



CULTURE OF SANTRI SENIORITY BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNIZATION IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The tradition of seniority in Islamic boarding schools plays an important role in shaping the social structure and character of santri, where senior santri have the authority to guide and supervise junior santri. This tradition is not only seen as a hierarchy, but also as a learning mechanism that teaches the values of respect, responsibility and leadership. Even though it provides benefits in character building, challenges arise regarding the potential for abuse of authority which can affect relationships between students. In an organizational context, seniority also plays a role in efficient decision making, but can hinder innovation if it is too rigid. In addition, modernization in Islamic boarding schools provides opportunities to improve the quality of education through technology, but risks eroding the traditional values that characterize Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between modernization and preserving traditions, as well as integrating moral education to ensure seniority is carried out wisely and fairly. Through proper management, Islamic boarding schools can produce a generation of students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have strong morality and character, able to contribute positively to a society that is balanced between cultural heritage and the demands of the times.

Keywords: *Seniority in Islamic boarding schools, Dynamics of Tradition and Modernization, Moral Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of increasingly modern times does not guarantee the disappearance of the culture of seniority among Islamic boarding school students, because the traditional values that exist in the Islamic boarding school community remain strong even though they are exposed to the influence of the times. Seniority in the context of Islamic boarding schools is not only seen as a sequence of ages, but also as a form of respect for the religious knowledge possessed by senior kyai and santri. Even though technology and globalization influence many aspects of life, traditions in Islamic boarding schools still maintain a social structure that emphasizes the importance of manners, respect, and learning from those who are more experienced. In daily life at Islamic boarding schools, senior students still have an important role as teachers, mentors and role models for junior students (Munir and Latifah 2020). Therefore, even though the outside world is increasingly modern and changing,

the culture of seniority among Islamic boarding school students continues to persist because it is considered part of the long-accepted system of education and character development. Thus, developments over time do not eliminate the culture of seniority, but instead enrich and strengthen its relevance in Islamic boarding school life. (R, n.t.).

Modern era developments do not guarantee the disappearance of the culture of seniority among Islamic boarding schools, because this culture has become an integral part of the social and educational structure in Islamic boarding schools which prioritizes traditional values. Even though global society is experiencing rapid progress in terms of technology and communication, Islamic boarding schools still maintain the tradition of seniority as a way to transfer religious knowledge and morality between generations. In existing literature, seniority in Islamic boarding schools does not only include an age hierarchy, but is also valued as a form of respect for the depth of knowledge and experience possessed by senior students (R, t.t.). This respect is reflected in the interaction between senior and junior santri which places more emphasis on the guidance and learning process, where senior santri act as role models. Thus, even though changing times continue, the culture of seniority is still maintained in Islamic boarding schools as an effort to preserve spiritual and moral values which are considered fundamental in religious education. (R, n.t.).

The aim of this research is to analyze whether modern developments can influence the loss of the culture of seniority among Islamic boarding school students, with a focus on Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions that maintain this tradition. This research aims to understand how the culture of seniority persists despite the pressures of globalization and modernization which tend to change the social structure in various communities. In this study, researchers will explore various factors that support the sustainability of seniority culture, such as the values of religious education, discipline, and the role of senior students in spiritual and moral guidance. With a qualitative approach, this research is expected to provide insight into the relationship between tradition and changing times, as well as how Islamic boarding schools respond to the challenges of modernity without sacrificing existing values. Overall, this research aims to show that even though times continue to change, the culture of seniority among students remains relevant and plays an important role in the educational structure of Islamic boarding schools.

The basic assumption in this research is that modern developments do not guarantee the disappearance of the culture of seniority among Islamic boarding schools, because the traditional values in Islamic boarding schools continue to survive despite the influence of technology and globalization. This research assumes that even though modernization has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, the social structure in Islamic boarding schools which prioritizes respect for seniority remains strong. It is believed that the culture of seniority in Islamic boarding schools, which functions to maintain relations between generations and transfer religious and moral knowledge, will not simply be eroded by changing times. Thus, this assumption emphasizes that despite advances in technology and communication, Islamic boarding schools are able to maintain the continuity of the seniority tradition as part of the education and character development system. This research assumes that despite the challenges of modernization, Islamic boarding schools remain a space where traditional values, including the culture of seniority, continue to be continued.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research with a qualitative approach regarding the cultural phenomenon of santri seniority between tradition and modernization in Islamic boarding school education aims to understand the dynamics of social and cultural interactions that develop among santri. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research prioritizes an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences of santri, as well as how the culture of seniority that has long existed in Islamic boarding schools persists even though it is influenced by increasingly modern developments. In this research, the phenomenon studied is the relationship between senior and junior santri which still shows traditional patterns, even though there is a push to adapt to social developments and modern technology.

The research process was carried out using participatory observation methods and in-depth interviews with students, ustaz, and Islamic boarding school management to explore their views and experiences regarding seniority in the Islamic boarding school context. It is hoped that the results of this research will illustrate how the culture of seniority in Islamic boarding schools survives and adapts to modernization and its impact on the overall Islamic boarding school education process. Thus, this research contributes to understanding how tradition and modernity interact and influence life in the Islamic boarding school environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tradition of seniority in Islamic boarding schools is a cultural aspect that plays an important role in the life of the Islamic boarding school community. This tradition is based on the principle of hierarchy which places senior santri as figures who have more authority than junior santri. This is reflected in various forms, such as giving responsibility to senior students to guide, supervise and be role models for younger students. Through this mechanism, Islamic boarding schools are not only a place to learn religious knowledge but also a means of character building that emphasizes the values of respect, responsibility and leadership. (R, t.t.) However, the seniority tradition in Islamic boarding schools is not free from challenges and dynamics that need to be taken into account. On the one hand, this tradition supports the formation of an orderly social structure and supports the educational process, but on the other hand, it can give rise to the potential for abuse of authority if not managed properly. Phenomena such as excessive seniority can create unequal relations between students, which has the potential to harm juniors. Therefore, it is important for Islamic boarding school managers to ensure that the seniority tradition is in accordance with Islamic values, such as justice and compassion, so that it can become an effective educational instrument and reflect noble morals.

Seniority in an organization often influences work dynamics and decision making. Seniority can provide advantages for more experienced individuals, such as greater access to information and a wider professional network. This can increase efficiency in the decision-making process, as senior individuals usually have a deeper understanding of the organization's culture and the challenges it faces. However, these positive impacts can also create problems, such as resistance to change and innovation, as more senior individuals may tend to maintain existing ways of working. On the other hand, seniority can create dissatisfaction among younger or new employees, who feel that their opportunities to contribute and grow in their careers are hampered by rigid

hierarchies. This dissatisfaction can lead to decreased motivation and productivity, as well as increasing employee turnover rates. Therefore, it is important for organizations to find a balance between valuing experience and providing space for new ideas from all levels of employees. In this way, organizations can harness the power of seniority while still encouraging innovation and collaboration.

Dynamics of Tradition and Modernization

The dynamics between tradition and modernization are complex and mutually influencing phenomena in contemporary society. Tradition often serves as the foundation of cultural identity and social values, while modernization brings changes necessary to adapt to developments over time. In many cases, modernization can strengthen traditions by introducing innovations that enable traditional practices to survive and thrive. For example, in the context of arts and culture, new technologies can be used to document and disseminate local traditions, thereby reaching a wider audience and increasing appreciation of cultural heritage. However, the process of modernization can also pose challenges to existing traditions, especially when modern values conflict with traditional norms. This tension often arises in various aspects of life, such as education, family and religion. For example, in societies increasingly affected by globalization, traditional practices may be considered outdated, which can cause younger generations to move away from inherited values (Hafidhoh 2016). Therefore, it is important to find constructive ways to manage these dynamics, so that traditions can adapt to change without losing their essence. In this way, society can create harmony between cultural heritage and the demands of modernity (Almursyid 2023).

Modernization in Islamic boarding schools is a phenomenon that is increasingly developing along with social and technological changes in society. Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, are now starting to adopt various innovations in curriculum and teaching methods to answer the challenges of the times. For example, many Islamic boarding schools are starting to integrate information technology in the teaching and learning process, such as the use of educational software and access to online learning resources. This not only improves the quality of education, but also prepares students to face an increasingly digital world (Murtadho, 2018). However, modernization in Islamic boarding schools also faces challenges, especially in maintaining traditional values that have long been the identity of Islamic boarding schools. Some groups are concerned that the application of modern methods could erode the essence of Islamic education which is based on morals and spirituality. Therefore, it is important for Islamic boarding schools to find a balance between modernization and preserving traditional values. In this way, Islamic boarding schools can function as institutions that not only produce graduates who are academically competent, but also have strong character and are able to contribute positively to society. (Munir and Latifah 2020).

Moral Education

Moral education for students has an important role in shaping individual character and morality. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, seniority is often interpreted as respect for those who are older or more experienced, who can be role models for younger students. This process not only involves the transfer of knowledge, but also moral values that must be upheld, such as respect, politeness, and responsibility. (Lumiu, Pio, and Tatimu 2019) Thus, moral education based on seniority traditions can create a conducive environment for

the development of the character of santri, where they learn to respect the experience and wisdom of others. However, challenges arise when seniority traditions are not balanced with adequate moral education, which can lead to negative behavior such as bullying or injustice among students. In some cases, more senior santri may abuse their position to pressure or demean younger santri, which is contrary to the moral principles taught in Islam (Saputro, Hidayat, and Yulianto 2016). Therefore, it is important for Islamic boarding schools to systematically integrate moral education in their curriculum, so that students not only understand the importance of seniority, but also how to apply it in a positive and constructive way. With this approach, Islamic boarding schools can produce a generation of students who are not only knowledgeable, but also have good morals and are able to contribute positively to society (Nugraha and Tjahjawati 2017).

The tradition of seniority in Islamic boarding schools plays an important role in shaping the social and cultural structure of the Islamic boarding school community. This tradition places senior santri as figures who have greater authority and responsibility, especially in guiding and supervising junior santri. In the Islamic boarding school environment, seniority is not only seen as a hierarchy of age or experience, but also as a learning mechanism that instills the values of respect, responsibility and leadership. Thus, this tradition becomes an integral part in forming the character of santri which emphasizes the importance of mutually respectful relationships between generations (Q, n.t.). However, the seniority tradition also has challenges that need to be anticipated, such as the potential for abuse of authority which could give rise to inequality or negative behavior if not managed wisely.

At an organizational level, the concept of seniority often plays an important role in decision making, as more experienced individuals tend to have a deeper understanding of existing systems. This allows for efficiency in management and problem solving. However, the positive impact of seniority can be counter-productive if accompanied by resistance to change or innovation. In an organizational context, a hierarchy that is too rigid can stifle creativity and give rise to dissatisfaction among younger or new individuals (R, n.t.). Therefore, a balanced approach is needed to value experience while providing space for new ideas so that the organization remains adaptive and innovative. On the other hand, the dynamics between tradition and modernization in Islamic boarding schools is also a significant issue.

Modernization brings challenges as well as opportunities for Islamic boarding schools to adapt to current developments. Innovations such as information technology have been adopted in the teaching and learning process, opening wide access to learning resources and improving the quality of education (Budiyanto, Hartono, and Munirah 2022). However, modernization can also raise concerns about the potential erosion of the traditional values that are the identity of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between modernization and preserving traditions, so that the innovations implemented do not eliminate the essence of moral and spirituality-based education which is the hallmark of Islamic boarding schools (R, t.t.).

Moral education is central to maintaining this balance, especially in the context of seniority traditions. Moral education not only teaches values such as respect, politeness and responsibility, but also ensures that senior students are able to carry out their roles wisely and fairly. With systematic moral education, Islamic boarding schools can create a healthy environment, where seniority is

understood as a moral responsibility, not domination of power. This is important to prevent potential negative behavior such as bullying or abuse of authority, which is contrary to Islamic principles (Riyadi 2011).

Through the integration of moral education and good management of seniority traditions, Islamic boarding schools can continue to function as educational institutions that not only produce knowledgeable individuals, but also have strong morality and character. In this way, Islamic boarding school graduates are not only ready to face the challenges of modernization, but are also able to contribute positively to society, bringing harmony between cultural heritage and the demands of the times (Fahham 2020).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this discussion shows that the tradition of seniority in Islamic boarding schools plays a very important role in the formation of the social structure and character of the students. This tradition not only functions as a learning mechanism that instills the values of respect, responsibility and leadership, but also as a means of building mutually respectful relationships between senior and junior students. However, this tradition needs to be managed wisely so as not to give rise to abuse of authority or inequality that is detrimental to junior parties. Seniority must be carried out based on Islamic values that are fair and full of compassion.

Apart from that, the dynamic between tradition and modernization is also a challenge that Islamic boarding schools must face in facing changing times. Although technology and educational innovation can improve the quality of teaching, Islamic boarding schools must ensure that the essence of traditional values, especially those related to morals and spirituality, is maintained. Therefore, a balance between modernization and preserving tradition is very important to maintain the identity of Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions based on character formation.

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