

# Leadership and Multicultural Environment; Kyai's Power and Authority Contest at Pondok Pesantren

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v6i3.3532>

Received: 26 February 2022; Recieved in Revised Form 26 March 2022, Accepted: 25 April 2022, Available online: 1 June 2022

## Abstract:

This paper aims to understand spiritual leadership from the personal point of view, power, and authority. The central concept of leadership in this landscape is how a leader can impact people who have different attitudes, motivations, origins, personality values, beliefs, and of course, culture from a sociological-anthropological perspective. In addition to looking at aspects of multicultural leadership, the author will also enrich this study by studying a character, namely KH Muwafiq Amir. A Kyai who has power and authority in the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur, Genteng, Banyuwangi. An influence that will be read through the paradigm of power and authority. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The results showed that KH Muwafiq Amir was 'appointed' as chairman of the Board of Caregivers in this pesantren environment outside the customs or traditions different from pesantren in general; where the succession of leadership is determined by lineage. Meanwhile, KH Muwafiq Amir is not a direct descendant (read; biological) from the Big Family of the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur.

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Leadership, Multicultural, Kyai, Power, Authority*

## Abstrak:

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memahami tentang kepemimpinan spiritual dari sudut pandang personal, power, dan otoritas yang dimiliki oleh seorang pemimpin. Konsep utama daripada kepemimpinan dilandscape ini ialah bagaimana seorang pemimpin bisa membuat pengaruh terhadap orang-orang yang memiliki perbedaan sikap, motivasi, asal muasal, nilai kepribadian, keyakinan, dan pastinya kebudayaan dalam kacamata sosiologis-antropologis. Selain akan melihat aspek kepemimpinan multikultural, penulis juga akan memperkaya kajian ini melalui studi tokoh, yakni KH Muwafiq Amir. Seorang Kyai yang memiliki kekuasaan dan otoritas di lingkungan Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur, Genteng, Banyuwangi. Suatu pengaruh yang akan dibaca melalui paradigma power dan authority. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa KH Muwafiq Amir 'ditunjuk' sebagai ketua Dewan Pengasuh di lingkungan pesantren ini di luar kebiasaan atau tradisi yang berbeda dari pesantren pada umumnya; dimana suksesi kepemimpinan ditentukan oleh garis keturunan. Sedangkan KH Muwafiq Amir bukan keturunan langsung (baca; kandung) dari Keluarga Besar Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kepemimpinan Spiritual, Multikultural, Kyai, Power, Otoritas*

*Please cite this article in APA style as:*

Rahman, K. (2022). Leadership and Multicultural Environment; Kyai's Power and Authority Contest at Pondok Pesantren. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(3), 643-654.

## INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows that pesantren are non-formal educational institutions in Indonesia with their characteristics. Sociologically, Islamic boarding schools are built based on the character of a religious figure, balanced by the belief and participation of the community around the figure's house. This condition is different from formal education institutions whose development and management are much assisted by the government (Indies-Dutch or Indonesia) today. Even historians note that Islamic boarding schools had existed as a basis for resistance to colonialism in the archipelago (Dakir et al., 2020). For this reason, historians have finally formed a separate entity for Islamic boarding schools. Entities that cannot be compared with any existing educational institutions globally (Munif, 2018; Chotimah, 2012). For the author, the uniqueness of this Islamic boarding school entity is quite reasonable; Islamic boarding schools have their value system, learning system, their community engagement model, and management and leadership systems.

The research results show that the leadership of the pesantren is often referred to as Kyai (parents who are considered to have greatness in attitude and depth of religious understanding) (Rosita, 2018). Managerial, Kyai has full responsibility for the management process of Islamic boarding schools (Habib, 2018; Ruslan, 2020). Kyai is a source of power and authority in running the existing organizational wheels (Mardiyah, 2012; Hefniy, 2016; Pramono, 2018). If observed, in classical eras, a Kyai concurrently had all the duties and roles in educational institutions. Kyai is the pioneer of the organization. Management of educational institutions. Educational institution developer. Communication liaison between educational institutions and the community. Kyai also provided operational costs for all programs launched in the development process (Dlofier, 1982; Bashori, 2019; Falah et al., 2021). Therefore, if you look at Islamic boarding schools, it is not surprising that the concerns of educational management reviewers are focused on the leadership (leadership as values) of a Kyai and how the role is used for the development of Islamic boarding schools.

Although it is undeniable that today pesantren are getting to know modern development and management systems, Kyai is no longer the central figure in the management of Islamic boarding schools. The researchers also shifted their research from the portrait of the Kyai, who influenced a closed space, to a broader direction, such as politics, social, populist economy, and the development of national identity and nationality. These research models can be done because Islamic boarding schools have started to face the leadership succession phase from a founder to a caretaker (manager/manager). This means that the Kyai in several Islamic boarding schools in Java is no longer the first to implement the pesantren system. They could be the children and grandchildren of the founders of the Islamic boarding school. However, the pesantren still does not lose its uniqueness. Pesantren can still maintain the consistency of their institution as a unique institution. The reason is that Islamic boarding schools have a value system in the existing leadership succession and have an explicit formula for how the Kyai prepare their successors.

The most normal value system for seeing the succession of Kyai's leadership is to see it from the boys' point of view in the boarding school environment. This means that the Kyai 'do not have gender awareness' in their pesantren leadership change system. Kyai's daughter, it is possible, will not have the space as a pesantren leader. This is similar to the one in the kingdom in the era of Indonesia that was not yet independent. Although gradually this pattern is not practiced by all pesantren. What often happens is when the first leader of the pesantren is not present. Pesantren delegitimize their absolute power into several parts of their family environment. The author wants to give an example at the Darus Sholah Islamic Boarding School, Jember. When Gus Yus died, the leadership was taken over by his wife. Being operationally handed it over to his son and daughter-in-law. Although it is broader, it already has limitations within the family environment of the Islamic boarding school and is not as wide as it was in the past.

For example, at the Denanyar Islamic Boarding School, Jombang. Halim Iskandar at the one century event KH. Bisri Sansyuri had stated that 'if Kyai Shohib (Denanyar Today's Caregiver) is no longer able to manage Denanyar boarding school. I am ready to quit politics and replace him," he said. The pesantren reviewers must know that KH. Abdussalam Shohib is the son-in-law and student of KH. Bisri Sansyuri and the son of the family of Pondok Pesantren Ploso Kediri, which today also needs a replacement leader figure. So, to this day, KH. Abdussalam Shohib had to divide his time between being in Denanyar Jombang and at the Islamic boarding school founded by his family and father. Another example is the leadership of KH. Azzaim Ibrahimy Situbondo. In a normative way, it should be a substitute for KH. Fawaid As'ad was his younger brother. However, because all of his family are women, KH automatically. Azzaim Ibrahimy was the Islamic boarding school's caretaker, and several senior students who helped him, such as KH. Afifuddin Muhadjir and Prof. Yazid. This is because of KH. Azzaim Ibrahimy is still relatively young. Moreover, there are many other examples of leadership succession.

The author deliberately expresses these distinctions to give an idea that Islamic boarding schools have various norms and concepts of leadership. It can no longer be analyzed like Zamakhsyari Dhofier, Manfred Ziemer, and some previous researchers have done it using the view of Kyai's genealogy and Islamic boarding school. Islamic boarding schools already have different concepts and contexts sociologically and phenomenologically. Research that might be interesting to present is the work of Muali et al. (2021) which says that Sufistic-based Kiai leadership plays a vital role in fostering the character of santri. Kiai is categorized as very influential in building character because in fostering santri, the Kiai provides *uswah* (examples) to his students.

However, this research cannot compare what happened at the Tebuireng Jombang Islamic Boarding School in the KH era. Sholahuddin Wahid (Gus Sholah). Mardiyah (2015), in a research-based on the perspective of organizational culture, illustrates that Gus Sholah is a cultural broker for the value system built by his uncle KH. Yusuf Hashim. Gus Sholah changed the structure from being dominated by families to a more professional one. Those

(alumni) educated with informal and professional education take precedence over their families. Not only that, Gus Sholah did not 'hesitate' to invite his professional colleagues to help him develop the Islamic boarding school he leads. This shows a certain level that caregivers can use to make changes. In this context, the author sees Gus Sholah's courage to make significant changes because of his power as the son of the reformist figure KH. Wahid Hashim. The weakness of the courage to make changes in Islamic boarding schools is that they will face their own families. The latter seems to have power and authority commensurate with the caregivers of the Islamic boarding school.

Based on the natural phenomena above, the writer also wants to explore how the figure of KH Muwafiq Amir, as a leader and board of caretakers of the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur Genteng, from three unique and broad perspectives. First is the paradigm of power and authority. Second is the multicultural environment, presenting his figure as a multicultural leader. The author must provide their limitations regarding multicultural leadership from these two subjects. This is because there is an understanding that when multicultural words are mentioned, religion becomes an inseparable part of the context of the study. The author can understand this because the discourse of 'multiculturalism' was introduced in Indonesia to foster a tolerant attitude towards religious differences in Indonesia and confirm that the Indonesian nation is a pluralistic country. This word does not always have a religious meaning. The word multicultural (in a narrower context) is the differences produced by the dialectical tensions of individual attitudes and the social conditions that surround them.

To facilitate understanding of this paper, the author will divide it into several discussion topics: the discourse on power and authority in the educational environment and how it should be carried out as a form of applied science. Second, the multiculturalism of the work/organizational environment and the leadership approach offered. Third, exposure and data analysis related to the leadership of KH Muwafiq Amir at the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur, Genteng, Banyuwangi.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to the type of phenomenology, which wants to reveal the meaning behind spiritual leadership from the personal point of view, power, and authority possessed by a leader. In addition to looking at aspects of multicultural leadership, the author will also enrich this study by studying a character, namely KH Muwafiq Amir. A Kyai who has power and authority in the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur, Genteng, Banyuwangi. The researcher, in this case, is the critical research instrument, where the researcher collects, analyzes, and concludes the research. To obtain accurate and valid data, the researchers interviewed several informants, consisting of the leaders of Islamic boarding schools, administrators, asatadiz, students, and the community. In addition, researchers also conducted observations and documentation related to the leadership of Kyai at the Islamic boarding school. Furthermore, the data analysis was carried out circularly

concerning Miles and Huberman (2014), namely collecting data. All the data obtained were reduced, sorted, and selected according to the research theme. The last step is to draw research conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Power and Authority: The Contested Zones on Pondok Pesantren**

No one can deny that Islamic boarding schools are unique institutions and are always interesting to study from various scientific perspectives, from history, and sociology to what the author is learning today, education management science. In terms of management science, Islamic boarding schools, at least, have been seen from various macro perspectives of management science, for example; management of Islamic boarding schools, models and types of leadership of Islamic boarding schools, the interrelating sphere between Islamic boarding schools and formal educational institutions within them, and several other macro studies. As for the position of this research, it can be said that, more specifically, it wants to assess the contestation of power and authority in Islamic boarding schools. A micro topic in educational management science. In more straightforward assumptions, this research has an indirect-component framework of thinking that influences the process of education science management. As is well known, the contestation of power and authority ultimately creates new terminology related to models of leadership, management, and the dynamics of cultural or organizational beliefs that exist within the institution.

Theoretically, power is the ability to invite someone to do what they want (Pfajfar et al., 2019; Keohane, 2020). The authority is the power legitimized (authorized) by the owner of the power (O'Neal, 2021). According to Coleman (1997), it is said that: power is the "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." Authority (Herrschaft), for its part, is the "probability that a given group of persons will obey a command with a given content." The primary difference between power and authority rests in the fact that power is essentially tied to the personal characteristics of individuals or groups. In contrast, authority is always tied to social positions or roles. Weber notes that while power is a mere factual relation, authority is a legitimate relation of domination and subjection (Kocak, 2019).

The quote above means that power is a personal/individual or group characteristic that can influence someone to follow what they want. Meanwhile, the authority is more inclined to the aspect of legitimacy and domination of a person because of a delegation of roles and functions given. It is not purely due to one's abilities or from a person's sociological cult.

Practically, in the context of education, this power and authority contestation cannot be framed; all depend on the context and dynamics within the educational institution. Edmundo Norte said that it is possible that everyone assumes that power is permanently attached to a school leader (Kovach, 2020), but on the other hand, other strengths are generated based on

dynamics and interactions within the school (Norte, 1999; Megheirkouni, 2019). Therefore, there are at least five components of the power interaction model in educational institutions; First, power is like energy within humans. Everyone can have this to build relationships between one person and another. Second, power is very dependent on the model of relations, place, and time that exist in the environment. Third, power also depends on the interests of one person's relationship with one another. Fourth, power is related to one's lack of understanding of another person's behavior. Fifth, power relates to how a person can demonstrate his competence to respond to the problems faced in the organization (Meydan & Köksal, 2019; Håvold & Håvold, 2019).

As for authority, it is always related to the duties and positions in their work environment. However, some define *authority* as being divided into legal authority, which means an authority given based on systems, rules, and principles that are understood together within an organization (Hiller et al., 2019). Traditional authorities are the inherent authority because they have been running and existed for a long time. Charismatic authorities, namely based on the charisma of a leader or manager who has individual strength in holding his responsibilities (Grimm et al., 2021). This typology of authority, of course, still has a biased meaning when juxtaposed with power itself. Therefore, the authors tend to agree on the definition that authority is a position and role given to a person (legitimate power), without which a person cannot do anything, even though it can influence other people, individually, not institutionally.

Meanwhile, politics is an art to play the two terminological rhythms above. According to Ball (2012), politics is the art of using legitimate power; it requires transparent decision making, assertiveness, accountability, and willingness to express one own view (proactive, not reactive). People feel powerless and become bossy and rules-oriented. They may become oppressive leaders, punitive, and rigid in decision making. Wegmann (2022) provides a practical framework for how this political thinking framework is implemented in schools; first, Go beyond the authority system; Formal power is not enough to lead. Second, Tap into the informal authority; Expand your authority and influence. Third, Tap into the expertise of teachers; Empower teachers and empower yourself. Fourth, understand the system of politics; Limit politics--it is destructive. The art framework for political thinking like this will be straightforward when power and authority are well dispersed and implemented by a leader who understands the political game (gaming of political communication). The most straightforward question to mark this academic anxiety is, what about Islamic boarding schools?

Through the theoretical-practical reading above, this will be very complex if it is contextualized to Islamic boarding schools. Although some previous researchers have begun to frame how the leadership of the Islamic boarding school is implemented; Some of them are using the theoretical framework as follows; first, the genealogy of kinship (leadership of Islamic boarding schools to differentiate their treatment of Islamic boarding schools). Shodiq (2012) revealed this research and said at least two genealogical features of Kyai leadership: fate and fate. Kyai *nasab* (derivatives) will be more closed in

making changes in the pesantren. He only has the authority of derivative power and vision that the Kyai or previous leaders have determined. Conditions differ from Kyai's fate (a caregiver and founder of a boarding school and has no genealogical connection with his father). They will be very accessible and open in determining the system and management of the boarding school they build.

Second, using the patron-client theory, a Kyai is considered to have charismatic power to hegemony all his subordinates without any resistance process to the instructions given (in the previous framework, it could be considered a blind position of members) (Pramono, 2018). This research model is mainly done by sociologists who frame their theory using Max Weber's view. Categorization in this study system can be called more monodisciplinary. This means that Kyai is considered the main factor of change in the boarding school because Kyai has charisma, principles of life, and a strong assumption that Kyai is a role model in social life. Third, idealized knowledge and transformation, a position where Kyai understands management science and can transform the values that become his power to all subordinates in it.

### **Reading the Context and Leadership Model of KH Muwafiq Amir**

Two versions have been developed in naming the Banyuwangi Genteng District. The first version states that the name Genteng itself comes from the word Ganteng, which used to be the name of a prince or prominent figure in the area. From the story that developed, this Handsome Prince was a hero who was persistent in inviting the people to fight against the Dutch colonial government during the colonial era. Falling in a war, his followers then buried this figure in an area now known as Dusun Krajan, located in Gentengwetan Village and can still be found today. Because of the pronunciation, the word "Handsome," which refers to the Prince, eventually became "Title" and is used until now as the name of the city. The second version states that the name Genteng is associated with the existence of an industrial center for roof tiles/tiles (roofs made of baked clay) in the area in the past. Even until the 1980s, this tile industry still existed and had a market in local and other cities. One of the big factories can still be seen even though the ruins are only the Karang Pilang Tile Factory is located on Jl. KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, to be exact, in the RW. 12 Krajan Hamlets Wetan Tile Village

From a social point of view, as a whole, the Genteng people are descendants of fugitives from Mataram, so until now, the language used daily is Ngoko Javanese (Rude). Meanwhile, the Osing people, a native of Banyuwangi, occupy most of the villages on the east side of the sub-district, especially Kembiritan and a small part of Genteng Wetan Village. Especially for particular foods, the tile society only refers to chicken dishes with very spicy sauce at Ratinem's stalls. Located right east of the old terminal or behind the post office, Ratinem's spicy chicken is always visited by guests who are most loyal customers. Even during holidays, this shop is a favorite for customers who come from outside the city who accidentally come. (now moved to the old terminal) The economic center in the tile sub-district is the tile market, which is the center for transactions for essential goods for tile residents and residents

from other sub-districts in Banyuwangi Regency. In addition, in Genteng District, there are also shopping centers such as Sun East Mall, Karunia Damai Sejahtera (KDS), and Kalisari.

### **Leadership and Multicultural Environment**

It is the same as what the author had stated above that the leadership of the pesantren in the advanced era would not be comparable to when it was first established. Many contestations of power, authority, personal superiority, and cultural differences exist within the Islamic boarding school environment, whether as a sociological effect or as a form of the educational process and spiritual experience of a Kyai. The same thing happened to KH Muwafiq Amir BA. In this era, the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur leadership entered its third phase after the founders of Kyai Djunaidi Asmuni and KH Imam Zarkasyi Junaidi. KH Muwafiq Amir, genealogically it would not be possible to replace the two. Because of not a direct descendant of the founder of the boarding school. He is the son-in-law, which means his wife can be the successor of the pesantren. Although there are still male siblings of his wife, he will automatically replace KH Imam Zarkasyi.

KH Imam Zarkasyi Junaidi did not want to be alone and chose to lead the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur together. Therefore, there must be a division and delegation of different powers automatically. Based on interviews conducted with Ainur Rofiq, it was stated that KH Muwafiq Amir was one of the caregivers who always appeared to make changes in Bustanul Makmur. He, assisted by several intelligent people behind him, convinced the policymakers in the family environment and the managers of educational institutions around the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur. Not only that, her fostered experience and her wisdom help her to have a different impact than other caregivers. In this position, the author concludes; that there are other sources of power apart from the proper genealogy that can be assembled in the pesantren environment, namely related to the experience and knowledge. This is the same as at the Salafiyah Langitan Islamic Boarding School, where KH. Munif Marzuki was elder by other caregivers because of their spiritual maturity compared to others.

From a leadership point of view. Of course, KH Muwafiq Amir does not necessarily agree with the author's assumptions when conducting interviews. For example, does he understand the context and process of developing a boarding school well? For the author himself, this is very common in Islamic boarding schools. The Kyai cover the splendor of their knowledge and experience compared to others. However, observationally the author saw how all strategic decisions in this Islamic boarding school were consulted first with KH Muwafiq before being brought to the board of caretakers meeting and then socialized to the pesantren administrators who had the task of carrying it out every day. So, the author sees and assesses that KH Muwafiq Amir has the ability and spiritual maturity to disseminate his ideas into actual forms in the Islamic boarding school environment.



The last one relates to the context of multiculturalism at the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur. This Islamic boarding school was built on land grants from colonial and non-Muslim people from the historical dimension. So, this is appropriate for the author if it is forced to enter the frame of religious multiculturalism. However, as the author has mentioned, the writer wants to see KH Muwafiq Amir solve the problem of differences that exist in various sociological-phenomenological contexts.

In the sociological context, tile is a sub-district close to urban communities. They face a modern pop culture that is proliferating. Therefore, if you look at what KH Muwafiq Amir has done, he prefers to sell and invite the surrounding community to understand the spiritual but elite lifestyle (like the conception of Urban Sufism in some big cities). This Islamic Boarding School established a formal educational institution that can compete with other formal institutions (if you do not want to be called superior). They established vocational schools based on local and national cultural values and junior high schools that excel in technology and information systems, etc. So, the caregivers, including KH Muwafiq Amir, can read the cultural differences in the surrounding community.

In the phenomenological context, the board of caretakers also realizes that collaboration, competition, and elaboration of interests among teachers, ustadz, and pesantren administrators must be rewarded with a measure of appropriateness. This means that the conditions and dynamics of materialistic-oriented urban communities must also be addressed by providing a decent income for anyone who serves in the pesantren environment. However, this context is interpreted differently by the devotees in the environment. The value of appropriateness and simplicity of life will be directly proportional. Sometimes, what they get is appropriate for some teachers because they have a simple lifestyle. However, on the other hand, if life is measured in luxury, what it gets may not be up to the mark. In the view of KH Muwafiq Amir, he will always distinguish between alumni, professionals, and students who are devoting themselves to the Islamic boarding school environment. These three entities should be approached differently. When it comes to alumni, incredibly successful alumni, let alone give them their rights, they even return them to develop Islamic boarding schools. At least, this is what the author outlines in this research process.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there are many contestations of power, authority, personal superiority, and cultural differences in the Islamic boarding school environment, whether as a sociological effect or as a form of the educational process and spiritual experience of a Kyai. The study of educational leadership in Islamic boarding schools should also require critical studies on the 'contested-ground' aspect. In the space of the theoretical framework used to build how a strategy is implemented or a concept is offered. Not on the contrary, 'worshipping' scientific results or products and then looking for reinforcement or denial through facts that exist in real life. It is clear, as

explained at the beginning of this paper, that the author wants to redefine power, authority, and politics in school, which often uses Weber's view, to become more critical-philosophical through Michel Foucault's archeological paradigm of knowledge, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, and Jürgen Habermas' critical theory. Moreover, the author believes that Islamic boarding schools have more value in rereading all aspects of leadership and management studies of educational institutions.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher would like to thank all the leaders, administrators, and asatidz of the Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur, Genteng, Banyuwangi. They have provided opportunities and assistance to researchers to conduct studies and research on Kyai leadership in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, the researchers also express our gratitude to the team who has assisted in the completion of this article so that it can be published as a medium of scientific information in the field of leadership and management of Islamic education.

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