

Wisdom in Action: Village Kiai's Leading the Charge in Non-Formal Education Advancement

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the process of developing non-formal education through the transformational leadership of village kiai. Non-formal education plays a crucial role in community development, particularly for individuals who lack access to formal education. In this context, village kiai serve as key figures who not only provide religious guidance but also act as agents of change in fostering education and social development. Their leadership style influences community participation and enhances the learning process in non-formal educational settings. This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the leadership practices of village kiai in managing and advancing non-formal education. Data collection methods include interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The collected data is then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the transformational leadership of village kiai functions as a dynamic force in achieving the vision and mission of non-formal education. Their ability to mobilize the community facilitates knowledge development among individuals, fostering a sense of collective responsibility. The effectiveness of their leadership is characterized by four key dimensions: charismatic influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. Through these characteristics, village kiai successfully inspire, educate, and guide their communities in engaging with non-formal education initiatives. The findings also offer a framework for developing leadership strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of non-formal education in various socio-cultural contexts.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Village Kiai, Non-Formal Education, Rural Education, Islamic Leadership

Article History:

Received: August 2023; Revised: September 2023; Accepted: December 2023

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/edsojou.v1i1.527>

How to Cite:

Marzuki, A., (2023). Wisdom in Action: Village Kiai's Leading the Charge in Non-Formal Education Advancement. *Education and Sociedad Journal*, 1(1), 42–52.

INTRODUCTION

Non-formal education plays an important role in community development and improving the quality of life of individuals (Essomba et al., 2022; Kalenda & Kočvarová, 2022), especially those who do not have access to formal education. In many areas, non-formal education is the main means for people to gain knowledge and skills relevant to their lives (Mariyono et al., 2021; Ridlo & Yanti, 2023). One aspect that often receives less attention in non-formal education is the role of local leaders, such as village clerics, in managing and developing these educational initiatives (Alif et al., 2020; Rahayu, 2020). As figures who have great influence in society, village clerics not only function as spiritual leaders but also as agents of social change who can encourage community participation in non-formal education.

Previous studies have discussed the role of leadership in education and community development. Lim et al. (2021) highlights leadership strategies in maintaining the sustainability of non-formal schools with the concept of sustainability. The effectiveness of village cleric leadership in developing non-formal education at the community level also plays an important role (Muyassaroh et al., 2021; Suryono et al., 2023). Prasetyo et al. (2021) examines the role of informal leadership in regional development. Village clerics are not only role models in religious matters, but also have the ability to unite the mindsets of diverse communities and influence various areas of life, including politics, economics, and socio-culture. Meanwhile, Faiz et al. (2023) found that individual factors in informal leadership have an impact on the independence of communities around the forest. These findings indicate that informal leadership has a significant impact on various aspects of community development, including education.

This study offers novelty in the context of transformational leadership of village clerics in developing non-formal education. Unlike previous studies that focused more on informal leadership in general, this study focuses on village clerics in Karanganyar, Probolinggo Regency, who have a unique position as spiritual and social leaders. This study aims to explore the role of village clerics, or *Kiai Kampung*, in advancing non-formal education in their communities. The analysis will focus on the transformational leadership approach applied by *Kiai Kampung*, the innovations they bring to non-formal education, and their strategies in encouraging community participation. In addition, this study will identify the impact of the efforts that have been made and the challenges faced in their implementation.

This study is expected to provide policy recommendations for stakeholders on how to strengthen the role of *Kiai Kampung* in developing non-formal education. Given that village *kiai* have high moral authority and close involvement with the community, the transformational leadership-based approach they apply can be an effective model in improving access and quality of non-formal education. By delving deeper into this aspect of leadership, this study is expected to provide significant academic contributions to the study of leadership and community education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, which is an approach used to explore in depth a particular phenomenon or case in a real-life context (Williams, 2021). Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to comprehensively understand how the transformational leadership of village clerics develops non-formal education in Karanganyar, Bantaran District, Probolinggo Regency. This method allows researchers to explore various perspectives, experiences, and social dynamics that occur in the related community.

Data in this study were collected through three main techniques, namely interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with a number of informants who were directly involved in non-formal education in Karanganyar, including village clerics, education managers, and community members. Observations were made by directly observing non-formal education activities and social interactions in the research environment to understand the leadership patterns applied. In addition, documentation studies were used to analyze various relevant documents, such as education archives, activity records, and literature that supports this research. Table 1 shows several informants who provided an overview of field conditions.

Table 1. Informants Research

No	Informant	Amount	Initials
1	Village head	1	BN
2	Village Apparatus	1	HR
3	Public figure	5	JL, HI, NM, BR, RR

Data analysis was carried out based on the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Truman, 2023). Data reduction is done by sorting, simplifying, and selecting relevant data to answer research questions. Data presentation is done in the form of descriptive narratives that describe the main patterns and findings of the study. Finally, conclusions are drawn by interpreting the findings based on relevant theories, resulting in a deeper understanding of the role of transformational leadership of village kiai in non-formal education in the local community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Charisma (Idealized Influence)

This study found that the charisma and exemplary behavior of leaders, especially village clerics, play an important role in the development of non-formal education in the Karanganyar and Karanganyar communities. This exemplary leadership builds trust, respect, and strong social ties between leaders and the community. Village clerics are not only role models in terms of morals and ethics, but also provide solutions to socio-religious problems faced by the community. Their presence creates a conducive educational environment, where the community feels encouraged to participate in non-formal education activities.

The results of the study show that village clerics play a dual role as spiritual leaders and agents of social change. They provide real examples through actions and attitudes that reflect Islamic values and local wisdom. The community sees them as figures who deserve to be respected and trusted in managing non-formal education. This exemplary behavior is seen in their efforts to guide the community to achieve educational goals, provide motivation, and instill pride in the community's achievements in the non-formal education sector.

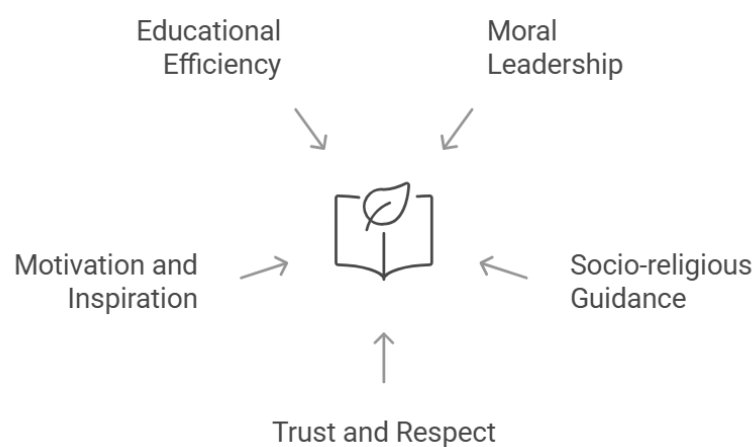


Figure 1. Role of Kiai in Community Education

The exemplary leadership as shown in Figure 1 is the main factor that strengthens the effectiveness of non-formal education. By displaying high morals and ethics, people tend to follow in the footsteps of their leaders. In addition, their role in providing solutions to socio-religious problems increases community involvement in education. The trust that is built between leaders and communities creates an environment that supports learning, where people feel safe and motivated to participate in non-formal education activities.

Leadership based on exemplars is very influential in the development of non-formal education. Leaders who have charisma and the ability to provide socio-religious solutions are able to create emotional attachments with the community. This makes it easier for them to invite the

community to participate in education, so that the effectiveness in achieving the vision and mission of education becomes higher.

Inspirational Motivation

The village kiai in Karanganyar village succeeded in forming inspirational motivation through his leadership in non-formal education organizations. They can lead the community to deepen religious knowledge and create unity. By socializing the vision and mission of education, the village kiai built a strong understanding among the community, encouraging them to be actively involved in efforts to achieve common goals. Through participation in non-formal educational institutions, the community gradually changes their behavior and unites themselves in activities initiated by the village kiai. Thus, village kiai have extraordinary abilities in inviting the community to play an active role in developing non-formal education, thereby creating strong synergy in achieving common goals.

This study found that the inspirational motivation possessed by the village kiai of Karanganyar plays an important role in the development of non-formal education. The village kiai succeeded in building community involvement by inviting them to study religion and creating social cohesion in the community. This process was carried out by socializing the general objectives of non-formal education, directing the community to get involved, and building a shared understanding of the vision and mission of education.

The village kiai of Karanganyar has the ability to inspire and motivate the community in achieving the goals of non-formal education. Through his leadership, the community is encouraged to change their mindset and actively participate in educational activities initiated by the village kiai. Socialization of the vision and mission of education is a key element that helps the community understand the importance of their involvement in non-formal education. Gradually, this participation reflects the success of the village kiai's leadership in directing the community towards common goals.

Table 1. Inspirational Motivation Aspects of Kiai

Dimension	Research Findings
Inspirational Motivation	Kiai provides motivation and inspiration to the community to explore religious knowledge and build togetherness in the community.
Socialization of Objectives	Kiai communicates the vision and mission of non-formal education to the community so that they understand the importance of participation.
Behavior Change	Society is gradually adopting a mindset that is in line with the goals of non-formal education.
Community Participation	The community is involved in educational activities led by village kiai, creating synergy in achieving common goals.
Social Cohesion	Participation in non-formal education strengthens social relations and solidarity within the community.

Table 1 illustrates how the inspirational motivation of the village cleric impacts community involvement in non-formal education. By providing inspiration, the village cleric is able to direct the community to understand the importance of non-formal education. The socialization of the vision and mission is the main strategy that helps shape the mindset of the community so that they are willing to change their habits and be more active in educational activities. Increasing community participation then strengthens social cohesion and encourages the achievement of more effective educational goals. The inspirational motivation of the village cleric in Karanganyar is a major factor in the success of non-formal education. Inspiration-based leadership not only builds community understanding of the importance of education, but also encourages them to change their behavior and participate actively. The synergy formed between the village cleric and the community shows

that effective leadership can create a more conducive and inclusive learning environment.

Intellectual Stimulation

This study found that the village kiai of Karanganyar have an important role in providing intellectual stimulation to the community through their leadership in non-formal education. The village kiai not only understand social problems more deeply, but are also able to provide appropriate solutions. One method used is to bring in external teachers to broaden the community's horizons. In this way, the village kiai create an environment that stimulates the exchange of knowledge and increases the intellectual potential of the community.

The leadership of the village kiai in Karanganyar is not only religious, but also functions as an agent of social change. The village kiai understand the various problems faced by the community and provide new insights in solving problems, especially in the development of non-formal education. This effort can be seen from various initiatives taken, such as bringing in external teachers and creating discussion spaces that allow the community to exchange ideas. The impact is a change in the mindset of the community to be more open and the development of their intellectual skills.

The presence of village kiai in Karanganyar village can help the community develop insight and provide solutions to problems that the community considers complicated. The village kiai in Karanganyar village has an excellent social understanding in analyzing and developing society. Village kiai provides solutions to developing non-formal education for the community's lack of religious understanding. In developing this education, the village kiai stimulates the community by occasionally bringing in expert external teachers to teach in the Karanganyar village community. Thus providing opportunities for the community to develop their knowledge potential.

The intellectual stimulus of the Karanganyar village kiai is evident in the condition of the community, which is experiencing changes in its way of thinking. The village kiai in Karanganyar village is also a place to share and often solve community problems. In this way, the community not only thinks monotonously of the village kiai in developing non-formal education but also as a figure who helps social society in Karanganyar village. In this transformational leadership dimension, village kiai are depicted as figures with good insight. As seen from the existing reality, the village of kiai uses an approach that is right on target with the existing needs of the Karanganyar village community.

The village kiai in Karanganyar village can provide significant intellectual stimulation for the community through his leadership in developing non-formal education. They have a deep understanding of the problems faced by society and can provide appropriate solutions by bringing in expert teachers and providing an environment that stimulates knowledge exchange; village kiai creates opportunities for the community to develop their intellectual potential. The impact can be seen in changes in people's way of thinking and in the role of village kiai in solving social problems in the village.

The intellectual stimulation provided by the village kiai of Karanganyar plays a key role in the social and educational transformation of the community. Leadership that encourages the exchange of knowledge and open discussion creates a conducive environment for the community to develop their intellectual skills. By bringing in external teachers and facilitating discussions, the village kiai has succeeded in changing the mindset of the community, from previously passive to more active and critical in dealing with social problems.

Consideration for Individuals

The transformational leadership of the village kiai in Karanganyar village was realized as a form of organizational goal. Village leaders or kiai can motivate the community, provide intellectual stimulus, consider several things related to the development of non-formal education, and provide an example to the community. As can be seen as a wheel turning to achieve a goal, a leader's role is to provide motivation and inspiration to his followers.

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The leadership of the village clerics in Karanganyar does not only focus on religious aspects, but also on the intellectual development of the community. With a high social understanding, the village clerics are able to provide relevant solutions for the community, especially in non-formal education. One strategy used is to bring in external teachers to provide new insights to the community. In addition, the existence of a discussion space facilitated by the village clerics encourages the exchange of ideas, which ultimately changes the mindset of the community to be more critical and open to various perspectives.

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Discussion

The leadership of village kiai is not only about authority, but also about building close social relationships. The trust gained from the community does not come instantly, but through consistent exemplars and success in resolving various socio-religious challenges. With this approach, non-formal education can develop faster because of a sense of ownership and shared responsibility from the community. Exemplary leadership has a major impact on various aspects of social life, including education. Leaders with high moral integrity are more likely to gain support from the community (Faoziyah, 2022; Sudiapermana & Muslikhah, 2020). This is in line with research in which the exemplary behavior of village clerics in Karanganyar and Karanganyar contributed significantly to increasing the effectiveness of non-formal education. Therefore, it can be said that the concept of charismatic leadership has broad relevance in the context of community development and education.

The Karanganyar village kiai has good role models and charisma so that he can build trust, a sense of respect, and be respected by the community. It can be said that his leadership in developing community non-formal education provides efficiency in achieving the vision and mission (Bolangitan & Pasaribu, 2022; Khumsamart, 2022). The charisma and example of religious figures or village kiai in Karanganyar and Karanganyar significantly impact the development of non-formal education in the community. Their leadership includes aspects of knowledge and solutions to socio-religious problems and displays high moral and ethical behavior. This allows them to build trust, a sense of respect, and a solid attachment to society to increase effectiveness in achieving the vision and mission of non-formal education.

The success of the village cleric's leadership lies not only in his ability to inspire, but also in building strong social relationships with the community. The ability to socialize educational goals and provide real examples is an important factor that makes the community believe and want to participate (Rahabav & Souisa, 2021). Therefore, inspirational motivation applied by village clerics can be used as an effective leadership model in non-formal education (Suryono et al., 2023).

Research conducted by Rosmilawati (2023) shows that inspirational leadership has a significant impact on increasing community participation in education. Leaders who are able to communicate goals clearly and provide motivation to the community tend to be successful in achieving educational goals (Somchan et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2021). The findings are in line with this study, where the Karanganyar village clerics used inspirational motivation strategies to increase community involvement in non-formal education. Thus, inspiration-based leadership can be considered an effective approach in education and community development.

The leadership of village clerics in providing intellectual stimulation can be categorized as a form of transformative leadership (Helmi & Sari, 2021; Hermans, 2021). Village clerics are not only a source of knowledge for the community, but also act as facilitators who enable the community to develop intellectually. The change in mindset that occurs in the community is evidence that this approach is effective in improving the quality of human resources at the local level. Therefore, a leadership strategy based on intellectual stimulation can be used as a model in the development of non-formal education in other areas.

Leadership based on intellectual stimulation can increase the capacity of people to think in dealing with social problems. Research conducted by Deranger et al. (2022) confirms that leaders who understand the specific needs of their community can design a more effective approach to community development. This research is in line with the findings in this study, where the village clerics of Karanganyar were proven to be able to create a learning environment that stimulates the intellectual growth of the community. Thus, this approach can be a reference in the development of non-formal education leadership models in various regions.

The consideration for the individuals in question is a leader who can treat other people as individuals who pay attention, educate, and listen to the aspirations of each individual in society (Muff et al., 2020). In this case, the village kiai pays attention in general and specifically to what the community needs. General attention is shown by developing non-formal community education (Caldana et al., 2023; Gada, 2022; Kyrychenko et al., 2021). Consideration for individuals in the institution's management is shown by the management appointed by leaders drawn from Islamic boarding school graduates (Aydemir & Türkel, 2022; Caldana et al., 2023). Meanwhile, particular attention is paid to the grouping of non-formal education. People's levels of understanding and intellectuality vary so that one individual has different concerns from one individual to another (Nursetialloh, 2023).

Caring for the village kiai can make it easier to achieve the shared vision and mission. The village kiai gives the best to the local community; by caring for the community, it can produce the fruit of a shared goal, which the local community can feel from the results of this care. From this, village kiai can also understand the abilities of each individual in the community so that in achieving these goals (Alam, 2020), village kiai can use approaches that are appropriate to their circumstances (Ramdani & Ihsan, 2021).

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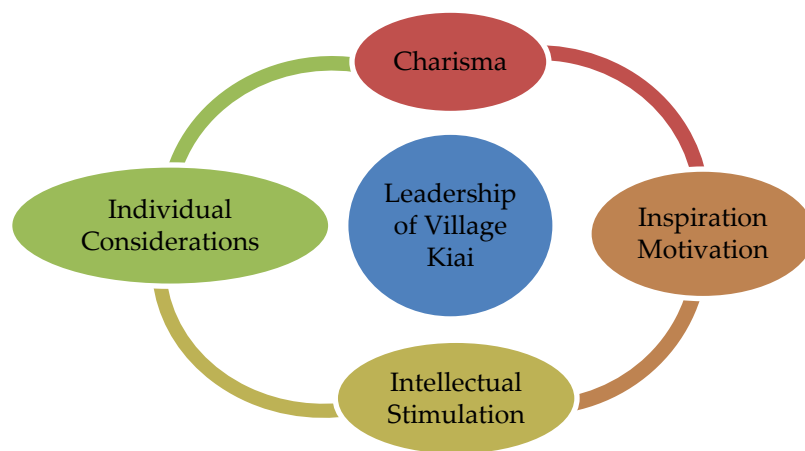


Figure 2. Transformational Leadership

The village kiai in Karanganyar village shows deep concern for individuals in society, both in general and specifically. They treat each individual with care, educate, and listen to their aspirations. Through the management of non-formal educational institutions, village kiai shows concern for the community's different needs and levels of understanding and chooses appropriate approaches for each individual. By paying in-depth attention to individuals, village kiai achieves a shared vision and mission, enabling the community to feel the benefits of this care. In conclusion, the transformational leadership shown by the village kiai in Karanganyar village can provide motivation, intellectual stimulus, and example to the community, creating an environment that enables the achievement of common goals in developing non-formal education.

CONCLUSION

The transformational leadership of village clerics in Karanganyar plays a role as a driving force in achieving the vision and mission of the organization, especially in developing non-formal education in the community. Village clerics not only play a role as spiritual leaders but also as agents of change who are able to mobilize the community to develop their knowledge and skills. The success of this leadership is supported by four main characteristics, namely charisma that builds influence and trust, intellectual stimulation that encourages people to think more critically, consideration of individuals that ensures everyone gets attention according to their needs, and inspirational motivation that moves the community towards common goals. With active

involvement and close interaction with the community, village clerics are able to create a dynamic learning environment, encourage changes in mindset, and strengthen social cohesion in supporting non-formal education as a means of community development.

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