Dismantling the Relationship between Kiai and Santri: A Critical Review of the Social and Cultural Dynamics of Pesantren in East Java

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dinamika hubungan antara Kiai dan santri di pesantren tradisional. Penelitian ini mendekonstruksi hubungan Kiai dan Santri dalam konteks sosial-kultural Indonesia. Melalui pendekatan kritis, penelitian ini mengkaji dinamika kekuasaan dan pengaruh budaya yang mewarnai hubungan tersebut. Dengan studi kasus, penelitian ini mengungkap kompleksitas hubungan Kiai dan Santri yang melampaui relasi guru-murid tradisional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membongkar asumsi-asumsi yang mendasari relasi tradisional ini, serta mengungkap struktur kekuasaan dan dinamika kultural yang ada. Melalui metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hubungan Kiai dan Santri di pesantren tradisional dibangun atas dasar nilai-nilai religius dan kultural yang kuat. Kiai memegang peran sentral sebagai pemimpin spiritual dan guru, sementara Santri menempatkan diri sebagai murid yang patuh dan hormat. Hubungan ini ditandai dengan hierarki yang jelas, di mana Kiai memiliki otoritas dan pengaruh yang besar terhadap santri kiai dan santri. Kemudian relasi Kiai dan Santri tidak hanya bersifat hierarkis, tetapi juga kompleks dan dinamis, dengan adanya negosiasi dan perlawanan dari santri terhadap otoritas kiai. Santri, yang sering kali diposisikan dalam kekuasaan subordinat (Patron-Klien), menunjukkan kemampuan untuk menegosiasikan identitas dan ruang mereka dalam struktur pesantren. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya memahami relasi ini dalam konteks perubahan sosial dan kultural yang lebih luas, serta mendorong rekonstruksi hubungan yang lebih setara antara kiai dan santri. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap studi pendidikan Islam

dan dinamika sosial di Indonesia, serta membuka ruang untuk diskusi tentang redefinisi Kiai sesuai tinjauan pendidikan pesantren yang relevan.
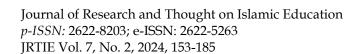**Kata Kunci:** Kiai; Santri; Dekontruksi Sosial; Budaya; Pesantren Jawa Timur

Abstract: This study aims to reveal the dynamics of the relationship between Kiai and santri in traditional pesantren. This research deconstructs the relationship between Kiai and Santri in the Indonesian socio-cultural context. Through a critical approach, this research examines the dynamics of power and cultural influences that color the relationship. Using a case study, this research reveals the complexity of the Kiai and Santri relationship that goes beyond the traditional teacher-student relationship. The research aims to unpack the assumptions underlying this traditional relationship, as well as reveal the power structures and cultural dynamics that exist. Through qualitative methods, data was collected from in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The results show that the relationship between Kiai and Santri in traditional pesantren is built on the basis of strong religious and cultural values. Kiai holds a central role as a spiritual leader and teacher, while Santri places themselves as obedient and respectful students. This relationship is characterized by a clear hierarchy, where Kiai has great authority and influence over both Kiai and santri. Then the relationship between Kiai and Santri is not only hierarchical, but also complex and dynamic, with the negotiation and resistance of santri to the kiai's authority. Santri, who are often positioned in subordinate power (Patron-Client), demonstrate the ability to negotiate their identity and space within the pesantren structure. This research highlights the importance of understanding this relationship in the broader context of social and cultural change, and encourages the reconstruction of a more equal relationship between kiai and santri. The findings contribute to the study of Islamic education and social dynamics in Indonesia, and open space for discussion on the redefinition of Kiai according to relevant pesantren education reviews.
Keywords: Kiai; Santri; Deconstruction Social; Culture; Pesantren East Java

A. Introduction

Pesantren as traditional Islamic educational institutions have a very important role in shaping the character and values of society in Indonesia, especially in East Java. In the social and cultural context of Indonesia, pesantren is not only a place for religious education, but also serves as a center for the development of culture, identity, and community solidarity. The relationship between kiai and santri in pesantren is often seen as a sacred and respectful relationship, where kiai function as teachers, spiritual guides, and community

leaders, while santri are positioned as students who obey and respect the authority of kiai. However, along with the times and increasingly complex social dynamics, this relationship requires a more critical review to understand the various layers of meaning involved in it.[1]

The relationship between Kiai and santri in traditional pesantren is often described as a sacred teacher-student relationship, filled with respect and obedience. Kiai is seen as a figure of great authority and influence, while santri submit to the rules and guidance provided. This relationship model, shaped by traditional values and local culture, has been the foundation for the survival of pesantren for generations. However, along with the times and socio-cultural changes, the relationship between Kiai and santri in traditional pesantren began to experience complex dynamics. The emergence of various issues, such as the influence of globalization, technological advances, and changes in the mindset of the younger generation, raises critical questions about the relevance and sustainability of the Kiai and santri relationship model that has been adopted.[2]

Power dynamics in this relationship can be seen from various aspects, including authority, identity, and tradition. Kiai, as the central figure, often has strong authority in determining the direction of education and religious practices in pesantren. However, this power is not absolute. Santri, although trapped in an identity construction that places them in a subordinate position, also show various forms of resistance and negotiation.[3] They attempt to negotiate their identity and space within the pesantren structure, creating a complex and non-static dynamic. In addition, social and cultural changes that occur in society also contribute to the transformation of the relationship between kiai and santri. Easier access to information and technology has

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[1] Nurcholish Majid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), https://doi.org/10.1088/1751-8113/44/8/085201.

[2] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren : Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, Ed. Rev., (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011).

[3] Alexander R Arifianto, "Practicing What It Preaches? Understanding the Contradictions between Pluralist Theology and Religious Intolerance within Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 2 (December 15, 2017): 241–64, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.241-264.
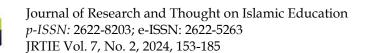
changed the way of thinking and behavior of the younger generation, including santri. They no longer only receive information from kiai, but can also access various other sources of information through the internet and social media. This encourages santri to be more critical and active in questioning the norms and traditions that exist in pesantren. This shift shows that the relationship between kiai and santri is not a static relationship, but continues to evolve along with broader social changes.[4]

The occurrence of socio-cultural changes and the dynamics of the Kiai-santri relationship, among others due to globalization, with the rapid flow of information and culture, has had a significant impact on people's lives, including pesantren. Easier access to information and technology has changed the way of thinking and behavior of the younger generation, including santri. They no longer only receive information and knowledge from Kiai, but can also access various other sources of information through the internet and social media. This change in mindset poses a challenge for Kiai in maintaining their authority and influence over santri. Santris exposed to global information and culture may have different views and interpretations of religious values and traditions taught in pesantren. This can trigger conflicts and differences in views between Kiai and santri.[5]

Changes in power and cultural dynamics in Kiai-santri relationships. The existing reality of Kiai and santri relationships in traditional pesantren is shaped by complex power and cultural dynamics. Kiai, as spiritual leaders and teachers, have great authority and influence over santri. They have the authority to determine the rules, curriculum, and activities in the pesantren. Santri, as students, are expected to submit to the rules and guidance given by

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[4] Muhammad Madarik and Hairul Puadi, "Modernisasi (Reorientasi) Pendidikan Pesantren," *Jurnal Pusaka* 12, no. 1 (2022): 1–18.

[5] S Hamdi, "The Recovery of a Non-Violent Identity for an Islamist Pesantren in an Age of Terror," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 69, no. 6 (2015): 692–710, https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2015.1058339.
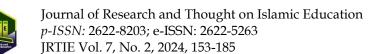
Kiai.[6] This relationship model is built on the basis of local traditional and cultural values that emphasize the importance of obedience, respect, and obedience to the teacher. Kiai are seen as figures who have high knowledge and wisdom, so their words and actions are considered as guidelines for santri. However, the power and cultural dynamics in the relationship between Kiai and santri do not always run in the same direction. The emergence of different views between Kiai and santri on the interpretation of religious values and traditions can lead to conflict and disagreement. Santris may want the freedom to develop their own views and interpretations, while Kiai emphasize the importance of respecting the traditions and rules that have prevailed in the pesantren.[7]

Then the conflict and differences in views between Kiai and santri can occur due to several factors, including: 1) Differences in Interpretation of Religious Values: Differences in interpretation of religious values can arise due to the influence of globalization, technological advances, and changes in the mindset of the younger generation. Santris who are exposed to global information and culture may have different views and interpretations of religious values taught in pesantren. 2) Differences in Socio-Economic Background: Differences in socio-economic background can lead to differences in views on the way of life, moral values, and the role of pesantren in society.[8] Santris who come from different socio-economic backgrounds may have different expectations of pesantren. 3) Influence of Changing Times: The changing times pose new challenges for pesantren in adjusting to the needs of

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[6] J C C Rodrigues, "Effects of Kiai on Jumping Performance and Striking Reaction Time in Karate Athletes," *Ido Movement for Culture* 22, no. 1 (2022): 27–35, https://doi.org/10.14589/ido.22.1.5.

[7] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Traditional Islamic Education in the Malav Archipelago: Its Contribution to the Integration of the Malay World," *Indonesia Circle. School of Oriental & African Studies. Newsletter* 19, no. 53 (1990): 19–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/03062849008729746.

[8] Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin et al., "Synchronization the Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah ' Aliyah Learning Akidah Akhlak : Facing The Challenges of Moral Degradation in the Era of Society 5 . 0," *JRTIE (Journal of Research and Thought on Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2024): 61–90.

the times. Kiai are faced with the challenge of maintaining traditional values and adjusting to the demands of an increasingly modern era.[9]

In this context, the charisma possessed by kiai in the course of history causes them to occupy leadership positions in their environment. In addition to being a religious leader and leader of the village community, the kiai also leads a boarding school where he lives. In this boarding school environment, the kiai is not only recognized as a teacher teaching religious knowledge, but is also considered by the santri as a father or his own parents. As a father who has a wide range of influence on all students, placing kiai as a respected, respected, obeyed and a source of scientific guidance for students.[10]

Such a position of kiai is actually a patron, a place where santri depend on. The relationship between santri and kiai is especially based on the justification of religious teachings, such as the student-teacher relationship in the tarekat environment. Because of the authority of the kiai, a student what is not pai The position of the santri is a client for him, the kiai as a patron is not only limited to the lives of the santri, but also the surrounding community Kahipura the parents of the santri. In addition to religious knowledge, kiai are also proficient in medicine, have magic or other things that are considered extraordinary, often strengthening their position as patrons of their community. The relationship between the leader and the led in such a cultural orientation, at least, gave birth to a patron-client relationship model leadership relationship. Definitively, James C. Scott explains the patron-client relationship pattern as follows:[11] *"A reciprocal relationship between two people can be defined as a special case of extended friendship, in which one individual of higher socio-economic status (patron), uses his influence and resources to provide protection or benefits to another individual of lower*

[9] Abdurahman Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren Perhelatan Agama Dan Tradisi*, Cetakan 1 (Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta : LKiS Yogyakarta, 2004).

[10] B Irawan, "Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren), Sufism and Environmental Conservation Practices in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022), https://doi.org/10.4102/HTS.V78I4.7073.

[11] Scott James, "The Erosion of Patron-Clien Bonds and Social Change in Rural Southeast Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXII, no. 1 (n.d.).

status (client), in which case the client has an obligation to reciprocate by providing general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron."

Referring to Scott's explanation above, the role of patrons in the life of leadership in Islamic boarding schools is carried out by kiai or kiai families. As stated by Dhofier, kiai are patrons because they have absolute authority and power in coloring the boarding school institution. No one opposes kiai, let alone santri in the pesantren environment, except kiai who have greater power and authority.[12] With the sources of authority and power owned, it means that kiai are normatively placed in the highest status of other elements in the boarding school environment. From this explanation, it appears that the relationship between kiai as patrons and santri as clients is strengthened by an institutionalized value system, namely the tradition of *sami'na wa atho'na* (listening and obeying). In the current era, there has been a paradigm shift in the discussion above, so it is necessary to look at the phenomenon of deconstruction of the Kiai and santri relationship which is critically reviewed based on the dynamics of power and culture.
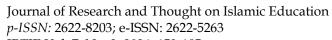
B. The Construction of Kiai and Santri Relationships in East Java Pesantren

The relationship between kiai and santri in pesantren in East Java is a complex social phenomenon, which includes aspects of education, power, culture, and identity. Kiai serve as spiritual leaders and religious authorities, while santri serve as students who seek knowledge. However, this relationship is not simply hierarchical; it involves dynamic social interactions and is often influenced by broader social and cultural conditions.[13] Kiai have in-depth knowledge of religious texts and Islamic traditions, so they are often seen as the guardians of norms and values in pesantren. As a central figure, kiai not only teaches religious knowledge, but also acts as an advisor who assists santri in

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[12] Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren : Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*.

[13] M F Isbah, "Pesantren in Contemporary Indonesia: Negotiating Between Equity and the Market," *Education in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-1878-2_8.
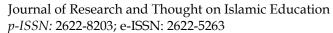
understanding and practicing Islamic teachings in daily life. In this context, kiai often have significant power in determining the direction of education and social norms in pesantren. However, this power is not absolute. Santris, especially in the modern era, show resistance and a desire to negotiate their position within the existing power structure.[14]

In this regard, power structure is an important aspect to analyze. Kiai, as authority figures, have a strong position in carrying out various practices, including decision-making in education and the establishment of social norms. However, in many cases, santri also have the potential to offer new perspectives and challenge traditions that are considered rigid. Social change and rapid advances in information technology have had a significant impact on this relationship. Easier access to information through the internet and social media has resulted in a more critical and active generation of santri, who not only receive information from kiai but also seek knowledge from other sources. This creates tension in the kiai-santri relationship, where santri feel compelled to question kiai authority and existing traditions. In this context, the relationship between kiai and santri becomes an arena of negotiation, where santri seek to gain recognition for their aspirations and identity.[15]

The social and cultural dynamics in pesantren also greatly affect the relationship between kiai and santri. Pesantren is not only a place of religious education, but also a cultural development center that develops local wisdom values. Kiai often become the guardians of tradition, while santri act as a bridge between tradition and modernity. In their daily interactions, kiai and santri are involved in various activities that bind the community, such as recitation, celebration of Islamic holidays, and other social activities. These activities not only provide opportunities for santri to learn, but also strengthen social ties

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[14] A H A Sabiq, "Pesantren Students' Religious Beliefs and Attitudes toward Learning English in Indonesia," *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature* 28, no. 1 (2022): 60–74, https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2022-2801-05.

[15] Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin et al., "Reorienting Pesantren Education In East Java: A Critical Analysis of the Thought of Zamakhsyari Dhofier and Abdurrahman Mas'ud," *AL-Fikru: Jurnal Ilmiah* 18, no. 1 (2024): 41–63.
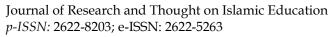
within the pesantren community. Although there is a strong relationship between kiai and santri, tensions remain due to differences in views and goals. Santris may feel that the kiai's teaching methods no longer suit their needs, which are evolving with the changing times.[16]

In the modern era, the relationship between kiai and santri is increasingly complex. Santris now have greater access to information and critical thinking from various sources. With technological advances, they can access different schools of Islamic thought and religious perspectives. This makes santri more able to question traditions and norms that are considered irrelevant to current social conditions. For example, in the context of education, santri may feel that the kiai's approach to teaching religious knowledge should be more inclusive and interactive. They want methods that do not rely solely on lectures, but also involve discussion and active participation. This shift shows that the relationship between kiai and santri is not static, but continues to evolve along with broader social changes.[17]

The identity of santri is also an important focus in analyzing this relationship. Santris are not only seen as students, but also as individuals with aspirations and potential. They come from various cultural and social backgrounds, thus bringing diverse perspectives to interactions with kiai. This process of identity negotiation often involves dialog between kiai and santri. Santris who are more critical and open to change encourage kiai to consider new perspectives in religious teaching and practice. On the other hand, kiai also have a responsibility to guide santri to stay connected to tradition while opening up space for innovation and renewal. This process creates an

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[16] Sutomo Sutomo et al., "Religious-Sociocultural Networks and Social Capital Enhancement in Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (June 25, 2024): 137–48, https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i1.19997.

[17] Florian Pohl, "Islamic Education and Civil Society: Reflections on the Pesantren Tradition in Contemporary Indonesia," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (August 2006): 389–409, https://doi.org/10.1086/503882.

environment where an exchange of ideas can take place, so the relationship between kiai and santri can become more collaborative.[18]

However, while there are many opportunities for positive transformation in this relationship, challenges remain. The tension between tradition and modernity is often a source of conflict. Kiai may feel threatened by changes proposed by santri, while santri feel pressured by norms that are perceived as restrictive. These challenges can be overcome through open dialog and a willingness to listen to each other. Kiai and santri need to work together to find a balance between maintaining traditional values and adapting to social change. By creating an environment that supports the exchange of ideas, pesantren can become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the younger generation.

In addition, it is important to understand that the relationship between kiai and santri is not only influenced by internal factors in the pesantren, but also by the broader social and political context. Government policies, social developments, and community dynamics can affect the way pesantren operate and how kiai and santri interact. In some cases, pesantren can be fertile ground for radical or extremist ideas, while on the other hand, they can also be centers of moderate and tolerant thinking. Therefore, an analysis of this relationship must take into account the various external factors that can affect the internal dynamics of pesantren.[19]

The construction of the relationship between kiai and santri in pesantren in East Java is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Through an analysis that includes aspects of power, culture, and identity, we can understand how this relationship is formed and develops along with social and cultural changes. Kiai, as a spiritual authority, has an important role in guiding santri, but santri

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[18] B Basri, "DATING PRACTICES: A MORAL NEGOTIATION IN PESANTREN," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 2 (2024): 671–94, https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i2.1167.

[19] Sriyanto, "Religious-Nationalist Character Building Model on Pondok Pesantren Based School to Reduce Radicalism in Kendal Regency, Central Java Provinces," *International Journal of Engineering and Technology(UAE)* 7, no. 4 (2018): 182–85, https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i4.15.21443.
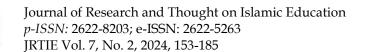
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also have the capacity to negotiate and resist the existing power structure.[20] Thus, this relationship is not a static relationship, but rather an arena of interaction full of possible changes. Why building an egalitarian relationship between Kiai and Santri is important, it is based on the value of building values, including ;

1. **Effective Education**: The construction of good relationships helps create a conducive learning environment. When students feel valued and listened to, they are more motivated to learn and actively participate in the educational process.

2. **Identity Reinforcement**: The constructive relationship between kiai and santri supports the development of santri identity. In positive interactions, santri can explore their values and beliefs, and discover their role in society.

3. **Adaptation to Change**: In the modern era, society undergoes rapid changes. The construction of good relationships allows santri to ask questions, express views, and adapt to new values without neglecting tradition.

4. **Dialogue and Negotiation**: Healthy relationship construction creates space for dialog and negotiation. This is important to overcome differences in views, where santri can provide valuable input for kiai regarding teaching practices and methods.

5. **Pesantren Culture Development**: A strong relationship between kiai and santri can strengthen pesantren culture. Kiai as a leader can guide santri to internalize local wisdom values while remaining open to innovation.

6. **Santri Empowerment**: The construction of equitable and inclusive relationships can empower santri. In a balanced relationship, santri can feel they have a voice and contribute to decision-making in the pesantren.

7. **Radicalization Prevention**: Good relationships can prevent potential radicalization. By having open channels of communication, kiai and santri

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[20] M R Purwanto, "Optimization of Student Character Education through the Pesantren Program at the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia," *Review of International Geographical Education Online* 11, no. 5 (2021): 2829–37, https://doi.org/10.48047/rigeo.11.05.179.

can discuss extreme ideas and help steer santri thinking in a more moderate direction.

8. **Sustainable Development**: In the context of community development, constructive relationships between kiai and santri can produce future leaders who are more sensitive to social and cultural issues, contributing to sustainable development.

It is important for pesantren to create space for dialog and collaboration between kiai and santri, so that this relationship can develop into a more equitable and inclusive one. In this way, pesantren will not only become places of religious education, but also centers of social and cultural development that are responsive to the dynamics of modern society.[21] This study explores the relationship between kiai and santri and encourages the development of better educational practices in pesantren that can accommodate the needs and aspirations of the younger generation. Through the recognition and understanding of the complexity of this relationship, it is expected that pesantren can adapt to the changing times without losing their identity and traditional values that have been preserved so far. Thus, the relationship between kiai and santri can be a model of productive collaboration in facing the challenges and demands of an increasingly complex era.

C. Deconstruction of Kiai and Santri Patron-Client Review in Pesantren

Referring to the phenomenon of deconstruction of kiai and santri, it is not far from the scope of pesantren education, where the values contained in Islamic boarding schools, if we look closely, contain three elements that lead to the formation of a patron-client relationship between kiai and santri, as Scott said. First, patron-client relationships are based on unequal exchanges, which reflect differences in status.[22] A client, in this case the santri, has received many

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[21] I Zaki, "Islamic Community-Based Business Cooperation and Sustainable Development Goals: A Case of Pesantren Community in Indonesia," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 38, no. 4 (2022): 621–32, https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-12-2021-0218.

[22] Muhamad Yasin and Muhammad Nabil Khasbulloh, "Constructing Ethical Critical Thinking at Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 127–44, https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v8i2.19028.
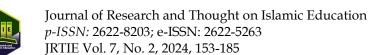
services from the patron, the kiai, so that the client is bound and dependent on the patron. Second, the patron-client relationship is personal. The personalized pattern of reciprocity between kiai-santri creates a sense of trust and dependence in the relationship mechanism. This can be seen in the culture of santri respect for kiai which tends to be an individual cult. Third, patron relationships are widespread, flexible and without time limits. This is possible because the socialization of values when becoming a santri runs for years. A form of value that is always adhered to by santri, for example, the absence of the courage of santri to argue about any matter with the kiai or refute it because it can *kuwalat (java language)* and the knowledge is not useful. A curse is considered heavy, if it is thrown by the kiai to the santri. It should be noted that experts define the patron-client relationship pattern as a relationship that exists between one individual or group against another individual or group, where one party is positioned as a patron or superior while the other party is positioned as a client or subordinate.[23]

From this explanation, it can be understood that santri recognize and accept the sources owned by their kiai, so that if the patron influences the client, the client accepts and recognizes this influence consciously or voluntarily. The sources referred to can be in the form of value systems, organizational structures and kiai power. The kiai's ability to occupy a patron position is because he has resources that are not owned by the person he influences or controls (client).[24] The three factors underlying the patron-client relationship in pesantren are certainly visible in the type of leadership carried out in managing pesantren institutions. With the emphasis on the dominance of kiai (kiai family) and the strong emphasis on tradition, finally the leadership that emerges is paternalistic in nature where a kiai has the status of a protector, teacher, and

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[23] James, "The Erosion of Patron-Clien Bonds and Social Change in Rural Southeast Asia."

[24] Pam Nilan, "The 'Spirit of Education' in Indonesian Pesantren," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30, no. 2 (March 2009): 219–32, https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690802700321.

father. This means the togetherness of the members, their position as subordinates in the pesantren, while the leader is above the members.[25]

In the context of Patron will always obtain a special position in society. Even this patronage pattern between kiai and the community is not limited to territorial areas, it can even cross cities and provinces. The influence of kiai leadership and the wider kiai network makes it easier for them to establish communication with outside parties, both government and private. The kiai's existence and position make it easy for him to act as an "agent" conveying "government" messages about development, for example, and in some cases the community is more receptive to development programs and government programs when delivered by a kiai. This shows how "kiai" in the construction of the classification of Javanese society has a quite special position.[26]

The positive aspects of paternalistic leadership can be that a leader shows the weight of a considerable sense of responsibility and personal attention to his followers. He provides the best protection to his followers to maintain the values of unity and roundness of the group.[27] If a paternalistic leader has a prominent advantage over others, then his followers will increase their trust in him. While the negative aspect of paternalistic leadership is when left by the leader, the members feel displaced and messy. The uncertainty of the fate of members including the organization as a result of the leader's excessive habit of paying attention to his group, resulting in the creation of an attitude of hanging or depending on the leader, like a father-son relationship. The death of a father has left the child uncertain.[28]

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[25] Umar Umar, "Eksistensi Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia (Perspekstif Sejarah Pendidikan Nasional)," *Lentera Pendidikan : Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 19, no. 1 (2016): 16–29, https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2016v19n1a2.

[26] Umar.

[27] A Karim, "Altruistic Works, Religion, and Corruption: Kiais' Leadership to Shape Anti-Corruption Values in Pesantren," *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2238968.

[28] I Abubakar, "Pesantren Resilience: The Path to Prevent Radicalism and Violent Extremism," *Studia Islamika*, no. 2 (2020): 397–404, https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.16766.

In principle, the father-son relationship contains the segregation of some groups of people in the position of officials *(priyayi)* and most in the position of commoners *(wong cilik).* In royal times, the king often used a mapping of his position with his subjects. The people were divided into several classes consisting of peasant families. They not only became the tribute-giving class, but also contributed their energy for community service.[29] Thus, the position of the king was more honorable than that of the people. Here the relationship between king and servant began to emerge. Although in the context of pesantren, the patron-client relationship is not entirely the case, it is even said to have been cultivated until now.[30] This model is often expressed in the language of Sufism, the expression of Ali bin Abi Talib's friend: "I am willing to become a slave of my teacher who has taught me one letter, it is up to him, I want to be sold, freed or remain a slave." The kiai-santri relationship tends to be maintained for life. It is a moral obligation for santri to bring tribute (orator) to the kiai and they are also obliged to do community service at his house.[31]
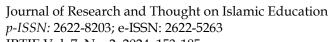
In Islamic boarding schools, there is another type of relationship besides the kiai-santri relationship, namely the kiai-khadam relationship. This relationship further strengthens the kiai's position as a patron compared to the kiai-santri relationship model.[32] Santri not only follow the customs of the boarding school, but at the same time work all day for the kiai's life, and it is an obligation for him. The khadam's position as a client always expects blessings or ngalap barokah from the kiai. Regarding the context of the relationship between kiai and santri, Dardiri states that the relationship between teachers

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[29] Imam Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (December 8, 2021): 185–212, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212.

[30] Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin, "Urgensi Historical Thinking Skills Bagi Peserta Didik Dalam Pembelajaran Sejaran Kebudayaan Islam," *Muta'allim: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, no. 2 (2022): 96–114, https://doi.org/10.18860/mjpai.v1i2.1125.

[31] Imam Amrusi Jailani, "Pendidikan Pesantren Sebagai Potret Konsistensi Budaya Di Tengah Himpitan Modernitas," *Karsa* 20, no. 1 (2012): 76–87.

[32] A Karim, "Spiritual Leadership Behaviors in Religious Workplace: The Case of Pesantren," *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2076285.

and santri is very familiar, free and democratic, except for the santri's relationship with the kiai and his family, there are still authoritarian traits and the kiai is seen as a sacred person. This pattern of relationship can create fanaticism for santri, for example, santri dare to die defending their kiai. The kiai-santri relationship is often clearly illustrated by the designation *nunggal guru* (one teacher) and *nunggal banyu* (one knowledge with the same source).[33]
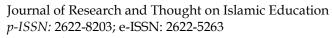
Indeed, it can be likened to a kingdom, where the kiai is the top holder of power who has absolute authority in the life and environment of the pesantren. Therefore, the santri must show respect to the kiai, both in religious, social and personal life. It is a great disgrace to forget such a bond, in addition to losing the blessing of the teacher.[34] Even though the position and function of each leader have been arranged according to their field of work, the authoritarian element in the life of the pesantren is still felt strongly. Kiai is the sole owner of the boarding school. No matter how democratized the leadership structure in the pesantren, there is still a distance between the kiai and his family on the one hand and the santri or ustad on the other.[35]

The pondok pesantren tradition also holds feudal elements wrapped in religious clothing or religio feudalism. This can be observed from daily life, when santri meet kiai, they do not call it meet or nemoni but sowan. Likewise, there are still recognized levels have using language, namely kromo inggil, kromo and ngoko. On the other hand, there are still elements of feudalism such as the designation romo kiai, and his son is called gus, which is similar to the designation raden for the noble class in Java In another aspect, hierarchical awareness arises among santri, namely the feeling of respect and obedience of santri to kiai is absolute and cannot be broken. This attitude of the santri is not

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[33] Majid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren*.

[34] Muhammad Abdullah, Mudjahirin Thohir, and Rukiyah, "The Arom of Islamization of Java in The Literature of Pesantren: Study of The Rahman Faithur Book by K.H. Sholeh Darat," ed. T.R. Soeprobowati, B. Warsito, and T. Triadi Putranto, *E3S Web of Conferences* 317 (November 5, 2021): 03008, https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202131703008.

[35] F M Manshur, "Typical Literary Works of Pesantren on Righteousness Teaching within Cultural Transformation," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 11, no. 4 (2020): 114–48, https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85098731476.
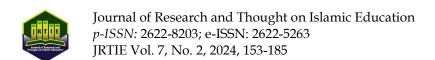
only a manifestation of total submission to the kiai, who is considered to have authority that is not possessed by the santri, but more because of the students' belief in the kiai as a channel for God's mercy to be bestowed on the santri in this world and have the hereafter. This obedience is understood as to the kiai's love and piety. The santri's trust in the kiai is based on the belief that the kiai is an alim who was chosen and holds an Islamic boarding school.[36]

The above problems are increasingly complex with the challenges of the times, where the dynamics of relationships in a modern context will lead to how the relationship between Kiai and santri changes along with the times, the influence of globalization, technological advances, and changes in the mindset of the younger generation. There is a shift in the relationship model, a shift from the traditional hierarchical and authoritarian relationship model to a more democratic and participatory relationship model. Coupled with several new paradigms related to pesantren education, where many modern pesantren are directly managed by business managers, which certainly creates a new upheaval in the review of pesantren education in the modern era.[37]

The influence of globalization and technology has triggered significant changes in the way young people, including santri, think and behave. Easy access to information through the internet and social media has opened new horizons for them, no longer relying solely on Kiai as a source of knowledge. This encourages the emergence of a critical and active mindset, where santri begin to question the rules and traditions that apply in pesantren. They have different views and interpretations of religious values and traditions taught, along with the open access to various ideologies and global culture. This change challenges the traditional hierarchical and authoritarian relationship model between Kiai and santri, demanding adaptation and more intensive

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[36] M Falikul Isbah, "Pesantren in the Changing Indonesian Context: History and Current Developments," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 8, no. 1 (June 22, 2020): 65, https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.5629.

[37] Abdul A'la, *Pembaruan Pesantren,* ed. Zoel Alba, Cetakan 1 (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2006).

dialog to bridge differences in views and create a harmonious and productive relationship.[38]

D.   Review of the Heirarchy of Kiai and Santri Socio-cultural Pesantren
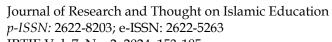
Kiai is a person who owns an Islamic boarding school, and masters religious knowledge and consistently carries out religious teachings. However, kiai is another term for those who understand religious knowledge without owning a boarding school or not living and teaching in a boarding school. These latter kiai teach religious knowledge by preaching from village to village, delivering religious fatwas to the wider community.[39] Hence the nickname given to him is Kiai Teko or Kendi. These preaching kiai are likened to a pitcher of water, which always gives it to everyone who needs it, by pouring water into a glass The lecture delivered by this kiai is a religious watering for the community. Meanwhile, the nickname of the kiai who has a boarding school institution is Kiai Sumur. The existence of this kiai is silent at home (boarding school), and the community will come to the boarding school intending to become students to get religious knowledge. It is like people who are thirsty will take water from the well. People who need religious knowledge must come to the kiai's residence themselves.[40]
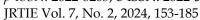
In addition, the kiai is called an Ulama, which is a person who not only devotes his life to worship solely for the sake of Allah, but also studies religious knowledge and has the authority to interpret verses of the Qur'an and Al-Hadith to become a reference for the general public. In Indonesia, the organization of ulama is gathered in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This organization functions to legitimize government policies on religious issues, such as halal labels on every food product. MUI membership consists of clerics,

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[38] Moh Khasan, "Pesantren, Sufisme Dan Tantangan Modernitas," *Dimas: Jurnal Pemikiran Agama Untuk Pemberdayaan* Vol. 10, no. 1 (2010): 111–32.

[39] M Asror Yusuf, "The Dynamic Views of Kiais in Response to the Government Regulations for the Development of Pesantren," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2020): 1–32, https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.6716.

[40] M L Fauzi, "Traditional Islam in Javanese Society: The Roles of Kyai and Pesantren in Preserving Islamic Tradition and Negotiating Modernity," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2012): 125–44, https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.1.125-144.

intellectual groups and community leaders, who have expertise in their fields. Because the existence of the MUI organization is closer to the government's power, it is referred to by the public as a formal ulama, that is, the validity of ulama members depends on the recognition of the authorities. In Indonesia, there are many ulama scattered in various regions, but they are not members of the Indonesian Ulema Council.[41]
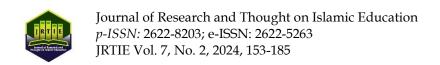
The title of a person's ulama grows and develops on the basis of gradual recognition from the community for his religious knowledge. According to Horikhosi, the difference between ulama and kiai lies in their social function. An ulama plays a more important role in small-scale communities, such as in rural areas. Meanwhile, the social function of kiai is greater than that of ulama because it is supported by charismatic forces. [42]The kiai's range of influence is greater than that of the ulama, although they occupy the status of a moral force and call for virtue. Horikhosi's distinction between ulama and kiai seems to be blurred in the criteria and types of the two groups. If the term ulama is interpreted as a functional position held by kiai, then the title kiai has a dual role, namely as the leader of the boarding school, acting as an ulama in the santri environment. And kiai as ulama have a role outside the boarding school education system, in this case cooperating with other institutions in carrying out the function of religious expert.[43]

Conceptually, there is a sharp difference between the terms ulama and kiai. The term kiai was born out of a social agreement that has been prevalent in the community, as has been explained and in the following developments the term was attributed to religious experts. This is different from the term ulama, which tends to be textual, whose scope of understanding is derived from

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[41] Rahmat Abd. Rahman, "Metode Ijtihad Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia," *Nukhbatul 'Ulum* 2, no. 1 (2016): 159–66, https://doi.org/10.36701/nukhbah.v2i1.11.

[42] S Futaqi, "Multicultural Leadership of Kiai for Managing Diversity in Indonesian Context: Spiritual, Intellectual, and Social Integration," *Cultural Management: Science and Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 57–73, https://doi.org/10.30819/cmse.6-2.04.

[43] A Fauzi, "E-Learning in Pesantren: Learning Transformation Based on the Value of Pesantren," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1114/1/012062.

references to God's revelation. The Qur'an in Surah Al-Fathir, verse 28, mentions the word ulama, with the expression:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ كَذٰلِكَۗ اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰٓؤُاۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ غَفُوْرٌ

Terjemah Kemenag : (Demikian pula) di antara manusia, makhluk bergerak yang bernyawa, dan hewan-hewan ternak ada yang bermacam-macam warnanya (dan jenisnya). Di antara hamba-hamba Allah yang takut kepada-Nya, hanyalah para ulama.) Sesungguhnya Allah Mahaperkasa lagi Maha Pengampun. Yang dimaksud dengan para ulama adalah orang yang mempunyai pengetahuan tentang syariat serta fenomena alam dan sosial yang menghasilkan rasa takut disertai pengagungan kepada Allah Swt. (Fatir/35:28).[44]

Then reinforced by the words of the Prophet: *Al-Ulama' warosatul Abiya'* Because kiai are people who have religious knowledge and teach it to the community, the status of kiai in Islamic boarding schools has become synonymous with the title ulama. Kiai is also the person who opens up land to become a village where people live.[45] We often find myths circulating in the community that villages occupied by kiai become peaceful, safe and blessed. Because of this, the kiai is honored as the opening of the village, who is meritorious and eventually nicknamed the village leader. The surrounding community tells about the kiai's magic and knowledge, so the story spreads to various places, even becoming a legend. Hence, kiai are personified as possessing noble traits, noble character and sacred qualities. Stories about the greatness of the sunan/walisongo in spreading Islam in Java originated from people's belief in mystical stories, which had developed in Java. The influence of Hinduism and Buddhism led to the growth of mysticism among the Javanese people.[46]

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[44] Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lanjnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Balitbang Diklat Kemenag Republik Indonesia, 2019).

[45] K Anuar, "'Ulamâ' Indûnîsiyyâ Al-Qarni Al-Thâmin'Ashar: Tarjamah Muhammad Arshad Al-Banjarî Wa Afkâruhu," *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 4 (1996): 137–64, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v3i4.794.

[46] Yanwar Pribadi, "Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 51, no. 1 (June 15, 2013): 1, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2013.511.1-32.

The position of kiai in Islamic boarding schools is the sole leader, having high authority in spreading and teaching religious knowledge. There is no other figure that can match the kiai's power except for the higher charisma kiai figure. Kiai has an absolute position, determining the style of leadership and development of the boarding school.[47] In the context of the kiai community, junior or young kiai must respect old or senior kiai. Meanwhile, the life of santri characterized by feudal culture is usually adopted in a paternalistic society, in this case the young respect the old. Although the Javanese cultural style influences the tradition in the trend-message hut, the habit of respecting kiai is also based on the ability of religious knowledge, such as the ability to read the book, the educational background of the pesantren, the number of books completed.[48]
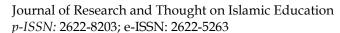
In the tradition of Islamic boarding schools, kiai status is also seen from heredity. Kiai who have great charisma later their descendants occupy a social status almost equal to the greatness that their father once held. There is a story from a kiai who is respected by the government and has an extraordinarily large following, describing charismatic kiai who are likened to a butan tiger which, when mated with a tiger of the same genetics, will give birth to an extraordinary tiger cub. Likewise, if you marry into the family of an influential kiai, you will give birth to offspring who have great influence as well.[49]
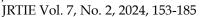
It should be noted that heredity has always been a consideration for kiai in forming marriage alliances, as explained in the previous chapter. Some Javanese people still believe that a child's nature is inherited from his or her parents. Some Javanese and Madurese people still feel happy if one of their families gets a match from a kiai family, just to get offspring, even if she

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[47] Rodrigues, "Effects of Kiai on Jumping Performance and Striking Reaction Time in Karate Athletes."

[48] M Syafiq Humaisi, "Pesantren Education and Charismatic Leadership: A Qualitative Analysis Study on Quality Improvement of Islamic Education in Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid Paiton, Probolinggo," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 7, no. 7 (2019): 1509–16, https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.070704.

[49] Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia."
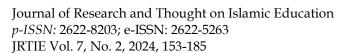
becomes the second wife or so on. The importance of the kiai family in the eyes of Javanese and Madurese society often results in excessive respect, almost leading to the cult of the individual. An illustration of the above is when I asked a kiai in Jombang about the concept of Assalaamu'alaikum being replaced in Abdurrahman Wahid's Good Morning or Good Afternoon greeting, which had caused controversy. The kiai did not dare to comment except to say that Gus Dur was a descendant of the great kiai, Hadratus Sheikh Hasyim Asy'ari.[50]

The role of kiai as a religious figure/expert can be categorized as an informal leader. The position of kiai as a leader is not appointed by government officials and not on behalf of certain groups, but on the basis of public recognition of the quality of religious knowledge that can benefit the general public. However, there are other processes that cause someone to be called a kiai. For example, an official appoints someone to teach religious knowledge and be the prayer leader in his neighborhood. Because the person often teaches religious knowledge and leads prayers, he is called a kiai who is known to the community. However, the influence of this kiai is not so great, only known to certain officials. His duties and work are related to the official's family, such as teaching prayer procedures, giving Qur'an recitation lessons to the official's sons and daughters and being a place to ask questions about religious laws, and the like.[51]

To hold the title of kiai, a number of conditions must be met. Candidates for the title of kiai must be a student at a boarding school, study diligently, and follow the recitation of the yellowclassical books. Kiai candidates also have a penchant for tirakatan, which is fasting on Mondays and Thursdays or as

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[50] Syarifuddin Idris, "Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *KREATIF: Jurnal Studi Pemikiran Pendidikan Agama Islam* 13, no. 2 (2015): 148–65, http://ejournal.iaimbima.ac.id/index.php/kreatif/article/view/90.

[51] H Patriadi, "Surviving in the Globalized World through Local Perspectives: Pesantrens and Sustainable Development," *Sustainable Future for Human Security: Society, Cities and Governance*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5433-4_3.

recommended by the kiai throughout his time as a santri.[52] Even if it is difficult to determine the time when to end the status of santri and switch to kiai, the time required is relatively long. On average, santri who succeed in becoming kiai spend almost decades studying in Islamic boarding schools. But the time factor is not the only measure of one's success in holding the title of kiai, just as a student becomes a scholar. The factor of personal formation based on religious teaching motives is an absolute requirement for prospective kiai, so that later kiai are not only good at science, but also consistent in carrying out Islamic teachings. The kiai's religious behavior, both in social religious matters and religious matters that cover the ukhrawi, will be the concern of the community. Therefore, the personal tempering of a prospective kiai is associated with a sense of great responsibility as a leader of the people who will be held accountable in the hereafter by God.[53]

This research study shows that the relationship between kiai and santri in pesantren is not only limited to a spiritual teacher-student relationship, but also contains a complex power structure. The concept of patron-client becomes very relevant to understand the dynamics of this relationship. Kiai as a patron has resources and authority that provide protection and benefits for his santri (clients). However, behind this patronage bond, there is an asymmetrical relationship that tends to benefit the kiai. Kiai utilizes its dominant position to maintain and strengthen its influence, both through identity construction, discursive practices, and rituals in pesantren. On the other hand, the santri who are in a subordinate position are not completely passive. They actively conduct negotiations, resistance, and survival strategies to maintain their autonomy and

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[52] Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin and Abdul Fattah, "Effectiveness of Kitab Kuning Based Learning in The Development of Qur'an Hadith Material for PAI Study Program Students," *In Annual International Conference on Islamic Education for Students* 2, no. 1 (2023): 135–44.

[53] Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia.*

interests. Although limited, these efforts show that the patron-client relationship between kiai and santri is not monolithic, but dialogic in nature.[54]
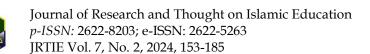
In this context, the reconstruction of kiai-santri relations towards equality is important to do. This can be achieved through recognizing the complexity of the relationship, empowering santri, and transforming pesantren values that allow more equal participation and collaboration between kiai and santri. Some things that need to be highlighted are, 1). Kiai have great authority and influence in traditional pesantren, and how that influence changes in the modern context. 2). The challenges faced by kiai in maintaining their authority in the midst of changing times and the emergence of santri who are more critical and have greater access to information. 3). Santri can develop their own views and interpretations, as well as how they participate in determining the direction of the pesantren with the aim of contributing to the transformation of pesantren education values.

E. Social Phenomenon of Kiai and Santri Relationship in Pesantren Culture

In observing the relationship between santri and kiai, there are at least two phenomena of social relations that arise, namely, first, salaf Islamic boarding schools, whose internal elements are simple, still show high homogeneity, and the type of education is simple, kiai dominates the teaching and education system, and the relationship between santri and kiai can be done directly or face to face. In this case, the kiai is the teacher of the book, and if there are students who do not understand the problem of the book being studied, the students can ask the kiai directly. In salaf pesantren, the kiai element is very strong. In addition to the community factor that is not complex in forming social ties, also the factor of book material that is full of religious values can form the relationship between santri and kiai in the frame of religious legitimacy.[55] A

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[54] R N Aulia, "Pesantren-Based Environmental Management in Equatorial Areas," *AIP Conference Proceedings*, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1063/1.5061868.
[55] Irawan, "Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren), Sufism and Environmental Conservation Practices in Indonesia."
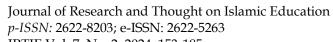
santri is afraid of committing a sin when they dare to protest the kiai's opinion which is considered inaccurate. From here, it is known how much obedience a santri has to kiai in salaf Islamic boarding schools. This protesting attitude shown by santri is considered a form of violation of religious values.[56] However, this relationship model fades, if we study the social ties that are symptomatic in khalaf *(modern)* pesantren, which is a type of pesantren that incorporates elements outside the pesantren into the pesantren. The khalaf form of pesantren is characterized by school education that uses a formal curriculum, and each graduate of the pesantren obtains a diploma that is recognized as legal by the government. Graduates who obtain a diploma can use it as a requirement to continue their education to a higher level or for the purpose of applying for a job.[57]

In the current period, many boarding schools have established public school units, skills education, and businesses in agriculture or animal husbandry, which are managed in collaboration with the government or the private sector. Because the daily activities are not only occupied with teaching the field of yellow book study and recitation of the Qur'an, this type of boarding school is called a khalaf boarding school This type of khalaf boarding school emerged in the period of the 70s, in this case students who took public school education if they continued to higher education would have a bachelor's degree.[58] Not a few pesantrens that were previously categorized as salaf pesantrens turned into khalaf pesantrens by including various general education such as elementary schools, junior high schools and even universities. The teaching side of the yellowclassical books in khalaf Islamic boarding schools is decreasing from year to year, such as Pondok Pesantren

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[56] Zulmuqim, "The Characteristics of Pesantren in the Development of Islamic Education in West Sumatra," *Ulumuna* 24, no. 1 (2020): 132–54, https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v24i1.382.

[57] Marzuki, Miftahuddin, and Mukhamad Murdiono, "Multicultural Education in Salaf Pesantren of Religious Radicalism in Indonesia," *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 39, no. 1 (February 2, 2020): 12–25, https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v39i1.22900.

[58] Abdullah, Thohir, and Rukiyah, "The Arom of Islamization of Java in The Literature of Pesantren: Study of The Rahman Faithur Book by K.H. Sholeh Darat."

Tebu ireng, Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum Jombang, and so on. The condition of school education is increasing and increasingly varied, every santri is registered as a student in the school unit.[59]

The relationship between santri and kiai in khalaf pesantren is as follows: The dependence of santri on kiai is looser and not as strong as in salaf pesantren because the education and teaching process is no longer dominated by the role of kiai. School principals require teaching staff to have a bachelor's degree, most of whom have graduated from university.[60] It is highly unlikely that those with university degrees come from boarding school education, unless the boarding school has a university. In addition, the school-required subject matter emphasizes general knowledge of culture, socioeconomics, technology and mathematics, something that is unlikely to be mastered by pesantren kiai, who used to be educated in salaf pesantren. Such an education system and subject matter requires santri to have more intense contact with school teachers than with pesantren Kiai.[61]

Since school education entered the boarding school, the attitude of tawaduk to the kiai is still held by the santri. If it is said that the santri's obedience to the kiai is solely based on the existence of vantri bel dependence and the existence of scientific variables, then the following problem that arises is that the concept of obedience still applies, albeit to a lesser degree. Observing the concept of santri obedience can be seen from the aspect of kiai ownership of the pesantren. Although the kiai does not teach general knowledge at school, he is the owner of the institution. There is no reason for students not to respect the owner of the institution, where they seek knowledge. However, students still respect the owner of the institution, except when problems arise in the teaching

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[59] Adi Sudrajat, "Pesantren Sebagai Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Vicratina: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2017): 64–88.

[60] Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin, Abdul Fattah, and Marno, "Metode Dan Strategi Pengajaran Pendidikan Islam Terhadap Generasi Milenial," *Journal of Research and Thought on Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 5, no. 2 (2022): 102–29, https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v5i2.2315.

[61] Abuddin Nata, "Pendidikan Islam Di Era Milenial," *Conciencia* 18, no. 1 (2018): 10–28, https://doi.org/10.19109/conciencia.v18i1.2436.
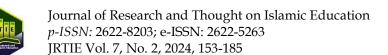
and learning process. Another aspect is that the religious subject matter delivered to the santri contains ethical values or religious moral ethics. When the tradition of obedience is seen from this side, it is natural that santri place kiai as people who have high social status than other figures. Any advice that comes from a kiai is believed to be a good teaching from a religious perspective. The existence of teachings of any kind, if it gets a religious legitimacy, people tend to obey it. Moreover, the kiai's status is commonly regarded by the community as a religious expert, so the santri tend to believe him rather than questioning his statements. In khalaf pesantren, there are symptoms that show the increasingly clear boundaries between the relationship between santri and kiai. The santri can now sort out which issues are the scope of religion or not.[62]

Some challenges must be considered, especially in the aspect of the influence of global culture, including access to information and technology, affecting the mindset and behavior of santri, and how these influences shape the dynamics of the Kiai and santri relationship. It can see conflicts that arise due to differences in interpretation of religious values and traditions between Kiai and santri who are exposed to global culture.[63] Then adaptation where pesantren adjust to cultural changes and find ways to maintain the relevance of traditional values in a modern context. There are several strategy models carried out by Kiai and santri to maintain harmony and avoid conflict in the face of complex relationship dynamics. The Importance of Dialogue and Communication: Analyzing the importance of dialogue and open communication between Kiai and santri in bridging differences in views and finding solutions that are acceptable to both parties. The Role of Pesantren in the Future: Analyzing the role of pesantren in the future, emphasizing the

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[62] Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren Perhelatan Agama Dan Tradisi*.

[63] Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin, Indah Aminatuz Zuhriyah, and Ahmad Barizi, "Evaluation Model of Islamic Religious Education Learning Program at Madrasah ' Aliyah Level in East Java" 16 (2024): 185–212.

importance of pesantren to adapt to the changing times and adjust to the increasingly modern needs of santri.[64]

Kiai and Santri Strategies in Facing Relationship Dynamics In facing complex relationship dynamics, Kiai and santri carry out various strategies to maintain harmony and avoid conflict. Some strategies that are often carried out include Kiai: Adjusting the Way of Preaching: Kiai adjust their way of preaching by considering changes in the mindset and culture of the younger generation. They use social media and information technology to reach out to students and spread religious messages that are more relevant to the times. Opening Dialogue Spaces: Kiai open spaces for dialogue and discussion with santri to listen to their views and problems they face. They try to bridge differences in views and find solutions that are acceptable to both parties. In addition, santri still respect Kiai as their spiritual leader and teacher. They value the knowledge and wisdom possessed by Kiai. Seeking Other Knowledge: Santris do not only rely on the knowledge taught in pesantren, but also seek other knowledge from other sources, such as books, the internet, and social media. They try to broaden their horizons and understand the world better.

F.   Conclusion

Based on the discussion in the research first, this research shows that the kiai-santri relationship cannot be understood solely as a spiritual relationship between teacher and student. Rather, behind this idealized construction lies a complex and hierarchical power structure. Kiai often use their religious authority to maintain dominance and reinforce social boundaries. Second, this study shows how the construction of the identities of *"kiai"* and *"santri"* is actually a historical and cultural product full of interests. These identities are reproduced through discursive practices and rituals in pesantren to reinforce the hegemony of kiai. Santri, on the other hand, are often trapped in a subordinate position that inhibits their independence and creativity. Third, the

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[64] Khulusinniyah Khulusinniyah and Almannah Wassalwa, "Reorientasi Nilai-Nilai Kepesantrenan Pada 'Santri Kalong' Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Indonesia* 1, no. 2 (2017): 237–49, https://doi.org/10.35316/jpii.v1i2.52.

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dynamics of kiai-santri relations are also characterized by negotiation, resistance, and transformation. Although santri are in a weak position, they are not completely passive. Various forms of resistance and santri compliance strategies actually show that the relationship is dialogic and not monolithic. Based on these findings, this study concludes that efforts to redifining kiai-santri relations towards equality are important. This can be done through, first, recognizing the complexity and historicity of the relationship. Second, empowering santri to develop their potential and autonomy. Third, negotiation and transformation of pesantren values so as to create space for more equal participation and collaboration between kiai and santri.

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