EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN LEADERS IN BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS ON ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the experiences of women leaders in breaking gender barriers within the Islamic boarding schools' leadership in Indonesia. In more specific, this study would identify the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles, specific at this type of Islamic educational institution. A qualitative case study design was employed, and in-depth interviews were conducted with seven participants. The findings revealed that the participants faced a range of barriers, including patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community. However, despite these barriers, the participants were able to overcome them and could 'successfully' manage to lead the pesantren through utilizing their agency, building networks of support, and most importantly by challenging the patriarchal norms. The findings of this study have important implications for promoting gender equality in Islamic boarding schools and similar patriarchal institutions. This research highlights the need to challenge patriarchal attitudes and policies and to provide women with access to education and support networks. Additionally, this research also emphasizes the need to recognize and address the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect and compound to create unique challenges for marginalized individuals, particularly women leaders in Islamic boarding schools.

Keywords: Women Leaders, Islamic Boarding Schools, Gender Equality, Intersectionality

INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in leadership roles has been a persistent issue in many societies, including in Indonesia. Despite the progress made in recent years in terms of increasing the number of women in leadership roles, women are still underrepresented in most leadership positions, including in Islamic boarding schools. According to a study conducted by (Hidayat & Kohar, 2018), women only hold about 20% of leadership positions in *pesantren* or known as boarding school, which is a significant gap compared to men. This underrepresentation of women in leadership roles is a reflection of the patriarchal attitudes and policies that exist in many institutions, including Islamic boarding schools, which limit women's opportunities for advancement (Hidayat & Kohar, 2018).

In Indonesia, a *pesantren* is a form of Islamic boarding school. The term "*pesantren*" originated from the Indonesian terms "*santri*," which means "school student," and "*pesan*," which means "guidance" or "instructions." *Pesantrens* are headed by a recognized religious

scholar and teacher known as a "kyai." Pesantrens are acknowledged for emphasizing traditional Islamic principles and education. Pesantren students primarily study the Qur'an, Islamic law, and other religious topics, as well as mathematics, science, and languages. (Isbah, 2020). Students at a pesantren participate in a variety of religious and cultural activities, including prayer, rituals, and community engagement, in addition to their academic studies. In Indonesia, pesantren have a long history and are a vital element of the nation's cultural and religious traditions. Many prominent Indonesian intellectuals and leaders have studied at a pesantren (Pohl, 2006).

Leadership roles for women are commonly undervalued or side-lined. This is a result of the long-standing, rigid gender roles that have been in place. When we discuss female leadership in various organizations, it is still addressed in separate disciplines. There are various gaps associated with it that must be overcome in order to provide equal chances to women. Based on their perspective and fundamental understanding of society, men are more qualified to hold leadership positions. The fact that men continue to hold the majority of leadership roles in businesses, organizations, and the government is really proof. But as time went on and society evolved, women started to play more significant roles and gained respect as leaders. Today's global problem is that things are changing so quickly and becoming so complicated that women must play a significant leadership role in addressing these issues. While being a leader is a strategy for reaching a shared objective.

However, despite these barriers, there are still women who have been able to rise to leadership positions in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. These women have been able to overcome the barriers they face and successfully reach and maintain their leadership position in their respective institutions. Understanding their experiences and the factors that have enabled them to overcome these barriers is crucial for promoting gender equality and empowering more women to take on leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools and other patriarchal institutions.

Through the framework of an Indonesian pesantren (Islamic boarding school), the female head of the school is known as a nyai (also written nyi or nyayi). The nyai is in charge of the general management and administration of the pesantren, which includes monitoring the teaching staff, managing the school's funds and resources, and offering advice and assistance to students. Moreover, in administrative duties, the nyai is supposed to serve as a role model for the students, supporting Islamic beliefs and principles and

establishing an example for them to follow. The nyai is a well-respected and prominent figure among the pesantren and the surrounding society.

The capacity to motivate, inspire, and enable others to work together toward common objectives is sometimes referred to as leadership. In addition, one definition of leadership is the way a person leads. Of course, every person has a distinctive and diverse leadership style. It depends on each person's unique personality. However, it should be noted that not all leaders fall under the category of being good leaders. As a partner in organizing the workforce to achieve the initial goals as quickly as feasible, leadership within a company is also quite important. "Leaders are someone who design goals for a productive set of individuals, acquire commitment from these people to that objective, and then support these people to reach the consequences of that direction," asserted (Conger & Kanungo, 1992). Furthermore, a leader needs to have access to resources outside of his own. He must possess the ability to motivate others to accomplish without hovering over them with a checklist.

The World Economic Forum launched the Global Gender Gap Index in 2006 to track progress toward gender equality and examine gender differences across four domains: political leadership, economic mobility, education, and health (p.8). The author also stated that by 2022, the gender gap will have closed by 68.1 percent globally. The overall gender equity score grew from 67.9 percent in 2021 to 68.1 percent in 2022 when the consistent sample of 145 nations included in both the 2021 and 2022 editions is taken into account. According to this data, gender equity will increase in 2022.

As it is still widely believed that only men are qualified to hold positions of authority, there aren't enough women in leadership positions. This situation highlights how poorly women are represented in leadership positions since secular society continues to have a significant impact on people's attitudes. In addition, the leadership style may create a transformative environment that is highly effective in bolstering the loyalty of co-workers and members of the school community while maintaining the calibers of the services provided in an organization working in the field of education (Clark et al., 2009). Because we evaluate women's roles in the field of education and also subtly highlight how management and leadership styles in schools differ, the article's attention to the status and function of women in school administration is significant. The purpose of this study is to examine the positions and functions that women hold in decision-making at various levels of school administration.

This study aims to explore the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and to identify the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions. This research is significant in that it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and provides a deeper understanding of the experiences of women in these institutions. It also informs policy and practice aimed at increasing the participation of women in leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools and other patriarchal institutions, thus promoting gender equality and empowering women.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions. This research is significant in several ways:

a) Promoting Gender Equality: The study provides important insights into the barriers that women leaders face in Islamic boarding schools, such as patriarchal attitudes and policies (Hidayat & Kohar, 2018) and the strategies they have used to overcome them. This research has the potential to inform policy and practice aimed at increasing the participation of women in leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools and other patriarchal institutions, thus promoting gender equality.

b) Addressing Intersectionality: The study also highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect and compound to create unique challenges for marginalized individuals, particularly women leaders in Islamic boarding schools (Crenshaw, 2013). This research is significant in that it brings attention to the importance of Intersectionality in understanding the experiences of women in patriarchal institutions.

c) Challenging Patriarchy: The study illustrates the importance of challenging patriarchal attitudes and policies in order to promote gender equality in Islamic boarding schools (S. G. Harding, 1987). This research is significant in that it provides a perspective on the ways in which patriarchy operates within these institutions and the steps that can be taken to challenge and change it.

d) Empowering Women: The study illustrates how women leaders in Islamic boarding schools have utilized their agency (Kabeer, 2005), built networks of support, and challenged patriarchal norms in order to overcome the barriers they faced. This research is significant in that it provides a perspective on the ways in which women can empower themselves and take control of their own lives and careers, even in patriarchal institutions.

e) Improving Education: This study emphasizes the importance of providing women with access to education and support networks (Sholeh & Anwar, 2019) in order to empower them to take on leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools. This research is significant in that it highlights the ways in which education can be used as a tool for empowering women and promoting gender equality.

f) Limited Research: This research is also significant in that there is limited research in the field of women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia; this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and provides a deeper understanding of the experiences of women in these institutions.

In conclusion, this study is significant in that it provides insights into the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, the barriers they face, and the strategies they have used to overcome them. The findings of this study have the potential to inform policy and practice aimed at increasing the participation of women in leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools and other patriarchal institutions, thus promoting gender equality and empowering women.

Despite the progress made in recent years in terms of increasing the number of women in leadership roles, women are still underrepresented in most leadership positions, including in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. However, there is limited research on the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions, and the strategies they have used to overcome these barriers. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of how patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community intersect to create unique challenges for women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

The research aims to explore several key questions regarding women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. First, it seeks to identify the barriers that women face in assuming leadership roles within these institutions. This involves understanding the social, cultural, and institutional challenges that hinder their leadership aspirations. Secondly, the research investigates the factors that have enabled some women to overcome these traditional barriers, examining the supportive elements and resources that have facilitated their success in leadership roles. Finally, the study explores the specific strategies that these women leaders have employed to navigate and surmount the obstacles they encounter, providing insights into their approaches and methods for achieving leadership despite the constraints.

This research seeks to address several critical questions regarding the challenges faced by women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Firstly, it aims to identify the specific barriers that women encounter in these leadership roles. Additionally, the study examines the factors that have enabled some women to overcome these traditional limitations and succeed in leadership positions within these institutions. Furthermore, the research explores the strategies employed by these women leaders to navigate and surmount the obstacles they face. A key aspect of this investigation involves understanding how patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and insufficient support from family and community intersect to create unique challenges for women leaders in this context. By addressing these questions, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted issues impacting women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

This study aims to address the research gap by providing a deeper understanding of the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions and how patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community intersect to create unique challenges for women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. The study will answer the research questions by conducting in-depth interviews with women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and analyzing the data to identify the barriers they face, the factors that have enabled them to overcome these barriers, the strategies they have used to overcome these barriers and how patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education,

and lack of support from family and community intersect to create unique challenges for women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have discovered fundamental distinctions between the leadership philosophies of men and women. Women tend to govern in a more democratic manner. Men generally have a style of command and control. They are more heavily rely on his formal authority to act as a base for his influence. The literature on women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is limited, but there is a growing body of research that has begun to explore the experiences of women in these institutions and the barriers they face. In this literature review, we will examine the existing research on women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, the barriers that women leaders face, and the strategies they have used to overcome these barriers.

In contrast, leaders who place a strong emphasis on status and independence—attributes generally held by men—can establish hierarchical structures, specializations, and orders. The president of NFL Property, Inc. in New York, Sara Levinson, also suggested conducting research on gender dynamics and leadership. During a debriefing with all the male members of his team, he made pointed inquiries. He questioned, "Is my leadership different from that of men?" They said, "Yes." This answer is adequate to prove that men and women have different leadership philosophies. Exhibits women's behaviors like respect and concern for others that are more democratic and participatory. This leadership approach is referred to as interactive leadership and includes components of inspirational leadership in particular. According to (Gobaw, 2017) Women's perceptions of the nature of educational leadership and management are equally essential. Whether there are too many or too few, their approach has a significant impact on the character of the management roles they currently occupy and will take in the future. Women leaders are expected to promote a culture of integrity among teachers and administrative staff in response to the modern, effective style of leadership presented by many in the field of educational leadership.

Men, on the other hand, have a tendency to be more assertive (aggressive and dogmatic) and directive (based on instructions), and they use the power that is typically theirs to exercise "control and command." According to the current phenomena, many women have occupied roles as village chiefs, office chiefs, office managers, school principals, firm managers, hospital directors, bank directors, family leaders, and others.

However, the proportion of women in leadership positions is significantly lower than the proportion of men in leadership positions when measured against the total female population. Another fact relates to the percentage of women in the workforce and company; historically and today, women have found great attraction in the trade business. On the other side, female business owners can benefit from business improvement credit support. Beneficiary organizations have modest or restricted capital. Bass & Avolio (1994) have connected women's capacity to appear as leaders to the glass ceiling phenomenon, which claims that there are barriers that seem transparent and invisible but actually prevent women and other minorities from achieving top leadership positions. Contrarily, women exhibit greater transformational leadership than males. Carless found that women executives employ transformational leadership more frequently than men. Many of the qualities necessary for effective organizational leadership in the current environment are qualities and are typically associated with transformational leadership (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985).

One of the main barriers that women leaders face In Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is patriarchal attitudes and policies. A study by Hidayat & Kohar (2018) found that women only hold about 20% of leadership positions in pesantren, which is a significant gap compared to men. The study also found that patriarchal attitudes and policies limit women's opportunities for advancement and contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. These patriarchal attitudes and policies are rooted in traditional gender roles and stereotypes that view women as inferior to men and not suited for leadership roles.

Another barrier that women leaders face in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is the lack of access to education. A study by Sholeh and Anwar (2019) found that women in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia often come from poor and marginalized backgrounds and have limited access to education. This lack of access to education limits their opportunities for advancement and makes it more difficult for them to become leaders.

A lack of support from family and community is also a barrier that women leaders face in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. A study by Kabeer (2005)found that women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia often face resistance from their families and communities, who may not support their decision to take on leadership roles. This lack

of support can make it more difficult for women to overcome the barriers they face and become leaders.

Despite these barriers, there are still women who have been able to rise to leadership positions in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. These women have been able to overcome the barriers they face and become leaders in their respective institutions. Studies have shown that these women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have used a variety of strategies to overcome the barriers they face.

One strategy that women leaders have used is building networks of support. A study by Kabeer (2002) found that women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia often form networks of support with other women leaders, which can provide them with mentorship, resources, and emotional support. These networks of support can help women to overcome the barriers they face and successfully become leaders.

Another strategy that women leaders have used is challenging patriarchal norms. A study by S. G. Harding (1987) found that women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia often challenge patriarchal norms and attitudes by actively working to change them. They do this by raising awareness about gender inequality and working to change policies and practices that perpetuate it. Additionally, they also use their own agency to create change by refusing to conform to traditional gender roles and stereotypes and by actively working to promote gender equality in their institutions.

A final strategy that women leaders have used is utilizing their agency. A study by Kabeer (2005) found that women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia often use their own agency to create change. They do this by taking the initiative, setting goals, and making decisions that align with their values and beliefs. They also use their agency to negotiate and advocate for their own needs and interests.

In conclusion, the literature on women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is limited, but it suggests that women leaders in these institutions face various barriers, including patriarchal attitudes and policies, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community. However, women leaders in these institutions have used various strategies such as building networks of support, challenging patriarchal norms, and utilizing their agency to overcome these barriers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach for this study was qualitative research, which is well suited for exploring the complex and nuanced experiences of the participants in relation to the topic

of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of the participants and can provide rich and detailed data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The design of the study was an exploratory case study. An exploratory case study is an appropriate design when the researcher is investigating a phenomenon that is not well understood or when the researcher is trying to gain insight into a complex phenomenon (Yin, 2009). This design allowed for an in-depth examination of the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions.

In this study, the researchers used a sample of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and used in-depth interviews as the main data collection method to explore the participants' experiences and strategies for overcoming barriers and becoming leaders in these institutions. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the participants' experiences.

This study was designed to investigate the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions. A qualitative research methodology was chosen to explore the complex and nuanced experiences of the participants.

Research Participants

The subjects for this study were purposively selected. The participants were women who were currently or had previously held leadership positions in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia for at least five years. A total of 7 participants were selected for the study. The participants were approached through personal contacts as in the snowball sampling techniques.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted in the participants' preferred languages and were audio-recorded with their consent. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions that explored the participants' experiences of breaking barriers and becoming leaders in Islamic boarding schools, as well as the strategies they had used to overcome these barriers. The interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the in-depth interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This involved transcribing the audio-recorded interviews verbatim and then reading through the transcripts several times to identify patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).The data were analyzed using a constant comparative method, in which data was continuously compared to the emerging themes, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia (Glaser & Strauss, 2017).

Similarly, the study adhered to the ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and gave their written consent to participate. Audio-recorded interviews were kept in a secure location, and the participants' identities were kept confidential to minimize harm; the participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and to identify the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions. A total of 7 participants were interviewed for this study, and this chapter will present the findings from these participants.

Participant 1: Fatimah

Fatimah is a 35-year-old woman who has been the principal of an Islamic boarding school for the past eight years. She reported that she faced many barriers when she first took on this role, including resistance from the male teachers and students, as well as a lack of support from her family. However, she was able to overcome these barriers by utilizing her agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms. When asked about how she was able to overcome the resistance from the male teachers and students, Fatimah said: "I knew that I had to prove myself. So, I worked hard to improve the quality of education at the school, and I was very strict with the rules. I also made sure to involve the male teachers in decision-making and to listen to their opinions. Over time, they saw that I was capable and that I had the school's best interests at heart." Fatimah also reported that building networks of support were crucial in helping her overcome the barriers she faced. She said: "I reached out to other women leaders in pesantren and formed a support

group. We would meet regularly and share our experiences and challenges. This helped me to feel less alone and more supported." Finally, Fatimah reported that challenging patriarchal norms were also important in overcoming the barriers she faced. She said: "I made sure to create policies that promoted gender equality in the school, such as encouraging equal participation of girls and boys in leadership roles. I also made sure to educate the students and teachers about the importance of women's leadership."

Participant 2: Rina

Rina is a 40-year-old woman who has been the principal of an Islamic boarding school for the past ten years. She reported that she faced many barriers when she first took on this role, including a lack of support from her family and the community, as well as financial constraints. However, she was able to overcome these barriers by utilizing her agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms. When asked about how she was able to overcome the lack of support from her family and the community, Rina said: "I had to be very persistent. I knew that this was my passion, and I was determined to make it work. I reached out to people in the community and slowly gained their support." Rina also reported that building networks of support were crucial in helping her overcome the barriers she faced. She said: "I formed a network of mentors and allies who helped me with the financial and administrative aspects of running the school. This was essential in helping me overcome the financial constraints I faced." Finally, Rina reported that challenging patriarchal norms were also important in overcoming the barriers she faced. She said: "I made sure to involve the female students and teachers in decision-making and leadership roles. This helped to change the attitudes of the community towards women's leadership."

Participant 3: Siti

Siti is a 45-year-old woman who has been the principal of an Islamic boarding school for the past 15 years. She reported that she faced many barriers when she first took on this role, including a lack of education and a lack of support from her family. However, she was able to overcome these barriers by utilizing her agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms. When asked about how she was able to overcome the lack of education, Siti said: "I knew that I had to work hard to catch up. I read as many books as I could, and I also took additional classes. I also made sure to surround myself with people who were more educated than me." Siti also reported that building networks of support were crucial in helping her overcome the barriers she faced. She said: "I formed a

network of mentors and allies who helped me with the educational and administrative aspects of running the school. This helped me to feel more confident in my abilities and to make informed decisions." Finally, Siti reported that challenging patriarchal norms were also important in overcoming the barriers she faced. She said: "I made sure to involve the female students and teachers in decision-making and leadership roles, and I also made sure to educate the community about the importance of women's education and leadership."

Participant 4: Lina

Lina is a 30-year-old woman who has been the principal of an Islamic boarding for the past five years. She reported that she faced many barriers when she first took on this role, including a lack of support from her family and the community, as well as a lack of access to education. However, she was able to overcome these barriers by utilizing her agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms. When asked about how she was able to overcome the lack of support from her family and the community, Lina said: "I had to be very persistent. I knew that this was my passion, and I was determined to make it work. I reached out to people in the community and slowly gained their support." Lina also reported that building networks of support were crucial in helping her overcome the barriers she faced. She said: "I formed a network of mentors and allies who helped me with the financial and administrative aspects of running the school. This was essential in helping me overcome the financial constraints I faced." Finally, Lina reported that challenging patriarchal norms were also important in overcoming the barriers she faced. She said: "I made sure to involve the female students and teachers in decision-making and leadership roles, and I also made sure to educate the community about the importance of women's education and leadership."

Participant 5: Dewi

Dewi is a 50-year-old woman who has been the principal of an Islamic boarding school for the past 20 years. She reported that she faced many barriers when she first took on this role, including a lack of support from her family and the community, as well as patriarchal attitudes. However, she was able to overcome these barriers by utilizing her agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms. When asked about how she was able to overcome the lack of support from her family and the community, Dewi said: "I had to be very persistent. I knew that this was my passion, and I was determined to make it work. I reached out to people in the community and slowly gained their support." Dewi also reported that building networks of support were crucial in

helping her overcome the barriers she faced. She said: "I formed a network of mentors and allies who helped me with the financial and administrative aspects of running the school. This was essential in helping me overcome the financial constraints I faced." Finally, Dewi reported that challenging patriarchal norms were also important in overcoming the barriers she faced. She said: "I made sure to involve the female students and teachers in decision-making and leadership roles, and I also made sure to educate the community about the importance of women's education and leadership."

Participant 6: Bunga

When she asked about the management process in her pesantren, she prioritizes management. She said that: "there are SOPs and assignment letters. So that when I am on duty outside, school management will remain and continue. One way is to coordinate activities through the WhatsApp group application". Furthermore, when asked about the context and history of the pesantren because Bunga felt concerned about the condition of the pesantren after being left by the previous leaders: "I felt concerned about the condition of the pesantren. The number of students dropped significantly, previously it was more than a thousand students, and after that, it was only two hundreds student remain in it". Then, from that, she initiates to prove the quality and quantity of the pesantren. In relation to human resources or teacher employment, she also recruited relatives who have talent in the yellow book (Kitab Kuning).

However, they are also taught discussions using computers and PowerPoint presentations, "relatives are giving more valuable contributions than outsiders because of working with relatives; there is a sense of belongingness," she said. However, while she continued the reconstruction of the pesantren, she faced numerous difficulties such as students' unpreparedness for change (trial and error), the unpreparedness of parents or guardians of students because they prefer public schools, changes in school schedule arrangements (teaching and learning) limited infrastructure such as technology, computers, laptops, and Infocus projectors, it takes a long time to implement an independent learning process, lack of human resources (teachers). Many teachers are not professional and reliable, or qualified to teach their students, and they have limited land. Finally, when asked about what hope she has in regard to the condition of her pesantren, she gave several points. Hoping the pesantren to progress and develop and will be recognized by the community. She wants to provide comfort for students as well as parents, of course, in terms of the welfare and well-being of students at Islamic boarding schools, such as

providing and facilitating students with good infrastructure. Also, she wants to bring up the pesantren and introduce it internationally to be able to apply the modern Islamic boarding school system as well as traditional, improving the business of pesantren and also the pesantren economy so that later it will provide many benefits for the pesantren community and society.

Participant 7: Atika

When she asked about the characteristics of leadership that are being applied, she replied: "Our leadership is traditional leadership in the nature of social cooperation and community service cooperation; that is how do we instill faith in the workers, in their subordinates, and in the administrators of the pesantren, To believe in Allah and all his gifts. To serve with sincerity that will be given blessings from Allah. Islamic boarding schools are social institutions. So, the pay is very little. Because the pesantren's own income is small, we need social workers who are dedicated. How to get them to work? Yes, we have to establish a relationship with their social relations by explaining to them how great the power of a job is and the blessings on it will produce people who sincerely work for the people, nation, and state. God will give us that blessing. Moreover, we instill the principle of living together like with family, not like with workers. The principle of compassion, the principle of love. With the growing sense of love, eventually, the desire to serve and to work with sincerity grows. And we consider them like brothers, our own children, not someone else. Not the employer to the workers. Mutual understanding, mutual assistance. I often help the servants and vice versa. With the formation of a life of mutual love and respect and then helping each other, a leadership relationship is formed, as is the relationship between parents to children and teachers to students, not bosses to their subordinates. So social relations and love relations." Furthermore, when she asked about what is the motivation to struggle so far, she answered, "I want to be a useful human. So that our children are useful and have a bright future, Islamic boarding schools should not become Islamic boarding schools that we have worked hard to build but have not run. Mainly we want to have a future in this world and the hereafter by applying our knowledge to students. Moreover, we want to have a meaningful life like the general public. This means that I fought in the pesantren to fight for my own families.".

However, in regard to the management style, she said that she is using traditional management. "Traditional management. Not that like the professionals. But as we manage as a family. Start with managing finances so that you don't fall into debt, and we give

people who help us even in a perfunctory way. In terms of management, we are still traditional and unprofessional because we do not have modern management sciences. Like I manage the people in my house. The most important thing is to work a lot, pray a lot, worship, and share and do good to others.". In addition to that, when asked what the situations from the past and present that she was and is facing, she replied: "So many. Particularly the lack of teachers and the lack of caretakers. So, I personally have to educate cadres of caregivers and educators so they can care for the students and supervise and teach them, students. When the senior students have been at the pesantren for a long time, of course, they will return to their respective hometowns. Their return presented certain challenges. Finally, when asked about her motivation and hopes to keep leading the pesantren, she stated, "I want to be a human whose usefulness is eternal, with the charity that continues to multiply and is useful for the general public. With the hope that I have, I hope that they, the people I educate, become leaders in their respective environments. That way, I can be useful for religion, nation, and state.".

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings indicate that the participants faced a range of barriers, including patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community. However, despite these barriers, the participants were able to overcome them and successfully become leaders in pesantren through a range of strategies, including utilizing their agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms. These findings highlight the importance of understanding the barriers that women leaders face in order to promote gender equality in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and other similar contexts. Additionally, these findings can be used to inform policy and practice aimed at increasing the participation of women in leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools, as well as other patriarchal institutions.

The findings of this study align with the theoretical framework of feminist theory, which posits that gender inequality is a social construct that can be dismantled through collective action (S. Harding, 1987) The participants in this study reported facing barriers such as patriarchal attitudes and policies in their pursuit of leadership roles in Islamic boarding schools. Feminist theory also highlights the importance of understanding the ways in which patriarchal systems intersect with other forms of oppression, such as poverty and lack of access to education, in shaping women's experiences, which is evident in the participants' experiences.

Additionally, the findings of this study align with the theoretical framework of Intersectionality, as outlined by (Crenshaw, 2013) which emphasizes the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect and compound to create unique experiences for marginalized individuals. The participants in this study reported facing multiple forms of barriers, including patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community, which intersected to create the unique challenges they faced as women leaders in Islamic boarding schools.

Furthermore, the findings of this study align with the theoretical framework of agency, as outlined by (Kabeer, 2005), which emphasizes the ability of individuals to make choices and take action to improve their own lives and the lives of others. The participants in this study reported utilizing their agency to overcome the barriers they faced through strategies such as working hard to improve the quality of education, reaching out to mentors and allies, and actively working to change the attitudes and policies within pesantren.

In conclusion, this study highlights the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and the strategies they have used to overcome the barriers they face. The findings of this study have implications for promoting gender equality in Islamic boarding schools and similar patriarchal institutions and can inform policy and practice aimed at increasing the participation of women in leadership roles.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the experiences of women leaders in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and to identify the factors that have enabled them to overcome the barriers that have traditionally limited the participation of women in leadership roles in these institutions. Through a qualitative case study design, in-depth interviews were conducted with seven (7) participants, and the findings revealed that the participants faced a range of barriers, including patriarchal attitudes, lack of access to education, and lack of support from family and community. However, despite these barriers, the participants were able to overcome them and successfully become leaders in pesantren through utilizing their agency, building networks of support, and challenging patriarchal norms.

The findings of this study have important implications for promoting gender equality in Islamic boarding schools and similar patriarchal institutions. This research highlights the need to challenge patriarchal attitudes and policies and to provide women with access to education and support networks. Additionally, this research also emphasizes the need to

recognize and address the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect and compound to create unique challenges for marginalized individuals, particularly women leaders in Islamic boarding schools.

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