

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP OF *MURABBIAH* IN GUIDING FEMALE SANTRI: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIORAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran kepemimpinan demokratis, khususnya yang dijalankan oleh *murabbiah* di lingkungan *ma'had*, dalam membimbing mahasantri perempuan yang berisiko terjerumus dalam lingkaran sosial negatif. Penelitian ini mengkaji tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasantri, termasuk kecanduan rokok dan pengaruh teman sebaya yang negatif, yang dapat mengancam nilai, iman, dan tujuan hidup mereka. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan demokratis yang diterapkan oleh *murabbiah* berhasil membangun komunikasi terbuka, suportif, dan empatik. Melalui interaksi yang persuasif namun penuh kasih, *murabbiah* mampu memotivasi mahasantri untuk menggali kembali potensi mereka dan menyelaraskan hidup dengan nilai-nilai agama dan moral yang positif. Temuan penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa kepemimpinan ini tidak hanya menyelesaikan masalah perilaku langsung, tetapi juga berkontribusi pada pengembangan holistik mahasantri dengan memperkuat karakter, spiritualitas, dan ketangguhan mereka. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang partisipatif dan penuh kasih sangat diperlukan untuk menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang kondusif dalam mendukung mahasantri membangun orientasi hidup yang positif dan bermakna.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Demokratis, *Murabbiah*, Santri, Nilai Moral, Gaya Kepemimpinan

Judul: Kepemimpinan Demokrasi *Murabbiah* dalam Membimbing Mahasantri Putri

Abstract: This study explored the role of democratic leadership, specifically as practiced by *murabbiah* within *ma'had* environments, in guiding female *santri* who were at risk of falling into negative social circles. The research examined the challenges faced by *santri*, including nicotine addiction and negative peer influence, which could threaten their values, faith, and sense of purpose. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study revealed that democratic leadership employed by *murabbiah* fostered open, supportive, and empathic communication. Through persuasive yet compassionate interactions, *murabbiah* were able to motivate *santri* to rediscover their potential and align their lives with positive religious and moral values. The findings indicated that such leadership not only addressed immediate behavioral issues but also contributed to the holistic development of the *santri* by strengthening their character, spirituality, and resilience. The study concludes that nurturing and participatory leadership is essential to create a conducive educational environment that supports *santri* in building a positive and meaningful life orientation.

Keywords: Democratic Leadership, *Murabbiah*, *Santri* Development, Moral Values, Leadership Styles



INTRODUCTION

The strategic development and empowerment of *santri* (students) must be continually adapted to align with the dynamic challenges of contemporary society. The demands of the present era necessitate a comprehensive rethinking of how *santri* are guided, especially in female dormitory environments, which are uniquely vulnerable to social and cultural shifts. Today, these challenges encompass not only the traditional aspects of religious and moral education but also extend to promoting mental health awareness, harnessing the benefits of digital technologies for education and communication, and embedding Islamic values within responses to broader global concerns, including environmental sustainability and gender equity. These areas of concern reflect an increasingly complex landscape in which *pesantren* must operate, requiring leaders to adopt more responsive and integrative strategies.

A growing body of literature has emphasized the need for a holistic and participatory approach in the leadership of Islamic educational institutions. Tohet and Hidayat, for instance, in their analysis of transformational leadership for enhancing educational quality within the perspective of symbolic interactionism, underscore the importance of leadership that is capable of inspiring, empowering, and adapting to the dynamic needs of learners and their communities.¹ Their findings point toward the critical role of leadership in fostering educational environments where students can thrive academically, morally, and socially. Similarly, Khofifah et al. have demonstrated the essential role of technology in enhancing the effectiveness of Islamic educational practices, underlining how digital platforms can be leveraged to support learning and facilitate positive behavioral change.² Furthermore, Triyono and Mediawati have examined how *pesantren* education can effectively transmit Islamic values to shape *santri* character, highlighting the significance of a value-based educational approach that goes beyond rote learning.³ These collective contributions illustrate an emerging recognition of the importance of integrating transformative and participatory leadership practices to cultivate *santri* who are resilient, morally grounded, and socially aware.

Nevertheless, despite these valuable insights, significant gaps remain in applying effective leadership frameworks to address pressing social challenges faced by *santri*, particularly within the female dormitory setting. This is evident in the case of *mabna K* at Ma'had Sunan Ampel Al-Aly, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, where existing leadership strategies have faced obstacles in adequately responding to students' behavioral risks.

¹ Moch. Tohet and Taufik Hidayat, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Interaksionalisme Simbolik," *JiIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 2 (2023): 1184–91, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i2.1571>.

² Khoi Khoifah et al., "Peran Teknologi Dalam Meningkatkan Efektivitas Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Al-Afhan* 4, no. 2 (2024): 218–23.

³ Bambang Triyono and Elis Mediawati, "Transformasi Nilai-Nilai Islam Melalui Pendidikan *pesantren*: Implementasi Dalam Pembentukan Karakter *santri*," *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 1 (2023): 147–58, <https://doi.org/10.62504/jimr403>.

Interviews conducted with the *murabbiah* of *mabna* K revealed their difficulties in mentoring female *santri* who have been exposed to negative peer influences, including behaviors such as smoking and social interactions deemed inappropriate by dormitory standards. *Murabbiah* acknowledged the urgency of implementing more effective preventive strategies while simultaneously expressing a strong desire to increase student participation in dormitory decision-making processes. These findings point to the need for leadership approaches that not only address behavioral issues reactively but also empower *santri* to participate actively in shaping a healthy and supportive dormitory culture.

In response to these challenges, this study aims to fill the identified research gap by comprehensively analyzing the leadership strategies employed by the *murabbiah* of *mabna* K in managing issues of smoking addiction and negative social behaviors among female *santri*. This study is expected to make a significant scholarly contribution by developing a leadership model that combines personal mentoring approaches with democratic participation principles, thereby promoting more sustainable behavioral change among *santri*. Furthermore, this research will generate evidence-based recommendations for strengthening *santri* development programs that prioritize student participation, voice, and empowerment. Additionally, it will offer a nuanced understanding of the multidimensional factors that influence *santri* behavior in the modern *pesantren* environment, including social, cultural, and structural aspects that shape their daily experiences.

This research differs substantively from previous investigations, which have tended to concentrate on the general patterns of character education in *pesantren*, by focusing specifically on democratic leadership practices within a contemporary *pesantren* dormitory setting. Employing a qualitative research approach through in-depth interviews, this study is grounded in a theoretical framework that integrates transformational and participatory leadership perspectives. Such a framework is especially pertinent for addressing the multifaceted social problems emerging in modern female dormitories, where traditional top-down approaches may be insufficient.

The objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to identify the leadership strategies currently implemented by the *murabbiah* of *mabna* K in responding to social and behavioral issues among female *santri*; (2) to analyze the effectiveness of these leadership strategies, particularly in addressing smoking addiction and negative social interactions; and (3) to develop practical recommendations for enhancing future *santri* development strategies in female dormitory environments, based on participatory and empowering leadership practices.

By situating its analysis within the specific context of *mabna* K, applying a rigorous analytical approach, and adopting relevant leadership theories, this research extends the scope of existing studies and offers a fresh empirical perspective on an issue that has so far remained underexplored in academic literature. As such, the present study responds to a

contemporary and timely case that has not previously been systematically examined, thus providing critical insights into how democratic leadership approaches may correlate positively with reducing smoking behaviors among *santri* in the *mabna* K dormitory. This analysis will not only enrich the academic discourse on Islamic educational leadership but will also serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, dormitory managers, and educators seeking to strengthen *santri* character-building initiatives in modern *pesantren* settings.

METHOD

This study is designed to identify and explore the role of democratic leadership practices demonstrated by the *murabbiah* in guiding female *santri* who have become entangled in negative peer circles. To achieve this objective, the research adopts a qualitative approach that allows for a rich, in-depth exploration of social and behavioral dynamics within the *pesantren* environment. Data were primarily collected through semi-structured interviews and complemented by a systematic literature review.

The key informant in this study was the *murabbiah* from one of the female dormitories (*mabna*) at Ma'had Sunan Ampel Al-Aly, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The selection of the *murabbiah* as the primary source of information was based on their direct involvement and experience in mentoring female *santri*, particularly in addressing issues related to smoking behavior and negative social interactions. The interviews were guided by a flexible set of questions, allowing the researcher to probe more deeply into the participant's responses and to capture nuanced perspectives and contextual explanations relevant to the study objectives. This flexibility facilitated the emergence of unanticipated themes and insights, enriching the overall data quality.

In addition to interview data, this study also incorporated a thorough literature review as a secondary data source. This process involved systematically identifying, reading, annotating, and synthesizing relevant scholarly works, official reports, and institutional documents concerning leadership practices, character education, and youth behavioral issues in Islamic boarding school environments. This triangulated approach was intended to strengthen the validity and reliability of the research findings by corroborating interview insights with established literature.

The researcher formulated several key research questions that served as the basis for both the data collection process and the subsequent analysis, which will be elaborated further in the discussion section. First, what specific leadership strategies are being implemented by the *murabbiah* of *mabna* K? Second, how effective are these leadership strategies in mitigating smoking addiction and negative peer associations among the female *santri*? Third, what recommendations can be proposed for developing more effective, participatory character-building strategies in female dormitory settings?

By adopting this qualitative methodology, the research aims not only to document leadership practices as they occur but also to interpret their underlying meaning and implications within the wider sociocultural and educational context of modern *pesantren*. This approach is particularly suited to exploring complex, value-laden, and interpersonal phenomena such as leadership, empowerment, and behavioral change, which cannot be easily captured through quantitative measures alone.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings from interviews with a *murabbiah* at one of the female dormitories (*mabna*) in Ma'had Sunan Ampel Al-Aly, it emerged that two female *santri* were identified as being addicted to smoking and had become involved in negative peer circles outside the campus environment. This involvement contributed to a sense of spiritual doubt regarding divine guidance and the existence of Allah. Smoking itself, defined as the act of inhaling the smoke of rolled tobacco products wrapped in paper and then exhaling it into the environment, not only produces an unpleasant odor but also exposes bystanders to harmful secondhand smoke, posing significant health risks to both the smoker and those around them.⁴ Despite being widely recognized as a harmful behavior, some individuals, including those described by Suryawati and Gani, reported that smoking helps improve their mood under stress or emotional pressure.⁵ Others may initiate smoking simply out of curiosity about its sensory effects.⁶

The *murabbiah* explained that, in many cases, female *santri* do not actively choose to smoke but instead continue the behavior because they have become entangled in patterns of dependency within their peer groups.⁷ Responding to this complex challenge, the *murabbiah* implemented a persuasive and empathetic approach to establish rapport and trust with the affected students. She began by engaging them in casual conversations, encouraging them to share details of their daily routines, hobbies, and personal aspirations. Through this nonjudgmental and supportive dialogue, the *murabbiah* was able to gently uncover the underlying motivations and circumstances that had led to their current situation. Recognizing the social nature of their smoking habit, she sought to connect with them through shared, less risky interests — in this case, their habit of gathering in cafés — which then became an entry point for gradually introducing healthier perspectives and values. Over time, this process enabled the students to become more receptive to guidance, and they have since

⁴ Wanty Khaira and Mulia Mulia, "Pendekatan Gestalt Terhadap Perilaku Merokok," *Intelektualita* 12, no. 1 (2023): 89–98, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ji.v12i1.19259>.

⁵ Ida Suryawati and Abdul Gani, "Analisis Faktor Penyebab Perilaku Merokok," *Jurnal Keperawatan Silampari* 6, no. 1 (2022): 497–505, <https://doi.org/10.31539/jks.v6i1.3743>.

⁶ Putri Ayu and Muhammad Syukur, "Mahasiswi Perokok Di Kota Makassar," *Jurnal Sosialisasi Pendidikan Sosiologi-FIS UNM* 5, no. 2 (2018): 111–14, <http://ojs.unm.ac.id/sosialisasi/article/view/2376>.

maintained ongoing communication with the *murabbiah*, even if only through occasional, informal video calls.

Further details regarding the profile of these female *santri* smokers were corroborated by a *musyrifah* (senior *santri* supervisor) who also serves as part of the security division within the same *mabna*. Observations carried out by the security team confirmed the presence of two female *santri* involved in smoking, who had been formally reported and whose cases were subsequently addressed by the dormitory management. These incidents came to light in October 2024, highlighting the urgency of implementing more effective preventive and mentoring strategies to support *santri* in avoiding such behaviors.

The first female *santri*, identified by the initial N (aged 18), was initially discovered smoking when her roommate, who served as a *muharrimah* (motivator) within the dormitory, reported her behavior to a senior mentor who also oversaw security within the *mabna*. Her roommate had caught her smoking in front of the sports hall one afternoon after returning from language classes. At that time, she was seen smoking near a street vendor outside the building. According to her roommate, N had actually been addicted to smoking since she was a child and had been a consistent active smoker from an early age. Following a thorough investigation and cross-checking conducted by the *mabna*'s security team, it was revealed that N's smoking habit was strongly influenced by internal family factors. Her parents were both active smokers, and her home environment considered female smoking to be entirely acceptable and normalized.

While on campus, N commonly purchased cigarettes from a vendor located in one of the faculties, where the price was relatively affordable for students.⁷ She also acknowledged that she frequently smoked in front of her home when returning on breaks, considering this to be a completely ordinary practice within her community. Usman's research supports this notion, arguing that smoking among women is not necessarily viewed as a social taboo, as seen in cultural groups such as the Tengger community, where women have practiced smoking since their ancestors' time without perceiving it as a violation of norms.⁸

Environmental factors, particularly family upbringing as the smallest unit of socialization, exert a profound influence on a child's character formation. In N's case, her family environment emerged as a critical internal factor shaping her smoking behavior. She explained that one motivation for smoking was a longing for special attention from her family, whom she described as religiously uninvolved and lacking in spiritual guidance. As a coping mechanism to distract herself from familial neglect and conflict, she turned to

⁷ Ayu and Syukur.

⁸ Ari Usman, "Makna Merokok Bagi Wanita: Studi Fenomenologi Pada Mahasiswi Perokok," *RESIPROKAL: Jurnal Riset Sosiologi Progresif Aktual* 6, no. 1 (2024): 38–51, <https://doi.org/10.29303/resiprokal.v6i1.451>.

smoking. This phenomenon is consistent with research showing that female students who become smokers often experience incomplete socialization processes during their formative play stage.⁹ Observing parents or role models who smoke, and seeing it as a normalized behavior, tends to become deeply ingrained in their subconscious and is later imitated. In social environments where permissive attitudes towards adolescent smoking prevail, the likelihood of maintaining such behavior is significantly strengthened.¹⁰

On the one hand, N expressed deep regret for her actions, acknowledging her awareness of both the short-term and long-term risks associated with smoking, not only for herself but also for others exposed to secondhand smoke. Consequently, when the security officers confiscated the evidence — several sticks of illicit cigarettes found in her bag — she did not object. She was also prepared to accept the consequences of violating a fundamental rule of the *mabna*, which strictly prohibits female *santri* from smoking. Following this, she received an *iqab* or disciplinary sanction, which included reciting Surah Al-Waqiah, delivering one hundred *shalawat*, and writing a letter of commitment not to repeat the offense. N then pledged not to engage in smoking again. Her roommate observed a noticeable positive change in N's behavior after the punishment was implemented, and since then, she has not been reported to have smoked again.

The second female *santri*, identified by the initial R (aged 18), resided in the same *mabna* as N but occupied a different room. R was suspected of being an active smoker following a staged investigation conducted by the *mabna* security team. The incident originated when several *santri* returned late to the *mabna* after attending a birthday celebration for one of their study programs. Although they were aware that the dormitory's gate would close at 10:00 p.m. local time, a number of students arrived after the curfew despite hurrying back. During this chaotic return, R was observed tripping while running in her long robe, and several cigarettes fell out of her pocket at the same time. A member of the security staff witnessed the event directly and was even able to record it on video.

Immediately, R was stopped and questioned before being allowed to re-enter the *mabna*. During the security team's interrogation, she initially denied ownership of the cigarettes, claiming they actually belonged to a male friend who had accompanied her to the birthday gathering. Due to the absence of conclusive evidence to verify her story, the *mabna's* security staff decided to impose a heavy *iqab* penalty on her. In response, R attempted to negotiate by calling the friend in question and asking him to come to the *mabna* immediately to clarify the situation. After a period of waiting, the friend arrived and admitted that the cigarettes were

⁹ Wahyu Ningsih and Abdul Haris F, "Faktor Penyebab Mahasiswa Merokok Dikalangan Fis Universitas Negeri Jakarta," no. 2 (2024).

¹⁰ Usman, "Makna Merokok Bagi Wanita: Studi Fenomenologi Pada Mahasiswa Perokok."

indeed his, and retrieved them on the spot. As a result, R was absolved of the accusation of being an active smoker.

Not long after these events, another female *santri* reported experiencing shortness of breath due to exposure to cigarette smoke originating from her roommate. She eventually gathered the courage to inform her father about the problem, who subsequently escalated the complaint to the dormitory's student affairs management. Following a thorough investigation, the individual responsible was identified as R. She was then summoned before the security team, where she admitted to being an active smoker and confessed to having smoked inside her dormitory room on several occasions. During the subsequent room inspection, security staff discovered several cigarette butts as corroborating evidence, which led to the immediate imposition of disciplinary sanctions against her.¹¹

the need to gain acceptance within a friendship circle often compels individuals to engage in behaviors they might otherwise avoid. The higher the degree of conformity, the greater the likelihood of smoking behavior.¹² Ultimately, the incident was only uncovered after her roommate experienced acute breathing difficulties, prompting the entire situation to be revealed. As a consequence of her misconduct, R received a severe *iqab* (disciplinary punishment).

The steps taken by the *murabbiah* (female mentor) and *musyrifah* (female supervisor) in resolving this case were considered appropriate and effective. They adopted a democratic approach aimed not only at sanctioning but also at creating a deterrent effect so the violator would not repeat the offense. The application of democratic leadership within the *mabna* (dormitory) environment demonstrates that leadership goes beyond merely issuing orders or directives; it also involves fostering solidarity and cultivating mutual trust among members. For any institutional leader, possessing skills in empathy, communication, and the ability to understand the aspirations and needs of those being led is essential.

A *murabbiah* with a democratic leadership style embodies the principle that a leader is responsible not only for managing herself but also for guiding and motivating others. Moreover, one of the challenges of leadership is to serve as a role model in upholding justice, promoting collective consultation (*musyawarah*), and creating a harmonious environment for all members.¹³

¹¹ Anik Sunariyati Siswoyo, Umi Dayati, and Muh. Ishom Ihsan, "Kontrol Diri Wanita Terhadap Keinginan Merokok," *Jurnal Pembelajaran, Bimbingan, Dan Pengelolaan Pendidikan* 1, no. 9 (2021): 778–83, <https://doi.org/10.17977/um065v1i92021p778-783>.

¹² Khaira and Mulia, "Pendekatan Gestalt Terhadap Perilaku Merokok."

¹³ Faiqoh Ghonim and M Imamul Muttaqin, "Implementasi Kepemimpinan Berbasis Nilai Budaya Islam Dan Budaya Lokal Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang , Indonesia Menciptakan Pemimpin Yang Efektif , Tetapi Juga Untuk Menjaga Dan Memperkuat Kohesi Banyak Peluang Dalam Menciptakan P," 2024.

Democratic Leadership of *Murabbiah* in Guiding Female Santri

Leadership represents the ability to influence and direct individuals or groups toward the achievement of shared goals. A leader must possess skills aligned with the needs of their group and be able to utilize these skills effectively to guide and motivate members toward desired outcomes. Leadership is also viewed as an art of fostering cooperation, in which a leader employs their capabilities to encourage and persuade others to act in accordance with collectively agreed-upon objectives. Consequently, a leader plays a critical role in determining the direction and success of a group or organization through the influence and motivation exerted on its members. Furthermore, leadership is a competency possessed by an individual that is shaped by various factors, including internal personal qualities as well as influences from the surrounding environment. It further reflects an individual's ability to shape the behavior of others, regardless of whether those others occupy higher or lower positions within a hierarchy, to achieve common goals.¹⁴

Etymologically, the term 'leadership' derives from the word 'to lead', which in its essence refers to guiding, developing, directing, and serving as an example. A leader, therefore, is an individual entrusted with the responsibility of leading, while leadership itself constitutes the talent or characteristic that must be inherent in that leader. In this sense, leadership can be interpreted as the capacity to influence others within a group or organization in order to achieve specified objectives.¹⁵

Leadership may also be conceptualized as a process whereby a leader influences and serves as a role model for followers in order to accomplish organizational objectives. Leadership encompasses the art of guiding and motivating individuals to collaborate harmoniously with trust and dedication. This capability involves exerting influence, providing motivation, and offering direction to individuals or groups so as to achieve the intended results. In practice, leadership involves three essential elements: the leader, the followers, and the situational context, which together shape the dynamic nature of leadership interactions.¹⁶

Leadership can be manifested through various dimensions, including individual traits and behaviors, the capacity to influence others, as well as patterns of interaction within an organization. Furthermore, leadership reflects a collaborative relationship among differing roles, strategic executive positions, persuasive ability, and legitimacy in influencing others.

¹⁴ Dr. Wendy Sepmady Hutahaeen, "Filsafat Dan Teori Kepemimpinan (Dr. Wendy Sepmady Hutahaeen, S.E., M.Th.) (z-Lib.Org).Pdf," 2021.

¹⁵ Ahmad Sulhan, *Teori Kepemimpinan Organisasi Dalam Pendidikan Islam*, TADBIR: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 2020, www.sanabil.web.id.

¹⁶ Encep Syarifudin, "Teori Kepemimpinan," *Alqalam* 21, no. 102 (2004): 459, <https://doi.org/10.32678/alqalam.v21i102.1644>.

This legitimacy is constructed on the basis of perceptions and trust developed within a working environment or community.¹⁷

According to Ordway Tead, leadership is defined as the activity of influencing people so that they are willing to work cooperatively to achieve desired objectives. Likewise, J.K. Hemphill and Coons conceptualize leadership as the behavior of an individual when directing the activities of a group toward achieving shared goals.¹⁸ In the view of Thoha, leadership represents efforts to influence the behavior of individuals or groups, and is considered an art of guiding people toward certain objectives. Within organizational life, leadership plays a pivotal role since the success or failure of an organization largely depends on the effectiveness of its leaders in making decisions, fostering collaboration, and mobilizing members to pursue the established vision.¹⁹

Sumantri argues that leadership is a social influence process whereby a manager encourages the voluntary participation of subordinates in order to accomplish organizational goals. A leader is not only responsible for steering the organization's path but also for defining its vision and the targets it seeks to achieve. Consequently, leadership holds an essential function in shaping the organization's image and reputation, as its success depends heavily on the leader's ability to inspire, manage, and energize team members.²⁰

According to Sundari and colleagues, leadership comprises the actions of individuals or groups in coordinating and directing organizational members to achieve predetermined objectives. A leader utilizes formal authority to organize, guide, and supervise subordinates so that their work aligns with the organizational vision. An effective leader is able to nurture the best potential within subordinates and encourage them to develop their capabilities independently. The ideal leader, therefore, is someone who is able to mentor others until they are able to function autonomously without being overly dependent on the leader's direct supervision.²¹

Leadership is characterized by distinct and specific attributes, which must be adapted to particular situations. Within a group that pursues certain objectives and activities, a leader's personal characteristics and qualities must align with the situational demands of that group. Therefore, an effective leader should possess core attributes that are accepted by the group,

¹⁷ (Jasmine, 2014)

¹⁸ Rahman Afandi, "Kepemimpinan Dalam Pendidikan Islam" 18, no. 40 (2013): 6.

¹⁹ Miftah Thoha, "Kepemimpinan Dan Manajemen, Devisi Buku Perguruan Tinggi," *Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada*, 2010.

²⁰ Rifki Ahda Sumantri, "Problematika Kepemimpinan Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal An'nur V*, no. 1 (2013): 144–63.

²¹ Ariefah Sundari, Ahmad Fathur Rozi, and Ahmad Yani Syaikhudin, *Kepemimpinan* (Lamongan: Academia Publication, 2022).

relevant to the circumstances at hand, and compatible with contemporary developments so that their leadership remains both influential and effective in achieving predetermined goals.²²

From these perspectives, it can be concluded that leadership reflects a leader's strategy for influencing subordinates through distinct characteristics in order to achieve desired objectives. The success of a leader largely depends on the leadership techniques applied in creating conditions that encourage subordinates' awareness and willingness to perform tasks as expected. In other words, the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the leader's ability to manage and adapt their leadership style to the specific situation and context of their organization. Three prominent theories have emerged to explain the origin of leadership:²³

The Genetic Theory

This theory posits that leaders are born with innate leadership talents. It maintains that:

1. Leaders are not made, but born with extraordinary natural abilities from birth.
2. They are destined to assume leadership roles in situations and conditions they cannot choose for themselves.

In earlier societies, it was believed that individuals could become leaders based on lineage or noble descent. The persistence of this theory is often evident among aristocratic groups, where, for example, only royal descendants are permitted to succeed their parents as rulers. Conversely, if a person's parents did not hold leadership positions, their children were considered incapable of becoming leaders. However, proponents of democratic values have widely contested this theory.

The Social Theory

Social theory stands in contrast to genetic theory. It argues that leadership is not inherited through lineage, but rather is shaped by societal influences, reflecting the situational and contextual environment. This theory asserts that anyone can become a leader through several supporting factors such as experience, education, and training, alongside opportunities that enable them to be appointed to leadership positions. According to this theory:

1. Leaders must be prepared, trained, educated, and developed. Good leaders do not simply emerge on their own.
2. Every individual has the opportunity to become a leader, provided they undergo preparation, receive education, are motivated, and are given support.

Studies on leadership have shown that there are various factors capable of enhancing an individual's leadership skills. The greater the focus an individual devotes to developing these aspects, the higher their potential to become a competent leader.

²² Jaja Jahari dan Rusdiana, "Buku Kepemimpinan Pendidikan 2020.Pdf," 2020.

²³ Rahmi Aulia, Bambang Kurniawan, and Muhamad Subhan, "Implementasi Manajemen Kepemimpinan Dalam Pencapaian Tujuan Organisasi," *Journal of Student Research* 2, no. 1 (2024): 121–31.

The Ecological Theory

Ecological theory represents a synthesis of both the genetic and social perspectives. According to this view, a leader requires innate talent, but this talent must be continuously developed and cultivated in order to grow. The potential of such talent may flourish depending on how the environment shapes and supports it. The core of this theory emphasizes that multiple factors influence and shape an individual throughout their journey to becoming a leader, combining elements of heredity, natural ability, and environmental influences — such as education, training, and experiential opportunities — that facilitate the realization of each individual's leadership potential.

The majority of leadership scholars believe that leadership abilities and the potential to become an effective leader should ideally be nurtured within the first seven years of a child's life. The more leadership-related experiences individuals acquire during childhood, the more mastery they tend to develop over essential leadership skills. Vince Lombardi famously stated that “contrary to the opinion of many people, leaders are not born, but made and shaped through hard work and effort.” In the current era, there has been a notable shift in public perception, with leadership no longer viewed as an innate destiny, but rather as something shaped by experience, motivation, learning, and perseverance.²⁴

Leadership can further be defined as an individual's ability to influence others through communication whether directly or indirectly to encourage them to recognize, understand, and willingly follow the leader's intended direction. An effective leader is someone who possesses such skills.²⁵ Ideally, a leader should embody virtuous character traits, as these enable the leader to inspire, motivate, and effectively guide others:

1. Intelligence is the product of diligent and continuous learning, forming a crucial asset for any leader. With a strong foundation of broad knowledge, a leader can formulate decisions swiftly and accurately, as well as resolve diverse problems effectively. An unflagging enthusiasm for learning is key to refining this intelligence, enabling leaders to offer innovative solutions and drive their organizations toward sustainable progress.²⁶
2. Responsibility, an ideal leader is responsible not only for personal performance but also for the welfare, development, and overall integrity of their team or organization. This

²⁴ Endang Dwi Wahyuningsih et al., “ARTI PENTINGNYA FUNGSI KEPEMIMPINAN BAGI PERANGKAT DESA,” *Jurnal Pengabdian Mandiri* 1, no. 6 (2022): 839–42.

²⁵ Yani Muhammad, “Konsep Dasar Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Dalam Pendidikan Islam,” *AL-HIKMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2021): 157–69.

²⁶ Ni Wayan Mujiati, “Karakteristik Para Pemimpin Yang Diidolakan Masa Kini Dan Masa Depan Pada Organisasi,” *Forum Manajemen* 15, no. 2 (2017): 34–42, <https://doi.org/10.61938/fm.v15i2.164>.

encompasses responsibility for fostering the growth and well-being of team members, achieving organizational goals, and maintaining high ethical standards.²⁷

3. Fairness, an effective leader must be capable of acting justly toward all members of their team or organization. Fairness serves as a critical foundation for establishing trust, cultivating a harmonious work environment, and improving overall team performance. Such fairness is reflected in equal treatment of team members, appropriate task allocation, and impartial evaluation.²⁸
4. Trustworthiness (*Amanah*); A leader must be trusted by their members, as trust is a fundamental pillar of leadership. An ideal leader must be capable of building and sustaining the trust of their team members. Such trust is not established instantaneously but must be cultivated through consistent actions and behaviors that demonstrate reliability and integrity.
5. Honesty represents a cornerstone of ideal leadership. By demonstrating honesty and transparency in every policy and decision, a leader reinforces a solid foundation of trust among team members. This trust fosters confidence in the leader's words and actions. An honest leader not only earns respect but also has the ability to motivate the team to achieve shared objectives with a sense of integrity and high commitment.²⁹ T.

Hani Handoko in his scholarly work highlighted several essential leadership traits that are fundamental for effective leadership. These characteristics include:³⁰ The capacity to carry out management tasks, particularly in directing and supervising the work of others, fulfilling a supervisory role; A strong drive for achievement in the workplace, characterized by proactively seeking out tasks and striving for success; Intelligence, which encompasses sound judgment, creativity, and critical thinking abilities; Decisiveness, reflecting the capability to make prompt and effective decisions while solving problems with confidence and accuracy; Self-confidence, representing the belief in one's own abilities to handle various challenges and obstacles effectively; and initiative, defined as the ability to act independently, develop diverse activities, and identify innovative solutions.

Leadership style, or leadership type, refers to the manner in which a leader exercises authority and guides their group members. Ideally, an individual's style of leadership should

²⁷ Siharta Leman Anwar Nababan, Warto Warto, and Triana Rejekiningsih, "Pemimpin Idaman Dalam Masyarakat Multikultural," *Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHEs): Conference Series* 5, no. 1 (2022): 247, <https://doi.org/10.20961/shes.v5i1.57805>.

²⁸ Abd Mu'iz and Ibrahim Al-Khalil, "PEMIMPIN IDEAL DALAM AL-QUR'AN (Analisis Komparatif Tafsir Al-Azhar Dan Tafsir Al-Misbah)," *El-Waraqoh: Jurnal Ushuluddin Dan Filsafat* 6, no. 2 (2022): 232–59.

²⁹ Sakdiah, "Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Dalam Islam (Kajian Historis Filosofis) Sifat-Sifat Rasulullah," *Jurnal Al-Bayan* 22, no. 33 (2016): 29–49.

³⁰ A dan dewi M Wawan, "Hubungan Sifat-Sifat Kepemimpinan Dan Pengetahuan Komunikasi Dengan Kinerja Kepala SD Di Bandar Lampung," *Absanta Jurnal Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2010): 20.

align with their personal character and disposition, as leaders are expected to continually develop their own capacity.³¹ A leader should also possess specific expertise relevant to the field or objectives pursued by their group. Since leaders have unique personal attributes and perspectives, each will naturally demonstrate a distinct leadership type.

1. Autocratic Leadership Type; Etymologically, the term “autocracy” derives from *auto* (self) and *kratos* (rule), referring to governance dominated by a single authority.³² In an autocratic leadership style, all authority and responsibility are concentrated in one person — the leader — who acts as the central decision-maker and exercises unilateral power. Subordinates have minimal influence, as the leader dictates instructions and expects obedience. Autocratic leaders are often perceived as self-centered and authoritarian, prioritizing strict control over participatory input.
2. *Laissez-Faire* Leadership Type; In contrast, laissez-faire leadership represents the antonym of autocracy. Leaders who adopt this style grant their members extensive freedom to act independently while maintaining ultimate accountability for group outcomes.³³ Subordinates are empowered to solve problems on their own, develop their own suggestions, and make decisions with minimal or even no direct guidance from their leader. The laissez-faire leader tends to recede into the background, placing high confidence in team members’ abilities to carry out tasks independently.

This leadership style is characterized by a low level of visible direction, as the leader delegates virtually all authority to the team. The rationale behind this approach is that, by providing maximum freedom, team members may achieve success more quickly. Nevertheless, this style is only effective if the team members themselves have a high degree of intrinsic motivation and dedication, even in the absence of continuous oversight from the leader.

Some advantages of laissez-faire leadership include a reduced sense of pressure among subordinates, greater autonomy, and expanded opportunities to take initiative, since the leader does not exercise heavy domination. However, its disadvantages include a higher risk of chaos, subordinates behaving without sufficient restraint due to a perceived lack of control, and difficulty achieving organizational goals if members’ initiative and commitment decline over time.³⁴

³¹ Johanes Alfredo Purba and Mitro Subroto, “Analisis Tipe-Tipe Kepemimpinan Di Lembaga Pemasarakatan,” *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 4 (2023): 2168–72, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i4.1858>.

³² Zainal Efendi Hasibuan Samsul Nizar, “Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Hadis” (Jakarta Timur: Prenamedia Group, 2019), 1–302.

³³ Leny Marlina et al., “Tipe-Tipe Kepemimpinan Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan” XVIII, no. 02 (2013): 215–27.

³⁴ Purba and Subroto, “Analisis Tipe-Tipe Kepemimpinan Di Lembaga Pemasarakatan.”

3. Democratic Leadership Type; Democratic leadership is a people-oriented style that emphasizes efficient guidance while valuing the potential of each subordinate. Leaders who apply this style actively listen to feedback, including criticism and suggestions, and display a dignified authority that earns them respect from subordinates, rather than fear through authoritarian behavior.³⁵ Democratic leaders are willing to acknowledge the expertise of their members within their respective domains. They continue to coordinate work while fostering internal responsibility and promoting strong teamwork. Key indicators of democratic leadership include maintaining positive relationships with members, providing recognition and appreciation, and prioritizing the aspirations of subordinates. The core concept of democratic leadership involves a balanced distribution of power among those who support the leader's success, ensuring that neither the leader nor members dominate the decision-making process, which is instead carried out through consensus and deliberation.³⁶ Within this framework, leaders and subordinates cooperate from planning and implementation through to evaluation stages.

The advantages of this leadership style are that subordinates tend to feel comfortable and confident, which helps them reach their full potential, and the emergence of opposition groups is rare since the entire team works toward shared goals. However, its disadvantages include lengthy decision-making processes due to collective deliberations, challenges in unifying opinions, and potential conflicts arising from members who have strong egos and are unwilling to accept group decisions.³⁷

4. Charismatic Leadership Type; Max Weber described charismatic leadership as an extraordinary gift, a form of power that cannot be fully explained through logic alone. Charisma represents a personal authority that enables a leader to inspire others and motivate team members to achieve peak performance.³⁸ Charismatic leaders possess a magnetic presence that naturally attracts large numbers of followers. Their respect and admiration often cannot be easily explained in concrete terms; they appear to be endowed with a kind of supernatural gift that builds strong trust among subordinates, allowing them to become role models and sources of inspiration.

The effectiveness of charismatic leadership does not necessarily rest on the leader's objective qualities alone but rather on the perceptions and confidence of their followers toward them. This dynamic illustrates how charismatic leaders can profoundly influence

³⁵ Nunu Nahnudin, Anis Fauji, and Rijal Firdaos, "Tipe Dan Ide Kepemimpinan Adaptif Terhadap Solusi Konflik Organisasi," *Tadbir Mubabbid* 7, no. 1 (2023): 85–108, <https://doi.org/10.30997/jtm.v7i1.8127>.

³⁶ Nahnudin, Fauji, and Firdaos.

³⁷ Purba and Subroto, "Analisis Tipe-Tipe Kepemimpinan Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan."

³⁸ Samsul Nizar, "Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Hadis."

organizational culture and member behavior through personal appeal and perceived extraordinary traits.³⁹

5. Paternalistic Leadership Type; The paternalistic leadership type is characterized by a fatherly attitude, often encountered in traditional social environments. In such traditional communities, leaders are usually granted high respect and positioned as elder figures.⁴⁰ Indicators of paternalistic leadership include: An overprotective attitude coupled with excessive care; A tendency to regard subordinates as immature or lacking in maturity; and Rarely providing opportunities for subordinates to make independent decisions.

Leaders adopting this style aim to protect their subordinates while simultaneously encouraging them to develop toward self-reliance. This style is strongly linked to organizational change, where the leader acts as a visionary driving progress toward shared goals.⁴¹

6. Militaristic Leadership Type; Although not identical to leadership in a formal military organization, militaristic leadership adopts high levels of discipline, a rigid structure, and a command-driven system for mobilizing subordinates. Such leaders typically exercise their authority to organize and influence their team members to execute organizational tasks efficiently and achieve preset goals.⁴² The advantage of this type of leadership lies in its decisiveness, which fosters discipline among subordinates. However, its disadvantages include creating feelings of oppression among team members and establishing a rigid, inflexible atmosphere due to the leader's harsh behavior.⁴³
7. Pseudodemocratic Leadership Type; Pseudodemocratic leadership refers to a style that only appears democratic on the surface. Beneath this façade of responsibility, the leader subtly manipulates group opinions, presenting their own views as if they represent a collective decision. In practice, this form of leadership is essentially authoritarian in nature, disguised under the appearance of democratic values.

Field interviews with *murabbiah* at Ma'had Sunan Ampel Al-Aly revealed the cases of two female *santri* who were addicted to smoking and fell into negative peer groups. The persuasive approach implemented by the *murabbiah*—building empathic relationships and providing a comfortable communication climate—proved highly effective. The *santri* felt secure in sharing their stories, and gradually changed their behavior. This outcome supports

³⁹ Istikomah and Budi Haryanto, *Management Dan Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam*, 2021.

⁴⁰ Istikomah and Haryanto.

⁴¹ Nahnudin, Fauji, and Firdaos, "Tipe Dan Ide Kepemimpinan Adaptif Terhadap Solusi Konflik Organisasi."

⁴² Istikomah and Haryanto, *Management Dan Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam*.

⁴³ Sulhan, *Teori Kepemimpinan Organisasi Dalam Pendidikan Islam*.

both interpersonal communication theory and self-determination theory, which emphasize the critical role of supportive relationships and autonomy in fostering behavioral change.⁴⁴

The success of these interventions further illustrates that punitive measures alone may be insufficient in addressing addictive behaviors.⁴⁵ Subsequent analysis highlighted the significant role of family and peer environments in triggering smoking behavior. For example, *santri* N reportedly used smoking as a coping mechanism to manage family-related stress, aligning with social learning theory.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, *santri* R was influenced by negative peer groups, consistent with social influence theory.⁴⁷ This case study underscores the need for a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions in addressing addictive behaviors. In this context, the role of the *murabbiah* as an empathetic mentor becomes essential to support *santri* in overcoming challenges and rediscovering a positive spiritual path.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study of democratic leadership, particularly as embodied by *murabbiah* within the ma'had environment, has demonstrated the crucial role of democratic leadership in guiding female *santri* who find themselves entangled in negative social circles. The research has highlighted several essential aspects of this leadership style and its impacts on the personal and spiritual development of *santri*. It focused on the complex challenges faced by *santri*, especially those struggling with issues such as nicotine addiction and harmful peer influences. These challenges often risk disorienting young women, leading them to question their values and faith.

The leadership approach of the *murabbiah*, grounded in democratic principles, emphasizes personal connection and open, empathic communication. This method has been shown to foster a more supportive environment in which *santri* feel comfortable sharing their struggles and personal stories. Through persuasive yet compassionate interactions, the *murabbiah* guides *santri* to recognize their own potential and appreciate the importance of aligning their lives with positive religious and moral values. Such an approach addresses not only the immediate behavioral problems but also cultivates a deeper understanding of their life purpose consistent with religious teachings.

⁴⁴ Ali Nurdin, *Teori Komunikasi Interpersonal Disertai Contoh Fenomena Praktis* (Prenada Media, 2020).

⁴⁵ Nicole Adams, Todd D Little, and Richard M Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory," *Development of Self-Determination through the Life-Course*, 2017, 47–54.

⁴⁶ Tarsono Tarsono, "Implikasi Teori Belajar Sosial (Social Learning Theory) Dari Albert Bandura Dalam Bimbingan Dan Konseling," *Pympathic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi* 3, no. 1 (2010): 29–36.

⁴⁷ Fellasufah Diniyah, "Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Niat Perilaku Muslim Menggunakan Platform Crowdfunding Waqf: Teori UTAUT Model," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam* 7, no. 2 (2021): 544–52.

⁴⁸ Siti Irene Astuti, "Pendekatan Holistik Dan Kontekstual Dalam Mengatasi Krisis Karakter Di Indonesia," *Cakrawala Pendidikan*, no. 3 (2010): 84129.

The findings of this study confirm that a democratic leadership approach not only alleviates the immediate problems encountered by *santri* but also contributes significantly to their overall character building and spiritual growth. By creating a nurturing and empowering atmosphere, the *murabbiah* helps *santri* navigate their challenges and emerge with a stronger sense of direction and purpose, integrating personal, social, and religious dimensions. This underscores the need for leadership styles that prioritize participation, empathy, and empowerment, which in turn can lead to more effective *santri* development programs.

Therefore, it is imperative to build educational environments that are conducive to positive development. Leadership marked by wisdom, empathy, and peace will shape strong character and nurture *santri* to become individuals with a positive, resilient, and meaningful life orientation.

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