Visionary Leadership Strategy to Enhance Teacher Creativity at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School Tulungagung

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Abstract: This study examines the visionary leadership strategy in enhancing teacher creativity at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School, Tulungagung. The research is motivated by the phenomenon of the *kiai* as the pesantren leader, representing a unique and compelling form of leadership. The research approach employs a qualitative method. Data collection techniques include participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are: 1) data condensation, 2) data display, and 3) conclusion drawing/verification. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that visionary leadership is carried out by the *kiai* acting as a direction-setter, agent of change, supervisor, and role model, embodying ruh al-jihad and the spirit of striving to advance Darul Hikmah through the formation of a team in the management of the educational institution and collaboration with external parties in learning activities. The visionary leadership strategy in enhancing teacher creativity at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School, Tulungagung consists of: a) The *kiai* as a direction-setter communicates the vision to all components of the pesantren both horizontally and vertically. b) The *kiai* at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School, Tulungagung serves as an agent of change responsible for inspiring transformation within the pesantren by teaching both religious and general knowledge to prepare and shape a young generation with strong religious insight and high intellectual capacity. c) The *kiai* as a good mentor fosters teamwork in realizing the vision and mission of Darul Hikmah by forming a team for educational institution management and collaborating with external parties in learning activities. d) The *kiai* as *uswatun hasanah* or a good role model demonstrates ruh al-jihad and the spirit of striving to develop and advance Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School.

Keywords: visionary leadership; teacher creativity

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi kepemimpinan visioner dalam meningkatkan kreativitas guru di Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah, Tulungagung. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh fenomena kiai sebagai pemimpin pesantren yang merupakan bentuk kepemimpinan yang unik dan memikat. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi partisipan, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah: 1) kondensasi data, 2) display data, dan 3) penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan visioner dilakukan oleh kiai yang berperan sebagai penentu arah, agen perubahan, pengawas, dan panutan, mewujudkan ruh al-jihad dan semangat berjuang memajukan Darul Hikmah melalui pembentukan tim dalam pengelolaan lembaga pendidikan dan kolaborasi dengan pihak eksternal dalam kegiatan pembelajaran. Strategi kepemimpinan visioner dalam meningkatkan kreativitas guru di Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung adalah sebagai berikut: a) Kiai sebagai penentu arah menyampaikan visi kepada seluruh komponen pesantren baik secara horizontal maupun vertikal. b) Kiai Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung sebagai agen perubahan yang bertugas memberikan inspirasi perubahan di lingkungan pesantren dengan mengajarkan ilmu agama dan ilmu umum untuk menyiapkan dan membentuk generasi muda yang berwawasan agama yang kuat dan memiliki kapasitas intelektual yang tinggi. c) Kiai sebagai mentor yang baik membina kerja sama dalam

mewujudkan visi dan misi Darul Hikmah dengan membentuk tim pengelola lembaga pendidikan dan menjalin kerjasama dengan pihak eksternal dalam kegiatan pembelajaran. d) Kiai sebagai uswatun hasanah atau panutan yang baik menunjukkan ruh al-jihad dan semangat berjuang untuk mengembangkan dan memajukan Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan visioner; keativitas guru

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has three recognized types of educational institutions: *pesantren*, *madrasah*, and schools. *Pesantren*, as a traditional Islamic educational institution, is the oldest in the archipelago. However, the term *pesantren* varies outside of Java, such as *surau* in Minangkabau and *meunasah* or *dayah* in Aceh (Hana et al., 2022). *Pesantren* is an educational institution that specifically focuses on the teaching of Islamic religious knowledge. The learning process in *pesantren* typically does not follow a conventional classroom system as found in formal schools; instead, it adopts a non-classical instructional approach (Haryanti & Indarti, 2022). Learning in *pesantren* typically employs the *halaqah* system, in which the *kiai* sits at the center of a circle formed by the santri (students) and serves as the central figure in the instructional process. According to Dhofier (2015) there are five fundamental elements that constitute a pesantren: the *kiai*, mosque, dormitory, *santri*, and *Kitab Kuning* (Classical Islamic Texts). The *kiai* functions as the owner, manager, teacher, and religious leader within the institution. The mosque serves as the primary place for learning, the *Kitab Kuning* acts as the core instructional material, the santri are the students, and the dormitory provides their residence.

Pesantren possesses two essential dimensions in the field of education: hardware and software elements. The hardware elements include the *kiai*, dormitory, mosque, learning spaces, and religious texts, while the software elements consist of the educational system, teaching methods, learning strategies, and evaluation mechanisms. These software components differ significantly from those of formal schools, indicating that *pesantren* exhibit a level of complexity and effectiveness comparable to that of conventional educational institutions (Syukri & Abidin, 2019).

The *kiai* plays a highly strategic role in *pesantren* education. In addition to serving as a teacher and educator, the *kiai* also functions as a religious leader who is deeply trusted and respected by both the *santri* and the surrounding community. Therefore, the *kiai* can

be regarded as the central element of the *pesantren*, while other components such as the mosque, dormitory, *santri*, and *Kitab Kuning* serve as supporting elements under the *kiai*'s authority. Pesantren can be classified into two typologies: *salaf* and *khalaf* pesantren. *Salaf* pesantren are traditional institutions that preserve the original elements of pesantren, such as the *kiai*, mosque, dormitory, *Kitab Kuning*, and classical teaching methods. In contrast, *khalaf* pesantren are institutions that have adapted to contemporary developments by integrating both formal and non-formal education to enhance the overall quality of learning (Imron, 2022).

Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) are a distinctive feature of Islamic education in Indonesia, providing instruction primarily focused on religious teachings (Haryanti, 2014). Pesantren is a community-based educational institution that integrates both general and religious education. It possesses distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other educational institutions. Students (*santri*) who have completed their education in *pesantren* typically demonstrate qualities such as independence, simplicity, responsibility, patience, and discipline, which prepare them to reintegrate into society as productive members of the community.

The leadership style exemplified by Prophet Adam, the first human being, was characterized by a strong opposition to ignorance, demonstrated through his pursuit of knowledge by learning the names of all creatures. He also opposed injustice, even when it was committed by his own son (Haryanti et al., 2022). Prophet Noah led, guided, and treated the poor with justice at a time when they were marginalized by the wealthy elite of his era. Prophet Shu'aib opposed economic injustice faced by the people of Madyan. Prophet Moses liberated the enslaved Israelites from the oppression of Pharaoh. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) perfected the laws and teachings of Islam. He was able to communicate effectively not only with his closest companions but also with his adversaries. Through his leadership, the Muslim community progressed and transitioned from an era of ignorance marked by the immoral acts of the Quraysh disbelievers into a society that swiftly embraced reform and improvement in all aspects of life. Thus, it is neither excessive nor unfounded to regard them as the best of nations.

Leadership is a practical skill that encompasses an individual's or an organization's ability to lead or guide others, whether it be individuals, teams, or entire organizations (Mastur et al., 2022) Leadership is the art and skill of utilizing one's authority to influence

others in carrying out specific activities directed toward predetermined goals (Saugi et al., 2022). To lead means to achieve objectives through collaboration with others. In this context, the leadership of the *kiai* plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' creativity. The *kiai* provides motivation for teachers to become more creative in both instructional and extracurricular activities. In response, teachers strive to improve the quality of their teaching and seek innovative ways to serve their students. Through this process, teachers' creativity continues to grow and develop. In order to foster students' creativity, teachers guide them to think critically and solve problems. Teachers also create learning environments that support the enhancement of students' creativity (Haryanti & Rochmat, 2023).

Teacher creativity plays a vital role in the learning process. Creative teachers can stimulate students to think scientifically and develop their ability to observe natural phenomena. Moreover, teacher creativity can spark students' own creativity, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable. Therefore, teacher creativity is essential for achieving optimal educational goals.

Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah in Tulungagung Regency is equally remarkable. In addition to its numerous achievements in various student extracurricular activities such as its nationally awarded marching band. The pesantren also showcases the creativity of its teachers through the establishment of several entrepreneurial units, including a bottled water business, catering services, and a garment workshop. The *kiai*, together with the teachers, initiates a range of innovative activities. The *kiai* enhances the creativity of teachers (*asatidz*) and administrators by instilling in every student, staff member, and member of the teaching board a deep sense of sincerity (*ikhlas lillahi ta'ala*), spiritual discipline (*riyadhoh*), exemplary conduct (*uswatun hasanah*), and patience. This includes transforming the mindset of *asatidz*, developing their professional skills, and introducing as well as reinforcing institutional rules, duties, rights, and responsibilities both as members of the *pesantren*, the broader community, and the nation.

The *kiai*, as the leader of a *pesantren*, represents a compelling leadership phenomenon. Beyond serving as the head of an Islamic educational institution with multifaceted responsibilities such as developing curricula, establishing regulations, designing evaluation systems, and teaching religious knowledge. The *kiai* also functions as a spiritual guide and educator of the community, carrying with him a set of

institutionalized traditional values. This complexity and uniqueness in the *kiai*'s leadership have made the figure of the *kiai* in the pesantren an intriguing subject of study about its evolving role in society. The continued existence of *pesantren* is considered highly relevant in confronting the challenges of the digital age, all while maintaining the Islamic values that define its identity. In this context, teachers engage in commendable creative efforts to shape a resilient future generation.

METHOD

This research employs a field research method. Field research is conducted to investigate the setting in which the events or phenomena under study occur, thereby obtaining direct and up-to-date information related to the issue at hand. It also serves as a means of cross-checking existing materials and data (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020). In terms of the nature of the data, this study falls under qualitative research, which aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and so on in a holistic manner. This is achieved through descriptive analysis expressed in words and language, within a specific natural context, and by utilizing various natural methods (Moleong, 2013).

Case studies also aim to describe a particular setting, object, or event in depth (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This view is supported by Yin (2002) who states that case study is a strategy chosen to answer "how" and "why" questions, particularly when the research focuses on examining contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts. In this research, a case study is also employed to investigate the implementation of the head of *madrasah's* strategy in developing students' talents and interests. The case study method was selected by the researcher to obtain accurate data regarding the strategic management practices of the *madrasah* head in this area. This case study is based on a research site with specific characteristics relevant to visionary leadership as a strategic step in enhancing teacher creativity at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School, Tulungagung. By using this case study design, it is expected that the information and data gathered will provide various insights into the research topic. From this context, key patterns can be identified regarding the strategic role of the madrasah head in developing talents and interests in the madrasah environment.

The data collection procedures used in this research are as follows. First, participant observation. In this case, the researcher seeks to conduct systematic observation and

recording of phenomena occurring at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung. The observation technique used in this study is participant observation. The purpose of conducting participant observation is to observe events as they naturally occur in the field. In this technique, the researcher involves themselves or directly interacts with the activities carried out by the subjects while systematically collecting the required data. Second, in-depth Interview. The interview method in this study is used as a guideline for conducting the research. In this context, the researcher employs an in-depth interview technique, namely by exploring in-depth information regarding visionary leadership as a strategic step in enhancing teacher creativity at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung. Third, documentation. The documents referred to may include photographs, madrasah documents, interview transcripts, and records concerning the history and development of the madrasah. All of these documents will be collected for analysis to complete the research data. In this case, the researcher takes photographs related to the research topic.

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and organizing data obtained from interviews, field notes, and other materials, so that the information can be easily conveyed to others (Haryanti, 2019). Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and organizing interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials collected by the researcher. The analysis process involves examining the data, arranging it, breaking it down into manageable units, synthesizing, identifying patterns, discovering meaningful elements, and reporting the findings systematically. Since this study employs a case study design, the data analysis is conducted in three stages: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) verification and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Visionary leadership is essential in realizing quality educational transformation in *pesantren* and in providing educational services that meet the needs of society. A *kiai* does not merely aspire for his students to master religious sciences alone, but also equips them to sustain their livelihood by learning to live independently, such as through cultivating gourami and catfish farming, among other initiatives.

According to Peramesti & Kusmana (2018) visionary leadership refers to a leadership pattern aimed at providing meaning to the work and efforts that need to be carried out collectively by members of an organization, by offering direction and

significance to these efforts based on a clear vision. The implementation of visionary leadership as a strategic step in enhancing teacher creativity at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung is as follows:

The *kiai* as the determinant of policy direction

Visionary leadership provides encouragement and strength for Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) in various evolving conditions, enabling them to withstand all forms of change by determining policy directions in accordance with the needs of the santri. As revealed in an interview with the principal of the senior high school (SMA), who stated: "The senior high school, like the junior high school (SMP), operates under the same foundation and was established in response to the demands of the times, serving as an educational institution to accommodate the sons and daughters of the nation within an educational environment that truly aims to shape individuals of quality and noble character".

The next statement was delivered by the Head of the Islamic Boarding School, who explained: "The visionary leadership of the *Kiai* as a policy direction setter is carried out by communicating the vision to all components of the *pondok pesantren*, both horizontally and vertically. Communication is conducted through verbal, written, and programmatic actions that can be directly observed by the santri's guardians. Orally, the *pondok pesantren's* vision is conveyed during meetings with all internal components of the institution in both formal and informal gatherings. In every meeting, whether with internal or external parties, the *Kiai* consistently emphasizes the *pondok pesantren's* vision of producing *santri* with noble character who excel in academic and non-academic achievements".

The above information is reinforced by the results of an interview with the caretaker of Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah, as follows: "As the successor of the *Kiai*'s visionary leadership as a policy direction setter, I continue to carry on what my father aspired to achieve by conveying the pondok pesantren's vision through meetings with all components of the institution, both in formal and informal settings. In addition, I strive to realize *santri* who possess noble character and excel in achievements. Furthermore, the mission is carried out through the following objectives: 1) To cultivate noble character and virtuous morals, 2) To equip students with sufficient foundational religious knowledge, 3) To achieve the learning curriculum objectives in accordance with optimal

standards, 4) To master two languages such as Arabic and English properly, and 5) To develop useful specialized skills".

The aforementioned data is reinforced by the results of an observation conducted on November 29, 2024, in which the researcher directly witnessed a meeting involving all components of Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung. Based on the results of the interviews and observations, it can be described that visionary leadership as a policy direction setter is carried out by communicating the vision to all components of the *pondok pesantren*, both horizontally and vertically. Orally, the vision of the *pondok pesantren* is conveyed through meetings with all components of the institution in both formal and informal gatherings. In every meeting, whether with internal or external parties, the leader consistently articulates the *pondok pesantren's* vision of forming santri who possess noble character and excel in academic and non-academic achievements.

Leadership style refers to a pattern of behavior employed by an individual when attempting to influence the behavior of others (Sagala, 2015). Visionary leadership provides encouragement and strength for the Islamic boarding school (*pondok pesantren*) in various evolving conditions, enabling it to withstand all forms of change by determining policy direction in accordance with the needs of the students (*santri*).

The visionary leadership of the *Kiai* as a direction setter is carried out by communicating the vision to all components of the Islamic boarding school (*pondok pesantren*), both horizontally and vertically. Orally, the vision of the *pondok pesantren* is conveyed through meetings with all components of the institution in the form of formal and informal gatherings. In every meeting, both internal and external, he consistently articulates the vision of the *pondok pesantren* to realize students (*santri*) who possess noble character and excel in achievement. As a direction setter, the leader guides followers toward achieving the goals of the organization. If the leader fails to understand the condition of the followers, their role as a direction setter becomes akin to a compass used by a captain at sea indicating the destination and objectives while also striving to foster the moral character of subordinates so that they work wholeheartedly (Sarnoto & Sholihin, 2017).

The Qur'an implies that visionary leadership is characterized by the ability to provide guidance and set direction for the organization one leads. This is reflected in the word of Allah in Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 73:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا

عَابِدِينَ –٧٣–

"We appointed them as leaders who guided others by Our command, and We revealed to them the duty to do good deeds, establish prayer, give alms (*zakat*), and they worshipped Us alone with full devotion".

The verse above emphasizes that a leader is not only capable of articulating direction but also able to guide their followers toward the right and virtuous path.

Kiai as an agent of change

The *Kiai* at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung serves as an agent of change who is responsible for initiating transformation. An agent of change leads efforts to alter the social system and is directly involved in responding to pressures for change. He has introduced numerous innovations, transforming Darul Hikmah into an institution that not only teaches Islamic sciences but also provides general education. The *pesantren* has established institutions under its management, including junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA), and a higher education institution. This is supported by an interview with the Head of the Senior High School, who stated: "Pondok Darul Hikmah not only teaches Islamic knowledge but also includes general education. It has established educational institutions under the pesantren, namely junior high school, senior high school, and a university".

Similarly, the results of an interview with the board of the Islamic Boarding School Foundation revealed the following statement: "The *Kiai* here serves as an agent of change by providing a new perspective on the needs of the community." The *Kiai* at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung acts as an agent of change who is responsible for initiating transformation. As an Agent of Change, the *Kiai* leads efforts to reform the social system and is directly involved in addressing the pressures for change (Arifin, 2016). He has initiated numerous innovations, including transforming Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School into an institution that not only teaches religious sciences but also incorporates general education into its curriculum.

Organizational change refers to the process of transitioning an organization from its current state to a desired future state in order to enhance its effectiveness. An influential leader does not implement change in a vacuum; rather, such change is carefully

refined through the development of various organizational components (Saputra, 2024). The establishment of formal educational institutions is expected to enable Pondok Darul Hikmah to prepare and shape a young generation that is grounded in religious values and possesses high intellectual capacity. The various achievements attained by the junior high school, senior high school, and university under its auspices in regional and national competitions serve as evidence of the success of Pondok Darul Hikmah in nurturing its male and female students. Extracurricular activities such as Scouting and Scientific Research also help students to excel in these areas. The *pesantren* equips students not only with religious knowledge but also, importantly, with general knowledge and technology. This is aimed at producing technocrats who are rooted in faith, possess a forward-looking vision, and can contribute meaningfully to the Indonesian nation and humanity at large.

The role of a visionary leader is to serve as a pioneer and catalyst for various positive changes in the implementation of the vision (Soim et al., 2022). Successful organizational change should follow four steps: (1) Desire for change, in which individuals must first recognize a need, this may stem from existing shortcomings, dissatisfaction, or a desire for improvement; (2) Unfreezing, which involves creating motivation and persuasion through various approaches that reduce perceived threats or resistance, thereby preparing individuals for change; (3) Changing, which entails implementing modifications in individuals through new learning experiences, this includes introducing new information, behavioral models, and perspectives, enabling individuals to adopt new attitudes; and (4) Refreezing, which aims to solidify and stabilize the newly adopted changes to make them permanent (Aslami & Dewi, 2023).

Leadership as an agent of change requires visionary leaders to possess and develop appropriate strategies and planning in order to achieve the organization's vision. This is in accordance with the word of Allah in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hashr, verse 18:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ –١٨–

"O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do".

The *KIai* serves as a supervisor

An effective visionary leader must serve as a capable guide. This implies that a leader must foster teamwork to achieve the predetermined vision. At Pondok Darul

Hikmah, the *Kiai* builds collaborative teams to realize the institution's vision and mission by forming management teams for the educational institutions and cooperating with external parties in the learning process. As stated in the interview with the principal of the senior high school: "Whenever the *Kiai* meets with administrators and educators, he consistently provides direction and guidance to ensure that the vision is truly realized. He also offers guidance in the formation of small groups, including a quarantine model for twelfth-grade students preparing for graduation exams. For students in grades ten and eleven, smaller groups are also formed, though not quarantined. (Quarantine here refers to providing a dedicated space with a special program: meals, prayers, study time, and focus on nationally tested subjects). Teachers collaborate with external parties to offer motivational classes. There are also inspiration and motivation classes for twelfth-grade students, outdoor class activities, and small group learning sessions. The quarantine curriculum does not follow the national curriculum schedule due to the greater focus on national exam subjects. In addition, I have made efforts to have teachers appointed as government-delegated personnel (DPK). Since our system operates on mutual cooperation and many teachers have other external responsibilities, I have assigned assistants to each teacher. Furthermore, I conduct mentoring sessions where senior teachers provide guidance to junior teachers, and I ensure the senior teachers are well-prepared before they deliver such guidance".

A similar statement was conveyed by the Head of the Islamic Boarding School, who stated: "To realize the vision of the *pesantren*, work meetings are held every three months and at the end of each year. These meetings serve as a platform for guidance and direction for all components of the pesantren regarding the vision that must be achieved in line with its intended purpose. On the other hand, the *Kiai* consistently provides direction and guidance to administrators and educators to ensure the realization of the pesantren's vision. He also regularly gathers educators to offer instruction and guidance toward continual improvement, even inviting external experts to help foster the creativity of educators at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah".

An effective visionary leader must serve as a capable supervisor. This implies that the leader should utilize group collaboration to achieve the established vision (Jatmiko, 2023). The *Kiai* fosters team collaboration in realizing the vision and mission of Pondok

Darul Hikmah Hikmah by forming teams for managing educational institutions and partnering with external parties in the implementation of learning activities.

The *Kiai* consistently provides direction and guidance whenever meeting with administrators and educators to ensure the effective realization of the institution's vision. A leader can do much to facilitate the successful implementation of change through political actions, including building coalitions, forming teams, selecting the right individuals for key positions, creating symbols of change, and monitoring as well as identifying issues that require attention (Junaidi & Mildawati, 2022).

The Kyai serves as an *uswatun hasana*h or a noble role model

A visionary leader sets an example and serves as a role model for others. The core of such exemplary behavior lies in the spirit of jihad and the dedication to advancing and developing the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School. As revealed in an interview with the Head of SMA Darul Hikmah, it was stated that: "The *Kiai* consistently instills a spirit of discipline, sincerity, and a strong work ethic among the teachers. It is expected that the teachers will emulate these behaviors. If this practice continues over an extended period, such behaviors will develop intrinsically without compulsion or dependence on the presence of the principal at school, thereby fostering the creativity of the teachers."Similarly, the Head of the Islamic Boarding School stated: "At the *pesantren*, the cultivation of discipline is carried out not only through words but also through actions. Therefore, in assigning tasks to teachers, I strive to collect their work early, as I am also a teacher. Furthermore, I encourage the teachers to engage in writing, because nowadays, teachers are expected not only to teach but also to produce written works, ideally for publication".

A visionary leader sets an example and serves as a role model for others. The core values demonstrated include the spirit of *jihad* and a strong commitment to advancing and developing the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School. This is reflected in the cultivation of discipline, sincerity, and a strong work ethic among teachers and educational staff through consistent practice. In addition, the leader welcomes anyone without discrimination, regardless of their background or interests, whether on a large or small scale.

The exemplary leadership of the *Kiai* is reflected in his ability to motivate and inspire others to continuously strive for the advancement of Islamic education. The *Kiai*

consistently demonstrates good practices to students and administrators through regular participation in congregational prayers, Qur'anic studies, and other religious activities. A visionary leader actively implements the organizational vision into the institutional culture, recognizing that culture is a crucial aspect of the educational system that fosters a sense of comfort and belonging. Such leadership is characterized by the courage to initiate change, inclusivity, openness, fairness, and a commitment to building trust through consensus (Schein, 2020).

The findings of the study support the theory of Bennis & Nannus, (1997) which asserts that there are four essential roles that must be fulfilled by a visionary leader in executing their leadership: (1) Direction Setter; (2) Agent of Change; (3) Spokesperson; and (4) Coach. A leader must be capable of maximizing the potential of all "players" to collaborate and coordinate their activities or efforts toward achieving the vision. As a coach, the leader consistently strives to focus members or employees on the realization of the vision by providing guidance, fostering hope, and building trust among the individuals within the organization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of visionary leadership as a strategic step to enhance teacher creativity at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung consists of the following: a) The visionary leadership of the Kyai as a direction setter is carried out by communicating the vision to all components of the pesantren, both horizontally and vertically; b) The Kyai at Pondok Pesantren Darul Hikmah Tulungagung acts as an agent of change, responsible for initiating transformations within the pesantren by integrating both religious and general knowledge in order to prepare and shape a younger generation with strong religious insight and intellectual capacity; c) The *Kiai* serves as a capable mentor by fostering teamwork in realizing the vision and mission of Pondok Darul Hikmah, including the formation of management teams within the educational institution and collaboration with external parties in learning activities.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in its contribution to the development of Bennis and Nanus's theory, which asserts that realizing visionary leadership involves four key roles: (1) direction setter, (2) agent of change, (3) spokesperson, and (4) coach. The findings of this study reinforce and expand upon Bennis and Nanus's perspective by

demonstrating that the vision can be actualized through the leader's concrete actions, including: a) acting as a direction setter, b) the Kyai functioning as an agent of change, c) the *Kiai* serving as a capable mentor by building team collaboration in realizing the institution's vision and mission, and d) the Kyai serving as uswatun hasanah or a role model of good character.

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