

CULTURAL IDENTITY OF PESANTREN CADRES IN INDONESIA

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Submitted: 19/07/2024

Revised: 24/09/2024

Accepted: 16/11/2024

Published: 11/01/2025

Abstract

This study aims to explore the cultural identity of pesantren cadres through the rite of self-endowment (waqf basyari) at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG). The research employs a qualitative field methodology with an ethnographic approach. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with eight informants (two pesantren leaders, four senior cadres, and two junior cadres), and documentation. Data analysis followed Spradley's ethnographic method, including identifying social domains, semantic relationship analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and the identification of cultural themes. The findings reveal that the wakaf diri ritual at PMDG comprises three phases of a rite of passage: separation, liminality, and incorporation. Upon completing these phases, cadres gain a new status as wakaf cadres with a cultural identity encompassing symbolic and intrinsic dimensions. The symbolic identity includes the cadres' daily roles in educating students, assisting the pesantren, and pursuing studies, balanced by entitlements such as welfare as members of the pesantren community. The intrinsic identity consists of three core dimensions: (1) achievements in academic and non-academic fields, (2) dedication through the sacrifice of time, effort, thoughts, and even life, and (3) loyalty manifested as a commitment to PMDG's values, leadership, and system. The intrinsic identity reflects self-development, dedication, and profound love for the pesantren. This ritual shapes cadres who are loyal and uphold the values of the pesantren in their lives.

Keywords

Ethnography, Cultural Identity, Pesantren, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, Rite of Passage, Wakaf Basyari.



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INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is a unique educational institution in Indonesia (Yunus, 2019) that has existed since the 13th century CE (Dhofier, 2015). Cadre formation is a critical theme in ensuring the sustainability of pesantren (Firdaus, 2017). The nasab (genealogical) system is commonly used in pesantren cadre formation, particularly in traditional pesantren, where the institution's ownership is associated with the kyai (Hidayah, 2018). However, this model has notable weaknesses, such as (1) the absence of descendants, (2) familial conflicts, (3) unqualified descendants, or (4) self-interest, where descendants prioritize careers over contributing to the pesantren. These issues can lead to stagnation, decline, or even the closure of pesantren (Khasanuri, 2022).

Over time, a new understanding of cadre formation has emerged, shifting from reliance solely on genealogical cadres to a broader focus on wakaf cadres. In this model, pesantren cadres are not limited to the kyai's descendants but include anyone competent and willing to serve the pesantren. One such institution that embodies this perspective is Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG), established in 1926 as a reform effort following the collapse of the original Gontor pesantren due to failed cadre formation (Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, 2005). The concept of wakaf thus serves as the cornerstone of cadre formation at PMDG.

To date, more than 300 cadres have pledged to dedicate themselves to PMDG (self-endowment/ waqf basyari), encompassing both descendants of kyai and non-descendants, with an increasing trend (Tim Penyusun, 2022). These cadres have committed their entire lives to serving the pesantren, highlighting an inclusive approach that integrates both lineage (nasab) and meritocracy (Khasanuri, 2022). This wakaf diri system is one of the key factors enabling PMDG to thrive and sustain its development.

In cultural studies, the self-endowment/ waqf basyari pledge made by PMDG cadres can be understood as a rite of passage. A rite of passage refers to a series of actions or rituals performed by a community to acknowledge a change in an individual's social status, such as transitioning from childhood to adulthood, from singlehood to marriage, or from life to death (Van Gennep, 1960). In this context, the wakaf diri pledge signifies a transition from the status of a free individual to that of a wakaf individual wholly dedicated to the pesantren.

Based on the researchers' exploration, several studies are related to wakaf diri or Islamic voluntarism movements. First, a group of studies focuses on voluntarism and Islam, including works by Sulaiman (2011), Bilal Philips (2019), and Peucker (2020). These studies examine the

concept of voluntarism from an Islamic perspective. Second, another group investigates voluntarism within Islamic institutions, as exemplified by research from Alzaareer and Abdala (2023), Miller (2015), Ulfahadi (2023), and Adnan et al. (2023). This group explores voluntarism practiced by Muslims within institutions or organizations. Third, a distinct group of studies specifically addresses wakaf diri. Examples include Nice Durroh's "Wakaf Diri di PMDG dari Perspektif Fiqih dan UU No. 41 Tahun 2004" (Durroh, 2016), which elaborates on wakaf diri from the perspectives of fiqh and legal frameworks, and Azkiyah's "Wakaf Diri di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Menurut Hukum Positif" (Azkiyah, 2020). Similarly, Muhammad Saleh's "Model Wakaf Diri dalam Perspektif Ekonomi Islam pada Lembaga Pendidikan Ponpes Gontor di Ponorogo" (Saleh, 2019) and Diana's "Studi Analisis Wakaf Diri Ustadz Sunan Autad Sarjana Bin Hartono di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Jawa Timur" (Diana, 2020) also contribute to this discourse.

From these prior studies, it is evident that research on self-endowment/waqf basyari remains limited, though parallels can be drawn with the concept of voluntarism. Thus, self-endowment/waqf basyari may be regarded as a unique form of Islamic voluntarism. Based on the researcher's observation, wakaf basyari appears to be a culturally specific practice found predominantly in PMDG, making it a distinctive rite of the institution. This underscores the relevance of an ethnographic approach. Furthermore, the field of self-endowment research remains vast and underexplored. To address this gap, this study adopts an ethnographic approach to analyze waqf basyari, complementing earlier works that have predominantly focused on fiqh, legal, or economic perspectives.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative field research situated within the post-positivist paradigm (Rahardjo, 2022). The approach employed is ethnographic, aiming to describe a ritual by exploring its symbolic structures and underlying meanings (Agustiono, 2011). The specific ritual examined is the self-endowment/ waqf basyari rite at PMDG, with the research focus placed on the cultural identity of the individuals undertaking wakaf diri at PMDG.

The data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is conducted using a participatory observation model (Sugiyono, 2013), where the researcher directly engages in the field and participates in various activities of the wakaf cadre at PMDG. Interviews are conducted through in-depth interviews (Sugiyono, 2013) with eight

informants selected using purposive sampling, a method where informants are chosen based on the research objectives (Walidin et al., 2016). The selection of informants is based on several criteria: 1) Authority Refers to key informants who are part of the leadership structure. 2) Senior cadres: Individuals who have served as wakaf cadres for more than five years. 3) Junior wakaf cadre: Those who have been cadres for less than a year. Below is the coding and categorization of the informants.

Table 1. Data of informants

Code	Category	Code	Category
P.1	Leader of <i>Pesantren</i>	P.5	Senior cadres
P.2	Leader of <i>Pesantren</i>	P.6	Senior cadres
P.3	Senior cadres	P.7	Junior cadres
P.4	Senior cadres	P.8	Junior cadres

This study involves a total of eight informants. The categories are as follows: two key informants from the leaders of pesantren, selected to provide holistic data about PMDG; four senior cadres, chosen to obtain comprehensive information about the attributes of wakaf cadres; and two junior cadres, aimed at gathering data on their experiences during the wakaf basyari rite. The research stages follow the ethnographic framework proposed by Spradley, as outlined below:

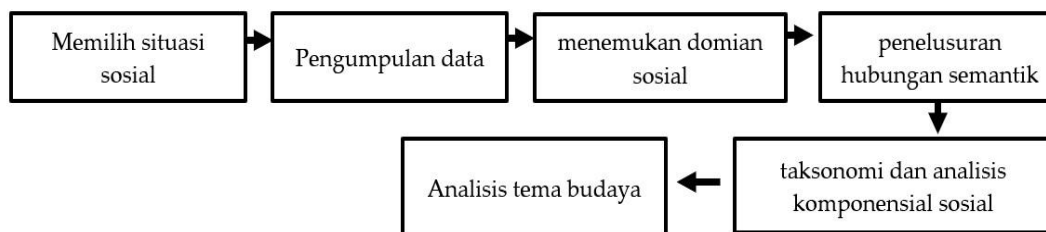


Figure 1. Diagram of ethnographic research steps

Source: adapted from Sugiyono (2013) and Spradley (1980).

The research process begins by selecting Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) as the social setting due to its distinct rituals that set it apart from other pesantren. Next, data is gathered through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The collected data is then categorized into specific domains, with a focus on the *waqf basyari* cadres and their rights and obligations. Following this, the semantic relationships between domains, including attributes, cause-effect, and functions, are examined, with particular emphasis on the identity of the *waqf* cadres. The fifth step involves taxonomic analysis to classify the stages of the wakaf diri ritual and the associated symbols and meanings, while componential analysis provides a detailed

description of these elements. Finally, cultural theme analysis is conducted to determine whether wakaf diri reflects a cultural theme of belief, ritual, symbol, or value.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

A Brief about Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) was established in 1926 by three brothers, K.H. Ahmad Sahal, K.H. Zainuddin Fananie, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi, who are collectively known as the Trimurti, in Gontor Village, Mlarak, Ponorogo (Badi, 2023). It was later endowed by the founders in 1958 (I. Zarkasyi, 2024). The establishment of PMDG was essentially a renewal of the old Pondok Gontor, which had ceased operations (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024), thus earning the name "the new Gontor."

The establishment of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) was also influenced by the social conditions of the time. Many schools established by Western Christian missionaries experienced rapid progress (Ismail, 2011). These schools had skilled teachers who were proficient in both content and teaching methodologies, as well as in psychology and social sciences. In contrast, Islamic educational institutions struggled to match their advancements (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2022). This gap was due to the lack of Islamic institutions capable of producing competent, knowledgeable, and dedicated Muslim teachers who could adapt to the times and advance society (Tolib, 2015). Thus, educational institutions of the time were highly imbalanced: some offered only general education while neglecting religious studies, while others focused solely on religious knowledge, disregarding general education (In'ami, 2011). Both forms of education are essential in Islam, and PMDG is needed to address this issue (Alhamuddin, 2005; Daud, 2003; Samindjaya et al., 2024; H. F. Zarkasyi, 2020). This is where the idea of integrating education became a core principle in the establishment of PMDG.

In its history, PMDG underwent a change in status from a private pesantren owned by the Kyai to a waqf (endowed) pesantren. This event took place on 28 Rabiul Awwal 1378, or October 12, 1958, at 10:30 AM WIB (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). The waqf certificate was signed, meaning that PMDG was no longer the property of the Kyai but became a waqf belonging to the Muslim community. Since then, all assets that were endowed could no longer be inherited by the Kyai's

descendants (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). Although formally, the waqf consisted of land and buildings, what the founders of PMDG truly endowed was not only this but also their worldview, vision, systems, life philosophy, values, ideas, thoughts, teachings, and even the spirit of the founders themselves (A. S. Zarkasyi, 2010). It is here that the concept of self-waqf began with the founders of PMDG, later followed by their students.

The Rite of Self-Endowment/ *Waqf Basyari* at PMDG

Self-endowment (*waqf basyari*), as explained by Topbaş in *Tsalatsiyatu al-Khair wa al-Atha' fi al-Hadzarah al-Islamiyah: Al-Waqfu, al-Infagu, al-Khidmatu*, refers to an individual's dedication of their self, wealth, and life to strive in the path of Allah and to serve His creation (Topbasy, 2016). Huda et al. describe personal endowment or self-endowment (*waqf basyari*) as a waqf-based voluntary act in which individuals voluntarily pledge to dedicate their time, energy, intellect, and even personal wealth to managing a *waqf* institution (Huda et al., 2019). In the context of PMDG, self-endowment is understood as the dedication of individuals to permanently serve, assist, and contribute to PMDG (Durroh, 2016). The *waqf* oath made by cadres signifies their commitment to dedicate their entire lives solely to the struggle for PMDG (Tim Peneliti, 2024f, 2024i).

Table 2. Illustration of the Three Phases in the Rite of Personal Endowment at PMDG

Phase	Description	Activities within the Context of Waqf Basyari at PMDG
<i>Separation</i>	The individual is separated from their social and cultural environment, undergoing a period of isolation or self-purification.	The cadre expresses their intention to dedicate themselves as a waqf and communicates this to the leadership of PMDG. A period of self-reflection, communication with family, and monitoring by the PMDG leadership ensues. The cadre waits for the call to proceed to the next phase.
<i>Liminality</i>	They relinquish their old identity and seek a new one, often through initiation ceremonies or rituals.	The waqf oath-taking process and the signing of the waqf pledge take place. The cadre declares their waqf, with the family serving as the waqif and PMDG as the <i>nadzir</i> . The individual's status transitions from a free person to a waqf entity.
<i>Incorporation</i>	The individual is accepted into a new group and granted rights and responsibilities according to their new status and identity.	The cadre becomes part of the PMDG waqf cadre corps. They fulfill the obligations assigned by PMDG and receive rights under PMDG's provisions. The identity of a PMDG waqf cadre is recognized through specific attributes and the obligations they perform.

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that *waqf basyari* at PMDG signifies a transformation in status from being a free individual to becoming a waqf entity. This transformation can be referred to as a rite of passage. According to Van Gennep, a rite of passage occurs in three phases: separation, liminality, and incorporation (Van Gennep, 1960). The waqf cadres at PMDG also undergo these three phases, which are detailed below.

First is the Preparation Phase. The first phase involves separating the individual undergoing a status change from their social and cultural environment, often through a period of isolation or self-purification (Van Gennep, 1960). In the context of waqf basyari, this phase begins when a cadre expresses their intention to dedicate themselves as a waqf and communicates this to the PMDG leadership (Tim Peneliti, 2024i). The intention to dedicate oneself is often rooted in the cadre's personal experiences. However, knowledge about a personal endowment is usually inspired by the behavior, teachings, and advice of PMDG leaders or Kyai (Tim Peneliti, 2024j).

After expressing their intention, cadres are typically asked to wait for further instruction (Tim Peneliti, 2024i). The waiting period varies for each individual, ranging from days, weeks, months, or even years (Tim Peneliti, 2024i). This phase is designed to provide cadres with time for reflection, contemplation, supplication, and communication with their families, allowing them to solidify their resolve (Tim Peneliti, 2024g). During this period, cadres are also expected to remain vigilant, as they are aware that their thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors are being observed by PMDG leadership (Tim Peneliti, 2024f). The results of this observation serve as a basis for determining whether the cadre is deemed suitable to proceed to the waqf basyari pledge process.

Second, the Transition or Liminal Phase. This phase is marked by the relinquishment of the old identity and the search for a new one (Van Gennep, 1960). Typically, this process involves a formal ceremony to inaugurate the new identity (Van Gennep, 1960). In the context of PMDG, once the cadre receives the call, the process moves to the waqf oath-taking and the signing of the waqf basyari pledge (Tim Peneliti, 2024i). As with general waqf regulations, waqf basyari also fulfils several essential pillars: *the waqif*, *mauquf alaih*, *shighah*, and *nadzir* (Amrullah et al., 2022). In the personal waqf oath, the parents of the cadre act as the waqif. If the parents are unavailable, a family representative assumes this role. The *mauquf alaih* is the cadre themselves, and the *shighah* consists of the statements or declarations made by the waqif and the cadre, which are formalized through the signing of the waqf pledge. Meanwhile, the *nadzir* is the PMDG Waqf Board (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). After the oath is taken, the cadre dedicates their life entirely to PMDG. This marks

the transition from being a free individual to becoming a waqf entity. For waqf cadres, the interests of PMDG take precedence over all other concerns (Tim Peneliti, 2024i).

Third, the Reintegration or Incorporation Phase. This phase is characterized by the individual's acceptance into a new group and the acquisition of rights and responsibilities associated with their new status and identity (Qudsy, 2018). In the context of PMDG, this phase begins after the waqf basyari oath (Tim Peneliti, 2024j). The waqf cadres become part of the PMDG waqf cadre corps, which entails various obligations assigned by PMDG, along with rights granted under PMDG's regulations (Tim Peneliti, 2024b). By fulfilling these obligations, the distinctive attributes of a PMDG waqf cadre become recognizable.

Discussion

The Attributes of PMDG Waqf Cadres: A Cultural Identity

As previously outlined, the stages of the waqf basyari rite for PMDG cadres culminate in the incorporation phase, where cadres assume rights and responsibilities that distinguish them from individuals not part of the PMDG waqf cadre. These characteristics can be interpreted as a cultural identity, defined as a set of attributes or features belonging to a specific cultural group, identifiable by its boundaries and distinguishable from the cultural traits of others (Liliweri, 2019). In this context, PMDG waqf cadres exhibit distinct obligations and responsibilities compared to others. From an ethnographic perspective, this identity manifests in two forms: (1) tangible symbols such as rights and duties specific to waqf cadres and (2) the intrinsic values understood by PMDG waqf cadres in fulfilling these rights and responsibilities. The following section provides an analysis of these aspects.

First, the Symbolic Identity of Waqf Cadres: Structure of Rights and Responsibilities

The symbolic identity of PMDG waqf cadres is evident in the structure of their rights and responsibilities. These cadres are provided with the fulfillment of basic living needs, including clothing, food, shelter, and education (Tim Peneliti, 2024c). This means that PMDG ensures the welfare of waqf cadres and their families, including spouses and children, through various categories and schemes (Tim Peneliti, 2024d). Notably, this commitment reflects PMDG's dedication to the well-being of its Pondok community members (Samindjaya et al., 2024).

It is important to note that the term Pondok family does not refer to the family of the kyai but rather to the waqf cadres actively contributing to the institution (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). To support the welfare of these cadres, PMDG manages various waqf-based economic units such as

farmland, printing businesses, retail shops, factories, livestock, and service enterprises, all operating under a protective economic principle (Tim Penyusun, 2023). However, it is stipulated in the waqf basyari oath clause that waqf cadres are not entitled to a salary (Durroh, 2016; Tim Peneliti, 2024i). Instead, decisions regarding the welfare of the cadres are entrusted entirely to the wisdom and policies of PMDG leadership. The cadres willingly accept this arrangement, as their initial intention in becoming waqf cadres was not to gain material wealth but to strive for and support PMDG's mission (Tim Peneliti, 2024i).

Next, in addition to rights, the visible structure of identity in waqf cadres consists of various responsibilities and obligations. In general, the duties of PMDG waqf cadres are primarily to believe in, obey, and adhere to the values and decisions made by the leadership (Tim Peneliti, 2024e). They are not allowed to teach at other institutions, engage in political party leadership, join social organizations, or become Civil Servants (ASN) (Azkiyah, 2020); even in matters such as choosing a partner, waqf cadres must receive approval from the Pimpinan Pondok (Diana, 2020). This ensures that the chosen partner understands and accepts the responsibilities of their spouse so as not to interfere with the duties of the cadre. Waqf cadres are assigned tasks within PMDG, which generally consist of three main responsibilities: 1) the duty to teach and educate, 2) the duty to assist the Pondok, and 3) the duty to learn (Tim Peneliti, 2024e).

First, the duty to teach or educate. This responsibility refers to PMDG's identity as an educational institution. As a pesantren (Islamic boarding school), PMDG implements its educational and teaching programs in a holistic 24-hour system. Holistic means comprehensive education, not just classroom teaching. In other words, the totality of life at PMDG constitutes the educational curriculum. Therefore, PMDG's educational curriculum includes formal, informal, non-formal, and hidden curricula (El-Yunusi, 2023; Ismail, 2011; Syarifah, 2016). This means that waqf cadres are responsible for implementing education across all layers of the existing curriculum.

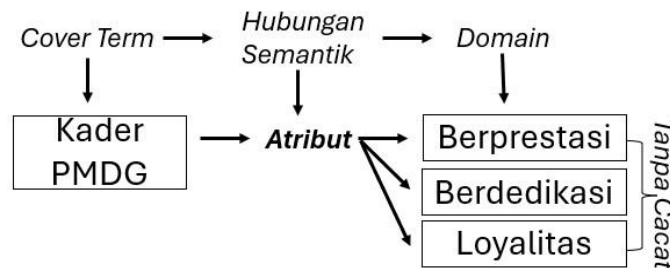
Second, the duty to assist the pesantren. Each waqf cadre, in addition to teaching, is entrusted with managing several affairs of the pesantren (Tim Peneliti, 2024g). This means that each waqf cadre will be assigned to various sectors, including the economic sector, organizational sector, and service sector. For example, waqf cadres may work in the pesantren's business units, the foundation office, or the PMDG health clinic. Occasionally, some waqf cadres are assigned to travel outside the region to carry out tasks related to PMDG's interests or to manage waqf assets of PMDG that are located far from PMDG's main location.

Third, the duty to learn. In addition to the obligation of educating students and assisting the pesantren, waqf cadres are also required to study. This is intended to enhance the skills and competence of the waqf cadres in carrying out their duties. This can be seen in PMDG's annual release through *Warta Dunia* (Wardun), where each year, there is a list of cadres who have started, are currently pursuing, or have completed their studies at the undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral levels, both domestically and abroad (Tim Penyusun, 2022, 2023). Moreover, the learning obligations of the waqf cadres are not limited to formal education but also include various forms of training, internships, workshops, seminars, and other activities. In essence, learning is also a duty for waqf cadres to enhance their personal development, and with the improvement of their abilities, it is expected that the quality of PMDG will also improve.

Second, the metaphysical identity of waqf cadres.

It has been explained earlier that the symbolic identity of the waqf cadres at PMDG is reflected in the structure of rights and obligations. Now, the discussion will continue with the metaphysical identity of the waqf cadres at PMDG. In line with the methodology of this study, the schematic representation of the metaphysical identity of the waqf cadres at PMDG is presented as follows:

Figure 2. The metaphysical attributes of PMDG cadres (semantic relationship between cover-term and domain)



Source: Compiled by the researchers.

In various instances, K.H. Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, the Leader of PMDG (d. 2020), explained that the cadres of waqf must possess three metaphysical identities: achievement, dedication, and loyalty (A. S. Zarkasyi, 2004). Below is an explanation of these three identities:

First, Achievement. Achievement relates to the personal development of the cadres. In principle, PMDG cadres are required to fully realize and develop their potential and expertise in their respective fields (A. S. Zarkasyi, 2004). For instance, a cadre who is an expert in building construction must truly become an expert, as they will be responsible for construction matters at PMDG (Tim Peneliti, 2024b). Another example is when a cadre is assigned to manage a business

unit, such as a building materials store, they must demonstrate their achievement by ensuring that the store generates profits for the institution (Tim Peneliti, 2024a). Similarly, in the field of education, cadres responsible for teaching should think creatively and work hard to achieve success in their teaching endeavors. With the achievements attained by the cadres, they have truly gone through a process of self-improvement, which continues to be pushed towards its peak.

Furthermore, the self-improvement of the cadres is not only achieved through direct assignments (non-academic) but also through formal education (academic). Every year, the cadres at PMDG are given a quota to continue their studies in their respective fields of interest, both domestically and abroad (Tim Penyusun, 2022, 2023). For example, a cadre with an interest in tafsir studies is given the opportunity to pursue a degree in tafsir at the undergraduate, master's, or doctoral level. The expectation is that upon returning from their studies, the cadre will have a positive impact on the teaching and curriculum of tafsir at PMDG (Peneliti, 2024). Similarly, a cadre interested in Arabic calligraphy (khat), after studying calligraphy in Egypt and obtaining a certificate from their teacher, returns to PMDG to introduce a new, better teaching method for khat (Peneliti, 2024). In this way, the cadres are always required to excel and improve themselves, both in direct assignments/fieldwork (non-academic) and through formal education (academic).

If the "achievement" aspect of the metaphysical identity is compared with the symbolic identity of rights and obligations, a clear alignment can be seen. First, the meaning of achievement in the obligations of PMDG's waqf cadres. The three main tasks of the waqf cadres can indeed be interpreted as efforts to achieve success. The task of teaching and educating the students essentially carries the meaning of achievement for the waqf cadres. By teaching and educating, the waqf cadres improve themselves in various aspects. From a knowledge perspective, teaching strengthens the cadre's mastery of the material. Similarly, from a mental skill standpoint, teaching enhances self-confidence, communication skills, and leadership abilities. The task of assisting the pesantren also carries the meaning of achievement.

A waqf cadre assigned to a specific position is expected to provide quality service in that role. In turn, this encourages the cadre to think creatively when managing their responsibilities. Therefore, the various positions assigned to the waqf cadres are, in essence, tools for self-improvement or achievement. The third task, which is learning, also contributes to the achievement. By learning, the cadres will become more accomplished and develop a variety of competencies. Through reading, researching, discussing, and writing, the waqf cadres' achievements will continue

to grow. Second, the meaning of achievement in the rights of the cadres. PMDG consistently supports its cadres in their pursuit of achievement. This support can come in both material and spiritual forms. In other words, the cadres have the full right to strive for success at PMDG.

Second, Dedication. Dedication means that the cadres of PMDG must be willing to dedicate their time, thoughts, and energy to the welfare of the pesantren without a set time limit (Huda et al., 2019; A. S. Zarkasyi, 2004)). This means that the cadres must be prepared at any time, both physically and mentally, to act for the benefit of PMDG. This dedication is reflected in the motto "*Bondo, bahu, pikir, lek perlu sak nyawane pisan*" (Suharto, 2016). Dedication, in this context, can be explained in several aspects as follows:

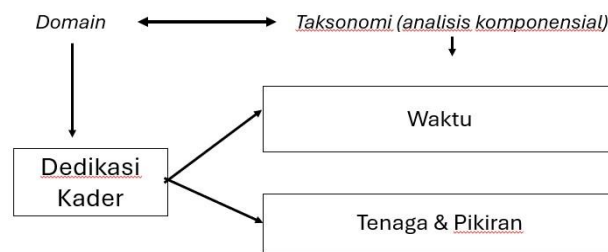


Figure 3. Scheme of Dedication. Source: Compiled by the researchers

The things dedicated by the wakaf cadres are as follows: *First*, dedication of time. Since the cadres have devoted themselves, all their time is dedicated to the welfare of PMDG. They are dedicated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout their lives. They are ready to be assigned at any time and anywhere by the leadership of the pesantren. Second, dedication of thoughts, energy, and even emotions. This relates to the readiness to pour all personal potential into performing tasks at PMDG. The welfare of PMDG is placed as the highest priority, and it is to be fought for above the personal welfare of the cadres. Moreover, an open heart is required when receiving evaluations from the leadership. If mistakes are made, they must be ready for evaluation and willing to make corrections. In this way, the cadres are ready to be led and to lead.

An example of this is the phenomenon of rotation. On various occasions, the leadership of PMDG carries out rotations of the cadres from one task to another (Tim Peneliti, 2024g). A deputy supervisor from a branch may be transferred to the central campus, a cadre assigned to the female campus may be moved to the male campus, or a cadre initially stationed in Java may be sent to Sumatra. In the author's observation, there was no sign that the cadres being rotated were angry, upset, or protested the leadership's decision (Tim Peneliti, 2024h). The cadres tend to take the wisdom and lessons from whatever decisions the leadership makes.

The metaphysical attribute of 'dedication' can be paralleled with the symbolic attributes of the PMDG wakaf cadres. Dedication can be understood as the measure of a person's quality in relation to their rights and obligations. This means that the rights and duties in the areas of education and teaching, assisting the pesantren, and learning are tests for the wakaf cadres. To what extent do the cadres dedicate their thoughts, energy, time, and even life to fulfilling their obligations to PMDG. If any task assigned to a cadre is left unfinished or fails to be carried out, it may raise the question of whether the cadre's dedication to fulfilling their duties is not yet at the expected level. This is where dedication becomes an important benchmark for the wakaf cadres and the success of the programs at PMDG.

Third, Loyalty. Loyalty refers to the obedience and steadfast adherence of the cadre to the system, leadership, and values of PMDG (Peneliti, 2024). Below is the scheme:

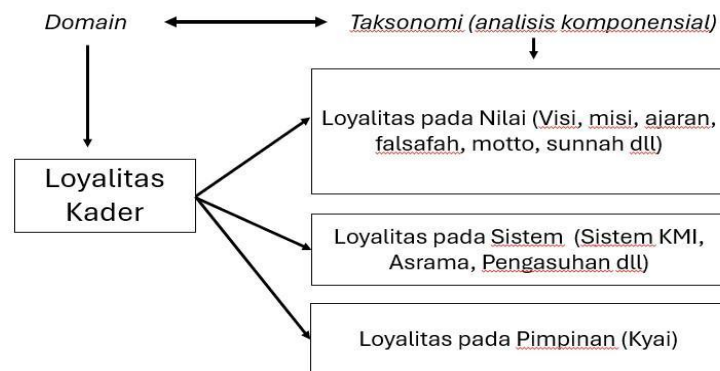


Figure 6. Loyalty Domain Taxonomy Scheme. Source: Compiled by the researchers

The first aspect of loyalty is to the values at PMDG. These values refer to the vision, mission, teachings, philosophy of life, philosophy of education, philosophy of struggle, the pesantren's motto, and the good traditions (*sunnah*) of PMDG. As stated in the PMDG waqf charter, the mandate of the waqf is the vision of PMDG, which is to serve the community and become a place for good deeds and charity (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). Its mission is to be a center for the teaching of religious and general sciences, the Arabic language of the Qur'an, and to maintain the spirit of pesantren (PMDG, 1958).

Additionally, the teachings of PMDG are based on the five core values: sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*), and freedom (Fahmy Zarkasyi et al., 2024; H. F. Zarkasyi et al., 2023; I. Zarkasyi, 2024). The motto of PMDG is to have high morals, good health, broad knowledge, and free thinking (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). Apart from these core values and motto, there are many other teachings in the form of life philosophies at PMDG, which

are often written on the walls of the pesantren buildings (Tim Peneliti, 2024a), such as: "*Berani hidup tak takut mati, hidup sekali hiduplah yang berarti*", "*bondo bahu pikir lek perlu sak nyawane pisan*" "*emoh dijajah,*" "*Jadilah ulama yang intelek, bukan intelek yang tahu agama*", "*Ke Gontor apa yang kau cari?*", "*Gontor tempat perjuangan bukan tempat mencari penghidupan, PMDG berdiri di atas dan untuk semua golongan*" (Suharto, 2016; Tim Peneliti, 2024a).

Furthermore, the values include the five "jangka" (long-term goals) of PMDG, which are education and teaching, cadre development, building construction, khizanatullan (the expansion of waqf), and the pesantren family (Samindjaya et al., 2024; Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). Meanwhile, the traditions (*sunnah of pesantren*) are values that have been lived and practiced in the daily life of the pesantren, such as being punctual for every meeting, helping each other, caring for one another, respecting each other, and greeting salams (Tim Peneliti, 2024b).

Second, the loyalty of the waqf cadres to the system. This refers to the readiness of the cadres to support and uphold the systems that have been established by PMDG. There are various systems at PMDG, such as the teaching system, the dormitory system, the kitchen system, the caregiving system, and the student organization system (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024; I. Zarkasyi, 2024). All these systems are implemented with the approval and knowledge of the leadership. Therefore, the cadres should exhibit high loyalty to the existing systems. For instance, if the current teaching system is Kulliyatul Muallimin Al-Islamiyah (KMI), the cadres should support that system rather than attempt to replace it with a national education system or an international curriculum. However, suggestions for improving the existing systems at PMDG can still be submitted to *kyai* (the leaders of pesantren).

Third, loyalty to the kyai (the leader of the pesantren). At PMDG, the kyai is the leader of all matters in the institution. The leader of the pesantren (after the founder's passing) is the mandatary of the PMDG Waqf Board (I. Zarkasyi, 2024). The pesantren leader's role is to run PMDG as effectively as possible and to periodically submit accountability reports to the Waqf Board as the nadzir (trustee) of the PMDG waqf (Sekretaris Pimpinan, 2024). All decisions related to the placement and duties of the cadres, as determined by the leader of the pesantren, are solely part of the leader's responsibilities. Therefore, the cadres must trust and remain loyal to their leader. It is often said that "*students must trust their teachers and kyai, teachers and cadres must trust the kyai, and the kyai must trust the teachers and cadres, and the kyai must also trust the students*" (A. S. Zarkasyi, 2004). With mutual trust, loyalty between all parties will be established. It is only natural for the cadres to

be loyal to the leadership, where the leader, who is also a cadre who has dedicated themselves, has more experience, greater achievements, and is trusted by the Waqf Board as the leader of PMDG.

From the brief explanation above, it can be understood that loyalty refers to the meanings of trust, belief, commitment, and even strong affection. If this is paralleled with the symbolic identity of the cadres at PMDG, then loyalty is the deepest meaning. All symbolic activities concerning the rights and obligations of the cadres are based on trust in the leadership, commitment to the system and values, and love for PMDG. This means that the cadres, when performing their duties and obligations, fully understand with awareness the intent, purpose, what, how, for what, and why these obligations are carried out. In other words, loyalty is an abstract attribute that contains trust, commitment, belief, and affection.

Among all these identities, there is an important word that the researchers focus on: "*tanpa cacat*" (A. S. Zarkasyi, 2004). This can be interpreted that the ideal cadre is one whose achievements, dedication, and loyalty are flawless. The perfection referred to here is not absolute perfection, as in the perfection of God, but without blemish in this context, refers to the level of ability that a human can achieve. It can also be understood that the dedication of oneself (*wakaf diri*) has become a unique ritual practiced by the cadres at PMDG for almost 100 years. Self-dedication is not merely about surrendering oneself to the institution, but it carries the consequence of self-improvement, maintaining dedication, and loyalty; thus, a distinctive identity emerges that becomes inherent in the cadres who dedicate themselves.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, several interesting findings and conclusions can be drawn. *First*, the self-endowment (*waqf basyari*) practiced by the cadres at PMDG can be considered a rite of passage that fulfills three phases: separation, liminality, and incorporation. *Second*, the cadres who have gone through the three phases of the rite of passage acquire a new status as Kader wakaf (dedicated cadres) or manusia wakaf (people of dedication), with a distinct cultural identity, namely symbolic and metaphysical identities. *Third*, the symbolic identity is the identity that is evident in the unity of the cadres, whose structure can be seen in the rights and duties of the Kader wakaf. The rights they gain include welfare as part of the Pondok family, while their duties are summarized in three main obligations: to educate the students, assist the Pondok, and study. *Fourth*, in addition to the symbolic identity, the kader wakaf of PMDG also possesses a metaphysical identity, which

includes the meanings understood as part of the self-dedication identity. These meanings encompass: 1) achievement, which refers to continuous self-improvement to bring out the full potential of the cadres in their assigned non-academic tasks and formal academic learning; 2) dedication, which involves readiness to carry out any task, anywhere and anytime; 3) loyalty, meaning that the cadres must remain loyal to the values system at PMDG, loyal to the leadership, and to the management system at PMDG, without flaw. *Fifth*, the identity of 'achievement' signifies self-development, the identity of 'dedication' signifies seriousness and sacrifice, and the identity of 'loyalty' signifies trust, conviction, commitment, and love. As the goal of ethnographic research is to learn from a unique culture possessed by a particular community, this study can offer theoretical contributions to the fields of organizational management, Islamic management, pesantren management, and, specifically, Islamic human resource management. This study has several limitations, including the semantic relationships discussed between domains in the theme of self-dedication, where only one relationship, that of cultural identity, has been explored. However, in ethnographic research, many other aspects remain to be examined, such as gender relationships, rational relationships, cause-and-effect, motivation, space, and more. This opens opportunities for future research to focus on these unexplored elements.

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