding School Institution is a religious educational institution that aims to provide education and learning by developing and disseminating Islamic religious knowledge through a boarding system. Pondok Pesantren is an educational institution based on Islamic teachings. (Rahmat, 2018) In its implementation, the pesantren forms a community led by a Kiai (Islamic scholar/leader), assisted by ustaz (male teachers) and ustazah (female teachers), who live together with the students (santri). Leadership in an Islamic boarding school is strongly associated with the leadership of the Kiai. Theoretically, within the pesantren environment, the leadership of the Kiai is considered absolute authority.. (Nuraeni et al., 2022)

The leader of the Pondok Pesantren is a dominant figure in the pesantren's life; he manages the dynamics of the pesantren's life, including the development and continuity of expertise, depth of knowledge, charisma, and skills. (Hasbullah, 2001) Pondok Pesantren Rafah establishes organizational activities with the goal of providing educational values to the santri so that they can lead many people in the future. The daily life of the santri is inseparable from organizational activities, as organizing in this pesantren serves as education for self-management and managing others. All activities carried out by the santri within the Pondok are arranged by senior santri and supervised by the care staff. (Jamaludin, 2008)

The role of discipline is very important in the running of an organization, ensuring the work dynamics run well and properly and can create peace and solidarity within the organization. Discipline also significantly impacts the enthusiasm for fulfilling the duties of the organization's members. In terms of discipline in carrying out duties, it is important for the leaders to pay attention to the work spirit of their members. (Syam & Rahma, 2018) Pondok Pesantren Rafah is an institution that applies a boarding system. It educates santri during their time at the pondok with discipline and

independence, aiming to produce youth who have good discipline, responsibility, and militancy. (pesantrenrafah.id, 2023)

The establishment of the Santri Organization of Rafah Pesantren (OSPERA) was initiated by KH. Muhammad Nasir Zein, MA. Its purpose is to educate santri so that they can lead many people in the future. In managing this organization, he is assisted by the santri care staff. Every organizational activity is always based on the five spirits (panca jiwa) of Pondok Pesantren Rafah: sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah), and freedom. The selection of the organization and reports at the end of the term are conducted once a year before the teachers, especially the Kiai or Pondok leader, as well as in front of the santri. (Jamaludin, 2008)

Therefore, discipline in living at the Pesantren is an awareness that needs to be instilled in a person and accompanied by habituation. A person grows and develops well if he or she lives obediently according to the rules, especially in organizing daily life carefully and consistently (istiqomah) in carrying it out. (Schaefer, 1989).

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Kiai Leadership

Etymologically, the word Leadership comes from the word Pimpin which means to guide or guide. Then coupled with the prefix ke- and -an, it becomes the word leadership which means an ability to influence others to achieve common goals (Faiqatul, 2017). Leaders are very influential and are the main responsibility holders for their subordinates in carrying out every activity (Salahudin, 2011).

Leadership in Islam is termed by the word *Imamah*. While the word leader in Islamic terms has several terms, namely: *Imam*, *Khalifah*, *Malik*, *Wali*, *'Amir* and *Ra'in*, *Sultan*, *Rais* and *Ulil Amri*. All of these terms refer to a branch of science in Islam that discusses the basic basis of leadership (Amin, 2015).

Syaiful Akhyar Lubis said that "Kiai is a figure who is the core of an activity in a Islamic boarding school, the success or failure of the Islamic boarding school is in accordance with the authority and charisma that Kiai has. therefore, many Islamic boarding schools closed due to Kiai's death, caused by the person who replaced him not the same as Kiai before." (Lubis, 2007).

According to Sayyid Quthb Kiai or caregivers are people who admire the holy verses of the Qur'an and think and live the *kalam* of Allah in the Qur'an until they can attain true knowledge (Rasyid, 2007). According to Nurhayati Djamas, Kiai is a term for a scholar appointed to lead an Islamic boarding school (Djamas, 2008). So, it can be concluded that kiai leadership is an activity to influence and invite others to cooperate with the aim of achieving organizational goals. As well as directing his subordinates to always carry out what has been arranged in the organization properly in accordance with the provisions in the plan.

The function of the leader is to facilitate the achievement of the common goal *cooperatively* among the followers and at the same time Provide opportunities for their respective personal growth and development (Achmad & Muzakir, 2024).

## 2. Organizational Discipline Culture

Organizational culture helps direct human resources to the achievement of an organization's vision, mission, and goals. Organizational culture will increase subordinate motivation by giving them a sense of belonging and encouraging them to think positively about them and the organization. The purpose of organizational culture is to increase

team cohesiveness between departments, divisions or units in an organization, so that it can become the glue that binds everyone in the organization together (Achmad & Muzakir, 2024).

Discipline has four main elements, namely: Rules, punishment, rewards, and consistency (Unaradjan, 2003).

### a. Regulation

Peraturan biasanya dibuat oleh orang tua di rumah, guru di sekolah, masyarakat di lingkungan sekitar bahkan teman bermain baik di rumah maupun di sekolah.

### b. Punishment

Punishment has three functions, namely: preventing a person from doing things or acts that are violative, educating a person to know what is right and wrong and providing motivation for violators of the rules (Muzakir & Putri, 2024).

### c. Appreciation

The form of appreciation is in the form of praise from subordinate superiors, it does not need to be material, besides that it can also be in the form of a smile and can even be in the form of a clapping on stage. There are three functions of rewards, namely: educating, motivating, and distinguishing right and wrong behavior.

### d. Consistency

Consistency is a form of uniformity in the provision of regulations, punishments and awards. The function of this consistency is to educate, motivate and enhance rewards.

## C. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, which is a study based on the philosophy of postpositivism. It is used to investigate

objects in their natural conditions, (with the researcher as the key instrument, using purposive sampling of data sources), employing data collection techniques with triangulation (a combination of methods). The data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization. (Sugiyono, 2013) The data sources for this action research include the Kiai (Islamic leader), Santri Care staff, Rafah Student Organization, documents, and data related to the Rafah student organization. The data collection techniques are as follows:

1. Observation

Observation can be defined as the act of observing patterns of human behavior in certain situations to obtain the desired information, according to Larry Christensen. Furthermore, Creswell states that observation is the process of obtaining first-hand data by observing people and places during the research. (Cresswell, 2016)

2. Interview

Interviewing is a data collection method conducted by asking questions directly to informants or respondents, carried out through face-to-face conversations. Interviews can also be called a face-to-face dialogue where two parties, interviewer and interviewee, engage in communication. This method is used to obtain data related to the leadership of the Kiai in the pesantren. The respondents or interview sources in this study are the Kiai, Santri Care staff, and Rafah Student Organization.

3. Documentation

Besides observation and interviews, qualitative data can also be collected through library research, which includes literature review and documentation study. Documentary methods or techniques involve the collection of data and information by searching for and finding evidence from non-human sources. Collected documents assist

researchers in understanding phenomena occurring at the research location and help with data interpretation. Furthermore, comprehensive documents and data can help in theory development and data validation. (Affinudin, 2009)

## **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As stated in Chapter One, this writing aims to understand how the leadership of the kiai builds the culture of discipline in the santri organization of Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA) at Pondok Pesantren Rafah, Bogor. The author used observation, interview, and documentation techniques during data collection. The interview process was conducted directly using interview guidelines and also utilized communication media to facilitate collecting the needed data and to ease the writing process. From this research, three problem formulations were resolved by the researcher during the study. The researcher presents the field results related to these problem formulations. According to the initial research focus, the results obtained from the field can be presented as follows:

### **1. The Role of Kiai's Leadership in Building the Disciplinary Culture of the Santri Organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA)**

Based on interviews with the TMI director, the role of the kiai's leadership in building the disciplinary culture within the organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah is very central. Everything in Pondok Rafah is closely controlled by the Kiai, including matters related to the discipline of the santri organization itself. The Kiai personally reprimands any mistakes or violations committed by OSPERA members, even calling them directly to his house to provide guidance and motivation. Indirectly, this causes OSPERA members to think twice before committing violations.

Furthermore, according to interviews with the director of santri care, in building this disciplinary culture the Kiai is assisted by the Santri Care staff, with the goal of

cultivating leadership so that the leadership chain continues without interruption. The Santri Care is the division that guides all santri activities outside the classroom. This division remains under the direct supervision of the Kiai or caretaker of Pondok Pesantren Rafah, namely KH. Muhammad Nasir Zein, MA. The santri care activities cover all santri from class 1 through class 6, directly managed or administered by the Santri Organization of Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA) around the clock (24 hours).

Also, based on interviews with the TMI director, the Kiai at Pondok Pesantren Rafah, K.H. Muhammad Nasir Zein, M.A., is a very influential figure in building the disciplinary culture in the santri organization. Every instruction from him is generally implemented directly by the organization, God willing. The Kiai's directions differ from those of other teachers because when the Kiai reprimands or directs, he carries a different aura. He pays close attention to all activities related to the mosque, especially congregational prayer. He emphasizes the Ta'mir (management) and Lighting sections, and if there are any errors in these areas, he takes direct action. Since he was part of the Lighting division when he was an Organizational member of Pondok Pesantren Modern (OPPM) Gontor, he has extensive experience in lighting.

From the above description, it can be concluded that the Kiai at Pondok Pesantren Rafah is a very influential figure in building the disciplinary culture of the santri organization. Everything in Pondok Rafah is under the Kiai's control, including organization discipline. The Kiai personally reprimands when violations occur among OSPERA members. He pays special attention to mosque activities, especially congregational prayers, emphasizing the Ta'mir and Lighting divisions, and intervenes directly if problems arise.

## **2. Factors Influencing the Kiai's Leadership in Building the Disciplinary Culture of the Santri**

### **Organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA)**

Based on interviews with the director of santri care, the factors influencing the Kiai's leadership in building the organizational disciplinary culture are as follows: First, the written regulations and rules greatly influence the discipline of the santri organization and are known by the kiai through deliberations. When additions are made, they are added and then read to the entire santri organization. Second, punishment or sanctions, which must be applied creatively. If the care staff relies too much on just one figure, namely the Kiai or pondok caretaker, the implementation of activities organized by the pondok will not run well. Everyone must have their function, and each person must have the power to help build the disciplinary culture. Third, the good example set by teachers and especially the Kiai regarding the organization.

According to the TMI director, the success of the Kiai's leadership in building the organization's discipline can be seen in the condition of congregational prayers in the mosque performed by the organization. Furthermore, in accordance with the teachings in the tarbiyah book *al-madrosah al-munadzoah* (The Organized School), a well-organized school is characterized by many students who remain quiet and orderly. When OSPERA members act accordingly, the organizational discipline is considered good. Generally, this success is also reflected in the attendance percentage of OSPERA members after holidays—meaning whether they return to the pondok on time. If members enjoy the organization, they will return to the pondok promptly.

Many Rafah santri are considered successful after graduating as alumni of Pondok Pesantren Rafah, and this success is undoubtedly inseparable from the role of the



Kiai during their time as santri.

The researcher will present the findings from interviews, observations, data, and documentation related to the leadership of the kiai in building the disciplinary culture within the santri organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA) in Pondok Pesantren Rafah, Bogor. The researcher uses a qualitative method to describe and present data related to the kiai's leadership in building this disciplinary culture.

### **3. The Role of the Kiai's Leadership in Building the Disciplinary Culture of the Santri Organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA)**

The role of the kiai here is very important, especially at the beginning of the organization's mandate. The Kiai is the one who directly inaugurates and provides direction and motivation at the start of OSPERA's term, with the goal that the santri who take office as members of OSPERA understand the organization itself. Being inaugurated directly by the Kiai makes the santri feel more cared for and increases their enthusiasm, because the touch of the Kiai is different from that of other teachers.

The role of Kiai Pondok Pesantren Rafah is very visionary: all decisions are made through deliberation and considering the pondok's future progress. He listens to the suggestions from his staff, and if the suggestions are beneficial for the pondok, he takes them into consideration. This approach is done purely to achieve the pondok's original goals at its founding.

The role of K.H. Muhammad Nasir Zein, M.A. in building this disciplinary culture in the santri organization is similar to common practice, but he prioritizes approaching his santris personally to directly oversee the development of organizational discipline at Pondok Pesantren Rafah. He leads congregational prayers in the mosque directly, disciplines the organization from small to large matters, and often personally reprimands and

punishes OSPERA members if they commit mistakes or violations.

Because of the importance of organizational discipline at Pondok Rafah, K.H. Muhammad Nasir Zein, M.A. has devised several ways to build cooperation so that santris are disciplined within the organization, which include: making congregational prayer (sholat berjamaah) the pride of the pondok, conducting OSPERA elections, organizing Basic Leadership Training (LDK), directing OSPERA to create work programs, updating the organizational structure (*Reshuffle*), holding weekly meetings with each section's advisor, and organizing accountability reports (LPJ). However, the implementation of these programs is said to be not yet fully effective, and Pondok Pesantren Rafah is still seeking a suitable formula. Discipline runs fairly well, but there are still some violations occurring. The pondok considers these violations normal but insists they must be corrected. It cannot be said to be perfect nor imperfect; the pondok does not allow these issues to persist and emphasizes continuous evaluation and improvement.

Based on observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, several challenges faced by the Kiai in building the disciplinary culture of the Santri Organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah include: First, the good example set by relatively young service teachers. In Pondok Pesantren Rafah, especially these service teachers reside inside the pondok, so whatever they do is observed by OSPERA members. Second, controlling OSPERA's activities. Poor control negatively affects the discipline of OSPERA members and can lead to many violations. Third, a lack of awareness among OSPERA members regarding some rules within Pondok Pesantren Rafah. It is undeniable that santris' ages vary, ranging from Madrasah Tsanawiyah to Madrasah Aliyah levels, so enthusiasm for following rules and implementing OSPERA's work programs fluctuates.

These findings are supported by the theory presented in Chapter II that leadership is an activity of influencing many people through good communication by giving directions or orders, which lead others to act or respond and create positive changes to achieve common goals. (Dakhi, 2020)

#### **4. Factors Affecting the Kiai's Leadership in Building the Disciplinary Culture of the Santri Organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah**

In building the disciplinary culture of the organization, there are factors affecting it. The researcher outlines several factors influencing the kiai's leadership in building disciplinary culture in the santri organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah, namely: written rules and regulations, punishments or sanctions, and good exemplary behavior (Uswah Hasanah). The written rules and regulations have a significant effect on the discipline of the santri organization. These rules at Pondok Pesantren Rafah are known to the kiai through deliberations held between the Kiai and the Santri Care staff. When there are additions from the Kiai, the Santri Care staff adds them and reads them aloud to all santris, especially to OSPERA members.

Pondok Pesantren Rafah applies three levels of sanctions for rule violators:

- a. First, light punishments for minor violations. OSPERA members who commit minor violations, such as being late to an activity, receive light punishments like writing Quranic verses or detention.
- b. Second, moderate punishments for moderate violations. Members who commit moderate violations, such as absenteeism from an activity, may get sanctions such as having their heads shaved (botak).

- c. Third, heavy punishments for serious violations. Members who commit serious violations, such as physical assault, receive heavy sanctions including returning educational responsibility to the parents or expulsion. Essentially, all punishments aim to educate violators for their own benefit.

In the disciplinary process, Pondok Pesantren, especially the Santri Care division as the extension of the Kiai, records violations and gives advice; if a violation is repeated, a warning is given and punishment imposed; if repeated again, the violator's parents are summoned; if there is still no improvement, the educational mandate is returned to the parents or the violator is expelled. All this is contained in the Standard Operating Procedure of sanctions called Mu'jam Iqob. All punishments serve to educate santri to become better. Although initially punished members may feel disgruntled, in time they realize the punishment has a positive effect. However, there are no formal rewards for santris who perform well in discipline.

Regarding congregational prayers in the mosque, which is regarded as the crown jewel of Pondok Pesantren Rafah, K.H. Muhammad Nasir Zein, M.A. strongly emphasizes both santris and teachers to pray together. The kiai himself leads as imam in congregation prayers in the mosque. He also guides teachers to continuously provide good examples to build a disciplinary culture, especially for the santri organization (OSPERA). The kiai personally intervenes and exemplifies proper conduct while directing the santri care staff to do the same.

#### **E. CONCLUSION**

The Role of the Kiai's Leadership in

Building the Disciplinary Culture of the Santri Organization at Pondok Pesantren Rafah (OSPERA) has a very significant influence. The role of the Kiai in activities at Pondok Pesantren Rafah includes: as an educator, as a religious leader, as a social servant, and as a caretaker and mentor. We can also observe from the three types of leadership he applies in leading Pondok Pesantren Rafah, namely: charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, and autocratic leadership. There is a Santri Care division that acts as the Kiai's right hand in running activities at Pondok Pesantren Rafah.

Factors Influencing the Kiai's Leadership in Building the Disciplinary Culture of the Santri Organization (OSPERA) at Pondok Pesantren Rafah include written rules and regulations as well as punishments or sanctions given to santri who violate the rules. However, it is regrettable that there are no rewards given to santri who demonstrate good discipline at this pesantren. There are also several challenges faced by the Kiai in building the disciplinary culture of OSPERA, namely: the example set by the service teachers and the control exerted by the Santri Care division over OSPERA itself..

#### F. AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article. The author emphasizes that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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