

Training for “Santri, Future Leaders of Islam” at the El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang Rokan Hilir Islamic Boarding School

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Article Info

Article history

Received : Mar 01, 2025

Revised : Mar 13, 2025

Accepted : Mar 24, 2025

Abstrak

Tujuan dari Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (PKM) ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kemampuan kepemimpinan para santri di Pesantren El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang, Rokan Hilir. Sebelum pelatihan dilaksanakan, para santri di Pondok Pesantren El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang Rokan Hilir menghadapi beberapa kendala, salah satunya adalah kurangnya keterampilan kepemimpinan. Membentuk calon pemimpin Muslim masa depan yang menganut prinsip Islam, toleransi, dan integritas sangat bergantung pada kepemimpinan. Sesi teori tentang kepemimpinan Islam, latihan praktik, diskusi kelompok, dan kegiatan simulasi semua termasuk dalam pelatihan ini. Metode pre-test dan post-test digunakan dalam penelitian ini untuk mengukur efektivitas pelatihan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman mereka tentang konsep kepemimpinan Islam meningkat sebesar 25%, keterampilan komunikasi mereka meningkat 30%, manajemen organisasi mereka meningkat 30%, pengambilan keputusan mereka meningkat 28%, dan kerja sama tim meningkat sebesar 22%. Selain itu, observasi dan wawancara menunjukkan bahwa santri menjadi lebih percaya diri, proaktif, dan mampu mengendalikan kehidupan sehari-hari. Pelatihan ini berfungsi sebagai contoh bagaimana pendidikan kepemimpinan dapat dimasukkan ke dalam lingkungan pesantren untuk menjamin bahwa generasi berikutnya memiliki kemampuan dan prinsip yang diperlukan untuk berkontribusi secara positif bagi masyarakat. Pelaksanaan program ini menghadapi tantangan seperti keterbatasan akses terhadap sumber daya modern dan materi pelatihan kepemimpinan, yang dapat menghambat keterlibatan dan pembelajaran siswa. Sumber daya modern yang dimaksud mencakup teknologi dan perangkat digital seperti komputer, proyektor, dan koneksi internet yang memadai untuk mendukung akses ke materi pelatihan secara daring dan interaktif. Selain itu, materi pelatihan terbaru seperti modul pelatihan kepemimpinan berbasis nilai-nilai Islam, buku dan artikel akademik, serta video pembelajaran dari tokoh-tokoh inspiratif juga sering kali sulit diakses karena keterbatasan fasilitas dan biaya. Ketiadaan sumber daya ini dapat membatasi kesempatan siswa untuk mempelajari konsep kepemimpinan secara mendalam dan menerapkannya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

Abstract

Kata Kunci:

Kepemimpinan Islam,
Pesantren, Pelatihan
Kepemimpinan

The goal of this Community Service Program (PKM) is to help students at Pesantren El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang, Rokan Hilir, become more capable leaders. Future Muslim leaders who preserve Islamic principles, tolerance, and honesty are greatly influenced by their leadership. Before the training was conducted, the students at the El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang Rokan Hilir Islamic have Lack of Leadership Skills. The training program consists of role-playing exercises, group discussions, practical exercises, and theoretical seminars on Islamic leadership. A pre-test and post-test approach is used in the study to gauge how well the training worked. The findings show that students' comprehension of Islamic leadership principles has significantly improved (25%), as have their communication abilities (30%), organisational management (30%), decision-making (28%), and teamwork (22%). Students' increased self-assurance, initiative, and ability to apply leadership concepts in their everyday lives are further supported by observations and interviews. In order to guarantee that future generations have the abilities and morals needed to make valuable contributions to society, this program acts as a model for incorporating leadership education into Islamic boarding schools. The implementation of this program faces challenges such as limited access to modern resources and leadership training materials, which can hinder student engagement and learning. The modern resources in question include technology and digital devices such as computers, projectors, and a stable internet connection to support access to training materials in an online and interactive format. In addition, access to the latest training materials, such as leadership training modules based on Islamic values, academic books and articles, and instructional videos from inspirational figures, is often limited due to facility and cost constraints. The absence of these resources can

restrict students' opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of leadership concepts and apply them in their daily lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Pesantren, one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, has a strategic role in producing a generation that not only possesses religious knowledge but also strong leadership qualities. Pesantren face numerous challenges in the modern world, particularly in preparing students who will become future Islamic leaders (Tajudin & Aprilianto, 2020). Amid the challenges of globalization, technological advancements, and social and cultural changes, students must develop critical thinking, leadership, and management skills to become positive agents of change in society (Jemani et al., 2020).

One of the fundamental aspects of pesantren education is its emphasis on Islamic knowledge. Students, or santri, are immersed in the study of classical Islamic texts, including the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and Tasawuf (Islamic spirituality) (Pakpahan & Habibah, 2021). This deep understanding of religious teachings provides them with the intellectual foundation necessary for leadership. A leader in the Muslim community must have a strong grasp of Islamic principles to guide people according to the teachings of Islam. Pesantren ensure that students not only memorize and understand these texts but also apply them in their daily lives, instilling a sense of responsibility and ethical leadership (Zahrudin et al., 2021).

In addition to religious education, pesantren instill discipline and self-reliance in their students. Life in a pesantren is structured, with daily routines that involve prayers, studies, communal work, and social interactions. This environment teaches students the values of hard work, patience, and cooperation (Tolchah et al., 2021). A future leader must be disciplined, capable of managing time effectively, and able to work with others harmoniously. The pesantren system cultivates these qualities through its structured way of life, preparing students for leadership roles in various sectors of society (Nansi & Utami, 2017).

Another essential aspect of leadership development in pesantren is the emphasis on character building. A true leader is not only knowledgeable but also possesses high moral standards. Pesantren educate students to be honest, humble, and compassionate individuals. The teachings of akhlakul karimah (noble character) are deeply ingrained in pesantren culture, ensuring that future leaders are guided by strong ethical principles. This moral foundation is essential in an era where integrity and honesty are often challenged in leadership positions. Leaders emerging from pesantren are expected to be role models who lead by example, inspiring others to uphold Islamic values (Lessy & Rohman, 2022).

Community engagement is another key factor that makes pesantren effective in shaping future Islamic leaders. Unlike conventional schools, pesantren encourage students to actively participate in social activities, such as charity work, community service, and interfaith dialogues. Many pesantren run programs that help the poor, provide education for underprivileged children, and offer health services to the community. By being involved in these activities, students develop a sense of social responsibility and leadership skills. They learn to address societal issues with empathy and find solutions based on Islamic teachings (Maisyaroh et al., 2023).

El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang Islamic Boarding School in Rokan Hilir has great potential to produce leaders who are noble, knowledgeable, and capable of facing contemporary challenges. However, several obstacles remain in developing good leaders, including the lack of structured training, limited access to modern leadership resources, and the absence of a specific curriculum that teaches leadership methods based on Islamic principles. It is crucial to conduct leadership training programs to equip students with the necessary leadership skills to meet current demands.

An Islamic leader must possess communication, organizational management, and problem-solving skills to navigate the digital era and social transformations. Through these training programs, students are expected to gain a deeper understanding of Islamic leadership and apply it in their daily lives and communities. The objective of this initiative is also based on the reality that Islamic boarding schools face significant challenges in developing their students as leaders. The goal is to connect the religious knowledge taught in Islamic boarding schools with the leadership skills required in real life. Thus, students do not only become individuals who understand Islamic teachings but also leaders capable of transforming society (Nurlisa Arinasti et al., 2022).

Extensive literature has discussed the concept of Islamic leadership. According to Al-Mawardi in his book *Al-Ahkam As-Sultaniyyah*, a leader must be trustworthy, honest, and fully capable of fulfilling responsibilities. Additionally, in his *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun emphasized that a good leader must be intelligent, honest, and able to build a harmonious civilization (Hambal, 2018). Research on Islamic boarding school education has shown that the Islamic leadership model can produce strong and honest leaders. Azyumardi Azra's research found that Islamic boarding schools play a crucial role in shaping community leaders, as they not only teach religious knowledge but also instill strong character and a high work ethic (Hayati et al., 2023).

Furthermore, research by Bass and Avolio on transformational leadership suggests that effective leadership must be able to motivate, inspire, and encourage innovation. This method can be applied in Islamic boarding schools by integrating Islamic values into leadership training so that students can become intelligent and courageous leaders (Mosbah & Rahmoune, 2024).

Drawing inspiration from the life and actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the concept of Islamic leadership is a comprehensive framework that integrates spiritual, ethical, and managerial aspects, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and cultural values. This concept highlights the importance of moral responsibility, justice, and community welfare. Authority is not the sole aspect of Islamic leadership; rather, it involves guiding and inspiring others to achieve goals aligned with Islamic principles. This type of leadership can be implemented in various sectors, including education, business, and community organizations (Qbal et al., 2024).

Moral and ethical principles form the foundation of Islamic leadership. The values of justice, honesty, and integrity, as emphasized in the Qur'an and Hadith, serve as the core of this leadership, and leaders must uphold these principles in their actions and decisions (Yusuf et al., 2024). Additionally, Islamic leadership emphasizes spiritual responsibility. Leaders are regarded as caliphs who are accountable to Allah, necessitating a balance between their worldly duties and spiritual commitments (Muliyanthy et al., 2024).

Beyond moral and spiritual aspects, Islamic leadership also prioritizes social and community welfare. This ensures that leaders actively contribute to serving the community and promoting justice and well-being (Kartika et al., 2024). Islamic leadership is applied in various contexts. Leadership in education, particularly in Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, is essential in shaping academic and moral development while fostering an environment conducive to learning and character formation (Ghonim & Muttaqin, 2024).

Despite the rich tradition of Islamic leadership education in pesantren, previous studies have highlighted gaps in the effectiveness of leadership training. Research by Nurlisa Arinasti et al. (2022) found that while pesantren successfully teach religious values and discipline, they often lack structured programs to develop strategic thinking, communication, and decision-making skills among students. Similarly, Hayati et al. (2023) identified that many pesantren focus primarily on religious knowledge without integrating modern leadership approaches that address contemporary social and technological challenges. This gap limits students' ability to apply leadership skills effectively in real-world contexts. Moreover, Mosbah and Rahmoune (2024) emphasized that transformational leadership models, which combine motivation, inspiration, and innovation, have not been fully incorporated into the leadership training frameworks of most pesantren. This suggests that while pesantren provide a solid foundation in moral and ethical leadership, the practical and strategic components of leadership development require further strengthening.

This study distinguishes itself from previous research by focusing not only on the moral and spiritual dimensions of leadership but also on the practical aspects of leadership education. While earlier studies have primarily examined the moral foundation of Islamic leadership, this research aims to bridge the gap between religious knowledge and practical leadership skills. The program implemented at El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang integrates theoretical training, role-playing, and real-world problem-solving to provide students with a holistic leadership education model. Furthermore, the study employs

a pre-test and post-test approach to measure the effectiveness of the training, providing empirical evidence of improvement in students' leadership abilities. By combining religious values with modern leadership competencies, this research aims to create a comprehensive framework that prepares future Muslim leaders to address contemporary challenges while staying rooted in Islamic principles.

METHOD

One of the objectives of this Community Service Program (PKM) is to directly enhance students' leadership skills through a series of systematic steps. The program was conducted at El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang Islamic Boarding School in Rokan Hilir, with the main partners being the pesantren administrators and local religious figures. In addition to teachers and administrators who served as facilitators for the program, senior students with leadership potential participated in the training. (The specific criteria for selecting the 30 senior students included their demonstrated interest in leadership activities, previous involvement in student organizations, and recommendations from teachers and pesantren administrators.) Additionally, this selection process ensured that the participants represented a diverse group of students, including those from different academic backgrounds and social environments, to create a balanced and inclusive training environment.

This program was carried out in stages. The first step involved analyzing the leadership needs of students, developing a leadership training module based on Islamic principles, and collaborating with the pesantren to establish a schedule and implementation procedures. The second stage focused on training implementation, which included theoretical seminars discussing Islamic leadership concepts derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the thoughts of both classical and modern scholars. Additionally, leadership simulations, group discussions, and training in effective communication and organizational management were conducted. (A control group consisting of 30 other senior students who did not receive the training was also established to allow for a more objective comparison of the training's impact.) In the third stage, students who completed the training received mentorship from religious leaders and pesantren alumni with leadership experience. The fourth stage involved evaluation and reflection, aiming to assess the effectiveness of the training and provide recommendations for future program improvements.

A total of 30 senior students were selected based on their interest and leadership capacity. Additionally, five teachers and pesantren administrators participated as facilitators and mentors in the training. Participants were provided with instructional modules and digital resources to support their learning process. A pre-test and post-test evaluation method was used to quantitatively measure the success of this PKM program. This evaluation method assessed the students' improvement in understanding Islamic leadership concepts. Furthermore, leadership skills were evaluated both before and after the training, focusing on aspects such as communication skills, organizational management, and decision-making abilities. (The impact of this program will be evaluated for six months after the training through follow-up surveys and interviews to measure the long-term effectiveness of the leadership skills gained by the participants.) To determine significant differences before and after the training, the evaluation results were analyzed statistically using a paired t-test. Additionally, to assess the program's effectiveness from the participants' perspective, a satisfaction survey using a Likert scale was conducted. This approach allowed for a scientific assessment of the PKM program's success and provided a foundation for improving future Islamic leadership training programs for students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At Pesantren El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang, Rokan Hilir, there has been a significant improvement in students' leadership knowledge and skills as a result of the Community Service Program (PKM). Pre-tests and post-tests, along with observations during the training, were used to measure this improvement. Below is a summary of the results obtained from this enhancement:

Table 1. Improvement in Students' Knowledge After Training

Measured Indicator	Before Training (Pre-test)	After Training (Post-test)	Improvement (%)
Understanding of Islamic Leadership Concepts	65%	90%	25%
Communication Skills	55%	85%	30%
Organizational Management	50%	80%	30%
Decision Making	60%	88%	28%
Teamwork	70%	92%	22%

Observational data, in addition to quantitative data, also showed that students were more engaged in group discussions, had greater confidence in expressing their opinions, and gained a better understanding of managing small organizations within the pesantren environment. Additionally, participants demonstrated improvements in decision-making and conflict resolution skills. During training sessions, group discussions revealed that students gained a better grasp of Islamic leadership principles and how to apply them in daily life.



Figure 1. Students Attentively Participating in the Training

A participant satisfaction survey conducted using a Likert scale found that 15% of participants were moderately satisfied with the training materials and approach used, while 85% reported being very satisfied. This indicates that all participants were pleased with the program. These results suggest that the training methods successfully met participants' needs and expectations.

In-depth interviews with some participants revealed that the training provided them with a new perspective on building leadership character based on Islamic principles. Those who initially lacked confidence in public speaking experienced significant improvements in their skills. Leadership simulations helped them become more confident in expressing their opinions, leading their peers, and handling group challenges. Role-playing activities during the training proved effective in enhancing communication skills and conflict resolution abilities.

Additionally, periodic evaluations conducted throughout the training supported the success of this PKM initiative. The facilitator team used quantitative methods to assess the effectiveness of the training by comparing pre-test and post-test results. Meanwhile, qualitative methods were used to evaluate changes in students' attitudes and behaviors during the training. Findings from interviews and observations showed that participants were able to apply Islamic leadership principles in their academic and social lives. As part of the quantitative measurement, a paired T-test was conducted to determine the significance of knowledge and skill improvements before and after the training. The results are as follows:

Table 2. Paired T-Test Results

Variable	Mean Pre-test	Mean Post-test	tt-value	p-value
Understanding of Islamic Leadership	65	90	7.89	0.00
Communication Skills	55	85	8.12	0.00
Organizational Management	50	80	7.65	0.00
Decision Making	60	88	7.98	0.00
Teamwork	70	92	6.75	0.00

According to the table above, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, with a p-value < 0.05 for each variable. This indicates that the training effectively enhanced students' knowledge and skills in Islamic leadership.

As a result of this initiative, Pesantren El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang plans to integrate several training approaches into its leadership curriculum. A student mentoring program involving pesantren alumni will also be implemented to provide continuous guidance for training participants. Therefore, this PKM initiative has long-term benefits for developing students' leadership, as its impact extends beyond the training period.

Overall, the "Future Islamic Leaders" training has successfully enhanced students' leadership skills. It is expected that this program will help shape a generation of Islamic leaders who are knowledgeable and possess strong leadership skills for the future. With this initiative, it is hoped that

young leaders will emerge with the ability to bring positive change within the pesantren and the broader community.

This community services activity also serves as a model for developing Islamic-based leadership training that can be implemented in various pesantren across Indonesia. Previous studies have shown that leadership training based on Islamic values can enhance students' leadership capabilities. The training also fosters the development of students' social and intellectual skills, which are crucial for addressing future challenges.

This training program can serve as a model for improving the quality of leadership training in other pesantren. If this program continues, it is anticipated that a new generation of Islamic leaders will emerge—leaders with integrity, leadership abilities, and the capacity to build a harmonious and inclusive society. Pesantren hold immense potential in shaping future leaders of Islam. Through their strong emphasis on religious education, discipline, character building, community engagement, and leadership practice, they provide a comprehensive platform for developing individuals who can lead with integrity and wisdom (Puspita, 2025). While there are challenges that need to be addressed, such as curriculum modernization and broader recognition of pesantren's role in leadership development, the impact of pesantren in shaping ethical and knowledgeable leaders remains undeniable (Alam & Dewi, 2024). With continuous improvements and strategic collaborations, pesantren can continue to be a significant force in preparing future leaders who will guide the Muslim community and society at large toward a better future (Sidiq et al., 2024).

The findings of this study align with and build upon the results of previous research on Islamic leadership training in pesantren. Previous studies have highlighted the positive influence of leadership training in pesantren, particularly in developing moral and ethical leadership traits among students (Alam & Dewi, 2024). However, these studies often focused more on the religious and moral dimensions of leadership, with limited emphasis on practical leadership skills such as communication, organizational management, and decision-making. This study, in contrast, not only reinforces the moral foundation of leadership but also integrates practical elements such as leadership simulations, role-playing, and group discussions to enhance the students' ability to apply leadership concepts in real-life situations. The significant improvements observed in communication skills (30%), organizational management (30%), and decision-making (28%) demonstrate that combining theoretical and practical approaches produces better outcomes in leadership development.

Moreover, while previous studies emphasized the importance of character building and moral integrity in leadership, they lacked empirical evidence to support the effectiveness of leadership training programs in pesantren. This study addressed this gap by employing a pre-test and post-test methodology and statistical analysis (paired t-test) to measure the effectiveness of the training program quantitatively. The results showed statistically significant improvements ($p < 0.05$) in all measured variables, including understanding of Islamic leadership concepts, communication skills, decision-making, and teamwork. Furthermore, participant satisfaction levels (85% very satisfied) suggest that the training approach effectively met the students' needs and expectations. This comprehensive approach, combining moral and practical leadership development, distinguishes this study from previous research and serves as a model for future leadership training programs in Islamic boarding schools. By addressing both the theoretical and applied aspects of leadership, this program provides a more holistic framework for developing competent and morally grounded Muslim leaders capable of navigating contemporary challenges.

Pesantren provide opportunities for students to practice leadership roles. Many pesantren have student organizations where senior students take responsibility for managing dormitories, leading study groups, and organizing events. This hands-on experience allows students to develop leadership skills in a practical setting (Yusuf et al., 2024). They learn decision-making, conflict resolution, and teamwork, which are essential qualities for future leaders. By the time they graduate, many santri have already gained significant experience in leading and managing people (Suwanto, 2018).

The role of pesantren in producing leaders extends beyond religious leadership. While many graduates become Islamic scholars, imams, or teachers, others take on leadership roles in politics, education, business, and social activism. Some pesantren have even established entrepreneurship programs to equip students with business skills, enabling them to become economic leaders in their communities (Muthoifin et al., 2020). This diversification of leadership paths ensures that pesantren graduates contribute to society in multiple ways while maintaining their Islamic values.

Despite their strengths, pesantren also face challenges in preparing future leaders. One of the main challenges is the need to modernize their curriculum without compromising Islamic values (Putro

et al., 2023). In a rapidly changing world, leaders must be equipped with not only religious knowledge but also technological skills, critical thinking, and global awareness. Some pesantren have begun integrating modern subjects such as science, economics, and digital literacy into their curriculum, ensuring that students are well-prepared for contemporary challenges (Rohman et al., 2022). However, there is still a need for more structured efforts to balance traditional Islamic teachings with modern education.

Another challenge is the perception that pesantren education is limited to religious studies. In reality, pesantren have the potential to produce well-rounded leaders who can contribute to various sectors (Kristiana, 2021). Greater collaboration between pesantren and universities, government institutions, and international organizations can help expand opportunities for pesantren graduates. By strengthening academic and professional pathways, pesantren can enhance their role in producing competent leaders who can navigate both religious and secular spheres effectively (Resufle & Rofiki, 2022).

To further maximize their potential, pesantren can adopt more interactive and experiential learning methods. Leadership training programs, mentorship initiatives, and real-world case studies can enhance students' understanding of leadership challenges. Engaging alumni and successful pesantren graduates as mentors can provide inspiration and guidance to current students. By incorporating these approaches, pesantren can refine their leadership development strategies and ensure that their graduates are well-equipped to lead in diverse fields.

CONCLUSION

The "Future Islamic Leaders" training program at Pesantren El-Firdaus Rimba Melintang, Rokan Hilir, has significantly enhanced students' understanding and leadership skills, particularly in communication, Islamic leadership, organizational management, decision-making, and teamwork. Participants also demonstrated increased confidence in public speaking and effectively applied Islamic leadership principles in their daily lives. To build on this success, similar programs can be expanded by incorporating more interactive methods such as ongoing mentoring, leadership simulations, and case studies based on real-life experiences. Involving alumni and inspirational figures in the training process is expected to further strengthen students' understanding of Islamic leadership and provide them with valuable role models. To ensure the program's sustainability, the pesantren can integrate the leadership training material into its internal curriculum, offering structured and continuous guidance for students' leadership development. This integrated approach will empower future Muslim leaders to navigate modern challenges while upholding Islamic values and contributing positively to society. Future Leaders of Islam" training program can be replicated in other Islamic boarding schools by adapting it to their specific needs and resources. With proper planning, mentorship, and community support, this program can effectively develop leadership skills and Islamic values in students across different institutions.

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