



Synergy of kiai leadership with the tradition of Islamic boarding school in Toli Toli regency

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the importance of integrating the traditional authority of the kiai with modern management principles to ensure the sustainability and progress of Islamic boarding schools in the contemporary era. DDI Soni Islamic Boarding School, located in Dampal Selatan District, Tolitoli Regency, faces real challenges in aligning charismatic leadership values with professional organizational governance amidst globalization. This study aims to analyze and describe the model and form of synergy between the kiai's leadership and the boarding school's management traditions. The research method used in this dissertation is qualitative with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out comprehensively through participant observation within the pesantren environment, in-depth interviews with the leader (kiai), foundation administrators, teachers (ustadz), and reinforced by relevant documentation studies. Data analysis was performed systematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was ensured using source and technique triangulation to obtain valid and reliable data. The results of the study indicate that the synergy between the kiai's leadership and the pesantren tradition at DDI Soni manifests in several main dimensions. First, the integration of the tarbiyah education system and traditional dawah through a blend of the formal madrasah curriculum with the sorogan and bandongan methods. Second, charismatic leadership based on akhlakul karimah, which functions as a medium for student character transformation rather than authoritarianism. Third, the preservation of the moderate (wasathiyah) Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) traditional practices as a social glue with the community. Fourth, strong social contributions through sending senior students as preachers and organizing the Qur'an Camp program with local residents. The implications of this study confirm that effective synergy heavily depends on the kiai's ability to position themselves as an accountable strategic leader who is open to community aspirations. Theoretically, this research reinforces a multidimensional leadership model that combines charismatic authority with modern management principles. Practically, the kiai is expected to be more democratic in delegating technical authority to management staff and adaptive to technology without losing the core values of the pesantren, such as independence and simplicity, thereby creating flexible, transparent, and high-quality institutional governance.

Keywords: Leadership, Kiai, Boarding school, Synergetic, Cooperation

Introduction

The world of Islamic education is currently confronted by the currents of globalization and modernity, which have brought disruption to various aspects of life. This phenomenon demands not only intellectual readiness but also moral resilience (Nurdin, 2022; Sahin, 2018) [16, 29]. Amidst the onslaught of secularization and digitalization trends, the DDI Soni Islamic Boarding School, located in South Dampal District, Toli-Toli Regency, Indonesia, has demonstrated extraordinary resilience. This institution remains viable, strong, and even able to compete competitively with state-based schools with established facilities. The success of the DDI Soni Islamic Boarding School in maintaining its existence is inseparable from the philosophical principle it upholds: that true education is not merely the transfer of knowledge to fill students' cognition or brains. More than that, the essence of education is filling and cultivating the heart with faith, actualized through the habituation of religious practice in daily life.

As Islamic educational institutions with distinctive characteristics of the Indonesian archipelago, Islamic boarding

schools possess strategic value deeply rooted in grassroots culture, particularly in rural areas. The DDI Soni Islamic Boarding School emerged from the aspirations, needs, and religious perspectives of the local Muslim community. Therefore, its development is symbiotic and mutualistic with the dynamics of the local population. The boarding school grows from the community and is rededicated to its advancement. From a sociological perspective, the boarding school serves not merely as a place for Islamic study but also as an agent of social change (Pratama, Pettalongi, & Nurdin, 2022; Roqib, 2021) [25, 26]. Activities within the pesantren are a promising empirical instrument for community empowerment and intellectual development in the Toli-Toli region. The pesantren is expected to produce Muslim scholars who are both ritually and socially pious.

However, empirical reality presents a significant challenge at the national level. Many Islamic boarding schools are beginning to lose their appeal and relevance due to a lack of optimal mapping and actualization of their internal potential. Islamic educational institutions are being forced to adapt; if they fail to innovate intelligently, creatively, and visionarily,

they will be abandoned by society and neglected amidst the changing times. In this context, the *kiai* (Islamic scholars) play a central role and are key determinants. As the highest leaders, the *kiai* have full authority and absolute freedom to determine policy direction, manage systems, and make strategic decisions within the *pesantren*. The *kiai*-centered leadership model characterizes *pesantren* as authoritative and paternalistic (Faisal, Pabbajah, Abdullah, Muhammad, & Rusli, 2022) ^[1]. However, this authority demands that the *kiai* and the ranks of *ustadz* (Islamic teachers) possess a transformative vision. Without functional synergy between the *kiai*'s modern policies and existing noble values, *pesantren* are threatened with stagnation.

The Islamic Boarding School in South Dampal District is a particularly interesting locus in this context. On the one hand, they must maintain Islamic boarding school tradition's value system, the tradition of reciting the Koran, the yellow book, and the obedience of students) that serve as an anchor of morality. On the other hand, *Kiai* is required to implement dynamic management and leadership patterns to ensure the boarding school remains competitive in Toli-Toli Regency. The intersection of the *Kiai*'s innovative leadership authority with the deep-rooted *pesantren* tradition is what creates a space of "synergy." The fact that the DDI Soni Islamic Boarding School continues to exist indicates a special formula in its governance. This success cannot be separated from the synergy between the *Kiai*'s leadership model and the Islamic boarding school traditions inherent in DDI (Darud Da'wah wal Irsyad). Tradition is not seen as a burden of the past that hinders, but rather as socio-religious capital, orchestrated by the *Kiai*'s leadership, that becomes a competitive advantage. The phenomenon of the DDI Soni Islamic Boarding School's resilience amid global challenges, driven by its leadership, sparked a deep academic interest in the author. The author believes that the success of efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education at this institution is greatly influenced by how harmoniously the *Kiai* constructs the relationship between modern leadership and the preservation of tradition. Departing from this dynamic, the researcher deems it important to conduct an in-depth scientific study. This research is directed at analyzing the *Kiai*'s leadership work, mapping clashes and harmony with local traditions, and designing a draft model of effective synergy between modern leadership patterns and traditional values.

Literature review

Understanding synergy in organizations

The term synergy comes from the Greek *Synergia*, which means working together (Geary, 2013) ^[4]. In general, synergy refers to cooperation or coordination among several parties, agencies, or elements (Holubčík, Soviar, & Lendel, 2023) ^[5]. The combination of this cooperation produces a much greater and more effective impact than if each party worked alone. Synergy refers to the interaction that draws from various connected entities and creates a dynamic relationship with the aim of achieving a common goal. This synergy develops from a relationship where two or more individuals are involved in

regular dialogue, building a partnership that adapts according to the needs to meet the aspirations of each party involved. Coordination is a social mechanism in which specific actions are directed to achieve common goals through mutual assistance and understanding of each other's roles (Nurdin, 2021; Nurdin, Stockdale, & Scheepers, 2014) ^[15, 19]. Scholars also describe synergy as a process in which diverse elements mutually enhance and support one another to produce results that exceed the simple sum. Synergy can be characterized as a type of collaboration in which the parties involved interact without a focus on winning or losing. This definition emphasizes that synergy thrives on diversity or difference, not similarity. By recognizing diversity as a valuable asset, synergy becomes a process in which unique co-contributors work together to create results that exceed the efforts of their individuals. Consequently, synergy can be seen as a combination of components that leads to stronger results, or as the coexistence and coordination between public and private entities, supported by prior agreements on the division of labor between the local community and the bureaucratic structure. The effectiveness of collective work results can go beyond simply combining the individual talents of each team member. This cooperative strength emerges as cooperative cohesion stems from the closeness developed through positive interpersonal relationships within the group. Cooperative efforts will become the foundation for achieving high productivity aimed at shared goals. Consequently, an integrated approach is essential to address the challenges and potential issues posed by border disputes, including conflicts between countries and local communities near borders. Cooperative action yields benefits that exceed those achieved by individual business entities alone. The results of this collaborative engagement will create a sense of satisfaction that significantly benefits both parties involved.

Therefore, future concepts cannot be realized without comprehensive collaboration from both parties. The interaction of ideas generated through teamwork among members emphasizes the need for strong managerial skills, which include not only the ability to share ideas but also the talent for effective listening. In the Islamic context, synergy is known as the *musharakah* agreement, in which partners have voting rights commensurate with their financial contributions, allowing each member to participate in the business's governance. Each coalition operates on a foundation of "trust" and cannot demand guarantees from the other partners. Furthermore, business decisions are made collectively, depending on their respective financial investments. Therefore, each partner has the capacity to influence the direction of business progress while overseeing the path of the final operation. Synergy can also be characterized as effective internal collaboration and balanced alliances with stakeholders that produce high-quality, beneficial results. From the perspective of synergy's objectives, it can influence how individuals and groups behave during interactions, facilitated by communication among all parties involved.

The concept of synergy in the realm of business strategy refers to the results achieved when various organizational resources

coordinate to produce value that exceeds the sum of their individual values (Garzella & Fiorentino, 2017; Mukerji, 2019) [3, 13]. This principle of synergy can be implemented in the context of interdepartmental relationships within a company or in partnerships with external organizations. It should be noted that synergy arises from cooperative efforts that produce greater benefits than the capabilities of each unit operating independently. The idea of synergy in communication dynamics is combined with a spirit of cooperation and deep trust to achieve harmony in work. Synergy represents collaborative and innovative efforts based on shared trust and a strong desire to work together. Communication characterized by synergy arises from a foundation of courage and decisiveness, along with the development of effective personnel. Therefore, the concept of synergy includes a focus on achieving results, cultivating positive attitudes, and integrating diverse perspectives to replace or enhance existing paradigms, alongside collaboration, shared goals, consensus, and efforts to achieve maximum effectiveness, making it a sustainable process. In this way, synergy is not about individual gain, but is designed to achieve success while ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and no one feels disadvantaged. In essence, the goal of synergy is to unite different components. Achieving synergy involves a process, meaning it cannot happen overnight.

Understanding the kiai leadership

A leader is an individual who supervises others in an organization (Spicker, 2012) [30]. A leader can be described as the primary force in an educational institution, a key figure responsible for managing the institution's functions, and an individual who has the authority to make decisions and the ability to inspire others to perform specific tasks that align with their goals and aspirations (Nienaber, 2010) [14]. Furthermore, a leader has ultimate satisfaction, influence, authority, and accountability for all actions taken by those they supervise. The Kiai, the highest leader in the pesantren, is crucial to its development. The Kiai oversees all management of the pesantren's leadership. As the leader, the kiai has the greatest freedom to manage the pesantren's leadership. This leadership model implies that the pesantren's leadership model has a distinct emphasis and becomes a special character. Thus, the kiai of the pesantren's leadership must aspire to change their leadership to survive. The kiai implements the pesantren's leadership and makes decisions.

As for what is meant by kiai, it refers to an individual who is gifted with spiritual understanding, along with positive actions and ethical standards consistent with that understanding. Saiiful Akhyar Lubiis asserts, "A kiai plays the role of a key leader in an Islamic boarding school; the success or failure of the school depends on the influence and attractiveness of the kiai. Therefore, it often happens that when a kiai dies, the reputation of the boarding school declines, because his successor may not have the same influence as the kiai who has died." Dauly states that a kiai is a religious figure who is proficient in reading the Qur'an and is able to understand the thoughts of his followers. The characteristics of a kiai include

honesty, courage in his actions, and also the courage to apply the principles of *ijtihad*. The kiai is very important for the formation, expansion, progress, and management of Islamic boarding schools. As the leader of the Islamic boarding school, the effectiveness of the Islamic boarding school is very much based on the knowledge and expertise, the power of attraction and influence, and the ability of the kiai. In this discussion, the character of the kiai is very important, because he plays a key role in the Islamic boarding school. Mastuhu stated that the kiai is an important figure who influences the personality and existence of the Islamic boarding school. Every member of the Islamic boarding school obeys the kiai.

They aim to carry out his orders and avoid anything he disagrees with, ensuring they refrain from actions not endorsed by the kiai, while simultaneously striving to engage in activities endorsed by the kiai. A kiai is a figure considered influential in the work environment, increasing motivation, shaping behavior, and instilling values in employees, thereby enabling them to maximize performance in achieving organizational goals. Thus, according to the view mentioned above, the kiai, acting as a leader, holds full power in a pesantren and possesses expertise and knowledge in Islamic matters. In managing and advancing Islamic boarding schools, the followers of the kiai must obey all of their directives. The term kiai is quite well-known within the santri community. The kiai plays a crucial role in the existence of the Islamic boarding school, as he is not only the primary supporter. The educational system in Islamic boarding schools is sustainable not only because of its continuity, but also because the kiai embodies the values that resonate within the santri community. The role and authority of the kiai stem from their personal virtues, particularly their comprehensive mastery of religion and the piety demonstrated in their daily behavior, which embodies the distinctive values of Islamic boarding schools, including sincerity, humility, and a focus on the afterlife to achieve *riyadhah*. The kiai is a fundamental component of a pesantren. He is often even its founder. The development of a pesantren is inherently related to the character of its kiai.

Leadership in Islam

Islam views leadership positions as an obligation to uphold the interests of the individuals they lead, as well as those of Allah SWT (Mir, 2010) [12]. Thus, in Islam, leadership responsibilities encompass not only the formal horizontal relationships between individuals, but also the moral vertical relationships, which signify accountability to Allah SWT in the afterlife (Faris & Abdalla, 2018) [2]. Although a leader is accountable to Allah SWT, he may not always be free from formal accountability to the individuals he mentors. In fact, leadership does not have to be pleasant. A leader must be reliable because he will be given responsibility. Abuse of power and position for evil purposes will inevitably occur if leaders lack the trust necessary for success. In Islam, there is the term "caliph," which is the concept of leadership in Islam. Linguistically, the term *khaliifah* is derived from three Arabic letters: *kha*, *lam*, and *fa*, all of which function as nouns. Mahmud Yunus stated that the term "*Khaliifah*" is a corrupted

version of "Khoilafa," with the plural being "Khulafaa." According to Abu Husayn, the term *khaliifah* is etymologically derived from the letters *kha'*, *lam*, and *fa'*, which convey three main meanings: to replace, to follow, and to change. In this context, the verb *khalafa-yakhlufu khalifah* indicates that the *khalifah* takes over the role of the Prophet as a leader. The *khalifah* is a leader who succeeds the Prophet, representing an individual capable of initiating change to improve the welfare of the community under his rule. Scholars have varying opinions regarding the status of the caliph. These various perspectives have resulted in numerous definitions of the caliph. As stated by al-Mawardi, the caliph is appointed as the heir to the prophethood in protecting religion and overseeing secular affairs. At the same time, al-Baidhawii views the caliph as the successor to the Prophet, chosen from among several individuals to implement sharia law and protect the rights of the community, which are obligatory for all members of society. Al-Juwaynii emphasized that the caliph represents total leadership (*riiyasah tammah*), which is related to specific and general matters concerning religious interests and worldly affairs.

The concept of boarding school

Islamic boarding schooling is essentially an Indonesian educational system, commonly known as local education (Zhong, Feng, & Xu, 2024) [32]. Historically, the mosque prayer hall or the teacher's residence serves as the center of Islamic education, with students sitting on the floor, facing the teacher, while studying the Quran. Teaching is usually conducted at night to prevent disturbing their parents' daytime work. Pesantren function as continuously active educational institutions. Students live in dormitories within the same environment as the teachers, religious teachers (*Kiai*), and elders. As a result, the relationship between students, teachers, and religious leaders throughout the educational process is very deep, going beyond the formal relationship between *ustadz* and students in the classroom. Therefore, learning activities continue throughout the day, from dawn to dusk. Islamic boarding schools are religious schools that teach Islamic religious education. Pesantren schools always prioritize this education. They have demonstrated resilience in overcoming challenges in developing education. They have also contributed to the spread of Islam in this country. Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) are traditional educational institutions focused on Islam in Indonesia. The term "pesantren" is derived from "santri," with the addition of the prefix "pe" and the suffix "an," thus becoming "pesantriian," which refers to the location where the students live. Islamic boarding schools are conventional Islamic educational institutions that focus on learning, understanding, enriching, experiencing, and applying Islamic teachings by emphasizing the importance of moral principles as the basis for daily behavior.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative methods. In qualitative research, theory serves only as a guide for data gathering and analysis (Nurdin & Pettalangi, 2022; Nurdin, Stockdale, & Scheepers,

2016) [17, 20]. The data was collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and written document analysis at the research site (Rusli, Hasyim, & Nurdin, 2021; Rusli & Nurdin, 2022) [27, 28]. The research was conducted at an Islamic boarding school in Toli Toli regency, Indonesia. The researcher chose the boarding school based on the consideration that the boarding school implemented good leadership collaboration between leaders. The results of this study can later serve as a reference and a guideline for integrating local language into teaching the Islamic religion and for making schools a model for other educational institutions. Data were collected through direct observation, focus group discussion, in-depth interviews, and written document analysis. The interviews involved the school principal, five teachers, and ten students. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were consulted with participants to obtain their consent (Nurdin, Scheepers, & Stockdale, 2022; Nurdin *et al.*, 2014) [21, 22]. The data analysis used a deductive approach, which can be interpreted as a research procedure that produces deductive data from interviews and field notes. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis from Strauss and Corbin (1998) [31]. The analysis started with open, axial, and selective coding. The final result of the data analysis is the set of themes identified from the data.

Results and Discussion

Synergy between *kiai* leadership and boarding schools traditions

The synergy of the leadership of the *kiai* and the tradition of the pesantren is a combination of charisma, spiritual autonomy, and the vision of the *kiai* as a central figure with the principles of modern management (planning, organizing, evaluation). The *Kiai* serves as the main generator and controller, while the management of the pesantren (human resources, curriculum, facilities) effectively regulates technical operations. This coordination, which combines traditional values with professional governance, is crucial to improving the quality of education and the economic independence of the pesantren. There are several co-ordinates of the leadership of the *Kiai* according to Uztad Habiibi, the daily implementer of the DDI Soinii Islamic boarding school and also the Principal of the MTs DDI Soinii School, stating that there are six co-ordinates of the leadership of the *Kiai* and the management of the Islamic boarding school that cannot be separated, namely 1) the role of the *Kiai* as a leader in determining the policies and innovations of the Islamic boarding school 2) Characteristics of Synergy which include Positive and Strategic Thinking, Islamic Boarding School-Based Management and Independence and Entrepreneurial Development.

Based on the interview results and the researcher's observations in the field, the six components of the *kiai*'s leadership synergy are actualized in the following forms:

- The *kiai*'s central role is not only as a spiritual leader but also as the main manager who determines the vision, policies, and innovations of the pesantren. The *kiai*'s charisma and authority provide a strong sense of togetherness and discipline at the DDI Soinii Islamic boarding school.

- The characteristics of synergy developed by the kiai are actualized in the Policy of Political & Strategic Thinking: The kiai applies a clear vision and rational decisions for the direction of the pesantren.
- Islamic Boarding School-Based Management: Management that combines elements of Islamic boarding schools (pondok, mosque, students) with modern management principles.
- Independence & Entrepreneurial Development: The kiai plays a role in fostering the economic independence of Islamic boarding schools, where good management supports entrepreneurial development.
- Synergy Objectives: Achieving effectiveness and efficiency in education, character formation of students, and maintaining the relevance of Islamic boarding schools in today's changing times.
- Modern Islamic Boarding School Management: Synergy is realized when Islamic boarding school management transforms to become more systematic, efficient, and oriented towards improving quality, without eliminating traditional (classical) values.

This relationship creates harmony between the students' obedience (adab) to the cleric and the organizational system, which defines Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions that uphold Islamic traditions and interact with local culture through media imbued with the essence of monotheism. Islamic boarding schools are seen as exemplary educational institutions, distinguished by their scientific heritage, commendable traditions, and the dissemination and internalization of Islamic ethics. Pesantren have emerged as a kind of local advantage and a new educational option, given the shortcomings of other educational institutions in promoting morals and life skills, and are thus starting to attract the interest of various groups. Pesantren have been accepted as a new educational framework, such as "university boarding schools" or cadet academies, and similar concepts. This shows that pesantren have influenced all fields and have been integrated into our national education system. Thus, it is completely incorrect to believe that pesantren play a small and subordinate role in contributing to the success of national development initiatives.

The existence of Islamic boarding schools is seen as unique for two reasons: first, these schools were created to address the situation and conditions of a society experiencing the collapse of its moral foundations, or what can be called social transformation. Second, these schools were created to spread Islamic principles globally throughout the archipelago. The DDI Islamic Boarding School located in Soinii certainly has a form of leadership called the synergy of kiai leadership with the Islamic Boarding School Management, as stated by one informant as follows:

The Islamic boarding school DDI Soinii is a unique religious educational institution, which distinguishes itself from other schools. This school educates children by filling their minds with information and nurturing their hearts with faith, through the practice of religious customs. This Islamic boarding school

functions as a distinct community where individuals live together, dedicated in spirit and sincerity to connecting with the clergy and adhering to certain moral principles, thereby fostering a unique culture in harmony with the character of the Soinii community.

From the interview findings, it is clear that the leadership synergy demonstrated by the kiai at the DDI Soinii Islamic boarding school consistently considers students' character and the local community's conditions. As a result, the kiai's leadership at the boarding school is quite unique, because they use a pre-modern leadership model. The relationship between the kiai and the students is built on trust. It is not because of the patron-client relationship that is usually seen in the wider community. The students' obedience to the kiai stems primarily from their desire to receive blessings. Thus, the state of morality in the wider community is not as positive at this time, and many seek out Islamic boarding schools, hoping to produce graduates who can raise the moral standards of the nation. Although somewhat excessive, this ideology shows that national education still fails to provide a significant function for society. The function of the Kyai, which has "nafii" (understandable knowledge), corresponds to the character development that is currently widely debated as a way to revive the moral and character of the nation that is increasingly deteriorating. The goal is to cultivate individuals who demonstrate not only scientific integrity but also moral and ethical values, which will be important assets as they reintegrate into society.

The synergy of Islamic leadership embodies the honor of knowledge and scholars, who work in society, seeking solely the pleasure of Allah, not wealth, status, or recognition. Nevertheless, we can affirm that Islamic boarding schools during this period were highly effective environments for character development. In terms of leadership, an effective Islamic leader embodies a combination of skills and experience in adapting to the dynamic circumstances arising from human interaction. Effective leadership can oversee its team, anticipate change, overcome deficiencies and vulnerabilities, and guide the organization toward its stated goals. In this context, leadership is crucial to the organization's success. Effective leadership and leaders are essential to facilitate every important step or action. Only leaders who readily recognize the skills, abilities, efforts, and positive intentions of their followers (individuals, subordinates, and the groups they guide) to act independently and collaboratively can ensure the physical and spiritual health of the larger community.

The educational system in Islamic boarding schools is closely linked to the curriculum. In some Islamic boarding schools, especially traditional ones, the concept of curriculum is absent, although it is embedded in teaching methods, spiritual guidance, and the development of skills in daily life. Even in studies and research findings, systematic examination of the curriculum is rarely observed, as evidenced by the research results. Regarding Islamic boarding schools, discussions about the educational system often revolve around narratives describing the relationship between students and scholars, as well as outlines of Islamic teachings, including the Qur'an and

other texts studied daily. Thus, the curriculum in the Islamic boarding school encompasses all student activities, both day and night, and is imbued with educational values. These values extend beyond academic subjects to include a variety of extracurricular activities that also have educational significance within the boarding school environment, such as practicing simplicity, managing shared resources, attending to personal needs, participating in self-defense training, maintaining orderly worship, and participating in training for a simple lifestyle.

Strategy for synergy of kiai leadership with tradition in Islamic boarding schools

The design of the leadership synergy of Islamic scholars in a pesantren point of view is greatly influenced by various factors. If analyzed further, it is found that the factors enabling the pesantren to continue to exist amid all forms of clashes in the dynamics of social change lie in the leadership and education system. In addition to the tradition of knowledge with a million treasures that become the wealth of the pesantren, the strength of the center of study "classic books" is, as stated by one informant, as follows:

"Initially, aspects of educational culture enabled students to gain an in-depth understanding. In the current understanding of the culture of comprehensive learning, this aligns with the concept of mastery learning. In this concept, education goes beyond simply transferring knowledge from teacher to student and encompasses comprehensive personal growth. The dissemination of knowledge in Islamic boarding schools is not limited by deadlines for completing the curriculum as outlined in the General Outline of the Teaching Program (GBPP), but rather focuses on a full understanding of conceptual nuances, without being bound by strict time limits. In Islamic boarding school education, the kiai or ustadz prioritizes the quality of students' mastery over the quantity of material they are able to learn."

Based on the interview results above, the DDI Soinii Islamic boarding school applies the tradition of studying the yellow scriptures as a student habit to deepen students' religious knowledge, shape students' character, and ensure they do not forget the sanad of their knowledge. The cultural aspect of education that strengthens Islamic boarding schools is strong community involvement. Societal needs and demands primarily drive the establishment of Islamic boarding schools throughout the country. The earliest physical manifestation of Islamic boarding schools is a mushalla, which is generally known by the Javanese community as tajug or langgar. Along with congregational worship, this place serves as a center for Islamic education, including mastery of reading and interpretation of the Qur'an, which eventually evolved into the study of various holy scriptures. As the number of students increased, the small prayer room (mushalla) was enlarged and eventually converted into a mosque. This place then expanded its role beyond simply accommodating the five daily prayers and various student activities, also becoming a place for Friday

prayers. The number of students also increased. Initially, they were santrii kaloing (students who did not live in the dormitory). However, as student enrollment continued to increase and they came not only from the kiai-ulama areas but also from further afield, a need arose for accommodation. This enabled active community involvement in the pesantren. This involvement manifested in various ways, including providing physical resources and allocating funds for needs.

The key and central element in the Islamic boarding school system is the kiai. Indeed, in many Islamic boarding schools, the kiai is the legal owner of the institution. From this perspective, the kiai should be considered the primary reference and focal point for students. The kiai in the Islamic boarding school environment is the primary individual who holds authority and serves as the focal point for all policies and transformations. This is related to two aspects: First, leadership focuses on individual elements that depend on charisma and paternal relationships. The majority of Islamic boarding schools follow the "moinoi-semua" model: moinoi-management and moinoi-administration. As a result, there is no division of authority to work units within the organization.

Ownership is personal, not collective. The personal autonomy of the kiai, as the creator and guardian of the pesantren, is highly significant and unshakable. Genetic influence is very significant, allowing the kiai to hand over leadership of the pesantren to his descendants, a succession accepted without any pesantren members daring to challenge it. This method of leadership transition often triggers "sarcasm" that implies that the existence of the pesantren resembles a "small kingdom." This further strengthens how the position and position of the kiai in his pesantren will not be touched by external forces and will never be shaken by internal influences. The leadership design of the kiai in the DDI Soinii Islamic boarding school is generally based on a combination of charismatic, paternalistic (fatherly), and transformational, where the kiai acts as a caregiver, educator, and holder of the highest spiritual authority. This approach aims to shape the mental, moral, and independent character of the students through direct role models (uswah hasanah) and centralized management of the Islamic boarding school.

Conclusion

The Islamic Boarding School is a key base for the Darul Da'wah wal Irsyad (DDI) network. At this Islamic boarding school, the continuity of education and the upholding of religious values depend heavily on the synergy between the kiai leadership and the deep-rooted traditions of the school. The following explains how this harmony and synergy are fostered at the DDI Soinii Islamic Boarding School. In the DDI tradition, the kiai is not merely the institution's operational manager, but also a spiritual leader and a source of knowledge, encompassing the transmission of knowledge (Sanad), charisma, and exemplary conduct. The synergy between kiai leadership and tradition at the DDI Soinii Islamic Boarding School manifests itself in a hybrid manner and is divided into four main traditional pillars through a harmonious division of roles. These traditions include academic traditions, where the

kiai act as ideological conceptualizers and holders of the highest sanad (teaching major books). At the same time, the administrators manage tutorial classes and daily evaluations rationally and legally. Then there is the religious ritual tradition (Barazanji), in which the kiai position themselves as charismatic-spiritual figures who serve as centers for the guidance of religious practices, as prayer guides, and as spiritual motivators for students and the community. Furthermore, there is the community tradition (Qur'ani Camp), in which the kiai exercise paternalistic leadership as a socio-religious umbrella for the community and open channels for cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the administrators serve as operational managers of field activities. Finally, there is the tradition of the pesantren lifestyle (the Pondok System): the kiai establish normative rules through exemplary behavior (uswah hasanah), while tactical control, 24-hour supervision, and daily enforcement of discipline are delegated to the dormitory administrators.

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