Kiai's Leadership in Strengthening Santri's Moderation Attitude in Islamic Boarding Schools

*Arif Khairur Rozaq1), Basri3), Indah9)
1,2) Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia
e-mail: arifikhoirur09@gmail.com, basizain2708@gmail.com, zuhriyah@pgmi.uin-malang.ac.id

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze: 1) the role of the kiai's leadership in strengthening the moderation attitude of the students at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School, 2) the steps taken by the Kiai, 3) the evaluation carried out by the kiai's leadership. This research uses a qualitative approach, the type of case study. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out in three steps, namely: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion. Checking the data's validity is done using the credibility, dependency test, and certainty test. The results of this study are as follows: first, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot in carrying out his leadership has four roles, namely: Kiai as a guide, Kiai as an agent of change, Kiai as spokesperson, and Kiai as a coach. To achieve the top leadership role, Kiai uses a situational leadership style in the form of delegation, guidance, and direction to subordinates. Second, in shaping and strengthening the moderation attitude of the santri, the Kiai emphasizes the study of books by the Kiai and the curriculum. Third, the implementation of the Kiai's leadership in strengthening the religious moderation of students at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has not encountered significant obstacles. Likewise, the implementation of strengthening the attitude of religious moderation of students by the expectations of the Kiai. The daily characteristics of santri in implementing the attitude of religious moderation are good.

Kata kunci: Kiai Leadership, Sikap Moderasi, Santri

Abstrak

INTRODUCTION

Moderation is the key to creating harmony, peace, and tolerance both among religions and between religious communities (Daheri, 2022; Jubba et al., 2021). In applying moderation, one must have extensive religious knowledge and good morals. With good morals, a person will uphold tolerance and humanism so that an attitude is easy to forgive, friendly, and not easy to vent emotions (Syuhud, 2018). Moderation has four indicators, namely: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating to local culture.

Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that spreads moderate Islam as well as a preventive measure for radicalism (Yumnah, 2020, 2021). In general, every pesantren has 5 main elements, namely: Kiai, boarding schools, santri, mosques, and the teaching of the turats book (Zulhimma, 2013). The Kiai is a central element that has a major influence on the life of the pesantren. This is because Kiai is the main support for the continuity of the education system in Islamic boarding schools (Ifendi, 2020, p. 79).

Kiai leadership is every action taken by the Kiai to coordinate and provide direction to individuals or groups who are members of a particular forum to achieve predetermined goals (Ansor & Muttahidah, 2020). Kiai leadership will have an impact if a Kiai has a role. Burt Nanus revealed that a leader in leading must have four important roles, namely: a direction maker, change agent, spokesperson, and coach (Bashori et al., 2020).

In maximizing their role, the leader must have a leadership style. The right leadership style is very effective in influencing subordinates to behave as desired by the leader (Heriyono et al., 2021). The best leadership style is situational leadership style, namely leadership by considering the power possessed, task complexity, and subordinate maturity (Sentana & Wiyasa, 2021).

Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is a boarding school that adheres to the al-wasath (moderate) perspective in Islam. Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School in faith and manhaj follow Ablussunnah wala Jama’ah. This is reflected in the fiqh and creed adopted by the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School, namely the fiqh of the Shafi’i madhab and the Ash’ariyah creed. In addition, the great teacher of Masyayikh Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot is a scholar of Ablussunnah wala Jama’ah.

In strengthening moderation, the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School makes Kiai the central figure. This is because the Kiai has full authority in the survival and existence of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. The authority possessed by Kiai related to policies includes: determining the vision, mission, goals, and programs that will be carried out at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School.

Kiai at Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot contribute directly to teaching and fostering students so that they do not experience errors in understanding religious texts in the hope that when they leave the pesantren (boyong) they are not easily provoked by new things, especially those related to SARA.

This study strengthens the results of previous studies that in preventing radicalism, Islamic boarding schools can revitalize the management of Islamic boarding schools (Fathurrochman et al., 2020, p. 242). On the other hand, Yumnah explained that in building moderate Islam, Islamic boarding schools can develop the following values: 1) Values in understanding Islam, 2) Values in understanding inter-religious communities, 3) Values in caring for the understanding of religion and culture (Yumnah, 2020).
RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach, the type of case study because it aims to describe the behavior and actions of the Kiai’s leadership in strengthening the moderation attitude of students. In general, case studies are research strategies that use how and why in the main question, researchers have little opportunity to control the events to be investigated, the focus of research lies on contemporary phenomena (Yin, 2003).

Data collection techniques were carried out through 1) Interviews, interviews were carried out on Kiai, administrators, and students of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School with open interview techniques, 2) Observation, researchers used participant observation techniques, 3) Documentation, researchers looked for data on matters or variables related to the research title, in the form of notes, transcripts, books, meeting minutes, agendas, administrative documents, and so on. Data analysis was carried out interactively with three steps, namely: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Checking the validity of the data is done by testing the credibility, dependency test, and certainty test (Miles et al., 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Kiai’s Leadership in Strengthening the Moderation Attitude of Santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School

In carrying out his leadership, the Kiai has four roles, namely: First, the Kiai is the one who determines the direction, and the first step taken by the Kiai is to determine the vision. Next, Kiai makes a master plan related to the education program and system that will be implemented. Second, Kiai as an agent of change, Kiai provides a general view which is the vision of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. In facing the era of technology, Kiai provides an understanding of the positive and negative impacts of using technology. The Kiai also emphasized to the santri to be neutral towards political candidates and to regard the news as fake news (hoaks) until proven true.

Third, Kiai as spokesperson, namely by interacting directly with related parties. The Kiai also makes maximum use of the institution’s website in explaining the system and manhaj of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School to the public. In addition, in responding to the problems and dynamics of society, Kiai actively publishes books.

Fourth, Kiai as coaches, namely by providing guidance and motivation, both to students and administrators so that they can actualize the vision of Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot effectively. In addition, Kiai summoned the management to report the condition of the pesantren program. To achieve the maximum leadership role, Kiai uses a situational leadership style in the form of delegation, guidance, and direction to subordinates. This is because human resources at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School have different characteristics.

Kiai’s Steps in Strengthening the Moderation Attitude of Santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School

Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is one of the largest Islamic boarding schools in East Java. The students of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School come from various regions throughout Indonesia which incidentally have various cultures so appropriate steps are needed to strengthen moderation in students.

Kiai in strengthening the moderation attitude of santri emphasizes the study of the yellow book and curriculum, both the pesantren curriculum, madrasah diniyah, and formal schools. The Kiai also did the same thing in forming a paradigm and a moderate perspective on santri. The study of
the yellow book is carried out intensely every day by using the books of the ulama` Aswaja. At the same time, the Kiai made the book *Ablussnah wal Jama`ab Islam Wasathiyyah Tasammub* love and peace, which was his work, as mandatory teaching material in madrasah *diniyah*.

On the other hand, Kiai delegates tasks to administrators to maximize moderation in students, among their duties is to guide students. Guidance is carried out through Kultum activities (seven-minute lectures). This guidance is a preventive measure against students who deviate from the Aswaja spirit. Guidance and direction are also provided by the Kiai to the management in every meeting forum.

About the pesantren system, Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has eight excellent programs. However, in strengthening the moderation attitude of the santri, Kiai focused on the Madrasah Diniyah program and the Study of the Yellow Book. Not only that, Kiai classifies students into three levels, and each level studies a predetermined book. The Kiai emphasized that the manifestation of moderation would be more effective if the Kiai set an example, both verbally and in attitude.

The indicator of a *kaffah* Aswaja Muslim according to the Kiai of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is every Muslim who in his belief follows the Ash'ariyah-Maturidiyah faith, believes in the four schools of thought, follows Sufism according to Imam Al-Junaid and/or the Sufis who follow his manhaj and is obedient on the umara (leader). A person who has implemented the four pillars of moderation will have an attitude of national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodative to local culture. The aim of the Kiai of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School to strengthen the moderation attitude of the students is to realize the perfect *maqosid asb-shari'ah*.

**Evaluation of the Kiai Leadership in Strengthening the Moderation Attitude of Santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School**

The implementation of Kiai's leadership in strengthening the moderation attitude of students at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has not encountered significant obstacles. However, the existing program will be further intensified, namely by maximizing the study of the yellow book, the material on madrasah diniyah, and the example of a Kiai.

The daily characteristics of the students of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School in implementing moderation are good. This is based on the high sense of tolerance among students. Although they come from different areas, both from Java and outside Java. However, they can mingle and socialize without discriminating against culture. Based on the data that the researchers obtained, the ratio of violence among the students of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is very small.

The Kiai and the management of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School synergize in minimizing students who deviate from the Aswaja spirit, including through the study of the yellow book, curriculum, and intense guidance for students, boarding school rules, and sanctions for students who violate the norms of moderation.

**DISCUSSION**

The Role of Kiai’s Leadership in Strengthening the Moderation Attitude of Santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School

The Kiai of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School in determining the pesantren education system which includes: programs, santri activities, and patterns of an arrangement always lean towards the Aswaja ulema. Kiai makes maximum use of his leadership role in implementing the education system. The role of leadership is an aspect that is very influential on the success of
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the organization in achieving its targets and goals. The achievement of organizational targets and goals is not only influenced by standard operating procedures, regulations, and human resources owned by an organization. However, the leadership model run by the leader also affects the performance of an organization in achieving its targets and goals (Agustin et al., 2019, p. 21).

The more influential the role of a leader, the better the quality of the organization (Suhartono et al., 2020, p. 337). The leadership of the Kiai of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has four roles, namely: first, the Kiai as a leader. The Kiai of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School provides direction to his subordinates, including the pesantren administrator, Madrasah Diniyah management, and formal school administrators (Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah) regarding the achievement of the vision of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. With the guidance from Kiai, the implementation of strengthening the moderation attitude of students will be more efficient and effective. Muladi argues that leaders must be able to select and set goals by considering the future external environment which is the goal of mobilizing all organizational resources in achieving the vision (Aisyah et al., 2022; Muali et al., 2021; Wajdi et al., 2022).

In implementing his role as a guide, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot takes the following steps: 1) Determines the vision of Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot. 2) Make a master plan related to the education program and system that will be implemented at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. 3) The Kiai continuously echoes the principle of moderation in his students, both through the study of the yellow book and the kiai’s attitudes and/or daily behavior. In realizing his vision, Kiai bases his education program and system on the perspective of ulama` Aswaja.

Second, Kiai as agents of change. Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot is a catalyst in the external environment. This is because the Kiai can anticipate the development of the outside world, and analyze its implications for the system and program of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. As stated by (Badrun et al., 2022; Eisenschmidt et al., 2019), leaders must be able to anticipate various changes and developments in the global environment and make predictions about their implications for the organization, be able to make priorities for changes that are implied by their vision, and be able to promote experimentation with the participation of people to produce the desired changes.

Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot provides a general view that is the vision of the pesantren, whether it is about Islam Aswaja, the quality of education, as well as affordable education costs. In facing the era of technology, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot provides an understanding of the positive and negative impacts of using technology. This is because the massive evolution of information technology in the world can lead to the transformation of the world's people who are starting to switch and use it in various personal and social activities.

The Kiai also emphasized to the santri to be neutral towards political candidates and to regard the news or information as fake news (hoaks) until proven true. The political aspect is one of the causes of the division of Muslims (Bashri, 2021). The division among Muslims will be more easily ignited if political candidates or of them uses a black campaign in their political propaganda. The potential for division of Muslims will be more widespread if the existing political situation is fried together with religious spices, as happened in the presidential election and the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017 (Abqa, 2020).

The rise of hoax information circulating both on social media and word of mouth has received special attention from many parties, including the Minister of Communication and
Information and the Secretary of the Indonesian Ulema Council. Seeing this reality, the demand for tabayyun is currently very much emphasized. A Muslim should be selective in receiving and conveying information (tabayyun).

Third, Kiai a a spokesperson. Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot interacts directly with related parties. In explaining the system and manhaj of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School to the community, the Kiai makes maximum use of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School website. In addition, in responding to the problems and dynamics of society, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot actively publishes books. According to (Daswati, 2014), a leader must be able to become a negotiator and form a network of external relations, develop a vision and communicate it, and carry out empowerment and change. The purpose of the Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot playing the role of spokesperson is so that the system, program, and vision of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School receive information on support, ideas, and resources that are useful for organizational development.

Fourth, Kiai is a builder. Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot provides guidance and motivation for both students and administrators to be able to actualize the vision of Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot effectively. Kiai provides guidance and motivation to students through the study of the yellow book both morning and evening. While the guidance and motivation for the management, Kiai do during routine deliberations. In addition, Kiai also summoned the management to report the condition of the pesantren program. Referring to the Kiai's leadership role as a coach, the leader is a group builder who empowers individuals in their organization and directs their behavior (groups) according to the vision that has been formulated. In other words, the leader acts as a mentor, who makes the organization's vision a reality (Mahrus, 2022, p. 10).

To achieve a maximum leadership role, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot uses a situational leadership style in the form of delegation, guidance, and direction to subordinates. This is because human resources consist of various characteristics. As stated by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard that the situation determines what style/pattern is carried out by a leader. The style/pattern of leadership is adapted to the challenges of the situation in which the leader is faced. The maturity characteristics of subordinates are the main keys that determine the effectiveness of leader behavior. Subordinates have different levels of maturity and readiness. Therefore, the leader must be able to adjust the leadership style to suit the situation of maturity and readiness of subordinates (Liu & Gumah, 2020).

In the perspective of situational theory (situational theory) as developed by Fred Fiedler, Paul Hersey, and Ken Blanchard, they say that the style/pattern that a leader must have is different, depending on the situation at hand (Khoironi & Hamid, 2020), Paying attention to the leadership style carried out by the Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot, he captures the various potentials of the institutional management under the auspices of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. Therefore, they are given space to be able to develop their creative ideas. However, the Kiai still provides guidance and direction to his subordinates if the problem cannot be solved.

Fiedler asserts that group performance in an effective organization depends on a good relationship between leadership style and existing decision-making (Prasetyo, 2022, p. 4). In making decisions, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot submits policies and responsibilities to subordinates (leaders of each institution). However, the final decision rests with the Kiai.

Thus, to support the pesantren's agenda so that it can run effectively and minimize the deviation of duties and responsibilities, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot categorizes three levels of sanctions for members of the organization who are not responsible for the task, namely light,
medium, and heavy. In addition, Kiai also categorizes students' activities based on time. This categorization is carried out so that teaching and learning activities can run effectively to strengthen the moderation attitude of students (Kartiko et al., 2020).

**Kiai Leadership Steps in Strengthening the Moderation Attitude of Santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School**

Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot in forming and strengthening the moderation attitude of students who incidentally have various characteristics, emphasizes the study of the yellow book and curriculum, both the curriculum of Islamic boarding schools, Madin and formal schools. The curriculum is an aspect that cannot be separated from education. The curriculum has an important contribution and contains the process of how to develop all potential capacities possessed by students so that they can create quality graduates (Nugraha, 2016).

About the pesantren system, Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has eight excellent programs. However, in strengthening the moderation attitude of students, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot focuses on the Madrasah Diniyah program and the Study of the Yellow Book. In addition, Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot classifies students into three levels, and each level studies a predetermined book. As stated by Cheung and Rudowicz, the classification carried out by teachers and/or policymakers aims to group students into classes or schools based on their cognitive abilities (Wibowo, 2015).

The existence of class grouping based on academic ability has many benefits, including it can meet the educational needs of students, can meet the wishes of parents that their children want to be grouped with students who have equality in ability, and with the grouping of students, teachers can take advantage of learning facilities (Alawi & Maarif, 2021; Sodikin & Ma’arif, 2021; Widjaja et al., 2022).

Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School always respects and maintains peace in humanity and understands the differences in faith. Therefore, Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School will continue to recognize the Islam of individuals and/or sects (groups) in Islam whose actions have no elements that cause them to become infidels according to the consensus of the ulama. The indicator of a kaffah Aswaja Muslim according to the Kiai of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is every Muslim who in his belief follows the Ash’ariyah-Maturidiyah faith, believes in the four schools of thought, follows Sufism according to Imam Al-Junaid and/or the Sufis who follow his manhaj and is obedient on the umara (leader).

A person who has implemented the four pillars of moderation will have an attitude of national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodative to local culture (Ardiansyah & Erihadiana, 2022; Farida, 2015). This is an application of the commands of the Qur’an Surah Ali Imran, and the Qur’an Surah Al-Hujurat which incidentally is a reflection of the true attitude of Muslims, namely: friendly, tolerant, and easy. Several aspects are always echoed by Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot towards students and administrators, namely: mutual forgiveness, tolerance, and the importance of the wasathiyah attitude. These aspects are the jargon of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School, namely: Faith, Knowledge, Morals, and Aswaja.

Based on data findings, the goal of Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot to strengthen the moderation attitude of students is to create a conducive and peaceful environment in the life of religion, nation, and state. Furthermore, for the realization of maqasid ash-shari`ah, namely hijizah al-din, hijizah an-nafs, hijizah al-aql, hijizah al-mal, and hijizah nasl perfectly.
Evaluation of the Kiai Leadership in Strengthening the Moderation Attitude of Santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School

Humans in various activities of daily life need evaluation. Without realizing it, evaluations have been carried out very often, both in the realm of leadership, education, administration, and other areas of life. Evaluation is one part of the system that must be carried out in a planned and systematic manner as a barometer of the success of the goals to be achieved in the Islamic learning and education process (Hadi et al., 2019; Hamdi, 2020). The evaluation aims to obtain accurate information related to the level of achievement of targets and instructional goals by students so that the next step can be taken (Anwar, 2021, p. 66).

Based on the data that the researchers found in the field, the implementation of Kiai's leadership in strengthening the moderation attitude of students at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has not encountered significant obstacles. However, the existing program will be further intensified, namely by maximizing the study of the yellow book, the material on Madrasah Diniyah, and exemplary, so that students can apply an attitude of moderation in practice perfectly.

The daily characteristics of the students of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School in implementing moderation are good. This is based on the high sense of tolerance among students. Although in essence, the students of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School come from different areas, both from Java and outside Java, which incidentally has many differences. However, the ratio of violence among students of Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is very small.

The management of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School took part in minimizing cases of violence against students by taking preventive steps, namely providing guidance to students, both periodic guidance and guidance whenever needed. Periodic guidance is carried out through Kultum activities (seven-minute lectures) which are held every Tuesday night. As for guidance outside of Kultum activities, it is carried out when there are students who are indicated to have committed acts that deviate from the Aswaja spirit. As the results of research which states that guidance and counseling are very useful to overcome the problems experienced by students. So that in the end students can learn more effectively. Thus, achieving educational goals will be easier (Hibatullah, 2022, p. 11). In addition, the management of the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School also tightened the boarding school rules and sanctions for students who violate the rules. This is done so that students can apply moderation optimally.

The implementation of strengthening the moderation attitude of students at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School is in accordance with the Kiai's expectations. This is because students are still actively studying (mukim) at the Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School so that they get full supervision and guidance, both from Kiai and pesantren administrators. In line with Hibatullah’s statement at the beginning, students are individuals who are in the process of developing towards maturity and/or independence. To achieve this maturity, students need guidance and direction because they are still unstable in understanding or insight into themselves, their environment, and experience in determining the direction of their lives (Lase, 2018).
CONCLUSION

Kiai Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot in carrying out his leadership has four roles, namely: as a determinant of direction, agent of change, spokesman, and coach. To achieve an optimal leadership role, Kiai uses a situational leadership style in the form of delegation, guidance, and direction to subordinates. In forming and strengthening the moderation attitude of the students who incidentally have various characteristics, Kiai emphasizes the study of the yellow book and curriculum. In addition, Kiai also sorts library books containing Salafi Wahhabi teachings. The Kiai's goal to strengthen the moderation of the students is to achieve the perfect maqosid ash-shari’ah. The implementation of Kiai's leadership in strengthening the moderation attitude of students at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School has not encountered significant obstacles.

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