

PESANTREN EFFECTIVENESS: THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN ENHANCING PERFORMANCE IN PESANTREN INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract.

The aim of this research was to plan and elucidate a framework of cultural structure for organization mainly for the advancement of its implementation. The object of the study was observed under the longitudinal research method and based on constructive organizational culture. The study employs a qualitative research design utilizing the grounded theory method. The key informants for this research comprise four individuals, namely the pesantren leader, deputy leader, and two teachers who serve as coordinators for student activities. Based on empirical data, Al Muslim has shown the potential to become a prominent pesantren in Aceh, utilizing a development model that prioritizes concentrated efforts in three key areas: work flexibility through institutional structural efficiency, curriculum revitalization and integration, and partnership development. Thus, in order to help attain the organizational object, the school administrators should develop an organizational culture.

Keywords: *Pesantren Management; Pesantren Performance; Organizational Culture; Organizational Effectiveness.*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk merencanakan dan menjelaskan kerangka struktur budaya organisasi terutama untuk kemajuan implementasinya. Objek penelitian diamati dengan metode penelitian longitudinal dan berdasarkan budaya organisasi yang konstruktif. Penelitian ini

menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode grounded theory. Informan kunci penelitian ini berjumlah empat orang, yaitu pimpinan pesantren, wakil pimpinan, dan dua orang guru yang berperan sebagai koordinator kegiatan kesiswaan. Berdasarkan data empiris, Al Muslim telah menunjukkan potensi untuk menjadi pesantren terkemuka di Aceh, dengan menggunakan model pengembangan yang mengutamakan upaya terkonsentrasi pada tiga bidang utama: fleksibilitas kerja melalui efisiensi struktural kelembagaan, revitalisasi dan integrasi kurikulum, dan pengembangan kemitraan. Oleh karena itu, untuk membantu mencapai tujuan organisasi, pengelola sekolah harus mengembangkan budaya organisasi
Kata Kunci: Manajemen Pesantren; Kinerja Pesantren; Budaya organisasi; Efektivitas Organisasi

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with a predominantly Muslim population, provides an environment conducive for the development and prevalence of Islamic-based schools (Hasan, 2009; Palmer & Chodidjah, 2012). Pesantren, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, have demonstrated their ability to adapt to changing contexts and have shown sustained growth across different historical periods (Isbah, 2020; Zaini, 2022). The institutional structure of Islamic-based education falls under the purview of the Ministry of Religion, while public schools operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Sysling, 2016). Regrettably, this situation reflects the existing dichotomy between religion and science within Indonesia's education system (Azra, 2019; Syarif & Hannan, 2020).

The existence of pesantren has become more apparent following the enactment of the Pesantren Law in 2019 (Setyawan, 2019). In Aceh, pesantren have experienced significant growth in the past five years, with a current total of 1200 pesantren (Dinas Pendidikan Dayah Aceh, 2022). One contributing factor to the continued existence of pesantren lies in their adherence to core values within the framework of organizational culture (Arifin et al., 2021). Organizational culture also plays a role in creating a conducive work environment. Indirectly, organizational culture influences individual and organizational performance (Perawironegoro, 2018; Prasetyo & Fadhillah, 2022).

Most pesantren in Aceh (known as Dayah) hold a private status and possess a rich historical background that has evolved alongside community development, warranting support and advocacy (Zainal et al., 2022). The role of pesantren culture, as stated accreditation by A and B, is deemed crucial in fostering a conducive work environment that positively impacts the sustainability of the organization simultaneously.

Various types of research on organizational culture show a fundamental role in improving the performance of school organizations (Roslan Mohd Nor & Malim, 2014). The research findings emphasize how organizational culture serves as a platform for

constructive social interactions, fostering collaborative and sustainable efforts among pesantren value and output quality (Azro'i & Fuaidi, 2020).

Conversely, a misunderstanding of the inculcation of values in organizational culture causes ambiguity among school administrators, which in turn hinders the process of education delivery. Even schools that do not have cultural character become uncompetitive. For this reason, the formation of culture requires consistent policy support. This research was conducted at Pesantren Al Muslim Bireuen. This research is a qualitative study using grounded methods. The data analysis was based on a mixture of observations and documentary studies, and all related to different levels of value of pesantren and pesantren cultural behavior. There are several points of cultural assessment to conduct, comprising commitment, investment, and outputs. Recognition of tensions is also evident in the findings. The theoretical framework of practical architecture is implemented to analyze the intersection of findings, namely the construction of organizational culture in creating stability in pesantren systems. The effective implementation of the organizational culture program will contribute qualitatively to raising the development of pesantren (Rodiana & Rahmawati, 2016; Silahuddin, 2015).

Further research is needed to measure the impact of post-reduction in the quality gap in the education management arena (Kholiq, 2022; Mardiyah, 2010; Muslim, 2021). This study revealed that Pesantren Al Muslim had not demonstrated integrity governance. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a valuable resource for policymakers in formulating effective school culture policies aimed at enhancing school performance and producing high-quality graduates. The fundamental aspect of cultural development lies in eliminating the dichotomy between general educational institutions and pesantren, as this will establish organizational boundaries during periods of change.

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative paradigm using the grounded theory method. The study focuses on two pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in the Aceh region, specifically Pesantren Al-Muslim in Bireuen. The primary instrument employed in this research is the researcher himself. Data collection involved interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis utilized data triangulation techniques, combining observations and documentary studies that encompassed various levels of leadership within the partnership. The study identified three areas of tension: investment appraisal, yield assessment, and commitment assessment. These tensions were further supported by the findings. To analyze these intersections, a theoretical framework for practical organizational culture was applied. The authors aim to elucidate the effectiveness of organizational culture in enhancing the performance of pesantren management programs through a comprehensive description. Through this honest depiction, it is anticipated that an ideal governance model will be identified to assist other educational institutions in improving their quality of education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the specific context of pesantren, recognizing the intricate relationship between organizational culture and climate necessitates an integrative approach. Organizational Culture approach entails conducting a comprehensive investigation into the shared values, traditions, and practices that shape the cultural identity of pesantren, while also examining dynamic contextual factors that influence the manifestation of these cultural elements. Organizational culture encompasses a range of elements including behavioral norms, assumptions, beliefs, values, ideology, attitudes, habits, and expectations held by an organization. Conversely, organizational climate refers to individuals' perceptions within the organization that reflect norms, assumptions, and beliefs (Filho, 2010; Siregar & Prasetyo, 2023). It is important to note that organizational culture is manifested through the behavior and actions exhibited by members within an organization.

The formulation of organizational culture boundaries cannot be separated from a basic understanding of organizational culture. The stages of the process that schools can take in forming a conducive organizational culture according to the opinion of some experts are as follows

Artifacts and creations appear to be real but, often, cannot be interpreted. Value is an important thing for humans in the organizational context.

"Values are all about awareness, affective desire, or the longing for fundamental assumptions that we create to guide our behavior. This layer includes assumptions that instruct us on how to perceive, think, and feel about our work, performance goals, human relations, and the performance of our coworkers."

Values are awareness, affective desire, or desire for the basic assumptions that people create to guide their character. This layer consists of assumptions that determine how individuals perceive, feel, and think about work, performance objectives, human relations, and the performance of coworkers.

Pesantren Al Muslim need to show their self-identity character without having to eliminate the characteristics based on Islamic values that function as filters. The opportunity to become an educational institution of high quality and competitiveness is actually very open with the affirmation of pesantren as a public education institution characterized by Islam.

Bringing Out the Teacher's Commitment

In scholarly discourse, the robustness of a pesantren culture is intricately linked to its capacity to foster a profound shared commitment to fundamental values. The true essence of a pesantren's strength resides within this communal commitment. When one considers the impact of administrative orders on this very cultural fabric, an intriguing paradox emerges. While the exercise of control through administrative mechanisms may appear to be an efficient means of maintaining order and structure, it can in fact undermine the pesantren culture's very essence.

This phenomenon results from the potential dilution of genuine commitment to core values, which is replaced by compliance motivated by external directives rather than internal conviction. Therefore, the delicate balance that supports the foundation of a robust pesantren culture may be compromised, necessitating careful deliberation on how to strike the optimal balance between administrative governance and the maintenance of authentic values.

“A strong pesantren culture when it has a shared commitment to core values is weakened when control is exercised through administrative orders. This framework is an organizational culture that has a strong correlation with the flow of organizational movements.”

Cultural assessment encompasses the evaluation of various aspects, including investment, result assessment, and commitment assessment. To foster commitment among members and organizational leaders, such as the pesantren principal in this case, it is imperative to establish benchmarks through organizational culture. This entails actively involving the surrounding pesantren community to facilitate effective adaptation and acculturation within its management practices. Within a robust organizational culture, members exhibit a heightened commitment towards fulfilling the mission and implementing organizational strategies to navigate competitive environments and external influences.

“The point whereby members of pesantren Al-Muslim are ready to give up, fight, and sacrifice to ensure the organization's vision and mission are realized is the medium for measuring the level of commitment of teachers and coworkers.”

The medium to measure the level of commitment of teachers and coworkers is the extent to which the capacity of members of the educational organization is ready to suffer, ready to fight, and ready to sacrifice to ensure the pesantren's vision and mission are realized.

This principle additionally indicates that if a leader or member of an educational group employs or sacrifices the organization for personal gain, he is a leader or member of the organization who is not devoted to it. Conversely, if there is a leader or member of an educational organization who sacrifices all of his potential for the benefit of the organization, he is a person who has a high commitment to the organization.

Establishing Standards of Organizational Behavior

Buya or Pesantren Principal as a leader needs to construct a reference base for the commitment of organizational members through an organizational culture designed with tolerance and acculturation governance of the organization with the surrounding environment.

Internal integration (internal functions) is concerned with the integration of various organizational resources, especially human resources. On this basis, it can be

shown that the viscosity of the internal integration function develops as the norms, regulations, traditions, and customs of the organization that its members are always cultivating develop within the organization. This process has implications for the organization's ability to build a strong and integrated organizational culture so as to increase organizational effectiveness -achieving the goals of pesantren-.

Standards of behavior can be formed when the organization community understands the organizational goals which are a more specific version of the organization's mission. Another important role played by pesantrens is means, which are a form of medium to achieve goals, including specialization of the workforce, compensation systems, and organizational structures.

“Individually and collectively, an effective culture is able to exert control over pesantren organizational behavior. Pesantren can also be measured through mission achievement using an evaluative concept.”

Through an evaluative concept that relies on empirical data, pesantren can also be measured based on mission accomplishment so that corrective steps can be taken to overcome deficiencies; correction itself is a gradual process of altering organizational culture by overcoming internal resistance and fostering consensus.

Increase the Stability of the Organizational Social System

The existence of Pesantren Al Muslim is a manifestation of community participation which considers the urgency of planting religious values in education. This adaptability is demonstrated by their adoption of a modern educational system, incorporation of nonreligious subjects into their curricula, and dynamic integration into the national education system.

The public recognizes the significance of this program in preparing students who are religious and ready to face the challenges of changing times, which have implications for increasingly global changes in attitudes and behavior.

Through the research results, it is known that Pesantren plays a role in the filtering function of institutions against the influence brought about by globalization.

In order to find a better identity, the leader should form an organization with the concept of communal culture. This type of organization assesses both friendship and performance (high on both sociability and solidarity). This culture is characterized by sociability and solidarity. Communal culture members are very friendly with one another and get along well, both personally and professionally. As the theory construction expressed by organizational culture experts, in this pesantren organization context, communication flows very easily and the Development of communication science in increasingly dynamic (Wazis, 2020). Organizational society at all levels of the pesantren are tolerant and helpful in all forms of work.

At the technical level, pesantrens provide the widest possible opportunity for the community to position themselves, their roles, and participate in the implementation of education as a whole, as in the early days of *pesantren*, especially if

they are able to provide foster parents for underprivileged students. Through the principle of institutional external analysis, the existence of this collaboration can be used to diagnose external deficiencies and weaknesses.

Organizational Resource Development

Pesantren value is the evidence of the importance of religion-based pesantrens development supported by the community. Pesantren Al-Muslim, as Islamic educational institutions, are conscious, structured, programmed, and systematic efforts aimed at creating quality graduates. The strategic role of teachers as educational facilitators needs to be developed by referring to indicators of Islamic personality. The logical consequence is that teachers who teach in pesantrens must be Muslim. As a manifestation of this faith, the teacher must have two fundamental aspects, namely the mindset (*'aqliyyah*) and the soul pattern (*nafsiyyah*).

The expected implication is that pesantrens are able to carry out strategic cooperation or partnerships effectively and efficiently. Each pesantren has strengths and weaknesses. Based on Islamic creeds, HR development at Pesantren Al Muslim can be developed by referring to four steps:

- (1) the naming of Islamic faith for teachers or employees;
- (2) inculcating a consistent attitude and *istiqâmah* in people who already have Islamic faith so that their way of thinking and behaving remains above the foundation of the creed they believe in;
- (3) development of the Islamic personality that has been formed in a person;
- (4) mastery of Islamic *tsaqafah*; and
- (5) mastery of life sciences (science and technology) is needed so that Muslims are able to achieve material progress, master technical and practical sciences, as well as skills and expertise training which are one of the goals of Islamic education.

Pesantren Management Structure

Founders have expectations that are expressed in the vision of the organization. The building of that vision is foundational, sustained, and demonstrated in the philosophy of the founder. In the next process, organizational culture is influenced by the criteria that become the work contract of the teacher or employee. The actions of the leader (the Foundation Chair or Principal) establish a general climate of acceptable behavior. On the other hand, the form of socialization depends on the success achieved in applying the values to the selection process - depending on the priority scale -.

"Pesantren culture is collaboratively shaped and enforced by the founders of educational institutions, principals, teachers, and all constituents within the establishment. In the case of Al Muslim that prioritize the advancement of Islamic-based education, they fortify their organizational structure with a positive culture, thereby facilitating effective learning processes and yielding outputs of superior quality."

In the context of educational organizations, organizational culture is co-created and enforced by the founder of educational institutions, principals, teachers, and all elements within the institution. Pesantrens as Islamic educational institutions that pay attention to the development of Islamic-based education strengthen their organizations with a positive culture, so that learning runs effectively, resulting in quality output.

Al Muslim program is also an adaptive form of *pesantren*, which previously only taught religious education, to revitalize its management or learning modernization. If formal pesantrens managed properly, the results will also be of good quality. Pesantren graduates are expected to become reliable Acehnese, have intellectual, spiritual locally, emotional integrity, have a plural and multicultural character, and respect the rights and obligations in the life of society, state, and nation for the realization of an Indonesian society that is civilized, has character, and is able to stand up equal with other nations in the world.

In order to achieve a unified order, it is necessary to have organizational standards or articles of association. The system will be formed in accordance with the dynamics that occur. Gradually, building organizational culture starts from several stages described above starting from organizational identity, organizational commitment, standards of behavior of organizational members, social system stability, human resource development, and revitalization of management structures. Concept building as the research novelty is shown in the following figure.

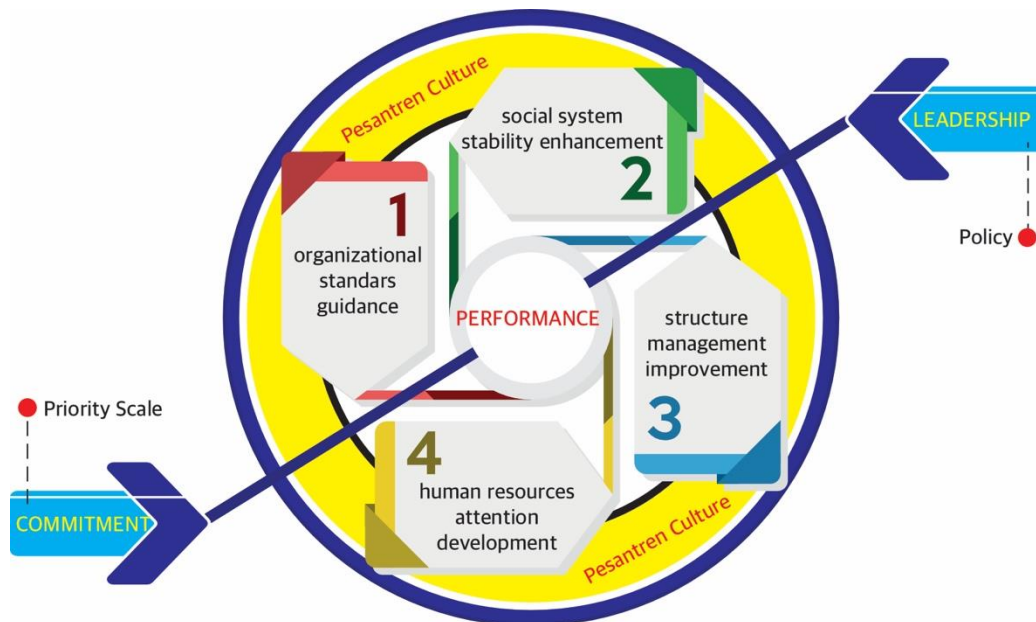


Figure 1: Research Novelty

The figure 1 formulates a pesantren culture building model that emphasizes the establishment of standards for organizational behavior, enhancing social system

stability, revitalizing pesantren management structures, and focusing on human resource development. When taken into account, the combination of the elements above will contribute for organization's identity. The policy arranged by managers and its members will help to optimize the structure.

These four aspects give a unique identity to the organization. Optimization of these buildings can be realized with the support of policies made by the leadership and the commitment of the community organization. Strengthening individual commitment also has an impact on the effectiveness of the achievement of the organization's vision and mission.

According to research conducted by Fajri, Ottl and Romi (Fajri & Sukatin, 2021; Ott & Basksh, 2015; Romi & Ahman, 2020) and Romi and Ahman (2020), transformative leadership is a highly strategic style for implementing change initiatives during the process of shaping organizational culture. Consequently, these values are gradually incorporated into the framework for selection in order to adapt to changes, resulting in the eventual emergence of the desirable organizational culture. However, it is important to note that such changes frequently require a substantial quantity of time and resources, as evidenced by research.

Furthermore, there is a close relationship between organizational culture and leadership. A series of leadership behaviors become an integral part of the organizational culture within this triadic framework. Concurrently, the performance of organizational members is one of the most influential factors on the organizational culture of an organization. This series can be interpreted as a pattern reflecting the factual relationships between these three entities, which collectively aim to improve organizational effectiveness in achieving objectives. Leadership competence, employee competence, and an organizational culture that reinforces and maximizes overall competency levels serve as the basis for attaining organizational success.

Externalities correlate with the existence of the organization. Empirically-normatively, the formation of organizational culture is first constructed by top management. The amount of influence they have will determine the ways (methods), beliefs, behaviors, and actions carried out in the organization they lead. Other frameworks may take leadership and organizational culture as two important keys to create leadership model. The process of forming an organizational culture is influenced by the founders and leaders.

The basis of the results of this study states that the existence of program success depends on the ability of the institution to adapt to the pressures that arise from changes that occur in its environment, which is supported by researches by Drisskill, Salabi, Siregar and (Drisskill, 2018; Salabi et al., 2022; Siregar & Prasetyo, 2023). Thus, the theoretical role of organizational culture is to provide core organizational value for an organization which is reflected in the freedom or interest of organizational members to provide new ideas, a willingness to accept risks that may occur, and openness to be able to communicate freely and to be responsible.

A strategic teamwork or collaboration is expected to be resulted from the pesantren management through its strength and despite its weaknesses. Moreover,

the collaboration can be useful for detecting weaknesses and shortcomings from external factors through institutional external observation. Through conceptual building, organizational culture can become a fundamental foundation in improving pesantren performance.

Al Muslim has shown the potential to become a prominent pesantren in Aceh, utilizing a development model that prioritizes concentrated efforts in three key areas: work flexibility through institutional structural efficiency, curriculum revitalization and integration, and partnership development.

Initially, the effectiveness of the institutional structure has a substantial effect on labor flexibility. In this regard, Al Muslim has restructured its leadership under the direction of the pesantren's principal. Given the institution's inherent rigor, it is essential that activity coordinators under the supervision of students be effectively monitored.

Second, Al Muslim has instituted a contemporary pesantren education system while preserving indigenous cultural knowledge. The term "modern" in this context refers to the KMI Gontor system affiliation. In addition, Al Muslim incorporates traditional Islamic studies (*kitab kuning*) into its curriculum, albeit to a lesser extent than conventional salaf-based pesantrens.

Thirdly, genealogical connections between Al Muslim and Gontor have facilitated networking opportunities in forums such as national and international alumni associations. These connections have made innovative program initiatives possible. In addition, the attentiveness of government entities toward pesantrens demonstrates a growing proximity between the two groups. Notably, Al Muslim has effectively implemented supportive programs such as inter-pesantren student creativity competitions and all-encompassing skill enhancement programs encompassing both hard and soft skills.

Internal analysis of Al Muslim's developmental achievements reveals several contributing factors, including an abundance of human resources, including competent instructors and devoted students who play crucial roles in the success of the program. Adequate budget allocations strengthen program development efforts, while nurturing a conducive learning environment exemplifies the implementation of a pesantren culture. In addition, infrastructure support is essential for program advancement; in this context, it is noteworthy that Al Muslim has superior infrastructure readiness compared to other pesantrens due to strategic investments made possible by partnership networks that have facilitated infrastructure development assistance.

Pesantren plays a crucial role in upholding and preserving its inherent values, which become deeply ingrained in students and significantly shape their character. From a systemic perspective, the manifestation of these values reflects the harmonious integration of Islamic principles and contemporary ideals within the pesantren's pursuit. These values permeate both individuals and modern practices within the educational system and governance structure of pesantren.

The formation of pesantren values can be delineated as follows: Firstly, pesantren teachers bear the responsibility of exercising self-control while carrying out their duties, thereby exemplifying the value of sincerity (keikhlasan). Secondly, teachers prioritize dedication over an excessive desire for positions, aligning with the philosophical principle upheld by pesantren: "ready to be led and ready to lead." Positional status is regarded as a trust (amanah) and serves as a secondary motivator. Thirdly, pesantren adopts a boarding school system where teachers and students coexist within the same premises. This arrangement fosters familial relationships among them while automatically cultivating an environment conducive to productive work. The substantial interaction between teachers and students facilitates effective interpersonal communication, which concurrently contributes to shaping a positive organizational culture.

CONCLUSION

The organizational culture is basically established in order to abolish the separation of organizational order of Pesantren. The key finding of this study points out that the adaptability of an organization over challenges determines the success of the program. The cultural structure or an organization may become an important basis for school performance advancement through conceptual framework. Efforts to create positive school performance can be done through a conducive cultural building. Qualitative studies in research emphasize the creation of a strong culture as a principle of organizational society behavior. Al Muslim has shown the potential to become a prominent pesantren in Aceh, utilizing a development model that prioritizes concentrated efforts in three key areas: work flexibility through institutional structural efficiency, curriculum revitalization and integration, and partnership development.

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