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Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's Leadership in Islamic Boarding School Development

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Abstrak

Sosok Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad mampu menjawab pandangan diskriminatif terhadap perempuan yang tidak bisa menjadi pemimpin. Nyai bisa menjadi pengasuh dan mempunyai keahlian penuh dalam pengembangan pesantren. Nyai mampu membawa pesantrennya melewati arus perubahan dan modernisasi yang pesat. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mendeskripsikan peran kepemimpinan Nyai sebagai influencer dan peran kepemimpinan Nyai sebagai pengambil kebijakan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif, dengan jenis studi kasus dan desain fenomenologis. Analisis data menggunakan deskriptif interaktif dengan model Miles Huberman dan Saldana. Temuan penelitian ini adalah peran kepemimpinan Nyai adalah: 1) Sebagai pemberi pengaruh dalam pengembangan pondok pesantren, dilakukan dengan cara: (a) keteladanan, (b) keimanan dalam bidang agama (kitab kuning), (c) kepemimpinan transformatif, (d) kekuatan spiritual. 2) Sebagai pengambil kebijakan, mengacu pada: (a) dasar musyawarah, (b) dasar tabayyun, (c) dasar rasionalitas dan intuitif

Keywords: *Kepemimpinan Perempuan, Pesantren, Mahmudah Ahmad*

Abstract

The figure of Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad can answer the skewed perspective regarding women as leaders. Nyai can become caregivers and have full expertise in Islamic boarding school development. Nyai was able to take her Islamic boarding school through the rapid currents of change and modernization. The aims of this research are: to describe Nyai's leadership role as an influencer and to describe her leadership role as a policy maker. This

research uses a qualitative research approach, with a case study type and phenomenological design. Data analysis uses interactive descriptive with the Miles Huberman and Saldana model. The findings of this research are that Nyai's leadership role is: 1) As an influencer in the development of Islamic boarding schools, carried out by: (a) example, (b) faith in the field of religion (kitab kuning), (c) transformative leadership, (d) strength spiritual. 2) As a policy maker, referring to: (a) deliberation basis, (b) tabayyun basis, (c) rationality and intuitive basis

Keywords: *Women's Leadership, Pesantren, Mahmudah Ahmad*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the attitude of influencing other people to achieve their ideal goals. Leadership can be understood as the fundamental way for the functioning of an organization, in which goals have been chosen and will be achieved. The presence of a leader is like the presence of a captain and pilot for a ship or airplane, where their presence is very important and fundamental for achieving a goal. Suhendar said, "The existence of a leader in an educational institution will directly influence organizational culture and teacher work motivation (Azizah, 2022)." Koonz said, "Leadership has become a substantial thing in the management chain." this is due to effective leadership, which will result in effective management as well (Kasful, 2015).

Talking about leadership also involves discussions around gender issues. Even though leadership is considered a universal right for every individual, discussions about leadership are often influenced by gender perspectives. According to Iskandar, the concept of gender can be interpreted as attributes that are culturally formed in men and women, distinguishing the structure of social life based on gender differences (Iskandar & Widyastri, 2020). Julia Cleves Mosse, as quoted by Saleh explains that gender, as a social analysis concept, refers to a series of traits, roles, responsibilities, functions, rights and behaviors inherent in men and women as a result of the culture that forms them (Saleh & Satriawan, 2020).

Gender can be interpreted as an analytical concept used to explain various aspects, for example, the concept of gender equality, which reflects efforts to create equal conditions between men and women in obtaining rights and opportunities as human beings (Ilyas et al., 2019). Gender equality is fought for so that all individuals have the same opportunity to participate in various sectors such as politics, law, economics, social

culture, education, defense, and national security. In this context, women often face gender inequality as a reality that must be faced in various domains, both public and private, domestic-reproductive and productive (Hayat, 2021; Muzayanah, 2020).

Women's leadership from an Islamic perspective (based on the Qur'an and Hadith) often causes underthinking and overthinking, as is the case in the QS. Bait An-Nisa 34. Women's leadership in Islam covers leadership issues in two domains, namely domestic and general (Wekke et al., 2019). In Islam, there are two opposing views when analyzing the phenomenon of female leadership, as in the verse above: 1) the conservative view, which does not accept female leadership. However, women are still considered the same as men. Second, the pioneering views of educated people tended to be Westernized (*Western-oriented scholars*) and rejected the perspective of classical Islamic literature. According to this view, the view of women's leadership is more humanistic. Every right that men have is equal to women's rights.

As individuals who together fulfill the obligations of the caliphate, humans are sent by Allah to always help each other (Muhammad & Sari, 2021). Women and men play similar social roles and obligations. This seems reasonable because the implementation of the caliphate is not only imposed on men but also women. Women's issues and politics are two things that cannot be combined, especially in developing countries. This is because society has shaped people, emphasizing that their position revolves around the family environment, dealing with children and husbands, cooking, etc. Such an assumption is still inherent among the general public, which has a " patriarchal " structure (Trinova et al., 2022).

Regarding Indonesia, the historical background of women's development actually began with the holding of the main Indonesian Women's Congress in Yogyakarta in 1928 (Kadir & Rama, 2023). This Congress was the energy of the Indonesian women's struggle. Even before that, most history books stated that the beginning of women's development was Kartini's struggle (1904).

Some previous research written by I Wayan Budiarta in 2022 entitled *Women's Leadership in the Purusa Kinship System: The Historical Legitimacy of Women's Political Leadership* . The results of this research indicate that historical records reflect the evolution of women's roles in the public sphere of female leadership in the midst of the karet ka

purusa culture, which is related to the values of equality between women and men (Budiarta, 2022).

Furthermore, research by Aulia Hanadita Balkis in 2020 examined the Leadership Style of Women in Public Agencies: Case Study of Susi Pudjiastuti. The research results show that gender factors do not influence a person's leadership abilities. For example, Susi Pudjiastuti, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, uses a transformational leadership style. Despite his masculinity, he can create programs that provide broad benefits in various sectors.

In contrast to the research above, which examines women's leadership styles and women's leadership in the political realm, this research examines the leadership carried out by Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad, which occurred at the Mukhtar Syafaat Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School. This Pesantren is led by a Nyai who is no less developed than the leader of other Pesantren, most of which are led by a kiai. This shows that Nyai also has excellent potential to lead as a Kiai. Several elements, including the death of Kiai at the Pesantren, caused Nyai's leadership (Anggraeni et al., 2023). As happened at the Mukhtar Syafaat Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School. Due to the death of the Kiai at this Islamic boarding school, the highest leadership role at the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School was led by Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad.

This research examines the role of Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad in the development of the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School to develop the quality of education and the quality of Islamic Boarding School graduates to meet the demands of *stakeholders*. This research departs from the uniqueness of Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership. *First*, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership at the Mukhtar Syafa'at Islamic Boarding School has proven to survive and achieved impressive achievements in facing various development challenges. This Islamic boarding school has managed to survive and has even become a reference for the people of Banyuwangi and its surroundings in the context of quality education. This success is reflected in several achievements, both in the academic and non-academic fields. *Second*, there is a harmonious relationship between the community and Islamic boarding schools, which is not limited to the education sector alone but also involves broad community empowerment, including economic, social, and

political aspects (Halomoan et al., 2023). Nyai established cooperatives and various business units involving community leaders as a form of economic empowerment. From a social perspective, Nyai is recognized by the community as a figure who provides valuable advice and is a role model for those around her. Meanwhile, from a political perspective, Nyai also plays a role in determining the direction of regional development policies. *Third*, after the kiai's death, Nyai demonstrated her ability to continue the struggle and development at the Islamic boarding school. Nyai was able to inherit and continue the vision and mission that had been laid previously, ensuring the Islamic boarding school remained relevant and made a positive contribution to society and the environment. It is proven that Islamic boarding schools are getting bigger, and the number of students and buildings is increasing.

Hersey & Blanchard identified four different leadership styles : 1). *Directing Style* : This style is characterized by a leader who provides specific instructions and supervises closely the completion of tasks. This leadership pattern is effective for subordinates who have low performance but have high commitment (readiness level). 2). *Coaching Style* : In this style , the leader encourages two-way communication, builds confidence and motivation among employees. Leaders remain concerned and monitor decisions and provide support for requests for advice from subordinates. This style is suitable for situations where subordinates need guidance and support. 3). *Supporting Style* : Leaders and subordinates maintain close communication, and more support is given than specific instructions, especially for subordinates who have a poor level of commitment. Leaders with this style provide facilities and support subordinates' efforts towards completing their tasks. 4). *Delegating Style* : This style is suitable for leaders whose subordinates are ready to complete specific tasks. Leaders provide full attention and motivation, and hand over more decision making and responsibility to subordinates. This style is suitable for situations where subordinates have a high level of maturity.(Jaenullah et al., 2022)

Yuri explains that situational leadership is related to the maturity level of subordinates and the appropriate leadership style. This reflects leadership adaptation to the situation and needs of subordinates to achieve desired goals (Yuri et al., 2023). As stated by Zamakhsyari Dhofier, the charisma of a figure in an Islamic boarding school is determined by several factors: heredity, breadth of knowledge, and devotion to worship. In practical terms, Islamic boarding school leaders are responsible for managing and

managing the Islamic boarding school, but also as teachers and spiritual guides as well as being good examples and informal leaders for the surrounding area (Anggraeni et al., 2023).

Dr. Bahai al-Khauili Sahal said that a woman also has rights, privileges, and commitments, has deep specialties and high abilities, and has social authority, body, and other things. In another article entitled "Islam and Women's Reproductive Rights: A Fiqh Perspective", Sahal said that Islam strictly protects women's regenerative rights. As far as pregnancy and birth, Islam sees compassion for women as eternal, especially during childbirth (Muafiah et al., 2022). There is certainly not a single verse of the Qur'an that describes a humanitarian event as important as the passage about pregnancy and birth. The funny thing is that many fathers (men) don't know about such a significant weight gain. Fathers never immediately develop the same conceptual weight as mothers. This difficult effort makes Islamic law suitable for placing such importance on women (Muafiah et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The approach in this research is qualitative research. Meanwhile, this research type is a case study with a phenomenological approach (Ramadhan & Usriyah, 2021). Informants in this research include Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad, foundation administrators, ustadz/ustadzah, and Islamic boarding school students, who are actors in women's leadership in the development of the Mukhtar Syafaat Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School to obtain data in accordance with focus 1). Nyai's leadership role as an influencer 2). Nyai's leadership role as a policy maker in developing the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school. Data *collection* procedures *are* divided into 4 basic types, namely interviews, observation, documentation, and photography (*audio and visual material*). The data analysis used in this research is in accordance with the interaction model according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Nyai's Leadership Role as an Influencer in Islamic Boarding School Development

The PP Mukhtar Syafa'at Islamic Boarding School was founded in 1990. Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad was given the mandate as chairman of the foundation. This order encouraged him to move forward in laying the foundations of formal education. Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad effectively spoke with the PP caregivers (Nyai). Mukhtar Syafa'at, her husband. This merger received a positive response from Nyai, and it was recommended that many capable human resources in their fields be involved. Due to limited human resources, a formal educational institution was finally chosen to start learning for the children.

Identifying Nyai in developing educational institutions is carried out at three primary levels of duties: chairman, deputy chairman, and teacher. It is in these two scopes that the identification process is carried out. These three extensions are to see the ability level that Nyai mobilizes in developing her Islamic boarding school educational institutions. Concerning these four test areas, it is an approach to estimate unique characteristics driven by Nyai's subordinates. It is thoroughly stated that *first*, the crime scene test area. This field should measure subordinates' abilities in their rational cognitive aspects. At the test stage, several questions regarding the abilities raised are related to their essential thinking abilities. *Second*, the integrity test area. This integrity test is a nonsense and in-depth test. This test is intended to measure subordinates' abilities in terms of work attitudes and commitment to carrying out their obligations. In this test, the structure of this matter is related to how subordinates position personal interests with the public interests that need to be achieved by the PP. Mukhtar Syafa'at. *Third*, the field of management tests. This area is the process of identifying the management knowledge capabilities of prospective subordinates. This test is intended to measure the ability of subordinates in their management progress when they are given the mandate to manage an educational institution. In this variation, some of the questions are administrative or managerial science questions. It is hoped that the direction of the questions given will provide results in identifying the abilities of subordinates in the field of administrative or managerial science as a provision for the progress of the Islamic boarding school.

In Islamic boarding school development activities, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership role has an impact both in the field of formal education and in the field of Islamic boarding schools. This strong influence is not solely due to her position as chairman of the foundation, but also due to the charisma and individual figure of the nyai as a pious caregiver in the field of yellow books and an expert in da'i who is embraced by the local Islamic boarding school environment. Several things related to what can be respected and imitated from Nyai Mahmudah, namely, her wisdom, *istiqomah* in worship, da'iyah management, and discipline in all aspects.

All thoughts and ideas raised by each field are discussed and discussed within the context and framework of Nyai's thinking. For this situation, all thoughts and thoughts at the institutional level will not be able and try to resolve before discussing it with Nyai.



Figure 1.1
Activities of the Monthly Meeting of the Mukhtar Syafaat Foundation Management

Nyai's role as a provider of strength at the Muhtar Syafa'at Tegalsari Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school occurs in situational conditions, as in the ideas of Hersey and Blanchard. Based on findings in the field, in the context of identifying the motivation of her subordinates in the early stages of establishing Islamic boarding school educational institutions, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad identified through understanding the motivation of her subordinates' daily actions.

At the post-establishment stage of educational institution development, identification is carried out in a formal, organized, and even measurable manner. Three competencies are the basis for assessing and selecting the head of each established educational institution. This process is carried out more professionally and measurably.

Mohammad Mashudi explained that the identification of vocational school management competencies was carried out by a professional team formed by Nyai, including quantitative competency evaluation and skills of educators and education staff.

Nyai identified the development of educational institutions in three structural scopes: principals, deputy principals, and teachers. These two scopes are identified to measure the extent of subordinate competence in developing Islamic boarding school educational institutions. In this context, four test areas are applied: the reasoning ability test (TKP), integrity test, management test, and ability test to develop Islamic boarding school educational institutions. The selection of Nyai leadership in developing educational institutions is carried out using these three test areas to measure subordinates' quality and abilities. This includes reasoning ability tests to measure rational cognition, integrity tests to analyze seriousness and emotionality, and management tests to identify potential subordinates' management knowledge.

This identification process is expected to provide a strong basis for developing Islamic boarding school educational institutions. By looking at the abilities of these subordinates, Nyai behaves according to her abilities according to Hersey and Bancerd's theory: 1) *Telling* (high task and low relationship), this leadership style tends to give many specific work orders (instructions) and supervise subordinates' work carefully; 2) *Selling* (high task and high relationship), this style tends to explain the decisions the leader has made and allow subordinates to understand (exploring). In this case, the leader still directs and supervises subordinates in completing tasks; 3) *Participating* (low task and high relationship); this style allows subordinates to exchange opinions and participate in decision-making. Leaders also encourage employees to complete tasks; 4) *Delegating* (low task and low relationship), this style tends to delegate responsibility, make decisions, and implement work for subordinates. (Saleh & Satriawan, 2020)

In Islamic boarding school development activities, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership role has a strong structural influence both in the fields of formal education and Islamic boarding schools. This influence does not only come from her position as chairman of the foundation but is also influenced by Nyai's charisma and personal figure as a caretaker who is pious in the field of yellow books and an expert in da'ie, which is recognized by the entire Islamic boarding school community. The impact typology in question will follow what happens (development) of subordinates in relation to assignment

behavior and relationship behavior. Moreover, Nyai's leadership in this situation also works according to Hersey and Blanchard's theory of leadership, which offers a performance behavior orientation approach following changes in conditions or situations.

Nyai's duties as an influencer in the progress of Islamic boarding schools can be traced as follows: 1). Exemplary. According to the facts on the ground regarding the role of Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad, both are very constant and steady and have a high obligation for the progress of the Islamic boarding school; this can be seen from their struggle since the beginning of the Islamic boarding school's founding. The results of these findings align with Hidayatullah's opinion, explains that to be a role model, someone must have at least three elements, namely: a). Readiness to be assessed and evaluated means having a readiness to be a mirror both for oneself and others. This condition will influence social life because one's words, attitudes, and behavior become a spotlight and example. b). Have Minimum Competencies. The competence in question is the minimum condition of words, attitudes, and behavior that must be possessed to be a good mirror for himself and others. A teacher needs minimum competency as an educator to instill and create role models, especially for their students. c). Having moral integrity, integrity refers to harmony between words and actions. The essence of integrity lies in the quality of *istiqomah*, which includes commitment and consistency towards the profession. Moral integrity is essential for forming exemplary behavior (Muafiah et al., 2022).

From the three elements above, it can be concluded that exemplary behavior is commendable and should be used as an example by others. Exemplary involves cultivating morals by respecting words, attitudes, and behavior so others can follow them. The three main elements that form the basis of exemplary behavior are readiness to be assessed and evaluated, having minimum competence, and having moral integrity. 2). Piety in the Field of Religion. Knowledge is so important that it is not uncommon for individuals who know to be able to get a high and good place at the side of the creator and the creatures. "Allah will raise the rank of those who believe and have knowledge among you several degrees..." (QS Al-Mujjadi (58): 11). But on the contrary, if a stupid person had as many good deeds and virtues in the morning and evening as the number of grains of sand, then in the end he would tend not to be able to maintain them even if they were only the weight of a mustard seed." Some asked, "How could that happen?" He answered, "Indeed, if an

intelligent person slips up, he immediately realizes it by repenting and using the intelligence given to him. 3). Inspirational. Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad is an active leadership figure in several religious organizations. Besides her busy life as an Islamic boarding school guardian and coordinator, she is also a strong da'iyah. She is a speaker in the local framework of thought in the Islamic boarding school area. She provides recitation activities online for TKW in Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and other countries. Different Things like this motivate women from various backgrounds. The characteristics of inspirational people are continuous learning, competence, sincerity, spirituality, and totality. With totality, a teacher will have maximum energy to educate its students. "Whatever field you are studying, immerse yourself in it. Build a neurosensory connection *with* as many of your senses and imagination as possible.(Iskandar & Widyastri, 2020)

The Leadership Role of Nyai as Policy Makers in Islamic Boarding School Development.

Nyai's duties as a policy maker are generally situational and consider the circumstances. There are two policy typologies taken by Nyai. First, regarding the strategy, the extent to which the options taken will be discussed and deliberated at regular meetings held by the foundation, for this situation the focus of the approach taken by Nyai is clearly visible. Despite her role as a leader, in formulating policies related to the development of Islamic boarding school institutions, Nyai generally still prioritizes a culture of deliberation in making policies.

Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's approach was created in the management and development of the Mukhtar Syafaat Islamic boarding school which emphasizes examples of deliberative policies as seen in the documentation:



Figure 1.2
Deliberation Policy in Resolving Student Disciplinary



Figure 1.3
Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad Gives Speech to Santri

This describes Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership role as a policy maker in improving the Mukhtar Syafaat Islamic boarding school. Nyai's role as a policy maker in developing Islamic boarding schools can be seen as follows: 1). Deliberation. Concerning policies in the Islamic boarding school environment, they are usually developed to achieve generally acceptable results between caregivers, administrators, administrators, and students. Basically, the approach taken by Nyai is seen as the main benchmark for the performance of an Islamic boarding school leader. A leader will not just appear but will still go through a process. Making policies that will be expressed in a series of group activities is the right and obligation of the top leadership initiative in the form of authority and power that will be delegated. 2). Tabayyun. Nowadays, there are many advances in innovation in information technology and electronic technology. Throughout the day, from waking up to returning to rest, individuals are exposed to various information by different media. On radio and TV, it is broadcast live and reaches the room. Newspapers with different genres, since they opened their eyes, have presented a variety of different news. Starting from mild to suffocating. Outside the house, we are treated to leaflets, pamphlets, notices, and information scattered worldwide. While working, we hear news, issues, and gossip, including things not covered by the media. In connection with the current incident, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad continuously carries out *tabayyun* or advice through lectures, briefings, lessons in the study room, regular meetings, and with online

media. For this situation, Nyai's second objective is explicit to the local area of the pesantren and the broader local area so that they are not easily affected by current conditions where innovation is part of life. Not to mention, the web provides formal and standard data but also data without convention and without even knowing the personality. Even in artistic performances, whether on the big screen, small screen, or on stage, data cannot be separated from being determined to influence or disrupt the audience's personality. Regarding cases that are currently widespread, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad consistently carries out *tabayyun* or advice given through strict lectures, briefings, classroom learning, meetings, and through the media, both electronic and print media. For this situation, Nyai's second objective is explicit to the local area of the pesantren and broader local area so that they are not easily influenced by the ongoing situation, where innovation is important for their lives. 3). Based on Rationality and Intuitiveness. The policy and decision-making carried out by Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad is the essential basis of rationality and intuition, for which these two foundations are used because rationality is very strong in making decisions, so it is based on conviction. For this situation, the two Nyai used an *istikharah* approach by asking Allah for guidance so that their choices were valuable and effective in the progress of the Islamic boarding school.

Implications of Nyai Mahmudaah Ahmad's Leadership for Islamic Boarding School Education

Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership role as an influencer in the development of the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School can be explained using the Hersey & Blanchard concept, where her role capacity takes place in situational conditions. It is difficult to determine whether its influence is more dominant than the development of Islamic boarding schools. At this stage, the typology of influence applied follows the subordinate's maturity situation based on the correlation of task behavior and relationship behavior. 1) *Directing Style* (Direct): Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad uses this style when giving specific instructions and closely supervising the completion of tasks. At this stage, leadership provides clear direction to ensure tasks are carried out well. 2) *Coaching Style* (Coaching): At this stage, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad encourages two-way communication, builds self-confidence, and provides motivation to subordinates. This leadership style focuses on developing competence and caring about decisions and asking for suggestions from subordinates. 3) *Supporting Style*: Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad uses this style to

maintain communication and provide support, especially to subordinates whose commitment may be less strong. This leadership style emphasizes a more collaborative and supportive approach. 4) *Delegating Style* (Delegating): This leadership style is chosen when subordinates are ready to complete specific tasks. Nyai provides attention and motivation and delegates more decision-making and responsibility to subordinates (Hayat, 2021).

By using the Hersey & Blanchard concept, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad carries out her role according to situational needs in the development of Islamic boarding schools. His leadership style adapts to the maturity level of his subordinates, ensuring that his influence supports the development of the pesantren effectively. Based on findings in the field, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's role as an influencer is firstly exemplary, secondly wisdom in the field of religious knowledge (the yellow book), thirdly inspirational, and fourthly spiritual strength.

Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership role as a policy maker in the development of the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School. *First*, a deliberation-based approach is the main basis for decision making and policy formulation by Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad. The main aim is to find formulations regarding decisions or policies that will be taken and ratified, with the hope that they can be followed and adhered to together to achieve the Islamic boarding school's vision and mission. *Second*, the *tabayyun approach*, especially in relations with the Islamic boarding school community and more generally with the wider community. The aim is so that they are not easily influenced by current conditions, especially in the context of technology which is an integral part of life today. *Tabayyun* is defined as the act of researching and investigating news to decide a problem. This approach involves carefully selecting information, whether related to legal, social, political, and so on, so that problems can be revealed clearly and no party is wronged or hurt. *Third*, Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad applies a rational and intuitive approach in decision making. Nyai recognizes that humans have inherent innate cognition, as long as they can engage in rational analytical decision making and policies. This selection ensures that the decisions taken are measurable and based on logical analysis.

Of the three bases for policy and decision making used by Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad, namely rationality and intuition, they were chosen because using just one base is not always effective in decision making. Therefore, the basis of rationality is strengthened by the basis of intuition. In the context of intuition, namely using the istikharah approach, by asking Allah for guidance so that the decisions taken are useful, appropriate and effective in developing the Islamic boarding school. This approach reflects policies based on spiritual values and beliefs, presenting a religious dimension in every step of decision making.

CONCLUSION

Considering the data analysis activities that have been carried out in depth, comprehensively and exploratoryly, the researcher draws conclusions regarding Nyai's role in leading the Mukhtar Syafaat Islamic boarding school: Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership as an influencer in the development of the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school is *the first* by example *second* piousness in the field of Religion (Kitab Kuning) *third* inspirational, *fourth* , spiritual strength. Nyai Mahmudah Ahmad's leadership as a policy maker in the development of the Mukhtar Syafa'at Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school is: *first* based on deliberation, *second* based on tabayyun, *third* based on rationality and intuitively based .

In a more in-depth study, it was revealed that women (Nyai) have leadership potential that is comparable to the ability to give directions, give speeches, give rhetoric and provide ideas, no less than the skills possessed by Kiai. This is clearly manifested at the Mukhtar Syafaat Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School which is led by a Nyai, showing that Nyai leadership has a parallel development with Kiai leadership in Islamic boarding schools in general.

The presence of Nyai as a female cleric who leads an Islamic boarding school can be considered a new phenomenon that is influenced by various factors. From an external perspective, the leadership of female ulama emerged as a response to modernization pressures which raised awareness among Islamic boarding schools regarding democracy, human rights, women's emancipation and feminism. Islamic boarding schools, naturally, respond to women's discourse and reexamine their traditional views which were previously opposed to the women's movement. Fiqh studies, which previously tended to

be gender biased, have also undergone critical correction within the Islamic boarding school environment itself.

Nyai's leadership in developing Islamic boarding schools needs to be adapted to the dynamics of current developments, without giving rise to a negative view of women's leadership. As humans whose job is to carry out leadership in line with God's mandate, both men and women are commanded to work together. Women and men have the same social roles and responsibilities. Nyai's ability is not only in providing teaching, but also requires knowledge in the field of leadership to manage the Islamic boarding school effectively, so that the Islamic boarding school remains relevant and in demand by the community.

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