Charismatic leadership of Kyai based on resilience of Pesantren in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract---Charismatic leadership in Islamic boarding schools has a large enough resilience potential to deal with problems. In this case, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a means of proof for two Islamic boarding schools in Madura which are the locus of research related to the leadership of the kyai to bring pesantren to survive the pandemic. The purpose of this study is to find, analyze and provide an interpretation of the form of charismatic leadership based on pesantren resilience during the pandemic and the strategies adopted. This study uses a qualitative approach and the type of multi-case study. Data were collected by interview, documentary studies, and observation. The data analysis technique was carried out twice, namely: individual case analysis and cross case analysis. The results of the study state, first, that charismatic leadership has two main components, namely, (1) that among followers there are unfulfilled needs, goals or aspirations. (2) there is charisma possessed by the leader and the forms of its manifestation are envisioning, energizing,
and enabling. Second, the Kyai’s strategy based on resilience is to talk about understanding the psychological condition of a person and society. Understanding resilience as a strategy from within an entity is important for the community to grow, in this case the pesantren’s social ecosystem so that it does not always depend on the government. Resilience is closely related to religiosity. Resilience requires social capital and established competencies.

Keywords---resilience, charasmatic leadership, Kyai, Pesantren, COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world has changed the entire order of life, including education (Jauhari & Hartanto, S., 2021). One option in bridging the pandemic period so that learning continues is to utilize communication and information technology (livari et al., 2020), as well as the use of digital platforms and online-based applications such as zoom, google meet, and others (Aswir et al., 2021; Hastomo & Zulianti, 2021; Irzawati, 2021). Although in its implementation there are some things that are not supportive considering the various social and geographical conditions that exist in Indonesia. Restrictions on crowds and the online learning process have made schools and educational institutions suspended. Without face-to-face learning activities, the enthusiasm for learning from students decreases. Given that there is no control or objective assessment.

Pesantren as one of the traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, the majority are also experiencing difficult times during the pandemic. In a sense, the online learning policy essentially helps make the pesantren feel lonely because the students are left home. For reasons of security, health, and humanity, the students went home for an indefinite period of time. Kahfi & Kasanova (2020) said that this pandemic caused the weakness of teaching and learning activities, institutional administration and the economic shock of Islamic boarding schools. Although in practice there are one or two Islamic boarding schools that dare not to overreact to the COVID-19 pandemic (Obs-S1.2021 & Obs-S1.2021). On the one hand, this condition is a negative situation, considering that in pesantren, it is not only the transfer of religious knowledge. However, there is also a character transformation in the form of habituation and example from the pesantren caregivers. Several steps were finally taken by the pesantren to maintain the strength of the character of the santri based on the transformation of the Islamic character. During the pandemic, the steps taken so that activities at Islamic boarding schools continue to run according to Luth & Meriwijaya (2021) are, prevention efforts with health promotion activities, protection activities by providing facilities in accordance with the Covid-19 health protocol, case finding efforts (detect) by checking body temperature and swab tests, as well as implementing fast and effective handling by means of physical and social restrictions, application of coughing and sneezing ethics, self-isolation, and implementation of quarantine measures.
The Al-Amin Prenduan Islamic Boarding School is identical to the modern pesantren in Madura with mastery of foreign languages (Arabic-English) as the everyday language inside and outside the pesantren (finding from preliminary study/Intrv.2021). Another uniqueness is that Islamic boarding schools have an independent curriculum that is not tied to the government curriculum (national education) and is approved by the government of the Republic of Indonesia and even gets mu'a from the international community, especially from Islamic countries. In addition, the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School is led and managed by several Kyai so that its leadership character is collective and not one (finding from preliminary study/Intrv-S1.2020 & Doc-S1.2021). During the pandemic, the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School was also affected by distance learning as a policy implemented by the government. KAFJ said that Learning at the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School is essentially not that far from schools in general. It’s just that the students returned to the boarding house to mature themselves in several ways. Mastery of foreign languages and religious scholarship. This high intensity in the process of studying is what makes pesantren different from schools. And during a pandemic, such a situation had to be stopped considering it was for the common good (Intrv-S1.2021).

KGMI stated that,

*at the beginning of the pandemic, most of the students were sent home due to more important considerations. However, during online learning, the results were less than optimal. After going through several considerations, students were finally advised to return to the pesantren with strict health protocols (Intrv-S1.2021).*

KMZR added,

*“...of course the recommendation for students to return to the pesantren has been communicated to various parties. It is undeniable that the pandemic some time ago had caused concern. But if we stop there without preparing the students, their time is also not being used properly” (Intrv-S1.2021).*

The charismatic collective leadership of the caregivers at the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School makes the pesantren have a high level of resilience during the pandemic and new normal. Charismatic leadership emphasizes individual characters that distinguish them from others, especially those related to the inspiration, acceptance, and support of subordinates (Setiawan, 2014). Charismatic leaders have great power to change organizations as subordinates believe that their leader is on the right track, they stick to it, and are deeply attached to the emotional side. Characteristics of charismatic leadership according to Bean (2022) and Kambuaya (2020) have a need strong sense of power, high self-confidence, and strong convictions in their own beliefs and ideals.

Islamic boarding schools need charismatic leaders during the pandemic to overcome various existing problems, especially regarding the resilience of pesantren. Charismatic leaders will find internal factors in Islamic boarding schools to be strong from within and tough to face the problems of the pandemic. Resilience is the individual's capacity to face, overcome, strengthen themselves
and keep making changes in connection with the problems or exams experienced, every individual has the capacity to be resilient. Tugade & Fredrickson (2004) explain that resilience is the ability to continue living after adversity or surviving in an environment with heavy pressure is not luck.

The Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School, which is managed collectively, has not lost the charismatic spirit of the existing kyai. So that the movement to overcome problems during the pandemic in Islamic boarding schools was felt very quickly (Obs-S1.2021). The cohesiveness of the kyai who are the caretakers of the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School is one of the charismatic capital in building internal resilience in the Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School Prenduan. Al Is’af Islamic Boarding School Kalabasaan Guluk-Guluk Sumenep Madura has unique characteristics. Considering that this pesantren still persists with the salaf concept that focuses on the development of religious scholarship (taffaqquh fi addin) (finding from preliminary study/Doc-S2.2021 & Intrv-S2.2021). This situation has its roots in the founders of the Al Is’af Islamic Boarding School specializing in classical book-based Islamic studies (Obs-S2.2021). Changes that exist in Al Is’af are related to methods, strategies and learning media which ultimately result in the learning process (learning process) substantially remaining on the track in the traditional education system. In addition, it also develops business units in pesantren as part of the economic resilience of pesantren (Intrv-S2.2021; Doc-S2.2021 & Obs-S2.2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Al Is’af Islamic Boarding School as well as pesantren in general also followed the government’s recommendation to carry out distance learning and limit community crowds. However, considering that this pesantren focuses on the study of classical books, adjustments are made considering the character of the pesantren which is different from other pesantren (Obs-S2.2021). KHR stated that,

“the number of students who are not so many, less than thousands makes it easier for Islamic boarding schools to manage Koran activities (learning) and other economic activities. So, even though there is a government recommendation to reduce activities that have the potential to attract crowds, we can solve the problem because the number of students is not really that much” (Intrv-S2.2021).

KHL confirmed that,

“We really free the santri whether they want to go home or stay at the pesantren by implementing good health protocols. Some choose to go home to protect the feelings of their parents, some stay in the pesantren because they want to be khidmah” (Intrv-S2.2021).

Changes in the world of education, especially Islamic boarding schools related to the pandemic, at Al Is’af Islamic Boarding School have widened in terms of economy. Considering that the pesantren has fairly good business activities to support the existence of the pesantren (Obs-S2.2021). Such conditions apparently also apply to other pesantren, problems that occur from the aspect of Islamic education which is carried out online and also institutional problems from the declining economic aspect (Hasanah & Nu’man, 2021). This is the main source of
problems for the development of Islamic boarding schools, so this study recommends the need for new policies to overcome the problems that occur.

The existence of the Al Is'af Islamic Boarding School which, although managed by kyai, is still under the direction of the main kyai, making charismatic leadership find momentum in resilience during the pandemic. Gebert et al. (2016); Howell & Shamir (2005); and Ito et al. (2020) find that there is a pattern of charismatic leadership leadership and follower relationships where followers here are people who are dependent on a leader. In the context of the Al Is'af Islamic Boarding School, the kyai under the main kyai along with the santri and the surrounding community will position themselves to comply with the wishes of the leader in all matters. This condition on the one hand is indeed a form of strength from the main kyai's personal who has advantages, one of which is good religious knowledge. In practice, the character of a charismatic leader will be able to control others either directly or indirectly by creating a dependency relationship with them. During the pandemic and the need for resilience, the concept of charismatic leadership at the Al Is'af Islamic Boarding School became a means of proving the quality of the main kyai in controlling the pesantren.

Al Amin Prenduan Islamic Boarding School and Al Is'af Kalaba’an Islamic Boarding School during the pandemic, although they both have charismatic leadership characteristics, they have similarities and differences. Considering that the two pesantren initially had the same historical roots, in development there were differences in direction. The COVID-19 pandemic has become a means of proof for the two pesantren to continue to survive with changes and at the same time be able to state their existence as a form of educational institution with Islamic character. The objectives to be achieved in this article are to analyze and provide an interpretation of the form of charismatic leadership based on pesantren resilience during the pandemic and the strategy of kyai based on pesantren resilience during the pandemic.

**Materials and Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach which according to the researcher is in accordance with the needs of the type of multi-case study research. This research aims to study intensively about certain social units, which include individuals, groups, institutions and society, in this case the way Kyai leads pesantren through the COVID-19 pandemic. Yin (2013) strengthens that multi-case studies are research with more than one case or research location. Data was collected by prioritizing in-depth interviews, in this case the first informant was determined using purposive sampling, and then followed by snowball sampling. Through snowball sampling, key informants will appoint people who know the problem to be studied to complete their statement and people who are appointed and appoint other people if the information is inadequate and so on. Data were also taken by researchers through documentary studies and participant observation. Both of these techniques serve to strengthen and triangulate data sources.

The data analysis technique was carried out twice considering that there were two research loci. Referring to Bogdan & Biklen (2007) and (Yin, 2013) the initial stages were carried out, namely: individual case data analysis and cross-case
data analysis which then resulted in research findings. In both stages of data analysis, an interactive analysis model from Miles et al. (2014) which consists of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Cross-case data analysis is intended as a process of juxtaposing the findings obtained from each case. The findings of the first locus were compiled, analyzed, and made a narrative explanation into findings I. The findings of the second locus were also carried out in the same way until they were compared with the findings at loci I and II. This pairing is used to find differences in the characteristics of each case for further analysis and discussion.

**Results and Discussions**

**Forms of Charismatic Leadership based on Islamic Boarding School Resilience during a Pandemic**

The forms of charismatic leadership based on Islamic boarding school resilience during a pandemic in the two research locations have similarities and differences at the same time. This is because the characters at the two research loci are different. So that the form of charismatic leadership follows the character of the two pesantren which are the locus of research. To make it easier to understand the findings, the researchers made the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Al Amin</th>
<th>Islamic Boarding School Prenduan Al Is'af Kalaba'an Islamic Boarding School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caregiver Collectivity</td>
<td>There are central figures from several Caretaker Kyai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>Catalyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Has positive energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Has regular</td>
<td>communication pattern Regular but centralized communication pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conflict and risk</td>
<td>Risk Taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Never give up for the</td>
<td>Never give up for the good of the pesantren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good of the pesantren</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Agents of change</td>
<td>Agents of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on research findings, there are a number of forms of charismatic leadership from two research loci. Leadership collectivity, centered on a main kyai, visionary, catalyst, flexible, has positive energy, good communication, conflict and risk management, risk taker, never give up for the good of the pesantren, and agent of change. Several forms of leadership are in line with Weber's view. Where in outline charismatic leadership has two main components, namely first, that among followers there are needs, goals or aspirations that have not been met by the existing reality. Second, there is a charisma possessed by these leaders who are seen as leading to the realization of their goals or
aspirations (Sparks, 2014). This is in line with (Winarno, 2011) who reinforces that the three forms of charismatic leadership are envisioning, energizing, and enabling.

Envisioning or in the language of the research locus is the ability of the kyai to give a vision of the future or in accordance with what the followers want. So that the exposure of these views can provide motivation and spur Islamic boarding school residents to change for the better. Envisioning, on the one hand, is indeed a conditioning of vision for pesantren residents. Vision plays an important role in an organization. In this case, (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2008) state that the correct vision is to release all human potential or abilities because they act as goals and bait for hope.

Idawati (2013) states that, in addition to having high self-confidence, charismatic leaders also have the ability to explain their vision clearly so that it is easy to understand, have ideal vision and goals in seeing a much better future, are good at changing circumstances, and are sensitive to changes in circumstances. environment. The vision of the kyai that is created and inflamed in a sustainable manner will be the joint focus of the pesantren community. So in this case there is a joint effort to move towards a common goal. Kyai as the owner of the vision first explained the vision to the residents of the pesantren. At the first locus, where the pesantren is managed collectively, the kyai who owns the vision by using language that is easily understood by other caregivers tries to invite changes for the better. Meanwhile, at the second locus, where there is a main kyai as a central figure, it gives influence and stability for other kyai to follow suit. The form of charismatic leadership at the research location in the area of praxis is, the kyai as the main figure provides an example of consistency towards the agreed vision.

Energizing at the research locus is the ability of the kyai to give positive energy to the pesantren residents. Charismatic leaders are able to spur followers in the form of motivation so that the vision that has been given can be realized. In pesantren, this is very easy to find, considering the central role of the kyai is undeniable. In addition, pesantren residents pay more respect to him considering his great contribution to Islamic scholarship. However, there is a difference between the energizing process at the first locus that prioritizes management and rationality. While at the second locus, it is more to the classical concept of pesantren where the pesantren residents prioritize obedience to the main kyai.

Enabling spoke about the ability of the kyai to help pesantren residents. The assistance here certainly leads to how the pesantren residents are able to psychologically follow the vision that has been set. Considering that on the way, it is possible that many pesantren residents feel they are not strong enough to achieve the vision outlined by the kyai. Enabling forms can be such as through recitations, brainstorming forums, and the most extreme is the provision of prayers which are often used as the psychological basis for pesantren residents. Gunawan (2018) reinforces that charismatic leaders are respected because of their personality traits, traits, and behaviors that are not shared by other people in general. Some characteristics that are usually possessed by charismatic leaders, namely: (1) have a strong attraction so they can have many followers; (2)
reasons for followers to obey and obey the leader cannot be explained; (3) the leader seems to have magic or supernatural powers; and (4) the charisma of this leader is what it is, regardless of age, wealth, throne, health, even good looks (Gunawan, 2018). Budiadi (2016) strengthens that the characteristics of a charismatic leader include having very high self-confidence, being able to express his vision clearly and easily understood by others, believing in a very strong vision, being willing to take any high risks and being willing to sacrifice in achieving his vision.

According Marginingsih (2016) charismatic leaders have several behaviors, including: (1) leaders have behaviors that are always trusted by their followers so that decisions made by leaders always give a distinct impression and believe in the competence of the leader so that they are only obedient and obedient; (2) the leader has a behavior that strongly emphasizes the basic goals of the group based on the ideals, values, hopes and desires of his followers; (3) this leader has an interesting vision of a better future for the organization, this is where followers will have an emotional connection to the leader so as to motivate followers to remain committed until the set goals are achieved; (3) this leader has behavior as an example for his followers so that the leader can have a greater influence because his followers already have the same values and beliefs as the leader; and (4) this leader will always give hope and trust to his followers with the aim that the followers have high commitment and performance in achieving the organizational goals that have been set.

Charismatic leaders emphasize ideological goals that link the group’s mission to deeply rooted values, ideals, and aspirations shared by followers. In addition, charismatic leadership is also based on the extraordinary power possessed by a person as a person. The relationship between charismatic leadership and the performance of subordinates, in this case the kyai and the pesantren community, is bound by the values or vision of the pesantren based on the thoughts and reflections of its founder. These values or visions became a general view that was agreed upon in the two pesantren that became the locus of research. Value compatibility in the form of acceptance of the vision of the pesantren by the residents of the pesantren has implications for the positive relationship of the kyai as the caretaker of the pesantren with the residents of the pesantren. Kyai with his vision is able to communicate and cooperate with anyone. A charismatic leader has individual characteristics that distinguish him from other leaders, especially in terms of implications for the inspiration, acceptance, and support of subordinates. Characteristics possessed by charismatic leaders are having a high level of self-confidence, strong beliefs and ideals and being able to influence others.

The leader of an organization, which in this case is a kyai with his pesantren, with strong charisma support can internalize the values of goodness in the existing vision and mission. Of course, although this process takes a long time, the success is also more maximal and not temporary. Because pesantren as an educational institution has strategic and long-term value. The charismatic kyai in addition to making the movement of the pesantren residents fit will also become an image that will bring the pesantren to be known more widely. The suitability of this movement occurs due to a reciprocal relationship and mutual trust. Kyai
believes in the residents of the pesantren, and vice versa. These conditions gradually brought the kyai to become agents of change for the pesantren and their environment. So talking about the name of the pesantren, there will certainly be a charismatic figure who stands behind the success of the pesantren.

**The Kyai’s Strategy based on Islamic Boarding School Resilience in the Pandemic Period**

The kyai’s strategy based on pesantren resilience during the pandemic in the two research locations had similarities and differences at the same time. This is because the characters at the two research loci are different. To make it easier to understand the findings, the researchers created a table as follows:

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<th>Islamic Boarding School Prenduan Al Is’af Kalaba’an Islamic Boarding School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Protocol although less stringent health protocols in God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have a backup plan and trust</td>
<td>Building the trust of the pesantren community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Build the trust of the pesantren community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Internal strengthening of the pesantren</td>
<td>Internal strengthening of the pesantren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kyai’s strategy based on the resilience of pesantren during the pandemic based on the results of the study was that both Islamic boarding schools implemented health protocols even though some were less stringent. One of the pesantren has a well-thought-out plan, while the other is flowing and relying on Allah. Building the trust of pesantren residents, relaxing the mind which means balancing the mind and heart, as well as strengthening the internals of pesantren so that they can move together to overcome the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic in learning changes everything. Where conventional learning is through face-to-face, with the adjustment of the pandemic period, learning is more online-based. This change creates a bias considering that not all educational institutions have good technology facilities and internet networks. Pesantren as a form of educational institution requires a resilience-based strategy so that they get out of the pandemic in a good way.

Sarrionandia et al. (2018) mentions that resilience is considered a basic strength that is the foundation of all positive characters in building one’s emotional and psychological strength. Reivich & Shatte (2013) see that resilience is the ability to survive and be adaptive to severe events or in life. Resilience is a psychological form that does not only concern a person but also society. As a basis for fighting
the pandemic, understanding resilience as a strategy from within an entity is important to grow so that a person or society does not always depend on the government. This is important to understand considering that the collective burden of the government during the pandemic is getting heavier.

Resilience is closely related to religiosity. Remembering someone who has a good religious base will have an understanding and belief that what happened even though it was beyond human reason, there was a cause that could make it happen. And by understanding this concept one will not feel hopeless in life. From this understanding, it shows that the religiosity side is able to make a positive contribution to the resilience of pesantren during the pandemic. Kyai as the main figure in the pesantren has a good religiosity base. This of course supports the resilience process of pesantren during the pandemic. Arifiana & Ubaidillah (2021); Dolcos et al. (2021); and Schwalm et al. (2022) proving that the role of religiosity is quite important, because one of the internal factors that influence resilience is religiosity. Hardjana as quoted by Ghufron & Risnawitaq S. (2017) religiosity is a feeling and awareness of relationship and reconnection to God.

Resilience is essentially a natural instinct in a person or society when they are forged by problems. Southwick et al. (2014) state that resilience is an ability that a person has where they do not succumb when faced with pressures and changes in the environment. With good resilience, people are able to face a pandemic, strengthen themselves or even change unpleasant (traumatic) living conditions into something natural to overcome (Juke, 2010). Good resilience will encourage someone to be brave and persever in facing problems. However, if resilience is not imprinted in oneself, then there is no courage, perseverance, no rationality, no insight (Desmita, 2013).

The development of resilience in pesantren starts from how Kyai sees problems in pesantren during the pandemic. Kyai conducts an analysis of pesantren by developing existing resources to be ready to face changes during the pandemic. The resilience of pesantren during the pandemic also requires social capital from kyai and community competence. Social capital and community competencies are important for communal resilience. By paying attention to several things, namely social bonding, namely a sense of belonging and attachment to people of the same identity, an ability that can serve as a source of protection against the problem of social identity crises (Ellis & Abdi, 2017). Horizontal social connectedness (social bridging), namely the ability to build cross-identity connectivity, a useful competency in dealing with social marginalization issues. Vertical social linking (social linking), namely the capacity to build links with government institutions, an ability to address issues of injustice and inequality in access to economic and political resources (Ellis & Abdi, 2017).

The resilience of Islamic boarding schools during the pandemic with the existence of social bonding, social bridging, and social linking has become an internal and external force that is solid enough to overcome the covid pandemic we are facing. Islamic boarding schools that are resilient to the covid pandemic have protective factors from within so as to produce social immunity in a good pesantren environment. However, pesantren still need to be covered or build a network at a wider, higher, and complex level. Such as building networks with the government
and all its agencies, as well as strengthening the community of guardians of students and alumni to control the students.

Pesantren with good social capital and community competence and supported by a high level of religiosity will make their resilience level stronger. Considering that Islamic boarding schools are not the same as school educational institutions where students are only in school during class hours, after that they return to their respective homes. The students generally study and live in the pesantren environment. So they interact more or less with their kyai in particular and the wider community in general. In the end, when the bond becomes strong, a sense of community based on pesantren emerges.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion in this study is that charismatic leadership has two main components, namely, first, that among followers there are needs, goals or aspirations that have not been fulfilled by the existing reality. Second, there is the charisma of the leader and the forms of its manifestation are envisioning, energizing, and enabling. Envisioning or in the language of the research locus is the ability of the kyai to give a vision of the future or in accordance with what the followers want. Energizing is the ability of the kyai to give positive energy to pesantren residents. Enabling spoke about the ability of the kyai to help pesantren residents.

The Kyai’s strategy based on pesantren resilience during the pandemic is to talk about the psychological condition of a person and society. An understanding of resilience as a strategy from within an entity is important to grow so that a person or society does not always depend on the government. Resilience is closely related to religiosity. Remembering someone who has a good religious base will have an understanding and belief that what happened even though it was beyond human reason, there was a cause that could make it happen. Resilience also requires social capital and an established collective competence.

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