

Communication Model of Women's Empowerment in Islamic Boarding Schools

Wina Kurnia¹, Lukman Hakim² Lukman Naufal Rifqi Nasution³

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Wasil Kediri, Indonesia, ³Universiti Utara Malaysia
Kurniawina106@gmail.com, lukmanbakim@iainkediri.ac.id, naufal_rifqi_n@absqs.uum.edu.my

Abstract

Keywords:

Communication model, women empowerment, pesantren.

This study investigates the communication model of women's empowerment at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya in Kota Kediri, focusing particularly on the applicability of Joseph Devito's communication model within the pesantren context. Using qualitative field research, data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews with kiai, nyai, ustadzah, santri, and administrators, as well as document analysis. The data were analyzed thematically through coding and validated by member checking. The findings reveal that empowerment is facilitated through religious studies, the leadership roles of nyai, skills training, and health education. Communication patterns observed in the pesantren reflect three models: chain, wheel, and star. While the wheel model emphasizes hierarchical control, the star model demonstrates participatory interaction. This study contributes to communication studies by contextualizing Devito's model and highlighting that communication within pesantren encompasses both informational exchanges and gendered power relations, underscoring its significance in promoting women's empowerment.

Kata kunci:

Model komunikasi, pemberdayaan perempuan, pesantren.

Abstrak

Pemberdayaan perempuan merupakan bagian dari peran strategis *pesantren* dalam mencakup kontribusi perempuan dalam berbagai bidang seperti pendidikan, politik, kesehatan, dan ekonomi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana proses komunikasi *pesantren* dalam memberdayakan perempuan di PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, Kota Kediri dan membentuk suatu model komunikasi. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini dan mengacu teori model komunikasi Joseph Devito yang meliputi model roda, rantai, lingkaran, y, dan bintang. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa model komunikasi pemberdayaan perempuan di PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya membentuk model rantai, roda, dan bintang. Model ini merupakan proses komunikasi pemberdayaan perempuan dalam kegiatan pengajian kitab, Maudloh hasanah, rapat, penyuluhan kesehatan, dan pelatihan-pelatihan.

INTRODUCTION

Discussing women is a topic that remains relevant and is frequently debated. Women have long been a subject of interest and conversation, particularly because they often face unfair treatment due to gender differences. (Gaillard dkk al., 2017) Negative perceptions of women have been prevalent throughout history, especially during pre-Islamic times. In that era, women experienced severe oppression; they had no societal roles, and their rights were largely ignored. For instance, women were denied inheritance rights, the right to divorce, and even the horrific practice of infanticide, where female infants were buried alive. (Handayani, 2014). Islam is a blessing for all creation, bringing good news to humanity. It was introduced to eliminate the degrading traditions of the jahiliyyah society that negatively affected women. Islamic principles aim to restore women's honor, recognize their contributions and sacrifices, and ensure they occupy their rightful place in society. The historical role of women in pre-Islamic times demonstrates that the arrival of Islam empowers us to elevate their status from oppression, honor them, and grant them equal rights to men. Efforts to further empower women continue today, particularly in various religious institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools. These schools implement and promote the values of gender equality within their educational framework. (Handayani, 2014)

Concrete evidence of women's empowerment in pesantren can be seen from previous studies, such as Ratnasari's (2016a) research. One of the efforts to empower women is to improve the quality of women's education in pesantren, based on the Qur'an and as-sunnah. (Muzayanah, 2022) States in her research that efforts to empower women in Islamic education or pesantren are efforts towards equality, both in learning opportunities and in policy implementation. Research by Noorhayati (2017) shows that efforts to empower women in *pesantren* can be observed through the involvement of *nyai* (the wife of a *kiai*) in leadership activities within *pesantren*. Furthermore, efforts to empower women can also be carried out by improving the skills of women in *pesantren*, such as training in both soft and hard skills (Adabi dkk., 2022). Women's empowerment is also shown in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. This can be seen in *pesantren's* policies, activities, and programs. Qur'an 'Arobiyya shows an effort to empower women by applying the values of equality, *Nyai's* involvement in pesantren leadership, women's participation in pesantren activities, and improving the quality of women through Islamic insight and skills.

The women's empowerment programs in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya will certainly only run with communication. Communication is an essential aspect of women's empowerment in *pesantren*. The communication process in *pesantren* is inseparable from the interconnected components that form a cohesive system. According to Devito, communication components consist of sources, recipients, messages, media, and effects.

Research (Hidayat, 2017) explains that the intensity or frequency of interaction between Kiai and santri can form a communication model between santri and Kiai. The Kiai is the main source or communicator at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya; other communication parties take sides as communicators. For example, the ustadzah communicates in 'pengajian kitab' and is a teacher at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya is not only carried out by the kiai, in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the participants of communication consist of *Kiai*¹, *nyai*², *Pengurus*³, *ustadzah*⁴, *Mudabbirah*⁵, and *santri*⁶. Each party has its role in the communication process, particularly in the context of women's empowerment in *pesantren*. (Ahwan & Karfida, 2025) Kiai is the caregiver of PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya acts as the main communicator in efforts to empower women. This is demonstrated through moments of communication in the *pesantren*, such as 'pengajian kitab', 'mauidloh hasanah', and management organization meetings. In these moments, kiai conveyed verbal and nonverbal messages about equality values.

Ustadzah, mudabbirah, pengurus, and santri are the primary targets of communication in women's empowerment. These parties receive messages or information that the kiai conveys as the primary communicator—for example, the communication process in program formation in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, Kiai gives freedom to santri to channel their ideas about programs or activities in the *pesantren*. In conveying ideas or opinions, santri can be conveyed through mudabbirah first, then conveyed to management, and then management conveys them to the kiai. This process demonstrates an effort to empower women by increasing their confidence in expressing opinions through discussions or program formation meetings. Previous studies on women's empowerment in Islamic boarding schools have shown progress. Although there have been significant changes, most studies emphasize the results of empowerment, policies, and leadership. Not many studies have specifically examined Communication models as a key component that enables empowerment programs to be effective.

¹ *Kiai* is the main element of the *pesantren*, and the term "kiai" is created from the Javanese language. Historically, the nickname of the "kiai" has been used as a title for the main character who provides teaching, the most influential element in establishing or determining the development of Islamic boarding schools, and a nickname or title given by the community (Adnan Mahdi, 2005).

² *Nyai* is *kiai's* wife

³ *The Caregiver entrusts Pengurus* or Pondok Management to help and guide Islamic Boarding Schools. The mandate and responsibilities of the management are given to people or students who are considered capable of carrying out the mandate entrusted to that person.

⁴ *Ustadzah* is a teacher at Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic boarding school.

⁵ *Mudabbirah* is the guide for santri in each room of the Qur'an 'Arobiyya. *Mudabbirah* helps *pengurus* to condition santri to participate in *pesantren* activities.

⁶ *Santri* is a term for students who studied at the *pesantren*. *Santri* occupies an essential element in the boarding school education system. Without any students, of course, it is just that the *pesantren* cannot carry out its functions as a religious, educational institution carry out the learning process (Fahham, 2020).

The limitations identified in previous research provide the foundation for this study. While many prior studies focus on the outcomes of empowerment, they often fail to explain the communication processes involved, including who the key participants are and how messages are sent, received, and followed up on. Preliminary findings from the Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic study indicate that various communication models – such as wheels, chains, and stars – are directly associated with the level of participation among female students. This observation highlights the significance of communication models as a key factor in determining the effectiveness of empowerment. However, existing literature has not offered a comprehensive examination of this topic. This research analysis focuses on communication as a way to address existing differences. The study aims to compare the communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools by employing Joseph DeVito's group communication model framework. This framework consists of five forms: star, wheel, chain, Y, and circle. By integrating these elements, the analysis seeks to clarify the communicative processes involved and the substance of empowerment achieved.

This study aims to describe the women's empowerment program at the Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic boarding school, identify and analyze the communication model used, and evaluate its effectiveness in enhancing women's participation and leadership. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on empowerment communication by providing an empirical model based on the context of Islamic boarding schools. Practically, it aims to offer recommendations to Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions on how to develop more participatory and effective communication Strategies that support women's empowerment. This research introduces a new focus on mapping the communication model for women's empowerment in Islamic boarding schools. While previous studies have explored the roles of nyai, curriculum, and gender policies, none have connected communication patterns to the process of women's empowerment.

METHODS

This research employs qualitative research methods to investigate and develop a communication model of women's empowerment at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the researcher needs an in-depth understanding of the social situation at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. Based on Sugiyono (2014), qualitative methods are used for research where the problem is more apparent, unclear, or where an in-depth understanding of meaning is required, making it impossible to research the social situation using quantitative methods.

Data sources in qualitative research are primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are obtained directly from observations and interviews, while secondary data sources are supporting data obtained from documentation (Nugrahani, 2014). Data in this study are from: (1) observations, which are sourced from every activity of the students, activities of the cottage organization, cottage programs, and facilities at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. (2) The interview data were obtained from the researcher's dialogue with the sources: Kiai, nyai, ustadzah, Mudabbirah, Pengurus, and santri at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. (3) Documentation data comes from photo archives or documents in the form of activity schedules, reports per responsibility, board work programs, and secretary archives at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. Data analysis was conducted in stages, involving reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Interview data were transcribed and categorized based on emerging themes, including forms of communication, communication actors, channels used, and responses from santri. Observation data were analyzed to identify actual communication patterns present in daily activities. Furthermore, all data were verified using triangulation techniques – both source and method triangulation – to ensure the validity of the findings.

The analysis results were mapped using Joseph DeVito's group communication models, specifically the wheel, chain, Y, circle, and star models. This mapping enabled researchers to identify the dominant communication model employed in each type of empowerment activity within Islamic boarding schools. Consequently, this research method provides opportunities for future researchers to replicate or verify findings in different Islamic boarding school contexts, while maintaining consistency in analysis that aligns with the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Women's Empowerment at Pondok Pesantren Qur'an 'Arobiyya

Islamic boarding schools (henceforth referred to as *pesantren*) are Islamic educational institutions with a high capacity for adapting to changing times. This condition enables *pesantren* to maintain its existence to this day. *Pesantren* is evident in the community due to its possession of three key strengths. First, *pesantren* is a community-based management model, where its life is supported and developed by the community that owns it. Second, it has a climate of freedom to adapt and adjust to the development and demands of the times, allowing it to experience increasing growth. Expressing freedom in the *pesantren* environment encourages creativity and tends to proliferate various types and systems. Third, *pesantren* have a tradition of accommodating all kinds of developments (Asrohah, 2011). One of the adaptations and adjustments of *pesantren* to the times is the empowerment of *pesantren*, especially women's empowerment.

Based on the data and findings, PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya has made efforts to empower women through various activities, policies, and programs at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya shows these women's empowerment efforts. For this reason, efforts to promote equality in Islamic education, such as those found in pesantren, are necessary. One of the efforts made is the empowerment of women by improving their quality through pesantren education, applying values of equality in pesantren, involving nyai in pesantren leadership and decision-making, and enhancing their skills through training. First, women's empowerment through gender equality at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya is by providing portions according to the abilities of each male and female santri. This is based on the concept of gender equality of *pesantren*, according to Kiai's PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. Equality is then socialized into regulations, rules, policies, and management work programs, as outlined in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, every santri, male and female, must obey the rules and participate in every activity. There is no difference between the two; in leadership, each has the same opportunity. Women have the right to be leaders for female students, as well as men to be leaders for male students. Additionally, on several occasions, such as board meetings, women take the lead in the discussion.

Gender equality in Islamic education, or pesantren, according to K.H. Husein Muhammad, entails providing both women and men with equal learning opportunities, creating space for men and women to learn, and ensuring that men and women have the right to utilize the knowledge they gain through their studies. The sense that men and women can practice the knowledge they get, for example, by becoming teachers, doctors, judges, and other societal roles (Muzayanah, 2022). Kiai Husein explained in the declaration of *Tauhid* or *Shahadat al-tauhid* that all humans are equal before God. This concept is illustrated as a horizontal relationship; the position of women and men is equal before God, and each is subject only to God. Kiai Husein based the idea of gender equality on universal Islamic values, such as justice ('adalah), equality (musawah), tolerance (tasamuh), and peace (islah)(Rahman, 2017). This concept of equality differs from gender equality, according to Nurul Islam Boarding School. In Nurul Islam boarding school, the efforts to empower women with equality focus more on the quality of the teaching staff. Equality is demonstrated in the process of recruiting educators; Nurul Islam Boarding School does not distinguish between men and women, but instead focuses on the potential and quality of the educators (Masyitoh dkk al., 2022).

In contrast to the concept of equality according to PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, which provides an appropriate portion for men and women. That is, everyone, both men and women, in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya are given opportunities according to their abilities. Minimizes injustice or disadvantages that can be felt by both men and women, according to PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the concept of equality led to the liberal feminism school. This

school views gender justice as a systematic approach and one that ensures no party is disadvantaged. (Sutanto, 2017) Providing portions according to the abilities of male and female students does not need to be the same, because indeed, men and women have their differences and privileges. Second, women's empowerment efforts involve Nyai in the leadership of the *pesantren*. In PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the role of the nyai is no less critical than the kiai. The kiai is busy outside the *pesantren*, requiring the nyai to represent the kiai's leadership when the kiai is not present in the *pesantren*. Now, nyai is the prominent leader in the *pesantren* because the Kiai is studying abroad. Leadership and decision-making are left to the nyai, accompanied by consultation or discussion with the Kiai for crucial issues. Nyai's involvement in *pesantren* leadership is also shown in PP. Nurul Jadid Paiton. Her husband's busyness in the political world requires her to carry out all political duties and her role as bu nyai in the *pesantren*. (Noorhayati, 2017) States that Nyai's leadership in *pesantren* proves that the role of women in *pesantren* cannot be underestimated.

Third, efforts to empower women through women's participation in *pesantren*. The participation of women in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya cannot be underestimated because women participate in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya is very necessary – women in managerial roles in the *pesantren*, organizing continuity regarding *ubudiyah*, *tauhid*, and morals. Women's contribution is also as financial managers and leaders for Santriwati. This aligns with Nugroho's (2008) opinion, as cited in Rosramadhana et al. (2022), that women's empowerment enhances their leadership ability and participation in every development or change activity. According to Hubeis (2010), the role of women as managers of *pesantren* can improve women's skills in management and bookkeeping. Fourth, women's empowerment efforts by increasing Islamic insight and increasing the Islamic insight of santri at the PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya is by 'pengajian kitab' related to Islamic insight, material about the Qur'an, and morals. Concrete evidence of efforts to improve the quality of santri with Islamic insight is shown by the santri's recitation activities listed in the santri's activity schedule. Such as learning Arabic, studying the kitab of 'Fathul Qorib' (fiqh), 'Risalatul Mahid' (women's fiqh), 'Min Kunuz As-Sunnah' (Hadith Science), 'Tibyan Fi Ulumul Qur'an' (Qur'an Science), and 'Tibyan fi adabi ulumul Qur'an' (Qur'an Science) (Secretary, 2018). Efforts to empower women through improving the quality of santri are in line with women's empowerment, according to Ratnasari (2016b). She stated in her book that one of the efforts to empower women is through *pesantren* education based on the Qur'an and as-sunnah. Improving the quality of santri with Islamic insight is not limited to men and women; both must participate in 'pengajian kitab' to enhance the quality of the santri's Islamic insight.

Fifth, women's empowerment efforts with skills training. In PP. In Qur'an 'Arobiyya, women are trained in various skills to improve their quality. This skills training is one of the work programs for both female and male administrators. The training activities between female and male students are partly the same and partly different. This is adjusted to the potential and needs of both male and female santri (Munjiyat, 2023). This skill improvement activity takes place once a week and every semester break. These skills improvement activities include handicraft skills, public speaking (including 'khotbah' and MC, or Master of Ceremonies), culinary training, cosmetology, scientific writing, graphic design, banjari, and reproductive health socialization.



Figure 1. Women's empowerment through reproductive health outreach

Sumber: sekretaris pondok pesantren Qur'an 'Arobiyya

Improving women's quality of life through training is a key strategy for empowerment. This aligns with Zakiyah's (2010) statement in Rosramadhana et al., who explained that empowering women involves providing various skills, such as sewing skills. In line with this, research by Prasetyawan and Rohimat confirms that *pesantren* are not only a place to study religious sciences, but also a place where students can develop their spiritual and moral values. Santri in *pesantren* can learn entrepreneurial sciences that can be used as provisions for students when they have completed their education in *pesantren*.

The Communication Process of Women's Empowerment in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya

According to Cangara (Basit, 2017), communication is not merely the act of sending messages from one person to another, whether directly or indirectly, using specific channels or tools. It is also a process of constructing meaning and represents a system in which all elements are interrelated. The dynamic plays a vital role in social life, including the empowerment of women at the Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic Boarding School. To understand the model applied in this context, it is essential first to examine

how the empowerment process unfolds through interpersonal and institutional interactions within the *pesantren*. (Effendy, 2009) defines this exchange as the transmission of thought or feelings from one individual (the communicator) to another. In every exchange of ideas, various elements are interlinked. The key components include:

Source/Communicator

This refers to the individual who initiates and delivers the message. In this study, the primary figure responsible for delivering guidance and making decisions is the Kiai, the leader of a *pesantren*. As the head of PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the Kiai plays a central role in shaping policy, setting rules, and initiating programs. Therefore, he functions as the principal source of influence in the *pesantren's* women's empowerment efforts. In every determining policy, whether it concerns rules, regulations, management work programs, or other policies, several procedures are involved in its formation. First, after managing, girls and boys are formed, each of whom compiles various programs according to their creativity. After the program is compiled, it is submitted to the Kiai in the management meeting forum. According to Kiai, if the programs are considered good, management can immediately disseminate them to all students. However, if the program is deemed inappropriate, Kiai provides advice or input to develop a good program for students regarding their *pesantren* and lectures. Likewise, the formation of rules and other policies is also determined by the kiai (Febrianti, 2023). The role of kiai as the primary sender or source of information is carried out through the following activities:

a. Meetings / Deliberations

A meeting is one of the gathering activities involving at least two people to formulate or decide on a goal. Meetings are a routine activity at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya as well as the kiai communication activities with students. Before meeting with the kiai, the female and male administrators held a meeting to ensure that the points to be conveyed to the kiai were clear (Afifah, 2023). Meetings are held to develop management work programs, monitor management performance every month, evaluate programs or activities that have been implemented, and provide solutions to complaints or problems related to *pesantren* activities. Each male and female administrator can express their opinions or input on programs, regulations, rules, or other policies during meeting activities. This activity is one of the forums for santri to build confidence, enabling both male and female santri to participate in public activities with confidence.

b. Pengajian Kitab

'Pengajian Kitab' is one of the kiai's communication activities with his students. Kiai can use this activity as a medium to convey Islamic messages to his santri. 'Pengajian Kitab' is also a medium for improving and deepening Islamic insight, which is one of the educational processes that Muslims are interested in (Darlis, 2017). "Pengajian Kitab" at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya covers various fields of study, ranging from hadith, fiqh, Qur'anic science, tafsir science, Islamic history, *Nahwu*, and *Sharaf* (Secretary, 2018). This activity shows that PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya caregivers are very concerned about their students' education, especially in Islamic insight. All santri, male and female, get the same opportunity to improve their Islamic insight. Teachers in the study of 'pengajian kitab' are not only carried out by the kiai; there are also teachers such as ustadz/ustadzah from outside the pesantren, ustadzah from the pesantren, and Nyai, who teaches 'pengajian kitab' at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. 'Pengajian Kitab', one of which is the kitab of Risalatul Mahid, which discusses women's fiqh, including menstruation, istihadloh, taharah, purification, and others. In this recitation, the teacher is a ustadzah from the *pesantren* attended by all students.

'Pengajian kitab' is one of the empowerment efforts aimed at increasing women's knowledge and awareness about reproductive health in the style of *pesantren*. Ustadzah provides material on women's fiqh, including procedures for calculating the menstrual period, the holy period, procedures for purifying after menstruation (such as bathing), the colors of menstrual blood, and discussions on crucial issues related to women's fiqh. After the ustadzah explains these materials, santri can ask questions about things that have yet to be understood. There is a message exchange or discussion process in this process, which can indirectly train female santri to speak in public.

c. Maudloh Hasanah

'Maudloh Hasanah' is a communication activity between students and the Kiai, where the Kiai conveys messages or advice to his students, at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the kiai gives advice and motivation to his students once a week. The advice emphasizes the importance of maintaining good manners, including those in speaking, dealing with parents, and dressing, as well as the value of education.

Message

The message is everything that the communicator delivers. Messages can be ideas, thoughts, or feelings that the communicator wants to convey to the recipient. The form of the message can be conveyed through symbols (words and phrases) that communicate ideas via facial expressions, body movements, physical contact, and tone of voice

(Liliweri, 2017), as noted in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, the ideas of the kiai are conveyed directly through words and symbols. The messages the kiai conveys in various communication activities in the *pesantren* include Islamic insights, the sciences of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and motivation to improve self-quality. Furthermore, the messages conveyed by Kiai as the primary communicator in efforts to empower women are centered on values of equality, the importance of women's roles in *pesantren*, and the importance of improving the quality of santri, both in terms of Islamic insights and skills.

First, about equality. Based on the results of interviews with the caregiver regarding gender equality in *pesantren*, she responded positively. She strongly supported the implementation of gender equality values in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. As he said, gender equality in *pesantren* is fundamental because it can foster or improve the competence of the santri (Munjiyat, 2023). Kiai's openness to gender discussions stems from his background and experience in education, which provides comprehensive insights into gender. Kiai completed his undergraduate education in the Sastra and Arabic Language Study Program at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang, and then continued his Master's education in the Arabic Language Education Study Program at Sunan Ampel Surabaya State Islamic University. He is currently pursuing his doctoral education in Morocco.

Second, the message about the importance of women's participation in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. According to the Kiai, the role of women in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya is very important. This is evident in his approach to determining policies, which accepts opinions and input from both women and men. For example, Nyai also forms regulations. As conveyed by Nyai in the interview, when determining a regulation, the Kiai and Nyai adopted several regulations from the regulations of the Kiai and Nyai hut when they were still in *pesantren*. Additionally, Umma contributes to the development of various policies at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya. They are coupled with the current condition of the Kiai, who does not live in a *pesantren*. Nyai, in certain circumstances, also makes decisions (Febrianti, 2023). Third, the kiai conveys the importance of improving self-quality with Islamic insight and skills. It has become routine that every Friday night after the prayer activity together, the kiai always advises his students. He consistently conveyed motivation to memorize, as he wanted his students to be able to complete their memorization. He emphasized the importance of maintaining polite behavior, being devoted to their parents, and sharing various other insights.

Receiver

A communicant in the communication process is a person or institution that receives information on women's empowerment. Communicants in women's

empowerment can be seen as the target or recipients of information related to women's empowerment efforts at PP: they are the individuals who receive messages in the communication process of women's empowerment at PP. Qur'an-an 'Arobiyya are santri.
Channel

A media or channel is a tool used by communicators to deliver messages. The tool used by Kiai in conveying women's empowerment messages is direct communication through various activities at PP. Qur'an-an 'Arobiyya. Such as meetings, 'pengajian kitab', and 'Mauidloh hasanah'. In addition, because Kiai is currently studying abroad (Morocco), communication is carried out using social media such as WhatsApp and online meeting platforms such as Google Meet.

Feedback

The results of delivering messages by communicators in meetings, 'pengajian kitab', and 'mauidloh hasanah' activities increase women's awareness of the importance of women's participation in *pesantren*. 'Pengajian kitab' of *Risalatul Mahid* and socialization of reproductive health can increase women's knowledge, awareness, and concern for reproductive health and ways to care for reproductive health. Empowerment through training can enhance women's economic independence, including training in financial management, business planning, and other relevant skills. This aligns with the anthropological concept of empowerment, specifically as an effort to build power within the community or among women to gain independence (Rosramadhana dkk al., 2022). Empowering women through freedom of speech in meeting activities so that they can train women's confidence to speak and appear in the public sphere. This is one of the gateways for women to participate more actively in decision-making.

Communication Model of Women's Empowerment at PP. Qur'an-an 'Arobiyya

The Communication Model of Women's Empowerment in PP. Qur'an-an 'Arobiyya is shown by how the process of equality values, women's roles, and women's empowerment is socialized and communicated in this *pesantren*. Based on the results of research and observation at PP. Qur'an-an 'Arobiyya, it is proven that there are several efforts made to empower women. This empowerment, which involves applying the values of equality, women's roles, and women's empowerment in *pesantren*, is associated with the rules and regulations of *pesantren*, the work program of the board, and the decision-making process at PP. Qur'an-an 'Arobiyya (Munjiyat, 2023). Programs in women's empowerment will only run with communication. Therefore, the communication process in empowering women in *pesantren* is fundamental. The

communication process of a *pesantren* will only run smoothly if the communication components are interconnected between one component and another, particularly in women's empowerment at PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya consists of source, message, receiver, media, and effect: Kiai, the caregiver of PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya is the primary source or communicator because the kiai determines every critical policy in the Qur'an 'Arobiyya. The messages conveyed by Kiai in efforts to empower women also vary, including messages about the values of gender equality and the importance of women's roles in PP: Qur'an 'Arobiyya, and the importance of improving their intellect and skills. The recipient of the message here is, of course, the Santri.

The media used to convey messages include meeting activities, 'pengajian kitab,' and 'mauidhoh Hasanah' led by Kiai. The effects or results of the communication process include awareness of the importance of improving abilities, increasing a sense of independence in the economic field, enhancing women's confidence in participating in the public sphere, the formation of women-friendly policies and regulations, and programs that support the development of students' potential, from the communication process in empowering women in the PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya through meetings, 'mauidloh hasanah', and 'pengajian kitab', researchers see that the process forms a communication model. Based on the research, the communication model of women's empowerment in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya forms three models, namely the chain, wheel, and star models.

Chain Communication Model

The chain communication model is a communication process that continues to run sideways. This means that the first communicator can channel their message to the second party, and the second party can channel their message to the third party, and so on. This chain communication model is similar to the circle communication model, but different. The same message continues to flow to the party next to it, but in the circle model, the last party can convey the message to the primary communicator as the first person to do so (Devito, 1997). The chain communication model in efforts to empower women in *pesantren* is based on the communication process during kiai (caregiver) meeting activities with management, which involves forming work programs and *pesantren* rules. First, the communication process in forming the board work program. According to the statement of the head of the women's board of PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, in compiling or forming a work program, the caregiver gives freedom to the management. However, it still adheres to the caregiver's instructions that the work program must be tailored to the needs of the students. After the management compiles its work programs, they are submitted back to the caregiver for approval. This statement

was conveyed directly by El-Fikriyah (2023) to the management at PP. Qur'anah 'Arobiyya.

In the process of establishing this work program, management and caregivers are included; indirectly, students also play a role in shaping the management's work program. For example, students can convey their ideas or opinions about what activities they want to participate in to improve their quality. After that, the management compiles these work programs and submits them to the caregiver for approval. If the programs have been approved, the management will socialize directly with the students regarding the management's work programs. From this process, a communication model of women's empowerment in PP emerges. Qur'anah 'Arobiyya shows a chain communication model. Students convey empowerment messages through work program ideas to management, then from management to caregivers, from caregivers back to management, and from management back to students. To be more apparent, the communication model of women's empowerment in *pesantren* can be seen in the following figure:

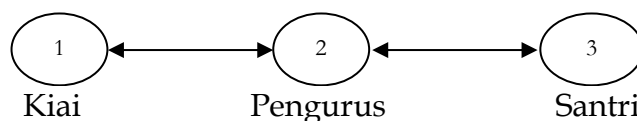


Figure 2. Chain Communication model

Note:

The *kiai* conveys messages of Empowerment in meeting activities; the administrator receives these messages from the *kiai* and conveys them to the *santri*.

This chain communication model is formed during meeting activities as part of the communication process. This communication occurs in a two-way manner for *Kiai* and administrators, and then for *santri* and administrators. Included in the chain model because the message from the *Kiai* flows to the administrator, from the administrator, and then flows to the *Santri*. The disadvantage of this chain model is that the message conveyed by the *kiai* cannot be transmitted directly to the *santri*, and the *santri* delivering the message cannot communicate directly with the *kiai*. This is because there are administrators who bridge the communication, so the message must be conveyed to them first. The communication process in this chain model shows inequality in communication because the delivery of messages cannot be done directly; the flow of messages does not flow in all directions. However, the discussion process is involved in the formation of rules, determining a policy, and forming a program for meeting activities. Women are given the freedom to speak or argue, providing input and suggestions in the discussion

process, which can help them become more confident in the public sphere or within an organization. This is the main gate for women to participate in decision-making and express their opinions freely.

Wheel Communication Model

The wheel communication model is one of the most centralized communication models. This means that a party acts as the primary communicator, controlling all parties. The primary communicator in this model is the only one with the power to send and receive messages from members (Devito, 1997) in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya, this form of wheel model communication occurs in the communication process in 'pengajian kitab' and 'mauidloh hasanah'. Because, in this activity, the communication process is only centred on the Kiai. Kiai controls the delivery of messages; he acts as the main communicator, conveying messages of women's empowerment through 'pengajian kitab' and 'mauidloh hasanah'. In this communication process, the kiai conveys his messages directly to the students or by lecturing. Kiai conveys Islamic insights, including akidah, morals, the Qur'an, hadith, and Arabic; this demonstrates that the caregiver is directly involved in enhancing the quality of women by increasing their Islamic knowledge. The lecture method used to deliver this message demonstrates the application of the empowerment communication model in PP. Qur'an 'Arobiyya forms a wheel communication model. There is a leader who occupies a central position; he can communicate with anyone, convey messages to anyone, and receive messages from anyone, including his students. For more details, it can be seen in the following picture:

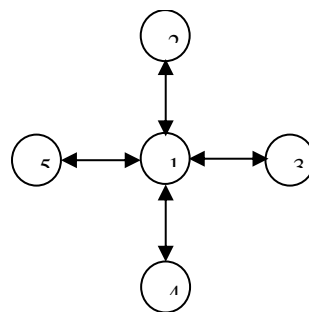


Figure 3. Wheel Communication model

Note:

Kiai, as the primary communicator, is shown in no. (1), kiai can convey messages to anyone, administrators (3), mudabbiroh (2), ustadah (4), santri (5).

The wheel communication model is formed from the communication process of women's empowerment in 'pengajian kitab' by Kiai and 'mauidloh hasanah'. This process is formed because the flow of messages described in 'pengajian kitab' and 'mauidloh hasanah' exhibits one-way communication, so the delivery of messages is carried out solely by the primary communicator. The other party only acts as a listener. In this process, efforts are made to empower women by enhancing their quality through Islamic knowledge. This wheel communication model illustrates an unequal communication model, as each component cannot freely communicate with other parties. Santri, ustadzah, mudabbiroh, and administrators cannot convey messages directly because the method of 'pengajian kitab' and 'mauidloh hasanah' occurs in a monologue. Meanwhile, the message conveyed by the kiai can flow in all directions, both to santri, ustadzah, mudabbiroh, and administrators, unlike the star communication model, which demonstrates equality in communication because each party can communicate with all others.

Star Communication Model

This star model is one of the communication models in which the flow of messages flows in all directions. Each communication participant can convey messages freely to anyone without any intermediary between them. This star model is formed by 'pengajian kitab' Risalatul Mahid led by ustadzah, skills training activities, and reproductive health socialization. These activities are attended by all santri, who bring in speakers who are experts in their fields. The types of activities between male and female students differ because they cater to the potential of each group.

The communication process in this activity involves a discussion, beginning with the speaker explaining the related training and then proceeding to a discussion session. In this process, each party can convey complimentary messages in all directions, ustadzah to students, students to administrators, and presenters to students. This activity aims to empower women by enhancing their knowledge and awareness of the importance of maintaining reproductive health, while also increasing their economic independence and autonomy. The process of delivering messages can be described in this picture:

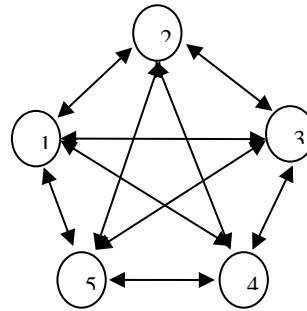


Figure 4. Star Communication Model

Note:
1-5 = can communicate with each other. For example, one communicates freely 2,3,4,5, not only to members beside him.

This star communication model is formed because each communication participant can convey messages in all directions, allowing the flow of messages to reach all parties. The communication process in this activity is only followed by santri, ustadzah, administrators, mudabbiroh, and presenters. From the communication process, it then forms a star model. The results of the study indicate that women's empowerment at the Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic Boarding School is implemented through a series of structured activities, including religious education, skills training, and student organizations. This empowerment is designed not only to enhance religious knowledge but also to equip female students with practical skills that they can use upon returning to society. Communication plays a crucial role in each activity, serving as a means to convey messages, shape meaning, and encourage participation.

In terms of education, religious studies serve as the primary medium for women's empowerment. These activities are led by Kiai and ustadzah using a lecture method that emphasizes spiritual equality between men and women. The communication pattern here tends to be one-way, with the kiai or ustadzah as the central figure providing information, while the santri (students) primarily receive the message. This pattern can be visualized as a wheel model, where all communication flows from a single source. The santri absorb the material with limited opportunities for response, except during occasional question-and-answer sessions. In contrast to religious lectures, student organization activities demonstrate a more hierarchical communication dynamic. During organizational meetings, students first express their ideas or aspirations to the mudabbirah (dormitory administrators), who then relay this information to the core administrators, ultimately passing it on to the kiai or nyai (female religious leaders) who make the final decisions. This communication pattern resembles a chain model, where

information flows linearly from one participant to another. While santri have opportunities to voice their opinions, the final decision-making authority rests with the highest figures, limiting their participation.

Conversely, in skills training activities such as culinary arts, cosmetology, and graphic design, as well as public speaking and reproductive health discussions, the communication pattern is more participatory. In these sessions, the ustadzah or instructors present material while also encouraging discussion, questions, and hands-on practice. Santri can engage directly, ask questions, and offer input without navigating a lengthy communication process. This communication model resembles a star, as each participant can interact directly with the instructor and other santri, fostering more equal, two-way communication and allowing for an active learning experience.

In addition to these three communication models, interview results reveal more flexible variations. For instance, in informal dormitory activities, communication among students occurs in a non-dominant manner without any dominant figures. Although less formal, this type of communication significantly strengthens solidarity and builds critical awareness among female students. However, compared to the wheel, chain, and star models, this informal communication pattern is less pronounced in official pesantren empowerment programs. Overall, this study's findings suggest that communication patterns in women's empowerment within pesantren are contextual, varying according to the type of activity conducted. The wheel model dominates religious lectures, the chain model characterizes organizational meetings, while the star model is more prevalent in skills training and participatory discussions. This variety in communication patterns suggests that Islamic boarding schools are transitioning from hierarchical to more participatory communication methods, although the authority of the kiai remains prominent in some areas.

The findings of this study indicate that women's empowerment at the Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic boarding school occurs through various communication models that differ based on the context of the activity. The wheel model is dominant in religious study groups, the chain model is used in organizational meetings, and the star model is applied in skills training and participatory discussions. This variation demonstrates that communication in Islamic boarding schools is not uniform but dynamic, depending on factors such as authority, the type of activity, and the level of student involvement. When compared to Joseph DeVito's group communication theory, the results of this study show consistency with its principles. The wheel model, with the kiai or ustadzah at the center of information flow, reflects an authoritative form of communication, where the message source maintains complete control over the dissemination of information. While effective for conveying instructional information and normative teachings, this model has

limitations in promoting active participation among santri. Conversely, the chain model illustrates a hierarchical communication flow. Although it allows santri to express their ideas, the process can be lengthy and may slow down the decision-making process. The star model emphasizes participation and openness, aligning with the empowerment concept that advocates for equality in interpersonal relationships.

From the perspective of women's empowerment, the use of the star model in skills training and discussions about reproductive health demonstrates the pesantren's efforts to foster a more participatory and equitable communication environment. This aligns with Mansour Fakhri's view that empowerment involves not only the transfer of knowledge but also the formation of critical awareness through equal interaction. In this participatory communication model, female students are regarded not only as objects but also as subjects who can express their opinions, share their experiences, and make decisions about their own lives. These findings reinforce Noorhayati's (2017) research, which highlights the role of *nyai* as agents of social change within Islamic boarding schools. However, unlike that study, this research introduces a new dimension by analyzing the communication models employed in the empowerment process. This study not only identifies the actors involved in empowerment but also examines how communicative interactions occur among them. Additionally, the results complement Ratnasari's (2016) study, which emphasizes pesantren education as a means of empowerment. While previous research has focused more on curriculum or leadership, this study highlights the communication patterns that interconnect curriculum, leadership, and participation.

Interestingly, this study reveals a transition in communication patterns within pesantren. The continued dominance of the wheel and chain models indicates that the *kiai*'s authority still strongly influences the flow of communication. However, the emergence of the star model in training and discussions reflects efforts to adopt a more participatory communication style. This transition can be understood as an adaptation by Islamic boarding schools to meet contemporary demands, where students are not only expected to be religiously obedient but also to develop skills, think critically, and engage in society. The contribution of this study lies in its assertion that the empowerment of women in Islamic boarding schools is intricately linked to the communication models employed. The same empowerment program can have different impacts depending on the communication model used. In other words, communication is not simply a neutral medium; it is a crucial mechanism that determines the effectiveness of empowerment efforts. These findings contribute to the study of empowerment communication by demonstrating that communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools are varied and contextual rather than uniform.

CONCLUSION

1. The results of research on women's empowerment communication models at the Qur'an 'Arobiyya Islamic boarding school provide several important findings. The most surprising finding is the variation in communication models used, depending on the type of activity. Book recitations tend to use a wheel model, where the kiai or ustadzah is the center of information. Organizational meetings of santri (students) are more like a chain model, with a long hierarchical communication flow. Meanwhile, skills training and discussions on reproductive health use a more participatory STAR model. This variation shows that Pesantren do not apply a single communication pattern, but are flexible and contextual, even though the dominance of the kiai's authority remains strong in some aspects.
2. In terms of scientific contribution, this study adds a new perspective to the study of women's empowerment in Islamic boarding schools. While previous studies have emphasized aspects of curriculum, leadership, or empowerment outcomes, this study highlights communication mechanisms as the core of the empowerment process. Thus, this study confirms and complements previous findings. On the one hand, this study confirms the important role of nyai, ustadzah, and kiai in empowerment. On the other hand, it contributes a new conceptual and empirical framework by mapping the communication model for women's empowerment in Islamic boarding schools. This shows that the success of empowerment does not only depend on programs or policies, but also on communication patterns that connect actors, messages, and participation.
3. However, this study has several limitations. It focuses on evaluative qualitative methods and therefore does not measure the extent to which communication models influence empowerment outcomes quantitatively. This study does not examine differences in communication patterns between Islamic boarding schools, between age groups of students, or between traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted with a broader scope of Islamic boarding schools, a larger number of participants, and a mixed-methods approach. With a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding, appropriate communication policies and strategies can be formulated to strengthen women's empowerment in Islamic boarding schools effectively.

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