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ANALYSIS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BETWEEN MUDIR AND USTAZ IN BOARDING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: A Case Study in Darul Hadith Palembang

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Abstract: *Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) play a significant role in character education and religious learning in Indonesia. Effective management relies on strong leadership and interpersonal communication between administrators and educators. Communication patterns influence decision-making, conflict resolution, and overall institutional effectiveness. In pesantren, the relationship between mudir (leader) and ustaz (teachers) is crucial for maintaining discipline and achieving educational goals. This study aims to describe the pattern of interpersonal communication between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang and analyse its influence on the management of the pesantren. Using a sequential mixed method, the study started with a quantitative approach to identify communication patterns, followed by qualitative analysis for deepening. Results showed the dominance of open (64%) and assertive (63%) communication patterns, reflecting transparency, assertiveness, and clarity of instructions from the mudir. The communication structure is hierarchical, with mudir as the main authority. The implications of these findings suggest that open and assertive communication patterns, supported by the mulazamah-based education system, strengthen interpersonal relationships and the effectiveness of pesantren management.*

Keywords: *Interpersonal Communication; Mudir; Ustaz; Pesantren; Darul Hadits Palembang.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school education has a significant role in shaping the civilisation of a nation. In Indonesia, pesantren have developed long before the era of independence and remain the main pillar of Islamic education to this day (Isbah, 2020). The existence of pesantren is not only a religious education institution, but also a centre for character building, skill development, and the cultivation of social values. Education in pesantren teaches the values of togetherness, justice, and pluralism, thus producing individuals with integrity and ready to face global challenges.

In the social context, Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang has an important role in providing Islamic-based education that prioritises the mulazamah system, which is a method of learning directly from the teacher without a standardised curriculum. This pesantren not only functions as an educational institution, but also as a centre of social life for students and the surrounding community. The existence of the pesantren, which is supported by the community and donors, shows that education based on independence and mutual cooperation still has a place in the midst of increasingly modern times.

In the study of Islamic education theory, pesantren is the oldest Islamic education institution that develops independently with a yellow book-based curriculum (Sunardi et al., 2025). Pesantren education theory emphasises exemplary learning and direct interaction between teachers and students, as explained in the social learning theory by (Hijriyah et al., 2024). This theory states that individuals learn through observation and imitation of role models. In this case, the mudir pesantren acts as a central figure who serves as a role model for santri and ustaz.

In the perspective of interpersonal communication, the relational dialectics theory proposed by (Montgomery & Baxter, 2013) explains that relationships between individuals in an educational environment are influenced by the tension between the need for independence and dependence. In the context of Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang, this theory is relevant to understand the dynamics of communication between mudir and ustaz which shows a hierarchical pattern with a high level of dependence.

Although many other pesantren in Indonesia apply a two-way communication pattern with deliberation in decision-making, Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows a more hierarchical communication pattern with the dominant role of mudir. This raises the main question in this study: How is the effectiveness of interpersonal communication patterns between mudir and ustaz in shaping the education system at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang? Does this communication pattern affect the effectiveness of pesantren management and the character building of santri?

In addition, this research also seeks to compare the communication patterns applied in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang with other pesantren that apply two-way communication and deliberation in decision-making. Thus, this research will highlight the

extent to which the effectiveness of interpersonal communication affects the sustainability of the education system in mulazamah-based pesantren.

This research is based on several main assumptions, about effective interpersonal communication between mudir and ustaz determines the success of the education system in pesantren. Based on interpersonal communication theory DeVito (2019) good communication creates deeper understanding and builds stronger relationships between leaders and followers (Yusnita, 2024). Then the mulazamah-based education system implemented without a standardised curriculum requires flexibility in communication between mudir and ustaz. This is in accordance with the concept of adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009), which emphasises the need for leadership that is able to adapt to the situation and needs of the institution. Furthermore, the high hierarchical structure can affect the effectiveness of communication and decision-making in pesantren. In educational organisation theory (Bush, 2016), a leadership structure that is too centralistic can inhibit innovation and active involvement from all elements of the institution.

Several previous studies have highlighted communication patterns in pesantren. For example, research by (Sanusi, 2019) found that in Pesantren Sirnarasa Ciamis, Pesantren Miftahul Huda Manonjaya Tasikmalaya, and Pesantren Nabil Husein Samarinda, communication patterns are two-way, with the involvement of ustaz and santri in the deliberation process. This pattern creates a more participatory educational environment and enables innovation in the learning system.

In contrast, Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows a more centralised communication pattern, where the mudir has full authority in decision-making. This is in line with research by (Tusriyanto et al., 2024), which states that an overly dominant leadership structure in educational institutions can create challenges in human resource management and communication effectiveness. With this approach, this study seeks to reveal how the interpersonal communication pattern between mudir and ustaz in the management of Islamic boarding schools: a case study at Darul Hadith Palembang.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a mixed method with a *sequential* model that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches sequentially to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under study (Khairunnisa, 2021). The choice of this *sequential* model is based on the need to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under study. The quantitative approach was used first to collect numerical data through surveys or structured instruments, in order to statistically identify patterns of interpersonal communication between mudir and ustaz, including trends, frequencies, and relationships between variables. Next, a qualitative approach was applied to deepen the understanding of the quantitative results through in-depth interviews or document analyses, by exploring context, meaning and subjective factors unreachable by quantitative data. The combination of these two approaches resulted in more valid, holistic, and comprehensive findings on the dynamics of communication that occurred.

This research is descriptive analytic, with the aim of providing a clear description of the facts and phenomena investigated (Sophia et al., 2023). The data obtained from the respondents, namely the mudir and ustaz of the pesantren, were analysed to reveal the interpersonal communication patterns that occurred, and presented in descriptive form.

In this study, data were collected through two main sources, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from respondents through observations and interviews, which were conducted at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang. Secondary data, on the other hand, was obtained from written documents, such as institutional records, related literature, and literature references that support this research.

Data collection techniques include structured interviews, structured interviews remain relevant despite often being associated with quantitative approaches, as they allow asking the same questions to all informants to collect consistent data and allow comparisons between respondents. This technique supports in-depth exploration of established themes, maintains focus on relevant research issues, and minimises researcher bias and maintains objectivity (Krismona Arsana & Sujana, 2021). To increase data validity, structured interviews can be combined with documentation and observation; documentation serves to verify information through analysis of written documents, archives, or reports (Mulyana et al., 2020), while observation complements data by capturing real situations in the field, including social interactions, behaviours, and environmental contexts that may not be revealed through interviews or documentation.

The research instrument is a systematically arranged list of questions used to measure interpersonal communication patterns between mudir and ustaz. This instrument provides a rating scale ranging from "Very Never" to "Very Often", with a score of 1 to 5 (Anam, 2017). The data obtained was then analysed quantitatively with a percentage formula to measure the intensity of communication, categorised into four levels: Good (76%-100%), Fair (56%-75%), Poor (40%-55%), and Not Good (less than 40%). The results of this quantitative analysis became the basis for the next stage, which was to analyse the pattern of interpersonal communication between mudir and ustaz in pesantren management. The findings regarding the level of communication intensity help identify areas that require more attention, so as to illustrate the dynamics of interaction, the effectiveness of message delivery, as well as communication barriers that may occur in the context of pesantren management at Darul Hadits Palembang.

Qualitative analysis in this study was carried out using descriptive techniques which aim to describe phenomena in accordance with the data obtained from interviews and documentation (Ferdinandito & Haryani, 2021). The analysis process includes several important stages. Data reduction was carried out in stages, starting with the initial screening of raw data to eliminate irrelevant information. Next, the selected data was categorised based on key themes that were in line with the research focus, such as digital da'wah patterns, audience perception, and transformation of religious understanding. The final stage of reduction involved simplifying the data by grouping similar information to facilitate further analysis (Martin & Maulida, 2022). To ensure data validity, triangulation

was applied by utilising various data sources, techniques, and perspectives. This was done by comparing interview results with relevant documentation and confirming findings through discussions with expert informants (Cao & Reimann, 2020). Through this approach, data credibility can be tested from multiple viewpoints, reducing potential bias. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on in-depth interpretations of the thoroughly analysed data. Each stage was carefully implemented to ensure the accuracy, consistency and validity of the information obtained during the research.
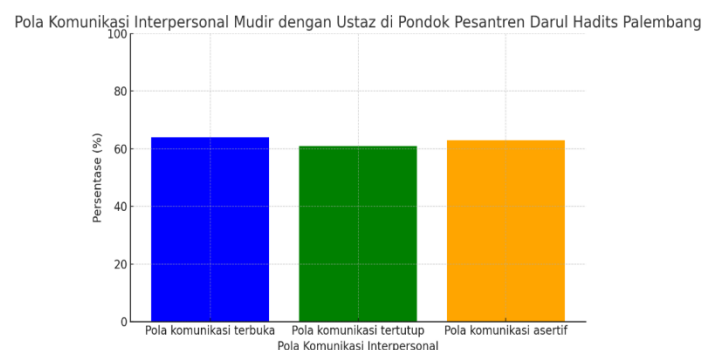
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Interpersonal Communication Patterns between Mudir and Ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang

The pattern of interpersonal communication between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang in this study was conducted by structured interviews with ustaz based on instruments that had been prepared. The data obtained through the instrument in the form of questions that have been provided answers are the embodiment of information about the interpersonal communication patterns of the mudir which are deliberately described to provide a real description. The following is the pattern of interpersonal communication between mudir and ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang based on interviews with 8 ustaz who were randomly selected.

Table 1

Interpersonal Communication Patterns between Mudir and Ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang

No.	Interpersonal Communication Patterns	Percentage	Category
1	Open communication pattern	64 %	Simply
2	Closed communication pattern	61 %	Simply
3	Assertive communication patterns	63 %	Simply

Bar Diagram 4.1 Pattern of Interpersonal Communication between Mudir and Ustaz at Darul Hadits Islamic Boarding School Palembang

Based on the bar chart displaying the percentage of interpersonal communication patterns between mudir and ustaz at Darul Hadits Islamic Boarding School Palembang, the following results were obtained: 64% open communication pattern, 61% closed communication pattern, and 63% assertive communication pattern. Each of these communication patterns is in the "Moderate" category, with percentages that are relatively balanced with each other.

These results can be analysed using the theory of interpersonal communication proposed by (DeVito & DeVito, 2019), which states that interpersonal communication involves a two-way exchange of messages with the aim of building effective relationships. The dominant open communication pattern indicates openness in the delivery of information, honesty, and acceptance of feedback. This is in line with the theory of openness which emphasises the importance of transparency in building trust and increasing communication effectiveness (Gudykunst, 2004).

Although there is a dominant tendency towards open communication patterns, the high percentage of closed communication patterns (61%) indicates that there are certain dynamics that encourage mudir to limit information. According to the impression management theory proposed by (Goffman, 2023), closed communication patterns can be used to maintain an image, authority, or hierarchical structure in an organisation. In the context of pesantren, this may be necessary to maintain authority and order in the educational environment.

Meanwhile, assertive communication patterns, which reached 63%, showed an effort to maintain a balance between assertiveness in expressing opinions and respect for the views of others. Assertive communication, according to (Castaños-Cervantes & Atristain-Suárez, 2024), supports healthy interactions by creating a space for dialogue that allows open expression of needs and feelings while respecting the rights of others.

The factors that cause the percentage of open, closed, and assertive communication patterns to be close together can be attributed to the need to maintain a balance between hierarchy, transparency, and healthy interaction. In the pesantren environment, this balance is important considering that the mudir's role is not only as an administrative leader but also as a spiritual figure who must maintain authority.

The implications for interaction in pesantren are significant. Open communication patterns create an environment conducive to dialogue and collaboration, encouraging innovation and active involvement of ustaz. On the other hand, the existence of closed patterns can help maintain structure and discipline, while assertive communication allows for a respectful relationship, which supports the creation of a harmonious and professional atmosphere. By strengthening open and assertive communication patterns, it is expected to create more dynamic and effective interactions in supporting the professional development of ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang.

The mudir's interpersonal communication pattern can be understood from the following line graph:
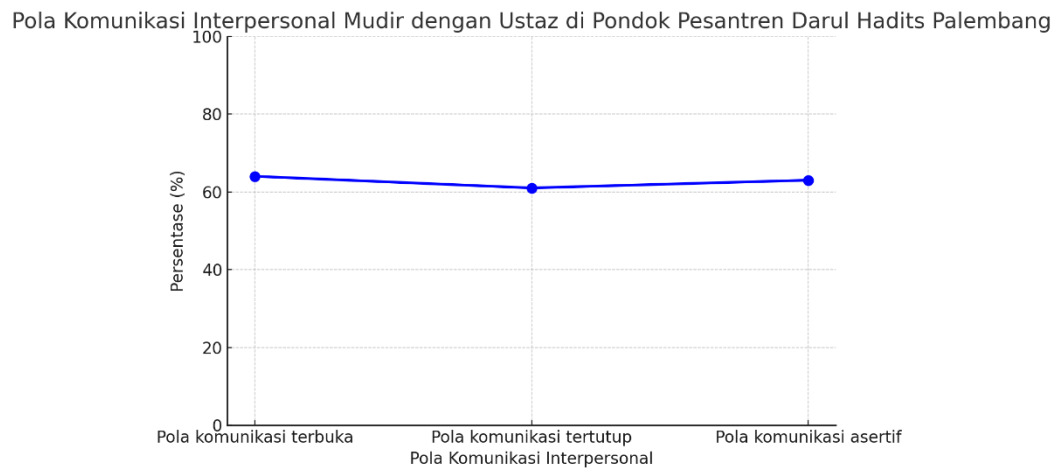
Pola Komunikasi Interpersonal Mudir dengan Ustaz di Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang

Pattern of Interpersonal Communication between Mudir and Ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang

Based on the line graph and the data above, it can be seen that the dominant interpersonal communication pattern of mudir is the open communication pattern, which is 64% in the moderate category. Open communication patterns have the following characteristics:

1. Transparency of information: Nothing is hidden, all parties get the same information.

2. Mutual respect: The parties involved respect each other's opinions and views.

3. Openness to feedback: Feedback and criticism are welcome and seen as constructive.

4. Easy access to communication: Everyone can easily contact and discuss without hierarchical barriers.

5. Honesty in communication: Messages are delivered honestly and directly, without hiding any intentions or agendas.

6. Active participation: All parties are involved in the discussion and are expected to contribute thoughts or opinions.

7. No fear or intimidation: Communication takes place in an atmosphere that is comfortable and free from pressure.

8. Empathy: Communicating parties understand and respond to the feelings and perspectives of others.

9. Two-way discussion: Communication is not just one party talking, but there is a balanced interaction.

10. The existence of trust: Communication is done on the basis of trust, thus creating a closer relationship.

Based on the data above, it can be explained that the mudir's communication pattern also has an assertive communication pattern of 63% in the moderate category, characterised as follows:

1. Clear and direct: Conveying the message firmly without confusing the interlocutor.

2. Respect the rights of others: Expressing opinions without denigrating or interfering with the rights of others.

3. Be confident: Expressing thoughts and feelings with conviction, without hesitation or aggression.

4. Solution-focused: Steer communication towards problem-solving rather than blame.

5. Expressing needs: Expressing personal wants or needs clearly and emphatically.

6. Being able to say "no": Dare to say no without feeling guilty or having to give exaggerated reasons.

7. Use positive body language: Posture, facial expressions and eye contact reflect an open and assertive attitude.

8. Emotional control: Managing emotions well, not explosive or defensive in conversation.

9. Active listening: Valuing the opinions of others and showing that we listen well.

10. Not defensive: Accepting criticism or feedback without being defensive, but responding calmly and rationally.

Based on the data above, it can be explained that the mudir's interpersonal communication pattern with a closed pattern has the smallest percentage of 61% in the sufficient category, characterised as follows:

1. Lack of transparency: Information tends to be hidden or only given to certain parties.

2. Lack of feedback: Feedback and input from other parties is not received or ignored.

3. Defensiveness: People who communicate tend to be defensive and do not accept criticism or feedback.

4. One-way communication: Only one party dominates the conversation without giving the other party a chance to speak.

5. Dishonesty: Information is delivered dishonestly or is often distorted.

6. Lack of participation: Not all parties are involved in conversations or decision-making.

7. Fear and anxiety: The other party feels afraid or anxious to express opinions or information.

8. Inaccessible: The communicating party is not easily accessible or contactable to discuss or ask questions.

9. Closed to change: Does not accept new ideas and tends to resist suggestions or innovations.

10. Not valuing other people's opinions: Other people's comments or ideas are often ignored or not considered important.

Relationship between Mudir and Ustaz Communication Patterns at Darul Hadits Islamic Boarding School Palembang

1. **Relationship between Mudir and Ustaz Communication Patterns at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang Based on Interactional Pattern Theory**

   Based on Interactional Pattern Theory, communication in an organisational environment is often influenced by the existing hierarchical structure. In Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang, communication between *mudir* and *ustaz* tends to be one-way, where *mudir* gives direct and clear instructions to the *ustaz*. This reflects the dominance of the leadership role in the formal structure of the pesantren, where the highest authority is in the hands of *the mudir*.

   For example, an interview on 20 September 2024 indicated that: *"Mudir is very clear in giving instructions, usually direct, and we understand that he plays a major role in decision-making."* Based on the quantitative data, about 65% of the respondents stated that communication with the *mudir* is direct and instructional, without involving two-way discussions. This finding is in line with the views of (Robbins & Judge, 2019) which states that in formal organisational structures, one-way communication is often used by leaders to clarify instructions and avoid misunderstandings.

   Despite the predominance of one-way communication, there are indications of informal openness that allows *ustaz* to provide feedback. According to Interactional Pattern Theory, effective communication depends not only on the direction of communication, but also on the flexibility of interaction that allows for the reciprocal exchange of information at times (Littlejohn et al., 2017).

   This is illustrated in the following interview: *"Although communication from the mudir tends to be one-way, he is still open if there are things we want to convey, especially related to operational issues of the pesantren."* Quantitative data showed that 45% of respondents felt that there were opportunities to convey input informally, especially outside official forums. This shows that there is an element of openness in communication, even within a strict hierarchical structure. This finding is reinforced by the opinion of (Denner et al., 2025) which emphasises the importance of informal communication in building a sense of trust in the work environment.

   Hierarchy plays an important role in decision-making in this pesantren. *Mudir* acts as the main authority who determines the direction of important policies and decisions, while *ustaz* performs the role of executor. According to interactional pattern theory, strong hierarchies often lead to top-down communication patterns, where decisions are made by the party with the highest status (Fisher, 2019).

   From the interview the following information was obtained: *"We realise that the final decision is always in the hands of the mudir, and we respect that."* Quantitative data supports this finding, with 80% of respondents stating that strategic decision-making rests solely with the *mudir*. However, 55 per cent of respondents felt involved in day-to-day

operations, suggesting a balance between formal authority and involvement in practical responsibilities.

Based on the theory of interactional patterns, communication between *mudir* and *ustaz* in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows a tendency of communication patterns influenced by hierarchical structures. While formal communication tends to be one-way, there is room for informal openness. The combination of strong authority and informal communication opportunities creates a balance that supports operational efficiency and internal harmony.

Based on the results of interviews and field studies, the communication relationship between mudir and ustaz at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang can be analysed using Interactional Pattern Theory. This theory sees communication as the result of interpersonal relationships formed through repeated interactions within the existing social system. Some previous studies have utilised this theory to understand communication dynamics in organisations that have a hierarchical structure. For example, (Ansori et al., 2023) conducted a study that highlighted how communication takes place in pesantren-based educational institutions. In this context, the main focus lies on how the strict hierarchical structure in pesantren affects the flow of communication between leaders, teachers, and students. The results showed that the communication pattern in the pesantren environment tends to be vertical, with the dominance of top-down communication, where the highest authority, such as the pesantren leader or kiai, has a great influence in directing interactions and decision-making.

Meanwhile, Anderson, J., & Meyer (2019) examined communication in religious organisations in the United States. The study explored how hierarchical structures affect the relationship between spiritual leaders and congregation members. The study revealed that communication within religious organisations also follows a vertical pattern, but is more flexible compared to pesantren, due to the influence of an organisational culture that is more open to two-way dialogue. It also highlighted the importance of effective interpersonal communication in building a sense of community and strengthening religious identity among congregation members.

Both studies show that the theory is relevant in analysing communication in hierarchical organisations, both in the context of traditional religious education in Indonesia and in modern religious organisations in America. The findings provide an important foundation for understanding how hierarchical structures can shape communication patterns that ultimately affect overall organisational effectiveness.

a. Hierarchy and Authority in Communication

In a pesantren environment, communication is strongly influenced by social roles and status. Mudir as the main authority has great influence in determining the direction of communication and decision-making. Studies by (Jahn & Black, 2017) show that communication in hierarchy-based organisations is often one-way, where leaders give instructions without much open dialogue. Ustaz in Darul Hadith

Islamic Boarding School play the role of policy implementers, with a limited level of participation in the strategic decision-making process.

b. Contextualised Openness

Although communication in the pesantren environment tends to be formal, there is flexibility in informal interactions, as stated by (Falah et al., 2023) in his study on informal communication patterns in modern pesantren. In certain moments, such as after prayers or during meals together, ustaz have the opportunity to convey their opinions to mudir in a more relaxed atmosphere.

c. Reciprocity in Interaction

The concept of reciprocity in this theory emphasises that despite differences in power levels, communication must still be reciprocal. A study (Solaja et al., 2016) on leadership communication in Islamic educational institutions shows that leaders' openness to feedback from subordinates can improve communication effectiveness and harmony in the organisation.

d. Trust as the Basis of Communication Patterns

Trust is a key element that maintains the continuity of communication between mudir and ustaz. (Islam et al., 2020) emphasises that trust in faith-based institutions is a major factor in maintaining the stability and smoothness of organisational communication.

Hierarchical communication patterns in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang, although effective in maintaining structure and order, can have some significant negative impacts. One of them is the lack of innovation and creativity. When communication takes place in a one-way manner, ideas from ustaz or other parties at lower levels often do not get room to develop. This can inhibit the emergence of new ideas that have the potential to enrich teaching methods or da'wah strategies. As expressed by (Harmathilda et al., 2024), an environment that limits active participation from all parties tends to reduce individual motivation to think critically and innovate. As a result, pesantren are at risk of stagnating in their educational and da'wah approaches, which in turn can hinder the relevance of the institution to the needs of the times.

In addition, inequality in decision-making is another problem that arises from this hierarchical communication pattern. Decisions dominated by one party, such as mudir or pesantren leaders, can ignore the perspectives, needs, and experiences of other parties, especially the ustaz who are directly involved in daily teaching activities (Kurniawan, 2024). This condition also increases the potential for misunderstanding due to the lack of open dialogue between pesantren leaders and members (Putra Halilintar & Rafiqah, 2024). When communication only flows from top to bottom without adequate feedback, policy interpretations may vary at the implementation level. This can lead to confusion, reduce policy effectiveness, and hinder the creation of a healthy and productive work environment in pesantren.

The communication pattern between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows an authoritative structure but remains accommodating in an informal context. Although this hierarchical communication pattern is effective in maintaining organisational stability, its potential negative impact needs to be anticipated with a more collaborative communication strategy to increase innovation, openness, and effectiveness in decision making.

2. **Relationship between Mudir and Ustaz Communication Patterns at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang Based on Relational Dialectic Theory**

Relational Dialectics Theory, developed by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery, suggests that interpersonal relationships are always affected by the tension between opposing needs, such as openness versus privacy, stability versus change, and autonomy versus connectedness (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). In the context of pesantren, this theory is relevant to understand how communication between mudir (pesantren leader) and ustaz reflects complex dynamics.

Based on the results of interviews with ustaz at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang on 20 September 2024, there are several communication patterns that indicate the existence of tension in this relationship. This analysis is divided into the following aspects:

In an interview excerpt, ustaz revealed: *"Mudir is always open in terms of daily instructions and operational policies, we get clear directions on what to do. However, for major decisions, for example related to the development of pesantren or more strategic policy changes, the mudir usually makes the decision directly. We are not involved much in discussions or deliberations beforehand."*

The results of these interviews reflect the tension between openness and privacy in communication. On the one hand, mudirs show openness in day-to-day operational matters, but in major decision-making, there is a tendency to maintain privacy in the decision-making process. This suggests an inequality of participation in strategic communication. According to (Montgomery & Baxter, 2013), in interpersonal relationships, openness is often balanced by the need to maintain privacy or control over certain information. In pesantren, this can be understood as a form of preserving the traditional hierarchy, where the mudir holds the highest authority.

From the interview regarding stability and change in communication as follows: *"This pesantren strongly holds traditional values, especially with the mulazamah system that is implemented. We appreciate that, because that is the characteristic of this pesantren. But, on the other hand, there are some things that we think can be improved, for example in terms of the use of technology or more modern learning methods."*

Here, there is a tension between the need to maintain stability through the preservation of traditional pesantren values and the urge to make changes, especially in the aspect of modernisation of learning methods. According to (Montgomery & Baxter, 2013), this tension is a natural part of any relationship, including in

institutional contexts such as pesantren. Mudir seems to seek to maintain stability by upholding traditional values, while ustaz, who are directly involved with the dynamics of learning and interaction of santri, begin to feel the need for innovation.

From the interviews on decision-making patterns: authority and collective involvement, the following information was obtained: *"We understand that the mudir has greater experience and insight, so we respect his decisions. However, sometimes we also hope to be more involved, especially in providing input or feedback, because we are in the field and experience first-hand the dynamics of teaching and interaction with santri."*

The communication pattern depicted in these interviews shows the tension between the centralisation of mudir's authority and ustaz's desire to be more involved in decision-making. Based on relational dialectic theory, this can be seen as a dynamic between the need for leader autonomy and the desire for collective participation from other pesantren members (Rawlins, 2017). The limited involvement of ustaz in major decisions may lead to a feeling of lack of recognition of their role as the main implementers in the field. On the other hand, mudir's authority can be understood as a form of leadership based on experience and moral responsibility for the sustainability of the pesantren.

The tension in communication between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows a typical dynamic in a traditional pesantren environment. Using the Relational Dialectic Theory framework, the tensions can be classified as follows:

a. Openness and Privacy: The communication pattern of daily instructions is open, but strategic decisions are more closed.

b. Stability and Change: The tension between maintaining pesantren traditions and the desire to adopt modern technology.

c. Collective Authority and Engagement: Centralisation of decisions by mudir versus ustaz's expectation to be more involved in strategic decision-making.

In the context of Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang, managing the dialectical tension between mudir and ustaz requires a strategic approach that considers the balance between various needs and expectations. Pesantren as traditional educational institutions face challenges in maintaining harmony between leadership authority and collective participation. The following analyses the handling of tensions in practice:

a. Openness and Privacy: Mudirs often maintain privacy in strategic decision-making, while ustaz want more involvement in the process. To address this tension, some pesantren implement musyawarah as a deliberative mechanism, allowing ustaz to contribute to important decision-making. This approach not only increases transparency but also strengthens the sense of belonging among ustaz.

b. Control and Freedom: Mudir is in control of the policy direction of the pesantren, but gives operational freedom to ustaz in the implementation of daily tasks. This

strategy allows ustaz to develop creativity and initiative in teaching and managing daily activities, while mudir ensures that the vision and mission of the pesantren are maintained.

c. Stability and Change: Pesantren often adhere to tradition to maintain stability, but the need for innovation cannot be ignored. Some pesantren adopt an adaptive approach by integrating modern learning methods without setting aside traditional values. This process involves dialogue between mudir and ustaz to reach an agreement on the necessary changes.

d. Proximity and Distance: Close personal relationships between mudir and ustaz can create effective communication. However, structural hierarchy can create distance in decision-making. To reduce this distance, some pesantren organise regular informal meetings that allow the exchange of ideas and feedback between mudir and ustaz, thus strengthening harmonious working relationships.

e. Tradition and Modernisation: Pesantren face the challenge of maintaining tradition while adopting modernisation. Some pesantren have successfully integrated information technology in the learning and management process, without compromising the core values of the pesantren. This approach requires cooperation between mudir and ustaz to assess and implement innovations that are in line with the vision of the pesantren.

Effective management of dialectical tension has a positive impact on the educational environment in pesantren. The involvement of ustaz in decision-making increases their motivation and commitment, which in turn improves the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, granting operational freedom to ustaz allows them to develop innovative teaching methods, according to the needs of the santri. However, if this tension is not managed well, it can lead to dissatisfaction and stress among ustaz. Lack of involvement in strategic decisions or excessive control from the mudir can reduce the ustaz's sense of autonomy and professionalism, which negatively affects their well-being and the quality of education in the pesantren.

Ustaz often adjust their communication style with the mudir to maintain a harmonious relationship. This adjustment involves understanding the mudir's communication preferences, such as formality, the appropriate time for discussion, and how to express opinions. In addition, the ustaz also acts as a mediator between the santri and the mudir, ensuring that the aspirations and needs of the santri are properly conveyed. The negotiation mechanism in the interaction between mudir and ustaz can take the form of deliberation, where both parties discuss to reach a mutual agreement. This process allows for a constructive exchange of views and arguments, so that the decisions taken reflect mutual interests. In addition, the existence of a forum or regular meeting between mudir and ustaz can be a forum for resolving differences of opinion and formulating joint strategies.

Based on the analysis of Relational Dialectics Theory, the communication relationship between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang

is coloured by various dialectical tensions that affect their communication dynamics. The tension between openness and privacy, control and freedom, stability and change, closeness and distance, and tradition and modernisation are some of the dialectics that arise in this relationship. Although these tensions exist, the communication patterns that occur are relatively effective in maintaining the operational stability of the pesantren, although there are challenges related to the involvement of ustaz in strategic decisions and adaptation to changing times. In this context, the mudir's authoritative communication pattern while still giving operational freedom to ustaz, as well as the combination of tradition and innovation, create a balanced relationship despite the tensions that must be managed well.

3. **Relationship between Mudir and Ustaz Communication Patterns at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang Based on Symbolic Interactionism Theory**

Symbolic Interactionism Theory, introduced by George Herbert Mead and developed by Herbert Blumer, emphasises that communication and social interaction are formed through symbols that have shared meanings in society. In the context of communication in pesantren, symbols play an important role in shaping and strengthening the relationship between mudir (pesantren leader) and ustaz (teacher). These symbols can be in the form of the use of certain language, gestures of respect, or special rituals that have been mutually agreed upon.

The language used in pesantren often contains deep symbolic meaning. The use of Arabic or religious terms in daily conversation is not only a means of communication, but also a symbol of religious knowledge and respect for knowledge. When ustaz communicate with mudir using polite and respectful language, this reflects their understanding of hierarchy and adab in the pesantren tradition. As stated by (Hastasari et al., 2022), verbal and nonverbal symbols that are mutually agreed upon between teachers and santri cause certain responses or actions in their interactions.

Physical gestures such as bowing the head, kissing the hand, or standing when the mudir enters the room are forms of respect that have become a tradition in many pesantren. These gestures not only show respect, but also strengthen the emotional and spiritual bond between mudir and ustaz. Through these gestures, ustaz express their loyalty and obedience, while mudir responds by providing guidance and care, creating a harmonious reciprocal relationship.

Rituals such as regular recitations, joint prayers, or commemorations of Islamic holidays become important moments that strengthen the relationship between mudir and ustaz. Joint participation in these rituals creates a sense of community and deepens the collective understanding of pesantren values. As expressed by an ustaz in an interview on 20 September 2024:

> *"Traditions and rituals in the pesantren strengthen our bond with Mudir. Every time he leads a recitation or religious activity, we feel there are symbols of devotion that connect us as part of this pesantren's extended family."*

Symbolic Interactionism Theory emphasises that meaning is formed through social interaction and the use of mutually agreed symbols. In the context of pesantren, the concept of "self" (ustaz) is formed through the process of "role-taking" where they place themselves in accordance with the roles and expectations that exist in the pesantren structure. As found by (Hastasari et al., 2022), teachers can place themselves according to the conditions when dealing with santri, showing flexibility in their roles.

The meaning-making process occurs when ustaz and mudir interact through symbols such as language and gestures. The meaning of the instructions or advice given by the mudir is understood and internalised by the ustaz through this interaction, forming a shared understanding of the values and goals of the pesantren.

Ustaz and mudir actively shape and negotiate meaning in their communication. Over time, ustaz's understanding of mudir's instructions may evolve through experience and ongoing interaction. Informal interactions, such as casual discussions or conversations outside formal contexts, allow for a freer exchange of views, which can influence the meaning of hierarchical relationships. This is in line with the findings of (Riva'i, 2020) which states that symbolic interaction in pesantren not only forms intellectual understanding, but also develops attitudes, mentality, and behaviour through an intensive and continuous process of interaction.

Symbols in communication in pesantren, such as the use of specific language, gestures of respect, and special rituals, play a crucial role in shaping and strengthening the relationship between mudir and ustaz. Through this symbolic interaction, a deep process of shared meaning formation occurs, which not only strengthens the hierarchical structure, but also builds strong emotional and spiritual bonds within the pesantren community.

Symbolic Interactionism Theory emphasises that meaning in social interactions is formed through symbols used in communication between individuals. In the context of the relationship between mudir and ustaz at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang, their interaction can be understood as a form of communication built through symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, which have social and spiritual meaning.

a. Symbol of Hierarchy and Leadership: Mudir plays a central role in this pesantren as an authoritative figure who leads not only from the administrative aspect, but also in the field of education and spirituality. In the communication relationship between mudir and ustaz, this position of authority is reinforced through symbols such as decisions without deliberation and direct instructions. For ustaz, this symbol is interpreted as a representation of respect for authority and trust in the mudir's wisdom. However, for santri, this symbol of hierarchy can be interpreted more as a form of discipline that guides them to submit and learn to respect authority. Meanwhile, the surrounding community may see this symbol as a symbol of stability and strong leadership, which maintains the traditional values of the pesantren. However, for some individuals, an overly rigid hierarchy may be interpreted as a barrier to two-way communication or innovation in pesantren management. Communication dominated by authority symbols may inhibit active

participation and creativity of individuals in the organisation, due to fear or reluctance to convey new ideas.

b. The Meaning of Learning Through the Mulazamah System: The mulazamah system, in which learning is conducted directly between students (ustaz) and teachers (mudir), becomes an important symbol in the communication pattern in this pesantren. For ustaz, this system reflects total devotion to knowledge and builds a close personal relationship with the mudir. However, for santri, mulazamah can be interpreted as an ideal symbol of closeness, but at the same time it can create an impression of exclusivity, because not all santri have direct access to the mudir. Meanwhile, for the surrounding community, this system may be seen as a form of classical education that preserves the Islamic scientific tradition, although it is possible that some parties consider this approach less adaptive to the times that demand more open and structured learning methods. An overly exclusive approach to learning can create disparities in access to educational resources, which in turn can hinder the spread of innovations and updates in teaching methods.

c. Symbol of Loyalty and Obedience: The ustaz's loyalty and obedience to the mudir is an important symbol in communication in pesantren. For ustaz, this symbol reflects dedication to authority which is considered part of spiritual devotion. On the other hand, santri may interpret this symbol of loyalty as an example that they should follow in showing respect to teachers and traditions. However, for the surrounding community, such strong loyalty can be interpreted in two ways: as a noble value that maintains the honor of the pesantren or, conversely, as a form of attachment that potentially limits critical space and more open dialogue. Excessive obedience without room for critical discussion can hinder the development of new and innovative ideas, as individuals feel bound to always agree with the authority without considering other alternatives.

d. Language Symbols and Nonverbal Communication: Formal language and nonverbal honours, such as a submissive attitude or low intonation, reinforce the mudir's position as a respected leader. For ustaz, these symbols emphasise hierarchy and norms of politeness in interaction. Meanwhile, for santri, this nonverbal communication can be a symbol of submission that reflects the learning of adab in daily life. For the surrounding community, formal language and nonverbal symbols can reflect the sacredness and uniqueness of pesantren culture. However, for external parties who are more accustomed to an egalitarian communication style, this practice can be considered a form of rigidity that inhibits relaxed or equal communication. The use of overly formal language and nonverbal communication can create distance between individuals, reduce familiarity, and inhibit the flow of new ideas that often arise in more relaxed and egalitarian interactions.

e. Decision Making as a Symbol of Authority: The symbol of decision-making without deliberation reflects the mudir's full authority in the pesantren. Ustaz

generally interpret it as a form of trust in the mudir's wisdom. However, for santri, this symbol can be interpreted as an illustration of the power of the leader who must be respected without being questioned. On the other hand, the surrounding community can see this symbol as a sign of firmness and stability in pesantren leadership. However, for some ustaz or outsiders, the closed decision could lead to a desire to encourage more space for participation and dialogue, especially in a modern context that promotes deliberation and democracy in decision making. Centralised decision-making without involving others can inhibit the emergence of new and innovative perspectives, as well as create imbalances in interpersonal relationships due to the lack of participation and ownership of organisational members.

f. Traditions and Rituals as Symbols of Spiritual Connection: such as recitations and religious activities, serve as symbols that connect spiritual communication between mudir and ustaz. For the ustaz, every recitation led by the mudir is understood as a deep spiritual experience and a sacred source of knowledge. For santri, this symbol is a moment to strengthen their faith and closeness to religious teachings. However, for the surrounding community, this tradition can be seen as the preservation of religious values that strengthen the social and spiritual identity of pesantren. Nevertheless, some modern people may interpret this ritual as something formal or symbolic only, without feeling the spiritual depth felt by the internal pesantren community. However, communication that is too centred on symbols of authority can stifle innovation and create imbalances in interpersonal relationships. Over-reliance on symbols of authority may limit the space for new ideas and creativity, as individuals may feel bound to always follow tradition without questioning or proposing changes. In addition, it can reinforce rigid hierarchies, reduce egalitarian interactions, and inhibit the constructive exchange of ideas. For example, in an organisational context, communication dominated by symbols of authority can control individual behaviour, but informal, more egalitarian communication can encourage innovation and creativity.

Based on the Symbolic Interactionism Theory, the relationship of communication patterns between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang is formed and influenced by symbols that have deep meaning in the pesantren environment. Symbols such as authority, loyalty, mulazamah learning, formal language, and pesantren tradition form a clear pattern of interaction and reflect the hierarchy and spirituality on which their relationship is based.

The symbols used in this communication not only create an understanding of each other's roles, but also strengthen the bond between mudir and ustaz as part of a pesantren community based on religious values and total devotion. Thus, this theory helps explain how social and symbolic meanings play an important role in shaping and maintaining interpersonal relationships in the pesantren environment.

The relationship between mudir and ustaz communication patterns in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang refers to the interactions and ways of

communicating between mudir (pesantren leader) and ustaz. This communication pattern includes how the mudir conveys information, instructions, and policies to the ustaz, and how the ustaz provide feedback or interact with the mudir. This relationship is very important because it affects the effectiveness of pesantren management, daily teaching activities, and harmony in the pesantren environment. In Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang, this communication plays a role in shaping an independent pesantren culture, with the mudir holding a central role in decision-making and coordination with ustaz. In order to understand how the mudir conveys information, instructions, and policies to the ustaz, the results of the interview with the mudir on 20 September 2024 can be understood as follows:

> "*At Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadith, communication is mostly done directly and informally, especially with ustaz who are mostly senior santri. Instructions are conveyed clearly in daily activities, while major decisions are usually taken by the mudir himself as a form of full responsibility. However, the ustaz are still involved in the implementation of tasks according to their abilities. The communication approach used emphasises clarity, discipline and independence, while still allowing room for input or reports where necessary.*"

The information above shows that the communication pattern applied by the mudir at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang has a significant impact on the motivation, involvement, and initiative of the ustaz in the management of the pesantren. The centralised and direct communication pattern in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang has a significant influence on the motivation, involvement, and initiative of ustaz in the management of the pesantren. On the one hand, this pattern creates role clarity and efficiency in task implementation because the instructions given by the mudir are firm and practical. Ustaz who are selected based on the mudir's personal trust tend to feel valued for being trusted with certain responsibilities, which can increase their internal motivation.

However, limitations in decision-making participation have the potential to reduce the active involvement of ustaz. The dominant top-down communication pattern, where strategic decisions are taken unilaterally by the mudir, may limit the space for ustaz to express ideas, criticisms, or innovations. This may reduce ustaz' initiative in offering creative solutions or proactively improving the pesantren management system, especially if they feel that their views are not taken into account.

Regarding the existence of participatory forums or mechanisms, based on the described communication patterns, it seems that pesantren do not have a formal forum specifically designed to accommodate the aspirations of ustaz. Communication that takes place is more informal and personal, usually through daily interactions with mudir. If there is an input mechanism, it most likely occurs non-formally, depending on the personal closeness of ustaz with mudir.

From a relational dialectics theory perspective, there is a tension between the need for autonomy and openness. On the one hand, the mudir maintains central authority in order to maintain stability and control; on the other hand, the ustaz may have a need to be more actively involved in decision-making. This tension, if managed well

through regular discussion forums or deliberations, can increase the sense of ownership among ustaz, which in turn will strengthen their motivation and involvement in the management of the pesantren.

In order to understand how the ustaz give feedback or interact with the mudir, the results of an interview with ustaz who declined to be named on 20 September 2024 can be understood as follows.

"As ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School, our interaction with the mudir is informal, given our previous relationship as his students. Usually, we convey important matters directly in our daily activities. Mudir is open to listening, although the final decision is often taken by himself. We respect his authority and carry out policies responsibly. Feedback is delivered carefully, usually in casual moments such as after prayers or during meals together. While we can discuss, we respect the final decision, which is always in the hands of the mudir."

The information above provides an explanation that the ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang generally provide feedback and interact with the mudir directly, respectfully, and limited by a strong hierarchical relationship. Here are some of the ways ustaz interact with mudir:

a. Direct Interaction and Spontaneity: The daily interaction between *mudir* and *ustaz* creates efficient lines of communication and allows for spontaneous dialogue. In the context of Relational Dialectic Theory, this reflects the tension between autonomy (freedom to express ideas) and connectedness (hierarchical ties). Informal discussions that happen in real-time can speed up decision-making while building personal closeness.

b. Respect and Obedience as Hierarchical Boundaries: The prominent hierarchical structure in pesantren creates a communication pattern that emphasises stability and order, but potentially creates tension between individual freedom and social norms. The tendency not to question major decisions may inhibit ustaz's creativity, limiting innovation in the development of pesantren policies.

c. Limited Openness in One-way Communication: The rather one-way pattern of communication from *mudir* to *ustaz* indicates a limitation of open dialogue. In the perspective of relational dialectics, this reflects the conflict between open expression and privacy. The limited space for ustaz to make suggestions may hinder potential improvements in the management of the pesantren.

d. Informal Discussion as a Space for Open Dialogue: Casual moments, such as after prayer or during a meal together, create a non-formal atmosphere that allows for more open dialogue. These interactions can strengthen a sense of connectedness and trust, ultimately helping to resolve the tension between authoritative structures and the need for individual expression.

e. Careful Approach to Giving Feedback: The ustaz's caution in delivering feedback indicates a tendency to avoid conflict. This reflects the tension between the need for transparency and a sense of security in a hierarchical environment. If left

unchecked, this pattern can inhibit healthy communication dynamics and limit the development of more innovative policies.

Thus, the interaction between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows communication dynamics influenced by hierarchical structures and interpersonal relationships. Although there is room for spontaneous dialogue and personal closeness, hierarchical boundaries limit freedom of expression and innovation. One-way communication patterns, caution in providing feedback, and limited openness reflect the tension in Relational Dialectic Theory, between autonomy and connectedness. However, informal moments provide an opening for more open communication, which has the potential to strengthen trust and encourage innovation in the management of pesantren.

Based on interviews with mudir and ustaz, the relationship of communication patterns in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows the dynamics typical of the traditional pesantren system. Communication between mudir and ustaz is characterised by a strong hierarchy and the dominance of mudir's role as the main authority in decision-making. The potential obstacle that arises in this communication pattern is the risk of obstructing the delivery of aspirations from ustaz to mudir. The dominance of the mudir's role can make ustaz feel reluctant to express different views or constructive criticism, thus inhibiting open discussions that can enrich decision-making. According to Yusuf, (2018) , overly hierarchical communication can limit innovation because it inhibits feedback from those lower in the organisational structure.

Communication between the mudir and ustaz tends to be one-way, with the mudir providing direction, while the ustaz act more as executors of the policies that have been set. A potential obstacle here is the limited space for formal dialogue, which may reduce the active participation of ustaz. In order for openness to be enhanced without disrupting the hierarchy, periodic deliberation mechanisms or structured discussion forums can be held. This is in line with the findings of (Rahman, 2020), which states that the provision of formal communication spaces can increase participation without disrupting the authority of the leader.

From the mudir's perspective, this communication pattern allows full control over the management of the pesantren, which is important to ensure that the pesantren runs according to his personal vision and experience. However, the risk of this approach is the emergence of blind spots in decision-making due to the lack of input from other parties. Studies by (Purba et al., 2024) show that isolated decision-making can reduce organisational effectiveness in the long run.

Meanwhile, from the ustaz's perspective, this communication pattern is received with compliance and respect. However, there are potential psychological barriers such as fear or apprehension in delivering feedback openly. According to (Safitri & Mujahid, 2024), excessive reluctance in a hierarchy-based organisational environment can reduce the effectiveness of two-way communication.

This communication pattern, although dominated by the mudir, still provides flexibility in interactions in a more informal environment. However, the limitations of formal communication patterns can cause important information to only appear in informal situations, which can hinder the efficiency of decision-making. (Fauzan Ahmad Siregar & Lailatul Usriyah, 2021) states that informal communication can serve as a complement, but cannot replace the need for formal communication structures in organisations.

Overall, the communication relationship between mudir and ustaz in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits Palembang shows an authoritative but accommodating communication pattern. To overcome potential communication barriers, there needs to be a balance between maintaining the mudir's authority and providing wider space for ustaz participation in formal discussions. This can be done by strengthening the structure of regularly scheduled deliberations. As suggested by (Widhiastuti, 2013), inclusive communication can improve organisational effectiveness without compromising existing hierarchical structures.

CONCLUSION

Interpersonal communication between Mudir and ustaz at Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Palembang is dominated by open (64%) and assertive (63%) communication patterns. Mudir tends to be transparent in conveying information and receiving feedback, but remains firm in giving instructions without lengthy deliberation. The hierarchical communication structure places Mudir as the centre of authority, with ustaz respecting the decision although their involvement in strategic decision-making is limited. Nonetheless, informal communication provides space for ustaz to provide input, so that pesantren operations continue to run efficiently. However, the limited participation of ustaz in strategic decisions may hinder innovation and decrease job satisfaction, as open communication is more informative than participatory. To overcome this, it is recommended that pesantren hold regular discussion forums and implement formal feedback mechanisms, such as surveys or periodic evaluations. By expanding ustaz involvement, pesantren can create a more collaborative environment, encourage innovation, increase motivation, and strengthen overall management effectiveness.

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