RESTRUCTURING AND REDESIGNING
THE PESANTREN TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Abstract

Pesantren is an Islamic boarding school and is the oldest community-based education system in Indonesia. The methods of instruction in *Pesantren* are over 400 years. The focus of *Pesantren* is Islamic teaching, teaching community values, literacy and numeracy. *Pesantren* has to compete with the contemporary educational practices currently used in Indonesia. *Pesantren*, as an educational institution faces challenges not only from outside, but also from within the organization. The complex roles of the *Kyai* as the leader, for instance, needs to be revisited and this paper highlights the history, key roles of the *Kyai* and the institutional framework of *Pesantren*. Arguably, there is a need to challenge the role of the leaders (*Kyai*) and communication patterns within the *Pesantren* it can respond to contemporary issues influencing education in Indonesia. The study suggests the use of restructuring and redesigning for *Pesantren*. The restructuring includes, but not limited to, transforming leadership role and involving teachers in designing the curriculum. Redesigning encompasses the idea of shared responsibility among teachers and redesigning infrastructure. In short, *Pesantren* has embedded strengths and resources used to face challenges and accommodate changes in society. The *Kyai* have significant roles in revisiting those resources.

Keywords: *Pesantren*; *Kyai*; *Santri*; restructuring; redesigning

Abstrak

Pesantren merupakan sistem pendidikan agama Islam berbasis masyarakat yang tertua di Indonesia. Metodologi pengajaran di pesantran bahkan sudah dikenal selama kurang lebih 400 tahun. Diantara ajaran utama pesantren adalah memberikan pengajaran tentang agama Islam, nilai-nilai luhur dalam masyarakat, selain ilmu baca tulis dan serta ilmu berhitung. Pesantren dituntut untuk mampu bersaing dengan sistem pendidikan kontemporer di Indonesia. Tantangan tidak hanya datang dari luar, melainkan juga dari dalam dunia pesantren sendiri. Peran yang sangat kompleks dari seorang Kyai misalnya, memerlukan kajian khusus, dan tulisan ini menelaah tentang sejarah, peran kyai dan kerangka institusional pesantren. Disimpulkan bahwa bahwa perlu adanya penelaahan kembali tentang peran pimpinan pesantren dan pola komunikasi di dalam pesantren dalam rangka merespon persoalan-persoalan kekinian yang mempengaruhi dunia pendidikan di Indonesia, sehingga diperlukan adanya restrukturisasi dan penataan kembali pesantren. Proses restrukturisasi meliputi transformasi peranan pimpinan dan keterlibatan para guru dalam mengembangkan kurikulum belajar mengajar. Sedangkan penataan kembali diantaranya meliputi dikembangkannya rasa tanggung jawab kolektif diantara para guru dan penataan infrastruktur pesantren. Singkatnya, pesantren sebenarnya sudah memiliki potensi dan sumber daya untuk mengakomodir perubahan yang terjadi di masyarakat. Figur kyai menjadi sangat penting untuk menelaah kembali sumberdaya dimaksud.

***Kata kunci:** Pesantren; Kyai; Santri; restrukturisasi; mendesain ulang*

Introduction

The Indonesian education system is unique. The geographical position, as well as, its social history, way of life, belief systems, and culture have shaped education in Indonesia (Suparto, 2001, 46). Islam is an integral part of Indonesian history (Ricklefs, 1981, 3). Similarly, when discussing the history of Indonesian education, it is necessary to acknowledge Islam and its heritage such as the *Pesantren*. Islam came to Indonesia approximately in the 7th century A. D. via Aceh, and it became the largest religion in Indonesia in the 16th century (Parsons, 2004, 9). Geertz (1989, 146), however, argues that Islam systematically came to Indonesia in approximately the 14th century. The spread of Islam in Indonesia is through the trade route used by *Sufis* (religious teacher) to accomplish their missionary activities (Suparto, 2001, 50-51). Islamic teaching later spread through Islamic educational institutions called *Pesantren* (Maksum, 1999, 10). *Sufis* built *Pesantren* in Java as they believed that education played an important role in spreading Islamic teaching throughout the archipelago. During early stages of its establishment, the *Pesantren* adopted a Hindu-Buddhist model in which both teacher and student lived together in the same compound (*Padepokan*). However, there is no exact recorded date for when the *Pesantren* first came into existence. Many predicted that the oldest *Pesantren* in Indonesia is Tegalsari in East Java, which was established approximately at the end of the 18th century (Parsons, 2004, 9). The emergence of *Pesantren* is stimulated by the willingness of Indonesian Muslim communities to protect Islamic teaching and return to the Al-Qur'an and the *Hadith* (the Prophet Muhammad's legacy), which both are the foundations of the *Pesantren* curriculum.

Pesantren is an Islamic boarding school that maintains traditional curriculums and a place to train religious leaders. Islamic religious leaders or *Kyai* graduated from the *Pesantren*, and who usually own, run, and teach at the *Pesantren*. *Kyai* plays significant role in the community as well. Miller (1968) argues that *Pesantren* was the center for education in Indonesia in the early period of its education system. *Kyai* is the traditional leader within the Islamic community in Indonesia (Lukens-Bull, 1998, 34). Before the twentieth century, *Pesantren* was the only form of education found in Java (see Abdullah 1987, Denny 1995). After the independence, Indonesia attempted to establish a national education system which could accommodate both the national language and the country's philosophy of *Pancasila*, as well as to educate its citizens in Math and science. Therefore, the *Pesantren*, started to accommodate not only the religious teaching, but also a national curriculum and general knowledge and sciences. Scholars, such as Abdullah (1987) and Geertz (1960), assert that the future of *Pesantren* depends on "its ability to maintain its identity as *Ulama* (religious leaders) dominated educational system while at the same time clarifying its role as a complementary feature of national education."

The Indonesian government applies two types of curricula, the National and the *Madrasa* system (Lukens-Bull, 1998, 36). The National system tends to be secular, while the *Madrasa* system is a combination of both the religious and National Curricula. *Pesantren* implements the *Madrasa* system under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). *Kyai* works in cooperation with the government to introduce new courses within *Pesantren*, for example, English, computer, and other job-related training, such as automobile servicing and sewing. While the primary purpose of *Pesantren* is spreading and preserving Islamic teaching, the national curricula also address students' needs for employment, such as obtaining specific skills.

Since *Pesantren* also part of an education system in Indonesia, it is necessary to discuss the its similarities and differences with regular schools in the country, as well as learning and teaching processes within the *Pesantren*. Reformation of *Pesantren* through restructuring and redesigning is urgently needed before they could become distinctive educational institution.

Education System in Indonesia

During the Dutch rule period, schools were designed to educate only particular groups of Indonesians, such as the upper classes or western people (Thomas, Gazali & Asudjana, 1963, 199). Aristocratic families which consisted of Dutch children and other foreigners could get a better education in Indonesia during that period. The formal medium of instruction was in Dutch language, and the course reflected the schools in Netherland. During this period, 80% of the Indonesian population was illiterate (Finkelstein 1951, 149). The Indonesian government tried to provide a better educational system to increase literacy rates. However, when the Japanese took over Indonesia during World War II, they abolished the Dutch system and replaced with one type of school for all classes of society. They used the Indonesian as a medium of teaching and learning.

In 1945, after the Indonesia's Independence Day, the government tried to provide education for all Indonesians. The Ministry of Education and Culture in Jakarta developed a centralized educational system and they also manage the Curriculum and administration. Local government was also involved in the education program regionally with the cooperation of the Provincial office of the Ministry of Education. This has resulted in increasing number of institutions, pupils, and teachers who participate in the Indonesian educational system.

Indonesian education system has its root in national ideology of *Pancasila* (Five Principles). *Pancasila* is a belief in one God and includes a range of values and ideas. Pancasila includes humanism, nationalism, democracy based on deliberate intention (*musyawarah*), and social justice (Eulie, 1987, 92). The framework of the school consists of elementary, junior and senior high school.

In Islam, on the other hand, it has three well-known of Islamic educational institutions such as *Langgar, Madrasa, and Pesantren* (Suparto, 2001, 58). These types of institution have existed since the 13th century (Depdikbud, 1995). Firstly, the *Langgar* system provides a basic level of education, particularly for children through the mosque in the surrounding neighborhood. The material taught is mainly religious where students recite the Qur'an and learners are trained to pray. This system is present everywhere, mostly clustered in villages. *Langgar* or a prayer house is commonly used by Islamic communities to perform daily prayers (Dhofier, 1980). *Langgar* is the center for Islamic teaching as well as an informal education institution. Secondly, the *Madrasa* system was established in the early of the 20th century (Dhofier, 1980; Mulkhan, 1994). This system is derived from *Madrasah Nizamiyyah* in Baghdad by the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nizam al-Mulk (1019-1092) (Suparto, 2000, 59). In the *Madrasa* system, grades are applied to students' works, and they are segregated into different levels. This system is formal, so teachers receive salary or wages (Depdikbud, 1995). The final system is *Pesantren* which includes an education system that involves training learners to be masters in the Islamic tenets. The curriculum content at *Pesantren* is religious and includes the Qur'an, *Hadith*, and other religious books. This is the oldest traditional educational institution in Indonesia (Oentoro, 1997).

The *Pesantren*

The word *"Pesantren"* derives from the word *"santri"* with the prefix *pe* and suffix *an*, which means a place for *santri*, a theological school (Bosworth et al., 1993, 296). Federspiel describes *Pesantren* as an education boarding school for studying the Islamic tenets (1995, 205). Also, the word *"santri"* itself comes from the Tamil language which means Islamic teacher or religious teacher (Johns cited in Dhofier, 1982, 4). There are some interpretations from scholars regarding the word *santri*. The word *santri* stems from the Sanskrit language and means "a person who has a deep knowledge of the holy book of Hindu" (Berg, 1932 cited in Sedyawati, 1991; Galba, 1991). Others believe that the word *santri* is from *sastra*, which means the holy books or book of knowledge (Purwadarminta, 1985, cited in Galba, 1991, 1). Ricklefs (1981, 41) and Woodward (1989, 79) described *santri* as an individual who tries to deepen their understanding of Islamic teaching by studying in *Pesantren*.

The learning method used in *Pesantren* is traditional that include repetition and memorization. *Pesantren* is used as the center of religious teaching (Osman, 1985, 46). Currently, the number of *Pesantren* has reached approximately more than 10.000 throughout the Indonesian archipelago. *Pesantren* can be found in villages or rural areas, as well as in urban cities. This type of school is significant for the Indonesian community since its graduates have learned moral values (Suparto, 2000, 115).

Pesantren, as the traditional Islamic education system, has existed for centuries and tries to maintain cultural values, norms, and deliver Islamic teaching amongst Islamic society in Indonesia. Suparto believes that *Pesantren* as an educational institution "aimed to facilitate the passing down of cultural fundamentals" for the younger generation (2000, 107). Educational institutions such as *Pesantren* enable the process of cultural socialization to preserve and transmit the Muslim way of life. *Pesantren* pays attention to preserve younger generations' cultural identities which stem from Islamic values.

In the early period of the establishment of *Pesantren*, there were three types of *Pesantren*, namely; 1) *Pesantren Desa* (Village-based *Pesantren*). In this category, students learn the foundation of Islamic teaching from Arabic books, such as *Taghrib*, and *Bidayatul Hidayah*, written by Imam al-Ghazali. The teaching method is known as as *Sorogan*, where teacher teach each learner individually, and *Bandungan* (*halaqoh*), where the teacher teaches students in a big class; 2) *Pesantren Besar* (big *Pesantren*). This type of *Pesantren* is a modern version as it includes bigger infrastructure, such as classrooms and dormitories. In this *Pesantren*, *santri* (students) need to learn Arabic to understand Islamic knowledge (*Fiqh*/ Islamic law, *Tasawuf*/asceticism); 3) *Pesantren Keahlian/ Takhasus* (*Pesantren* with specific program). This *Pesantren* is designed for learners who are interested in a particular branch of Islamic teaching. For example, *Pesantren* al-Qur'an with *santri* who only focus on memorizing the Qur'an verses. (Sedyawati, et al., 1991, 57-60)

However currently, there is a change in terms of classifying the *Pesantren* as there are now only two types of *Pesantren*; *Salaf* and *Khalaf*. The first term refers to the *Pesantren* that focuses only on Islamic teaching and its branches of knowledge like *Fiqh* (Islamic law), *Ushul Fiqh* (method of subtracting Islamic jurisprudence) (see Hasyim, 1987; Esposito, 1995, 325). The classical Yellow Book (*Kitab Kuning*) is taught in this type of *Pesantren* (Zarkasi, 1994, 323). The other category is like the modern *Pesantren* that adopts western educational systems in term of its principles and class formation. This *Pesantren* includes both general and Islamic knowledge. Vocational programs are also offered at *Pesantren Khalaf*,

for instance, automotive, sewing, agriculture, business, and computer. Both English and Arabic are compulsory languages in this *Pesantren*. Zarkasi (1994, 323) points out that *Pesantren Khalaf* faces new challenges about modernization but must also remain committed to Islamic principles. Bajudin (1994, 130) agrees with the establishment of *Pesantren Khalaf* as it is based on the notion that education is fundamental to Islam which reflects liberation and knowledge acquisition.

The objectives of *Pesantren* are to produce individuals who have faith, knowledge, and morals. As a result, Islamic education includes both piety and faith in its syllabus. In practice, it brings learners to understand God through the scriptures (Husain & Ashraf 1979, 38). Islamic education, in which *Pesantren* is founded, encourages faith through learning the Islamic tenets. The other objective is applying the cognitive and social aspects of human development (Ahmad, 1984, 28). Cognitive refers to "mental and intellectual functions" (Brown, 2007, 63). *Pesantren* is the best place to build up *santri*'s characteristics by referring to the ideal figure of Islam, which is Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the success of *Pesantren* is reflected in the morality of the graduates (Suparto, 2000, 115).

The social aspect relates to the socio-cultural milieu in which teaching, and learning occurs (Brown, 2007, 81). *Pesantren* enables learners to examine their emotions and feelings as there are *santri* from various backgrounds who live and interact between each other. *Pesantren* facilitates the challenge of creating a collaborative and harmonious culture. Socially, *Pesantren* also focuses on empowerment through community programs, such as conducting vocational courses, sewing, and mechanics, and establishing formal schools to support the government programs for nine years of compulsory schooling (Noor, 2006, 3).

Certainly, *Pesantren* also holds religious activities for neighborhood communities, namely *Pengajian* (public lectures), and *jamaah* (congregational) prayer. This process is in line with chapter 30 no. 4 of National Educational System no. 20 the year 2003, which states that "religious education can be *Diniyah, Pesantren, Pasraman, Pabhaja Samanera* and similar types of education" (cited in Noor, 2006, 4).

In performing its role as a religious, educational institution based on the national educational system of Indonesia, *Pesantren* also concerns with the importance of human resource development, as well as the demand for facing new challenges such as globalization (Noor, 2006, 7). As a result, *Pesantren* should adapt to the changes, such as incorporating computer and internet skills. *Pesantren* as an institution should embrace these skills to survive and engage with contemporary modern culture. In fact, there are some *Pesantren* in Indonesia, particularly for modern *Pesantren* (*Khalaf*) that equip them accordingly. Those kinds of *Pesantren* are preferred by most who live in urban areas, while the traditional ones mostly exist within the rural community. As some modern *Pesantren* follow the national system, these *Pesantren* should apply general education programs, such as vocational education, special education for disabilities, service-related education, religious education, academic education/ science, and specialized job knowledge and skills (Depdikbud, 1992).

The values within the *Pesantren* are *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *Ta'awun* (mutual aid), *Ittihat* (unity), *Tholabul 'ilm* (pursuing knowledge), *Ikhlas* (purity), *Jihad* (struggling for God's sake), and *Ta'at* (faithfulness) (Hasan, 1987, 84). There are three major values of the *Pesantren*; a) Living life as a way of observance of religious duty as well as performing social service; b) Demonstrating love and respect for both, God and community duties; c) The

willingness to sacrifice for the need of God and the community.

Pesantren tries to promote life balance between the worldly life and the afterlife. It can be understood through its three principles such as trust in God, develop knowledge, and people devote their life to their religion, community, and country (Djaelani, 1980, 52).

Specific characteristics of Pesantren include Kyai as a leader who act as parents, teachers, and supervisors; Santri stay in the dormitory, and learn everything from Kyai. Pesantren also use pengajian (reciting, memorizing and analyzing text) as learning style. The mosque is the center for learning and teaching as well as the neighborhood community usually gets involved in some activities of Pesantren (Djaelani, 1980, 54; Zarkasyi, 1994, 327). Therefore, the role of Pesantren is not only running Islamic teaching but also providing on-going education for all. The relationship can be between santri, santri and Kyai, Kyai and community, santri and community which occurs within 24 hours as they are living together (Suparto, 2000, 120).

Based on the discussion above, there are differences between Pesantren and other Indonesian schools namely; a)The dormitory system which allows Kyai to give full-time supervision of santri; b) The relationship between Kyai and santri is conducive for acquiring comprehensive knowledge as santri can learn everything from the life of Kyai; c) Pesantren can create independent santri in which they can manage their time wisely; d) Pesantren is the cheapest educational institution compare to other schools (Rahardjo, 1985, vii).

On the other hand, Pesantren requires improvement in the following areas; a) In term of its environment, it seems that Pesantren's infrastructure is not well planned and designed as Pesantren commonly does not provide adequate space for comfortable living areas, such as small-size bedrooms for 50 students, with only limited bathrooms; b) The life of santri is different from the community outside Pesantren. Santri tends to have unhealthy habits as they often share clothes due to lack of private space and storage, and shared dining facilities; c) A Kyai or leader of Pesantren is usually a charismatic figure. This charismatic persona often leads santri to become more obedience with lack of criticism. As a result, this type of leadership may be perceived as an autocratic or authoritarian system since the flow of information is in directive languages coming from the top of hierarchy (from Kyai to santri) (Arif, 2008, 169-170).

Teaching and learning process in the *Pesantren*

The learning and teaching process within Pesantren is unique, as all learning and teaching activities are part of everyday life (Mastuhu, 1994). Therefore, there is no schedule as everyday life activities are perceived as a learning process. Mosque or masjid is central to holding activities with large numbers of santri that Kyai usually teach. The mosque is also at the center of the community in the Pesantren where religious activities are conducted. Woodward describes activities at the mosque as a process where students learn rituals, such as how to perform daily prayer (shalat), read Arabic script, and recite the Qur'an" (Woodward, 1989, 141). However, there is classroom for formal learning and teaching processes where teachers oversee learning activities. Pesantren sometimes get government employed teachers to teach science and other general knowledge.

Santri should attend both formal and informal classes. Formal class refers to elementary, junior, and senior high school while the informal class can be identified as pengajian

(religious teaching), which consist of reciting the Qur'an and learning Arabic. For the rest of the time, *santri* can learn anything from their interaction with other *santri*, teacher, or *Kyai*, although some *santri* prefer to study independently in a dormitory.

The dormitory is designed for *santri* to experience a 24-hour learning process both formal and informal. Geertz (1960) states that *santri* who stay in the dormitory are between the age of 6 and 25 although there are some old *santri* who are 35 years old. They can remain there if they are not married. In the 19th century, *santri* were exclusively male (Woodward, 1989) while in the 20th century, female *santri* also come to stay in the dormitory system. *Pesantren* applies a segregated sexes rule. The Female *santri* dormitories are located near the *Kyai's* house as they can be easily monitored and supervised.

Also, Dhofier (1980) mentions that there are three main reasons to establish the dormitory system. Firstly, some *santri* come from different villages to seek the knowledge from *Kyai*, and they need to be accommodated. Secondly, almost all *Pesantren* in the early period were in rural areas where there was no accommodation available for *santri* who were studying there. Lastly, based on the assumption that *Kyai* is the role model for *santri*, it is better for *santri* to stay near the *Kyai* to build a good relationship with *Kyai*.

Regarding classroom design, some centuries ago, *Pesantren* mainly relied on its teaching process in the mosque, but now *Pesantren* relies on formal education in the classroom, following the Western model of teaching. The Department of National Education and the Department of Religious Affairs (1989, 147) introduced secular subjects into the *Pesantren* system which are based on the national government curriculum. Woodward argues that *Pesantren* serves national educational, while preserving some of the traditional teaching

methods such as *bandungan* (group teaching, *Kyai* is the expert and *santri* are listening to *Kyai* and making notes). There is also time for discussion under the supervision of *Kyai*. Discussion can be between *Kyai* and *santri*, or between *santri* and *santri* with the topic and instruction from *Kyai* (Suparto, 2000, 133-135). The last method is like a seminar. *Musyawarah* aims at valuing diversity among all member of *Pesantren* who come from various backgrounds.

Mitchell and Sackney (1998, 196-197) argue that valuing diversity is very powerful in promoting dialogue amongst members of the organization if the leader is not only tolerating diverse expressions of common goals, but also acknowledging the differences, and bring it into *Pesantren* as a cornerstone through group dialogue. *Pesantren* applies both traditional and current methods of teaching. In the formal classrooms, teachers need to adjust to modern ways of teaching but are still limited by the absence of teaching facilities such as computer, LCD, and projector.

Discussion

Based on the explanation above, it has become imperative for *Pesantren* to develop strategies to improve it in moving forward to be able to compete with other educational institution. Arguably, the possible changes through restructuring and redesigning *Pesantren* are the proposed solution.

Becoming a reputed educational institution requires a several changes and processes through which all elements of organizations should get involved. Fullan (1995) provides two major changes of school towards good organization; restructuring culture and redesigning the role of teacher. The term restructuring refers to the need for educational change as the response to "the need to comprehensively redesign schools" (Newmann

and Wehlage, 1995, 1; Lipman, 1997, 4). The restructuring includes a variety of changes in the content and structure of school (Newmann and Wehlage, 1995). Lipman (1997) argues that restructuring stimulates teachers to participate in decision making in which the reform of curriculum and pedagogy take place. Scholars articulate that this type of reform may relate with providing great opportunity of initiative and professional growth for teachers in term of achieving innovation and dialogue (see Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1989).

In restructuring school culture, for instance, should involve teachers' effort to value professional development as an ongoing process as they seek to develop a school-wide commitment to continuous improvement. Training and development are said to be the major features with more emphasis on curriculum and instruction as well as on management and planning. The key to success involves greater knowledge and skills, including sharing information. The strong ties with outside organizations and associates are noteworthy for professional development and information sharing. Schools seek expert advice beyond the district and even beyond the traditional circle.

The first process of restructuring school culture includes an attempt to reinvent schools around learning, not time. It means that the school should be aware of current learning processes and assess them to see the persistent problems and to find any possible solutions.

About *Pesantren*, restructuring the culture includes reform that devolved decision making from *Kyai* to all member of *Pesantren*. *Kyai* should not be an absolute decision maker. In discussing the term of restructuring, it is important to explore the role of the leader within the *Pesantren*. In response to this case, the author in line with Dilworth (1996) that leader should be role model and leader should lead organization only for a reasonable period. It is

true that *Kyai* in *Pesantren* is a prominent and real role model for *Pesantren* society as all members of *Pesantren* imitate what *Kyai* did in performing their life. *Pesantren* community will replicate the attitude of *Kyai* easily as they stay together for 24-hours a day. On the other hand, most of *Kyai* who lead *Pesantren* is not for a reasonable period, but for his whole life. Therefore, it is necessary for *Pesantren* to apply this reform. The writer thinks it is possible for *Pesantren* to move the type of leadership from autocracy to transformative model. Transformative leadership provides a more flexible atmosphere than the autocracy.

With regards to the authoritarian leadership style, it seems that the process of reflection and conversation in term of *Pesantren* development will be challenging to pursue because of the fear of punishment (Mitchell and Sackney, 1998, 196) and central decision making. Then, *Pesantren* should adopt transformative leadership style in which it is significant to foster learning for both individual and organization, which is *Pesantren* (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1998, 80). As explained by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), this type of leadership can enhance the commitments and capacities of people who experience it.

Then, restructuring *Pesantren* culture should also cover the involvement of teachers in curriculum and pedagogy reform that will bring some improvement of *Pesantren* as teachers are the first people who understand the need of *santri*. Furthermore, *Pesantren* should create a program that encourages teachers' professional development in term of generating innovation and dialogue. The writer argues that both innovation and dialogue are important as those concepts illustrate *boundarylessness* to distribute information and create dialogue freely and naturally. As a result, this reform will reduce the hierarchy and broader job distribution. Thus,

the information flows naturally amongst the member of *Pesantren*.

Based on Fullan's explanation above, the writer argues, it is imperative for teachers to become continuous learners throughout their careers. Improvement is a must to adjust and to prepare schools for the new challenges. The process of changes implies a great deal of complexity and difficulty. Therefore, it is understandable that educational systems are known more for their capacity to resist change than for their roles as the agent of changes. Additionally, teachers must know how and when they should initiate changes and understand how to manage and incorporate those changes into the system. The last but not the least is the moral imperative since it is an integral part of the conceptualization of teacher leadership (Fullan, 1995).

In addition to the term restructuring, the communication system amongst the member of *Pesantren* is also a factor to consider. To respond the problem of communication within *Pesantren*, some researchers argue that communication plays an important role in shaping the effectiveness of the organization. It is based on the notion that communication can facilitate knowledge sharing and reduce uncertainty in the organization, which means it can be a tool to solve the problem within the organization. Morley, Mayrhofer, & Brewster (2000) point out that there are three important factors to reach effective communication. Firstly, the function of the organization should increase the importance of information. As the information is critical for the organization, thus, the communication plays a significant role in distributing the information for all employees in the organization. Of course, the communication can occur in formal and informal settings. However, some scholars prepare to use informal communication than formal one for a reason it can create structures which give effect "what else

gets said and done by whom" (Weick, 1991, 97). Informal communication is assumed as the facilitator of knowledge and experience sharing (Slater & Narver, 1995). Secondly, the increase of recognition which is based on the notion that only the employees' talents and ideas leads the organization to be able to survive and compete with others. Organizations put employees' ideas and talents as great things in shaping the success of the organization. Again, communication can facilitate the information flows amongst the member of the organization. Lastly, the organization should be able to convince its employees to devote their ideas to the organization. To achieve this goal, an organization needs to communicate its mission and vision with all the employees to achieve the common senses between individuals in the organization.

The communication process in *Pesantren* can be traced back from the role of the leader, as the organization structures may vary between the traditional hierarchical structure and the modern ones (Heraty and Morley, 2008, 482). Heraty and Morley (2008, 482) argue that it is hoped, in an organization that information flows naturally and freely, every member has the commitment to share their qualities and participate to the success of the organization. Although this requirement is desirable for *Pesantren*, it is hard to follow as the information flows top-down from *Kyai* to teacher and *santri*. The communication between *Kyai* and *santri*, teacher and staff tend to be formal. However, in practice, all member of *Pesantren* is committed to sharing their knowledge and skill for the sake of the success of *Pesantren*. For teachers, they feel free to raise issues that affect teaching and learning to improve school quality. At this level, the communication between teacher, staff, and *santri* inclines to be a bit flexible. They can share information, experience, and knowledge in both formal and informal ways.

Based on the illustration above, it seems that it is difficult to distribute the bottom-up information as the suggestion comes from *santri* for *Kyai*. Wahid (1977) explains that the condition might be because of some traditional values embedded in *Pesantren*. For example, life is part of worship and the teaching from the religious teacher (*Kyai*) must be embraced unconditionally as it is a part of worship. To respect the Islamic doctrine and dedication to the religious teaching is necessary for the continuation of the spirit of *Santri*. As a result, these values put *Kyai* at the highest level of *Pesantren* society as well as holding absolute power. Suparto (2000) describes that *Kyai's* commands or opinions (*the fatwa*) are followed by *santri* and without questions as *santri* believed that *Kyai's fatwa* is a religious advice. Then, *fatwa* can become a community knowledge.

The term redesigning of school may involve shared-responsibilities to improve the quality of the school (Burstein et al., 1999). Redesigning concept affects teacher's role. The teacher's role in *Pesantren*, for example, mostly follows the traditional way in which teachers still focus on one task instead of many, that are needed to run a class today. Sharing responsibility will broaden and deepen teachers' knowledge and skills. In redesigning the role of a teacher in *Pesantren*, it suggests that teachers should equip themselves with modern technology as well to improve their teaching quality (Fullan, 1995). It is true that technology investment will keep *Pesantren* up to date with the current information. In short, if *Pesantren* makes the change and improve its quality, Indonesian Muslim society will continue to choose *Pesantren* as a place to educate their children.

In line with redesigning concept, as *Pesantren* still have insufficient resources to support the development of its member, such as the availability of library with limited reading textbooks, poorly managed library, limited access to modern teaching facilities as it is identified as modern technology, it is better for *Pesantren* to redesign its infrastructure. It is important for *Pesantren* to learn from such well-known weakness (Arif, 2008, 169) particularly in term of resources, and move forward with a better concept in term of keeping up to date with current need of students and attracting students to choose *Pesantren* as their first option.

Conclusion

Pesantren as an educational system it shapes students' moral behavior based on Islamic principles. *Pesantren* as an old Islamic educational institution is well known amongst Muslim society. *Pesantren* shares feature with Hindu-Buddhist education systems that settled before the arrival of Islam arrival in Indonesia. *Pesantren* was designed for everyone who wish to pursue Islamic knowledge and its teaching is about the Islamic tenets.

There are some important elements in discussing *Pesantren*, namely, *Kyai* as a religious leader, *santri* as student, the mosque as the main center of study; although nowadays *Pesantren* uses the classroom as well as the dormitory where *santri* live, and it has the unique culture, where *Pesantren* communities live together. It leads to an intimate relationship especially between *Kyai* and *santri* as a parent-children relationship. *Kyai* is a role model for their *santri*. In addition to that, Pesantren gives *Kyai* the highest level of power, while *santri* are in the lowest position. Thus, the communication tends to be top-down instead of bottom up. Most of *Pesantren* members believe that *Kyai* is a source of truth. This leads to an assumption that *Kyai* is the expert of Islamic tenets in *Pesantren*. As a result, whatever comes from *Kyai* will be regarded as a rule. It seems that it is not easy to stimulate

communication freely and naturally amongst *Pesantren* community.

Other specific characteristics of *Pesantren* culture can be seen from the concept *Musyawarah* (discussion), *gotong-royong* (collective work), and *muthalaah* (analysis). These characteristics indirectly reflect the principles of teamwork. This paper has addressed some of the key features of *Pesantren*. Further research is required to address the potential of *Pesantren* as a learning institution that can respond to modern society. In conclusion, *Pesantren* is a key learning site that encourages Islamic tenets, responds to students' learning needs and supports the national curriculum. Arguably, *Pesantren* is an underutilized institution that requires ongoing national support

Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution which includes the dormitory, *Kyai* (the religious leader), and *santri* (students). *Pesantren* in Indonesia is the oldest Islamic educational institution. Mastuhu (1994) argues that *Pesantren* plays pivotal role for Indonesian society in enriching local educational institutions for more than 400 years as well as spreading literacy and constructing an independent thought (Peacock, 1973). *Pesantren* originated from community-based education which specifically focuses on Islamic teaching (see Mastuhu, 1994; Dhofier, 1980; and Bruinessen, 1995). Thus, its main purpose is to create and develop a learning society through its religious-based educational activities. It means that *Pesantren* tries to provide both formal and informal learning as the dormitory is a must for *santri*. In its early establishment, *Pesantren* applies traditional a way of teaching, and now it moves forward and tries to adopt modern techniques. *Pesantren* tries to combine both traditional and modern way of teaching to be surviving in recent condition.

Pesantren still need some changes to be able to be an effective organization in term of restructuring and redesigning. The restructuring includes transforming leadership role and involving the teacher in all process of teaching and learning in *Pesantren*. The redesigning might be related to sharing responsibilities among all member of *Pesantren*, particularly teachers as well as redesigning the *Pesantren's* infrastructure. As the charismatic *Kyai* is very powerful, meaning that he is potential to be the agent of change for *Pesantren* community. Thus, those two terms are suggested as the potential strategies to bring *Pesantren* to face today's challenges.

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