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## The Concept of Ideal Islamic Boarding School Leadership Perspective KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi (1985-2020)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the Concept of Ideal Islamic Boarding School Leadership today from the point of view of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi who has experience in developing the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School from 1985-2020. This Research used a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach, with a field of exploration and a theoretical orientation or theoretical perspective, namely the researcher understood, described and analyzed the Concept of Ideal Islamic Boarding School Leadership. The results showed that the idea of Islamic boarding school leadership from the perspective of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi was considered the most appropriate and ideal to be developed in organizational culture and modern Islamic boarding schools, because the ideal type of Islamic boarding school leadership must be based on the principles of leadership values that must be owned by a leader, including: 1). The values of sincerity, 2). Honesty, 3). Sacrifice, 4). Moslem brotherhood, 5). Exemplary values, 6) Optimism.

**Keyword:** Leadership, Totality , Spiritual Values of Leadership, Kiai

## Konsep Kepemimpinan Pesantren Ideal Perspektif KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi (1985-2020)

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui Konsep Kepemimpinan Pesantren Ideal di masa kini dalam sudut pandang KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi yang telah memiliki pengalaman dalam mengembangkan Pesantren Modern Darussalam Gontor dari tahun 1985-2020. Peneliti menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi, dengan bidang eksplorasi dan orientasi teoretis atau perspektif teoretis, yaitu peneliti memahami, mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis tentang Konsep Kepemimpinan Pondok Pesantren Ideal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gagasan kepemimpinan Pesantren perspektif KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi dinilai paling tepat dan ideal untuk dikembangkan dalam budaya organisasi dan pesantren modern, karena tipe ideal kepemimpinan pesantren harus dilandasi prinsip-prinsip nilai kepemimpinan yang harus dimiliki oleh seorang pemimpin antara lain: 1). Nilai ketulusan, 2). Nilai Kejujuran, 3). Nilai pengorbanan, 4). Nilai Ukhuwwah Islamiyah, 5). Nilai keteladanan, 6). Nilai optimis.

**Keyword:** Leadership, Totality , Spiritual Values of Leadership, Kiai.

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## INTRODUCTION

KH (Kiai Haji) Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi in leading Gontor for more than 35 years, he sees that leadership is the source of the benefit and problems of mankind. Even the problems of people until now are about leadership. So, the vision and mission of Gontor's education is to create and form strong and sturdy leaders, leaders who have a noble soul and philosophy of life, true teachings and are seen in the totality of life in boarding school with high discipline, namely discipline that is always applied within 24 hours (Zarkasyi, 2011).

The leadership of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi in leading Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School (1985-2020) went through two reigns, the New Order and the Reformation. It is undeniable that the pattern of leadership at Darussalam Gontor Islamic Modern boarding school is no longer based solely on individual charisma but on institutional charisma which is reflected by strong and authoritative collective leadership.

Collective leadership presupposes that policy initiatives taken by leaders must be communicated to all parties. The aim is to build a common perception at all levels, that the policy is useful for Islamic boarding school education. Institutional policies must get support from waqf institution. The leader cannot make decisions on his own because boarding school does not belong to kiai (Zarkasyi, 2003).

However, in the development of Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School, it cannot be separated from the role and thoughts of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, he has interesting ideas on leadership, management, regeneration and strengthening boarding school economy, his thoughts are not just discourses on paper, but have been implemented in the educational institution he currently leads, Darussalam Gontor Modern Boarding School (PMDG). This writing is limited to the thoughts of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi between 1985 and 2011. 1985 was the first year of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi leads the PMDG, and 2011 was the year he became ill so he couldn't carry out his activities properly.

Leaders are innovators, with bold and creative ideas, and appropriate actions, providing selling points for organizations that can build public trust. The leader is the educator, with the leader being the educator because the process of being an educator is to humanize humans which must be done in humane ways not in inhumane ways. Thus, producing reliable and trustworthy subordinates (Nurdin, *et al*, 2015).

Allah S.W.T said in QS. Shad verse 26, as follows:

*Meaning: O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow (your own) desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah." Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah*

*will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Reckoning.* (QS. Shad: 26)

Based on the verse above, it is explained that leaders on this earth must have a fair attitude and not follow their desires because it will lead astray from the way of Allah and those who go astray will get a severe punishment. So a leader (*khalifah*) must have a fair character towards his subordinates.

The dynamics of Islamic boarding schools are not the same as other institutions. The growth and development and success of boarding school cannot be separated from the leadership of Kiai in it. the leadership of Kiai as one of the dominant elements in the life of boarding school. Leadership can be interpreted as a person's ability to influence other people, through direct or indirect communication with the intention of moving these people so that they are willing to follow the leader's wishes with understanding, awareness and pleasure (Wahid, 1999).

Therefore, the existence of the Kiai (leader) and Islamic boarding schools are one unit, because the position of Kiai is very dominant in determining the development of Islamic boarding schools. Among Islamic boarding schools, Kiai is the main actor, because he decides the policy for the development of Islamic boarding schools, both physical and non-physical. Kiai who started boarding school, nurtured it, determined the learning mechanism and curriculum, and colored the life of the pesantren in its daily life.

Therefore, Kiai plays a multifunctional role, apart from being a manager, teacher, preacher, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, First, Kiai is also being as a cultural agent. Kiai plays the role of a cultural filter that penetrates society. Second, Kiai as a mediator, namely as a liaison between the interests of various segments of society, especially elite groups, and other elements of society (Syam, 2005).

Thus Kiai is the main pillar of leadership, it is believed to be the main pillar in realizing the progress of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, in Islamic educational institutions, leaders must really be prepared and selected selectively, bearing in mind the role played by leaders can affect the overall condition of the organization. The progress of educational institutions is more determined by the leader factor than other factors. It is true that there are other factors involved in contributing to the progress of an institution or the setback of an institution, but the position of the leader is still the most powerful and most decisive factor for the future of an Islamic educational institution (Qomar, 2007). So it is not surprising that KH Abdullah Syukri Zakarkasyi always said: (Zarkasyi, 2005)

*“The main task of a boarding school leader is to organize, develop, and live the total life of the Islamic boarding school, for this reason the Islamic boarding school leader must be someone who is diligent, hardworking, masters the problem totally,*

*both concerning values, systems, as well as educational materials and programs, Leaders in Gontor, are educators, who at any time direct, assign assignments, train, oversee, set an example and pray for. .”*

One of the Islamic leaders who can be an example in leadership in the organization is KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi. He has succeeded in developing and becoming a leader at Darussalam Gontor Islamic Boarding School in 1985-2020. The success of his leadership is proven by the extraordinary developments, both in the field of education carried out, regeneration, boarding school economy and activeness in various activities in these institutions which are still in great demand by the wider community.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research used qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Research in a phenomenological view is meaningful in understanding events in certain situations. As Bogdan, to be able to understand the meaning of events and people's interactions, a theoretical orientation or theoretical perspective is used with a phenomenological approach, that is, researchers understand and internalize the behavior of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi in leading Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School from 1985-2020.

The purpose of this research is to get in-depth description of the totality concept of leadership in KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi's view. Topic selection is used because history has a broad topic of discussion so that it must be determined which topic will be studied. Topic selection is based on two conditions, namely emotional closeness and intellectual closeness (Kuntowijoyo, 1995).

The author chose the topic of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi's view regarding the educational concept of the totality concept of leadership based in the view of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, the author's interest in KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi's leadership method which he applied at PMDG. The author considers the leadership pattern implemented by KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi at PMDG is very different from the general public. One of interesting thought from KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi is, his thoughts are consistent to develop education and teaching more broadly, so as to be able to open branches of Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School. His intellectual closeness is that the author feels that the concepts of totality of boarding school leadership based on spiritual values in the view of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi that have been implemented by PMDG can be an ideal solution for boarding school leadership in this era.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Since being elected as the Leader of the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School by the Waqf Institution in 1985, KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi has been one of the active leaders in developing Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo, East Java. He is a warrior who works hard in fighting for human function as Khalifah. not only donate all thoughts, but also actions and assets with the sentence li l'laai kalimaatillaah. His wish is to continue the ideals of his ancestors, namely to revive Islamic education through Islamic boarding schools. Based on his learning experiences in various Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions in Java and abroad (Faj, 2011).

Aside from being a boarding school leader, he is also an educator, KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi develops leadership that can be internalized by those who are led, because of this appreciation, indirectly, the leadership of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, as well as creating cadres of community leaders. Unknowingly, his leadership style has shaped the leaders of people. Indeed, sometimes he did not specifically state leadership education in Gontor, but he instilled leadership education by providing leadership values in Islamic boarding school life which was imbued with an atmosphere called the five souls which became the life philosophy of Gontor.

In his leadership at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School, it would not be wrong to say that the leader is also a manager or administrator, that is, one who manages the totality of life in boarding school, but specifically leadership at Gontor is not managerial or administrative leadership which only regulates, organizes and divides routine tasks, then wait for the report and end up making decisions which are usually made in just a few hours, because the leader at Gontor is also an educator who always prays for his students, gives assignments, provides supervision and is always a good role model for his students (Zarkasyi, 2011).

So that the ideal leadership today is a leader who has values as KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi's thoughts are:

**The Value of Sincerity** In fact, the most basic and most important thing in this religion is to surrender ourselves to Allah S.W.T in every act of worship that we do. Sincerity is one of the practices of the heart that really needs to get deep attention and is carried out continuously in every act of worship that we do in this world, so that our practice becomes valuable before Allah S.W.T. Sincerity according to KH Imam Zarkasyi, the founder of Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School, sincerity is an act of intention to worship Allah S.W.T without expecting any reward, not driven by self-interest for profit.

The meaning of sincerity, if we look for the root of the word, means clean, holy, pure, without any mixture, or suitable and proper. Meanwhile, according to the

term, sincerity means presenting intentions only for the sake of Allah with a strong and earnest effort in thinking, working and acting for the progress of his business by always hoping for His blessing. KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi often conveys: (Zarkasyi, 2011)

*"I do something, work hard for the progress of this boarding school only because of God and sincerity makes us strong, tough and principled."*

The sincerity which KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi meant was in these words an active sincerity which brought a new movement and innovation in life, which was lived with high motivation, earnestly and praying.

**Honesty Value,** Being honest is known as *Asshiddqu* which means telling the truth or being real. The meaning is, honest is a form of equation between words and events that actually happened. In a broader sense, being honest means not acting dishonestly, always following the rules and regulations that apply and having a straight heart.

The word *siddiq* with various forms is repeated in several verses of the Qur'an. To find the correct word in the Qur'an, it is necessary to look at several sources to get more accurate results. From the Qur'an, 500 correct words were found, but after checking these words also contained explanations of verses that still needed additional explanation (Chirzin, 2011).

Honesty is one of the noble characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, who is a figure of a leader who has the most noble qualities and has always been a perfect role model for all mankind on earth, because he is a prophet who was sent as a mercy to all human beings, and also The Prophet Muhammad SAW was known as someone who had an honest personality in all things and never lied and always kept the trust and never broke the trust, and that happened long before he had not been appointed a Prophet by Allah S.W.T.

In leadership, the honesty must be instilled from an early age, because leaders who act with honesty will give positive energy towards the members or groups they lead. This honesty will open up other good qualities in a leader, because in an Arabic proverb it states "*ro'su alzdunubi alkadzibu*", namely the root of a sin is a lie, it can be interpreted that once a leader commits a lie, then the next he will cover up the lie with other lies.

Honesty is the key given by religion to achieve success in this world and also in the hereafter. For this reason, this skill must be continuously trained by leaders. Because whatever form of management is applied in a life, especially in the world of education, it will not be able to defeat honest management, because management is only a tool and a method, while what is more important is that the management actor can manage and control.

**Value of Sacrifice,** Leadership education based on a spirit of sacrifice will form sincere leaders who always strive for the interests and welfare of the group or members they lead. Sacrifice is a mandatory trait that must be possessed by a leader, he must always think about the safety and welfare of the people he leads. Those leaders who have a high spirit of sacrifice will always get help from Allah S.W.T, and then Allah S.W.T. will make it easier for all the paths of their leadership so that all the goals and missions of the leadership are achieved.

Leadership means to serve. Serving the group or its members they lead. Every servant must always sacrifice in serving. Sacrifice means that a leader must be free from desire to promote self-interest over the interests of other groups. Sacrifice also means that a leader is willing to lose his comfort. That means he has to get out of his comfort zone. Like salt pickles a dish, a servant leader gives his life to his group and members and puts their interests before personal interests. The servant-leader sacrifices his personal rights to find greatness in serving others. The servant leader's life is full of sacrifice. That's what separates a true leader from a mediocre leader.

The Trimurti or the founders of Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School have provided a valuable example in developing Gontor, they are ready to sacrifice anything for the progress of this boarding school. Her motto "Wealthy, energy and thoughts, if needed, lives are also ready to be sacrificed" is clear evidence of the sacrificial education that has been carried out by Trimurti.

**Moslem Brotherhood Values,** Humans were created on the basis of unity, they always live together in one unit, tend to like to work together, work hand in hand and help each other. Therefore, Allah orders the strength of the Muslims to be fostered by fostering unity, so that they are not easily divided and regulate relationships with one another, through mutual help and mutual assistance. Allah S.W.T said in surah Ali Imran: 103. KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi said: (Zarkasyi, 2011)

*"In social life, we become anything, the ability to share is one of the keys to our success, especially as a leader, we must be kind to everyone because it is our kindness that makes other people accept our presence"*

Moslem Brotherhood or Ukhuwah Islamiyah according to KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, there are at least two relationships that must always be repaired, the first with Allah and the second with humans themselves.

**Exemplary Value,** KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi believes that exemplary is an effort to always be a good and right example for others. In relation to leadership education, this effort is quite successful when applied in everyday life. For example,

the Prophet succeeded in fostering his friends and followers by example, because what is immediately seen by the eye will be easily digested and well understood.

That is the role of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi by making the leaders and teachers strive to be able to devote themselves wholeheartedly and spiritually, so that the message will enter the hearts and souls of the students. In setting a good example, no monthly salary is imposed for the leaders of boarding school, or special and excessive boarding facilities, the leaders only get what is reasonable or according to their needs. KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi said: (Zarkasyi, 2011)

*“It is not guaranteed that if Kiai is rich, the boarding school will have a progress”*

In the leadership of KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, to become a leader who has good examples, at least some excellent strength is needed to deal with it, because what a leader faces are not only material, but more complicated, namely non-material such as mindset, attitude and human behavior can change and develop.

The exemplary method in a leadership education is something that is really needed, because the community will indirectly follow all the behavior and gestures of the leader, they will read and judge the behavior, speech, policies and all the things that are done by a leader and always will serve as an example for them. So that a leader must be fair, wise and always prioritize the interests of the community above his personal interests.

**Optimistic Value,** Within a leader there must be optimism that drives oneself to continuously improve and develop, because if the leader does not have an optimistic attitude, then the leader will be left behind. KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi said: (Zarkasyi, 2011)

*“ If we do something based on a high sense of optimism, then we will be healthy and strong. Why? in someone's heart, if there is optimism in us, then the nerves of the brain will circulate fresh blood and distribute something fresh to all the nerve cells in our body, so that the body feels fresh, but if we are pessimistic, then the brain will shrink and make it not smooth and unhealthy.*

*Always being optimistic is the key to be healthy and successful, because Optimism grows together with our devotion to Allah, the higher our devotion to Allah, the higher our level of optimism for life and struggle. With high optimism, we are not afraid of failure, we will not be leaders who doubt.”*

In educating students to increase their sense of optimism, KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi taught us to have great mentality and courage and not be afraid, because it is this mentality and courage that will determine the extent of a leader's success. Moreover, a leader in determining a policy requires high courage. In any life, such as education, business, work, community, leadership, courage is still needed,

especially as a leader when it comes to decisions and policies, he believes that a leader should not be afraid of making mistakes, because if you are afraid of making mistakes, you will never do something correctly. This is firmness, because actually what makes people destroyed or perish is doubt, and doubt is caused by not having courage.

KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi said that his initial capital for returning to Gontor was recklessness and strong determination, after studying with his father KH Imam Zarkasyi, he had a strong capital in leading Gontor, namely optimism.



Figure 1. KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi's Totality Leadership Pattern Scheme

## CONCLUSION

After conducting studies and research on the Concept of Islamic Boarding School Leadership in KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi's view (1985-2020), researchers can draw the following conclusions: The idea of Islamic Boarding School Leadership developed by KH Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi is considered the most appropriate and ideal to be developed in modern Islamic boarding schools and organizational culture, because the ideal type of Islamic boarding school leadership must be based on the principles of leadership values that a leader must possess, including, First, the value of Sincerity that is manifested by certain methods, namely direction, training, assignment, habituation, escort and approach, Second, the value of Honesty with various training, diligent and able to complete tasks, achieve well, able to keep the mandate and always be honest and speak. Third, the value of sacrifice, sacrificing with one's thoughts, energy, possessions and feelings, is one's self-readiness which is largely determined by idealism, aspirations and goals in life, which has an impact on the maturity of mindset, wisdom and leadership. Fourth, the value of muslim brotherhood, which is marked by a good relationship with God

and humans. Fifth, the value of exemplary, education in Gontor is exemplary education shown by its leaders. Exemplary leaders must be accompanied by creativity, high fighting spirit, adapting to circumstances, struggling. Sixth, the optimistic value, in which the leader must have high courage and persistence and not be afraid of risks, which is taught through education, namely: the leader must master the problem as a form of responsibility, must have a strong will, then it will become a character that moves, fight and live.

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