



Implementation of Leadership Communication Management in Enhancing Students' Character at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School

Ahmad Zaki¹, Nurul Hasanah², Syarifah Hidayani³

^{1,2,3} STAI Jam'iyah Mahmudiyah Tanjung Pura Langkat, Indonesia

Corresponding Author :  zackyahmad212@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand how the implementation of leadership communication management in the Islamic Boarding School's administration enhances students' character at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School. This includes the communication of the school head with students, teachers, staff, and all elements of the boarding school. Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative research approach. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentary studies. After collecting the data, its authenticity was examined through validation standards, namely trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The data analysis technique employed involves data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions from the research findings. The expected findings of this research are: (1) The focus of the planning is on producing well-characterized graduates who possess both formal education knowledge and Islamic education knowledge from the boarding school. (2) The organization of the Boarding School Leadership and their accountability to the Boarding School Head in leading, planning, developing, directing, coordinating, overseeing, and controlling school activities in implementing the Public Relations field program in line with the established vision, mission, and work program. (3) The implementation of communication development includes activities such as creating Asma'ul Husna plaques, book study programs, voluntary prayers, voluntary fasting, and Qur'an memorization.

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INTRODUCTION

Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School is located on Alur II Street, Sei Lengan Subdistrict, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province. The school is legally registered under a foundation with the same name. Since its inception, the school was established by Ustad Darwis. This institution offers formal education programs such as elementary

school (MIS), junior high school (MTs), and senior high school (MA). It is not surprising that many students from different regions come here to seek knowledge.

(Gumilang & Nurcholis, 2018; Kahar et al., 2019) Islamic boarding schools, known as pesantren, are the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia. The existence of pesantren as Islamic educational centers in the country has played a significant role in shaping the character of the Indonesian nation. Furthermore, the continuous existence of pesantren throughout history has provided concrete contributions to the nation's journey. A pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that aims to cultivate a complete Muslim individual (insan kamil). (Chandra, 2020) According to Muhaimin as cited in Ramayulis, insan kamil is a person who embodies the Quranic virtues, achieving a dimension of religiosity, cultural awareness, and knowledge. To achieve this goal of Islamic education, modern pesantren education is expected to innovate its curriculum by integrating religious knowledge and general knowledge, as not all students will become religious leaders.

The integration of various forms of knowledge, both general and religious, is intended to create a balance between worldly life and the hereafter. The importance of maintaining this equilibrium between worldly and spiritual life is emphasized in the following verse from the Quran:

وَابْتَغِ فِيهَا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَدَاكَ اللَّهُ وَالْبَاطِلَ الْأَعْزَىٰ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

It means:

But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.

Islamic boarding schools are religious-based educational institutions that play a crucial role in shaping the character of students. Their existence as a place to cultivate Islamic-based character in children serves as a solution to numerous societal issues. The presence of these private educational institutions should not burden the community. Therefore, every school must strive to become a high-quality institution in all aspects, including the quality of its education (Agustina et al., 2020; Lesmana et al., 2021).

(Kahar, 2022; Suworo et al., 2022) The public perception of Islamic boarding schools is generally positive because they remain a hope for the community. However, the community's enthusiasm for making these institutions the best option for their children is not yet strong. (Azis et al., 2021; Chandra, 2020; Lesmana et al., 2021) There's an assumption in the surrounding society that pesantren are not able to "compete" with public schools in terms of teacher quality and classroom instruction. The understanding of modern teaching theories among teachers at the Islamic boarding school in Pamekasan is still limited, especially regarding the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, which is based on character development. As a result, many teachers still

use traditional lecture methods that are monotonous. Yet, the success of the learning process depends largely on the teacher's ability to effectively communicate and employ teaching approaches that increase student engagement in the learning process.

To produce male and female students who are competent and possess character, efforts are required from various parties including teachers as educational implementers, pondok pesantren leaders, school principals as leaders of formal education, as well as local and national governments.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology for this program is being carried out by the faculty of STAI Jam'iyah Mahmudiyah Langkat under the theme: "Communication Development Management of Islamic Boarding School Leadership in Enhancing Students' Character at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School." Through this research, the boarding school leadership and teachers can become more adept at enhancing and instilling character values in both their teaching practices and daily lives.

Furthermore, this research aims to equip teachers with effective teaching approaches and strategies in the classroom. This, in turn, will have a positive impact on the enhancement of student motivation and academic achievements. Based on the aforementioned phenomenon, the research necessitates the use of a qualitative approach. The research method employed is qualitative research with a naturalistic qualitative approach. This approach is chosen in accordance with the research problem, which is centered on the development of religious culture based on local wisdom at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Syahrums, 2015).

The researcher believes that utilizing the qualitative method will address issues that require an in-depth and immersive understanding of the subject under investigation, leading to research conclusions within the specific context of time and situation. This study is conducted at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School. With this approach, the researcher conducts the study in a natural and contextual manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data previously obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, the researcher will further explain the application of communication management between the leaders and students in shaping the character of students at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School as follows:

Communication Pattern of Islamic Boarding School Leadership in Shaping the Character of Students at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School

In essence, there are several actions taken by the leaders in character formation, including:

1. Dialogue or Consultation for Personal Issues

Based on interviews and field observations, the communication carried out by the leaders involves dialogues between two or more individuals or a small group of students, addressing personal matters that require private discussions between the students and the leaders/caretakers. From the perspective of communication studies, dialogue or interpersonal communication is a process of transmitting and receiving messages between two or more people with various effects and feedback. The aim of these personal consultations is to foster well-rounded students with good moral character, based on the values previously conveyed and understood, and to establish a conducive communication pattern between the students and their mentors, who are always ready to guide them.

2. Leading by Example and Motivation

Providing motivation is one of the steps taken by leaders/caretakers to encourage students not to give up easily in pursuing the goals set by the mentors. David McClelland, a psychologist, mentioned in his book (A.A. Anwar Prabu Mangkunegara) that an individual's productivity is determined by a "mental virus" within them. This mental virus is a condition that drives a person to achieve their maximum potential (achievement motivation). In addition to motivation, the leaders/caretakers continue to provide guidance, both directly outside the activities at the boarding school. This is a form of the leaders' presence in guiding their students, building emotional connections between students and mentors.

3. Imposing Sanctions or Penalties for Violations

If a student at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School violates the rules, they may receive warnings or sanctions. This also requires effective communication. The leaders are required to use effective communication skills to handle this process, which is aimed at shaping well-characterized students and achieving the desired results.

Barriers to the Communication Pattern of Islamic Boarding School Leadership in Shaping Student Character at Al-Habib Islamic Boarding School

1. Language Barrier

The use of easily understandable language within the boarding school environment serves as a positive conduit for effective communication between leaders and students. Using overly complex language can hinder the character formation process, as it may complicate the communication pattern and make it difficult for leaders and students to understand each other.

2. Shame and Embarrassment

Feelings of shame can inhibit effective communication. Some students may feel embarrassed to engage in discussions or consultations due to cultural norms or personal reasons, hindering open communication and character formation efforts.

3. Lack of Harmonious Relationships

Relationships are continuous interactions between two or more individuals that facilitate mutual understanding. Effective communication in character formation is crucial for creating a harmonious relationship between students and their mentors. A positive and open approach from the leaders, coupled with guidance and support, fosters a conducive environment for character development and communication.

The Role of Al-Habib Modern Islamic Boarding School in Shaping the Character of Adolescents and Students

1. Role in Shaping Adolescent Character:

Based on observations and previous theories, Al-Habib Modern Islamic Boarding School's role includes:

- **Facilitator Role**

The modern Islamic boarding school's presence serves as a means to enhance the religious experience of the surrounding community. The school provides facilities and services to fulfill the religious needs of the community. Adolescents in the area often participate in religious activities and develop their religious knowledge.

- **Mobilization Role**

Various activities are planned by the modern Islamic boarding school to provide guidance to the community, particularly adolescents. These activities focus on nurturing moral and religious behavior among adolescents. Regular events, such as commemorating Islamic holidays, offer opportunities for religious learning and community bonding.

- **Human Resource Role**

Involving the local community, especially adolescents, in religious education contributes to enhancing their religious experience. However, some adolescents may lack awareness of the importance of religious knowledge. The quality of adolescent development within the community can be impacted by these factors.

- **Development Agent Role**

The modern Islamic boarding school acts as a control mechanism for the religious behavior of the community. Community members, especially adolescents, may exhibit improved behavior within the school's influence, even if they previously engaged in deviant activities. The school's programs, which involve adolescents in various religious activities, create a positive environment and contribute to character building.

2. The Role of the Al-Habib Modern Islamic Boarding School in Shaping the Character of the Santri

Based on research at Al-Habib Modern Islamic Boarding School in Sei Lengan, the role of the ustads (male religious instructors) and ustadzahs (female religious instructors) in shaping student character is crucial. They play an essential and central role in the school's functioning and development. The advancement of the school often depends on the quality of the ustads' and ustadzahs' personal qualities.

Ustads and ustadzahs have a responsibility in character formation, aiming to create whole Muslim personalities who are pious. They play a role in teaching, guiding, and demonstrating through personal behavior. Kitab (Islamic texts) specifically designed to develop good character is taught, and examples are set through daily actions. Ustads and ustadzahs are also involved in managing school activities, mentoring, and monitoring students' behavior. Additionally, religious teachings are provided formally in classrooms, monitored, and evaluated.

Character formation is the responsibility of Ustadz and Ustadzah, where goodness serves as a symbol of Islam, the foundation of religion, and the embodiment of perfection for those possessing such qualities. As a result, Ustadz and Ustadzah play various roles in empowering their pivotal role in shaping the character of their students. Especially in their positions as leaders or caretakers of Pondok Pesantren Modern Al-Habib, Ustadz serves as the leader of the students. Their roles encompass both instructional methods and exemplary practices.

Particularly, Ustadz and Ustadzah utilize instructional methods, such as teaching specific books that focus on the development of moral character among the students. One of the notable books taught is "Ta'lim al-Muta'alim" authored by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji. Furthermore, their exemplary practices are demonstrated in their daily demeanor. They lead the five daily prayers as imams, and they assign rotating Ustadz to monitor and mark attendance for students who do not attend congregational prayers. Feedback, advice, and occasionally sanctions are provided to absent students. Additionally, they actively participate in construction work, setting an example and overseeing students (who are actively involved) to motivate and foster "independence and skills" relevant to their individual professions.

Religious experiences can motivate individuals to draw closer to God, manifested in their religious behaviors. This is evident in adolescents who undergo spiritual experiences, leading them to become better individuals. However, despite this, some adolescents may display indifference towards religious rituals.

Furthermore, several challenges are experienced by adolescents around the Pondok Pesantren, including:

1. For older students, there is occasionally a sense of embarrassment in attending the pesantren due to feeling grown-up.

According to one pesantren administrator, "Efforts have been made, but often, when students reach the level of junior high school or even higher, they are already engaged in various extracurricular activities outside, making them less likely to participate in religious studies due to a sense of embarrassment associated with being grown-up."

2. Adolescents may feel hesitant to interact with the pesantren students. Many adolescents around Pondok Pesantren Modern Al-Habib have graduated from high school or equivalent.

However, some have only completed middle school. While the majority of students at Pondok Pesantren Modern Al-Habib are MTS (Islamic Junior High School) graduates, those with only basic education might feel self-conscious or uncomfortable when interacting with the more advanced students.

3. The environment surrounding Pondok Pesantren Modern Al-Habib does not always support religious development.

Although the pesantren is located within a community, not all adolescents in the area perceive it as a center for religious knowledge. Despite the presence of activities and the involvement of Ustadz from the pesantren, some adolescents are hesitant to participate. This poses a challenge to the timely guidance of adolescents.

4. Negative Peer Influences: Adolescents around Pondok Pesantren Modern Al-Habib exhibit a variety of behaviors, including negative associations or a more liberated lifestyle.

Engaging such adolescents in pesantren activities can be challenging, as they may perceive the pesantren as a restrictive environment due to its strict rules. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts between Ustadz, Ustadzah, and the wider community to create an inclusive and supportive environment for character development among adolescents.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data and data analysis, the relationship between the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Al-Habib in shaping the character of the students can be summarized as follows:

Communication Pattern: The communication pattern between the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Al-Habib and the students primarily involves dialogue between two or more individuals, addressing personal issues or questions raised by the students. This communication pattern enables the establishment of a more personal and constructive relationship between the leaders and the students.

Factors Inhibiting Communication Pattern: There are several inhibiting factors faced by the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Al-Habib in establishing communication with the students, including:

- a. Language Factor: The use of complex or difficult-to-understand language can hinder effective communication between the leaders and the students. It is important for the leaders to use easily comprehensible language to ensure that the conveyed messages are well-received.
- b. Shyness Factor: Feelings of shyness or reluctance on the part of the students to speak or consult can hinder the formation of open and effective communication. This factor may limit interactions and impede students from asking questions or expressing their thoughts.
- c. Lack of Harmonious Relationship: A harmonious relationship and communication play a significant role in shaping the character of the students. The absence of a harmonious relationship can hinder effective communication processes and the desired character formation.

By addressing these inhibiting factors, it is crucial for the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Al-Habib to adopt a more inclusive communication approach, use easily understandable language, create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable to speak, and strive to build a positive relationship with the students. This research provides insights into the importance of effective communication patterns between the leaders of the pesantren and the students in shaping character. By overcoming communication barriers, the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Al-Habib can be more successful in guiding the students and creating an environment conducive to the formation of good character in accordance with religious and moral values.

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