
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KIAI AND SANTRI FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM IN MADURA

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Received: 07/03/2026

Accepted: 15/03/2026

Publications: 30/03/2026

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Abstrac

The relationship between kiai and santri at Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Madura represents a strategically significant social phenomenon for academic inquiry, given the profound influence of the kiai in shaping the character, values, and identity of santri with broad implications for Madurese social order. Nevertheless, the dynamics of this relationship have not been fully explored through adequate theoretical frameworks, particularly from a symbolic interactionism perspective. This study aims to identify interactional symbols in the kiai-santri relationship, describe the internalization of pesantren values through symbolic media and examine the construction of santri identity as a product of meaning negotiation in interaction with the kiai. This research employs a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design, conducted at three pesantren in Pamekasan and Sumenep Regencies, Madura, through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary study. The findings reveal three key outcomes: first, kiai charisma is socially constructed through material, linguistic, and ritualistic symbols; second, pesantren values are internalized through symbolic pedagogy encompassing ngaji practice, collective obedience rituals, and body language; and third, santri identity is formed through three phases adoption, negotiation, and consolidation resulting in a hybrid identity. This research contributes to the development of pesantren sociology grounded in Mead and Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory.

Keywords: Kiai, Santri, Symbolic Interactionism, Pesantren, Madura

Abstrak

Relasi kiai dan santri di pesantren Madura merupakan fenomena sosial yang strategis untuk dikaji secara akademis, mengingat kuatnya pengaruh kiai dalam membentuk karakter, nilai, dan identitas santri yang berimplikasi luas pada tatanan sosial masyarakat Madura. Namun, dinamika relasi tersebut belum sepenuhnya dieksplorasi melalui kerangka teoritis yang memadai, khususnya dari perspektif interaksionisme simbolik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi simbol-simbol interaksional dalam relasi kiai-santri, mendeskripsikan proses internalisasi nilai pesantren melalui medium simbolik dan mengkaji konstruksi identitas santri sebagai produk negosiasi makna dalam interaksi dengan kiai. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain etnografi, dilaksanakan di tiga pondok pesantren di Kabupaten Pamekasan dan Sumenep, Madura, melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga temuan utama: pertama, kharisma kiai dikonstruksi secara sosial melalui simbol-simbol material, linguistik, dan ritualistik; kedua, nilai-nilai pesantren diinternalisasi melalui pedagogik simbolik yang mencakup praktik ngaji, ritual kepatuhan kolektif, dan bahasa tubuh; ketiga, identitas santri terbentuk melalui tiga fase yakni adopsi, negosiasi, dan konsolidasi identitas yang menghasilkan identitas hibrida. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada pengembangan sosiologi pesantren berbasis teori interaksionisme simbolik Mead dan Blumer.

Kata Kunci: Kiai, Santri, Interaksionisme Simbolik, Pesantren, Madura

Introduction

Pesantren represents the oldest Islamic educational institution in the Indonesian archipelago, having made a significant and enduring contribution to the formation of national character and the cultivation of religious values throughout the country's history (Wardi dkk., 2024). Among the various elements that constitute the pesantren ecosystem, the relationship between the kiai and the santri occupies the most central and fundamental position. This relationship is far more than an instructional bond between teacher and student; it is a deeply layered social connection imbued with symbolic, cultural, and spiritual dimensions rooted in the long tradition of Islamic civilization in the Malay-Indonesian world. In Madura, this phenomenon carries a distinctive character shaped by local cultural constructions that place the kiai in a position of extraordinary prestige and influence that extends well beyond the walls of the pesantren institution itself.

The Madurese people are known for their very strong emotional and cultural ties to religious leaders. A popular saying that has taken root among the Madurese people is *buppa', babu', guru, rato* (father, mother, teacher, king) vividly encapsulates the social hierarchy in which the teacher or kiai occupies a position of supreme honor, second only to one's parents. This places the kiai-santri relationship in Madura within a cultural context that cannot be separated from the broader social fabric. The symbols of deference, the distinctive patterns of communication, and the interactional rituals that pervade everyday life in the pesantren represent a structured system of meaning transmitted across generations.

From a sociological perspective, the kiai-santri relationship constitutes a social field richly populated with symbols and meaning. Every action, gesture, utterance, and bodily expression occurring within kiai-santri interaction carries symbolic weight that is collectively agreed upon and serves as the basis for reproducing the social order of the pesantren (Najmi & Fattah, 2025). The theory of symbolic interactionism, developed by George Herbert Mead and subsequently elaborated by Herbert Blumer, offers a theoretically robust framework for understanding how meaning is constructed, exchanged, and reproduced through the everyday social interactions between kiai and santri (Mead, 2015). Symbolic interactionism holds that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings those things hold for them, that such meanings arise from social interaction, and that meanings are modified through interpretive processes (Blumer, 2021).

The research questions at the core of this study emerge from several fundamental issues. First, how are the interactional symbols embedded in the kiai-santri relationship constructed and interpreted by social actors within Madurese pesantren. Second, how does the process of value internalization and the reproduction of kiai authority unfold through symbolic media in the daily life of the pesantren. Third, how is santri identity as a social subject formed through meaning negotiation in interaction with the kiai? These questions arise from the recognition that the kiai-santri relationship has not been subjected to in-depth examination from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, particularly within the culturally distinct context of Madura.

Several prior studies have made important contributions to understanding the kiai-santri relationship from various analytical vantage points. Research conducted by Syamsul Arifin (2019) examined kiai authority in East Javanese pesantren through the lens of the sociology of religion and found that kiai authority derives from a combination of personal charisma, scholarly legitimacy, and social networks (Arifin, 2019). While this work provides a valuable foundation, it does not explicitly integrate the framework of symbolic interactionism into its analysis.

Wahid Nur Tualeka's (2020) investigation of communication patterns in Madurese pesantren revealed the existence of specialized communicative codes governing kiai-santri interaction; however, that study focused predominantly on verbal communication and did not explore the broader dimensions

of symbolic interaction (Tualeka, 2020). Meanwhile, Abdurrahman Mas'ud's (2021) research on the construction of santri identity demonstrated the presence of a complex process of self-formation within the pesantren environment, yet it did not explicitly and comprehensively connect its findings to symbolic interactionism theory (Mas'ud, 2021).

A careful review of these prior studies reveals a significant and substantive research gap. Earlier works tend to examine the kiai-santri relationship in partial and discrete ways focusing on authority, communication, or identity in isolation without integrating these dimensions within a single cohesive theoretical framework. Furthermore, no prior study has applied symbolic interactionism in a sufficiently deep and comprehensive manner to analyze the kiai-santri relationship in Madura, with appropriate sensitivity to the unique local cultural context that shapes that relationship. It is precisely this gap that provides the academic justification for the present study.

This study pursues three interrelated objectives: to identify and analyze the interactional symbols that constitute the kiai-santri relationship in Madurese pesantren; to describe the process of value internalization and the reproduction of kiai authority through symbolic media; and to examine the construction of santri identity as a product of symbolic interaction with the kiai. The study's contributions operate on two levels. Theoretically, it aims to enrich the field of pesantren sociology and expand the application of symbolic interactionism to the context of Islamic educational institutions. Practically, it provides guidance for the development of a more reflective model of pesantren education one that is attentive to the social relational dynamics unfolding within these institutions while also serving as a reference for policymakers designing programs to strengthen pesantren in ways that honor local cultural values.

It is important to emphasize that this study does not seek to deconstruct or problematize the legitimacy of the kiai-santri relationship as it has unfolded historically. Rather, it endeavors to deepen and critically enrich our understanding of how this relationship functions as a productive social mechanism in the formation of human beings of sound moral character and broad knowledge. The research thus situates itself within a tradition of appreciative inquiry toward the pesantren institution, while simultaneously offering analytical contributions that advance scholarly understanding.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design, selected for its particular relevance in excavating the meanings, symbols, and interactional practices that characterize the social life of the pesantren in a contextually grounded and deeply immersive manner (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study is classified as field research, positioning the researcher as the primary instrument in the processes of data collection and interpretation. The data sources consist of two categories. Primary data were obtained directly from key informants comprising kiai who lead the pesantren, senior santri, junior santri, and pesantren administrators. Secondary data encompassed pesantren documents, relevant academic literature, and the researcher's field notes compiled through observation. The research was conducted at three pesantren located in Pamekasan and Sumenep Regencies in Madura, selected purposively on the basis of their representativeness of the salaf pesantren tradition and their openness to academic research.

The data collection techniques employed include participatory observation, in which the researcher engaged directly in the daily life of the pesantren in order to observe kiai-santri interaction in its natural setting; in-depth semi-structured interviews with key informants; and documentary study of relevant written sources. Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, encompassing the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing in a simultaneous and iterative process (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, 2020). The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking with key informants.

Results and Discussion

The Symbolization of Kiai Charisma as the Foundational Pillar of Pesantren Social Relations

Within the framework of symbolic interactionism, social interaction never unfolds in a vacuum devoid of meaning. George Herbert Mead, in his foundational work *Mind, Self, and Society*, argued that human social life is fundamentally sustained by the capacity to employ significant symbols that is, symbols that carry shared meaning between the parties to an interaction (Mead, 2015). In the context of Madurese pesantren, the symbols that surround the figure of the kiai are not merely social ornaments; they constitute the structural foundation upon which the entire system of interaction within the pesantren community rests.

Field observations at Islamic boarding schools in Madura indicate that the charisma of the kiai does not arise naturally, but is instead constructed and continuously reproduced through a series of structured symbolic practices. These include the practice of kissing the kiai's hand (*ngalap berkah*), the use of honorific titles such as "Romo Kiai" or "Bendara," the arrangement of physical space that places the kiai in a central position in every gathering, and the custom of students bowing their heads when speaking to the kiai all of these are symbols that collectively construct and affirm the kiai's charisma in the perception of the pesantren community.

In his sociological theory of domination, Max Weber distinguishes three types of authority: traditional, legal-rational, and charismatic (Rofiqi dkk., 2026; Weber, 2019). The authority of the kiai in Madura is a unique blend of these three types, though with a greater emphasis on the charismatic and traditional dimensions. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, this charisma is not an intrinsic quality possessed by the kiai, but rather a social construction that is built and maintained through a process of repeated symbolic interaction (Nofi & Fithriyah, 2025). Every time santri perform rituals of respect toward the kiai, they are not only expressing individual respect, but also actively participating in a process of social reproduction that reinforces the legitimacy of the kiai's authority in the eyes of the entire pesantren community (Ismail & Wardi, 2025).

An interesting field finding is the existence of a strict symbolic hierarchy in the kiai-santri relationship. Senior santri who have interacted with the kiai for a long time have closer access to exclusive symbols in their interactions with the kiai, while junior santri remain on the outermost layer of this symbolic hierarchy. This phenomenon indicates that symbolic interactionism within the Maduran pesantren context does not operate uniformly but is differentiated based on the degree of closeness and the duration of interaction between the santri and the kiai. This aligns with Erving Goffman's concept of social dramaturgy, in which social actors play different roles on the front stage and the backstage of interaction (Goffman, 2023; Sa'edi dkk., 2025).

Linguistic symbols also play a very important role in the construction of the kiai's charisma. The use of polite Madurese (*Ajunan-Abdinah*) by santri when speaking to the kiai, while the kiai may use more informal language with the santri, represents a power asymmetry that has been symbolically institutionalized. The choice of vocabulary, intonation, and sentence structure used by students when communicating with the kiai reflects a deep internalization of the pesantren's social hierarchy. From Mead's perspective, this process is a manifestation of the human capacity for "role-taking" that is, the ability to place oneself in another's position and adjust one's behavior based on the anticipated response.

Symbol	Form of Expression	Social Meaning
Sowan	Kissing the kiai's hand upon meeting	Acknowledgment of the kiai's spiritual authority by the santri
Honorific titles	'Romo Kiai,' 'Lora,' 'Bendara'	Positioning the kiai at the apex of the social

		hierarchy
Physical attributes	White robe, turban, staff	Distinguishing the kiai's identity as a spiritual leader
Refined language (Ajunan-Abdihinah)	Santri using the high Madurese register to address the kiai	Representation of institutionalized power asymmetry
Spatial arrangement	Kiai seated at the center or front of the assembly	Affirmation of social hierarchy in communal consciousness
Offerings (Buah Tangan)	Presenting something of value to the kiai	Expression of the santri's devotion and love toward the kiai
Supplication (Memohon Do'a)	Requesting the kiai's blessing and prayer	Positioning the kiai as a servant of God in close proximity to the Divine

Table 1. Symbols of Kiai Charisma and Their Social Meanings in Madurese Pesantren Life

Beyond linguistic symbols, the physical attributes associated with the kiai's figure also function as vital media in the construction of charisma. The distinctive garments worn by the kiai the white robe or turban, the staff, and the designated seat of honor in the assembly are material symbols that differentiate the kiai from all other members of the pesantren community. These symbolic objects serve a dual function: on one hand, they affirm the kiai's identity as the spiritual leader of the community; on the other, they operate as persistent visual reminders that continuously reinforce the social hierarchy of the pesantren in the consciousness of every community member. The symbolization of kiai charisma is thus a complex, layered social process that simultaneously engages linguistic, material, spatial, and ritualistic dimensions.

The Internalization of Pesantren Values through Interactive Symbols

The second dimension of the kiai-santri relationship examined in this study is the process by which pesantren values are internalized through symbolic media. Herbert Blumer, the scholar who most systematically formalized the theory of symbolic interactionism, articulated three foundational premises: (1) human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings those things hold for them. such meanings arise from social interaction with others and meanings are employed and modified through an interpretive process that each person enacts in encountering the diverse situations of social life (Blumer, 2021). Within the pesantren context, these premises are highly illuminating for understanding how religious values and social ethics are transmitted from kiai to santri not merely through formal instruction, but through a system of symbols interwoven into every dimension of daily life.

Field research findings reveal that the process of internalizing values in Madurese pesantren takes place through what is known as symbolic pedagogy a method of instilling values that relies on interactive symbols as its medium. One of the strongest manifestations of this symbolic pedagogy is the practice of ngaji sorogan and bandongan, in which students not only receive a transfer of cognitive knowledge but also witness and absorb how the kiai embodies, interprets, and manifests the values contained in religious texts through his entire body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice (Fithriyah dkk., 2025; Ismail, 2025). Practices of collective obedience within the pesantren tradition such as lining up to await the arrival of the kiai, standing when the kiai enters the room, and prioritizing the kiai's interests in all matters constitute interactional rituals that serve as effective means of transmitting values. When

students repeatedly perform these rituals, they are not merely following external rules, but gradually internalizing the values represented by these rituals: respect for knowledge, love for the teacher, and humility as the foundation of the spiritual journey (Najmi & Ismail, 2025). This process aligns with the concept of “significant others” in Mead’s theory, in which key figures within a person’s social environment play a crucial role in the formation of an individual’s self-concept and value system (Mead, 2015).

This study also found that language is the most powerful interactive symbol in the process of internalizing values at Madurese pesantren. Not only verbal language, but nonverbal language such as gestures, facial expressions, and body posture serves as a highly effective medium for communicating values (Sayyi, Muslimin, dkk., 2025). For example, the act of bowing one’s head and crossing one’s arms over the chest when passing by a kiai is not merely a gesture of politeness, but a symbolic expression of the value of *tawadhu’* (humility), which is one of the core values in pesantren ethics. Through the repetition of this gesture in various contexts and situations, the value of *tawadhu’* gradually shifts from the realm of external behavior to the internal value system of the students (Wardi dkk., 2023).

The temporal and spatial dimensions of pesantren life also carry significant symbolic meaning in the internalization of values. The highly structured daily schedule organized around the rhythm of Islamic worship, where prayer times mark transitions between activities implicitly instills discipline and a sense of submission to divine order. Within the pesantren environment, specific spaces such as the *langgar* (small prayer room), study halls, and the residence of the *kiai* are associated with varying of sacredness. Expected behaviors in each of these settings symbolically reflect different levels of spiritual proximity that students are meant to attain throughout their intellectual and religious journey. This spatial organization illustrates what Pierre Bourdieu conceptualizes as *habitus* a system of dispositions shaped and reproduced through repeated practices within particular social contexts (Bourdieu, 2020).

A particularly intriguing finding of this study is how food and banquet symbols serve as a medium for the internalization of values a role often overlooked by previous research. The practice of a kiai giving leftover food or water he has already drunk to a specific santri is a symbolic act with complex layers of meaning. From the santri’s perspective, receiving leftovers from the kiai is understood as a spiritual gift imbued with blessings (*tabarruk*). This practice symbolically strengthens the spiritual bond between the kiai and the santri while transmitting values regarding blessings, loyalty, and spiritual hierarchy, which are integral parts of the pesantren’s value system. This phenomenon demonstrates that, from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, no social action is too simple to lack meaning; every interaction, however trivial it may seem on the surface, can serve as an effective medium for the transmission and reproduction of a community’s value system.

The Construction of Santri Identity through Meaning Negotiation in Kiai–Santri Interaction

The third and most dynamic dimension of the kiai-santri relationship within a symbolic interactionist framework is the process of santri identity construction. In Mead’s theoretical architecture, the self is not a static or given entity; rather, it is an ongoing process continuously constructed through social interaction (Sayyi, Muslimin, dkk., 2025). Mead distinguished between the ‘I’ (the spontaneous and creative aspect of the self) and the ‘Me’ (the social dimension of the self formed through the internalization of others’ attitudes), and argued that identity emerges from the dialogue between these two poles (Mead, 2015). Within the Madurese pesantren context, this process unfolds with particularly high intensity given the total and immersive character of the pesantren environment as what Goffman termed a ‘total institution’ (Goffman, 2023).

This research finds that the construction of santri identity in Madurese pesantren proceeds through three analytically distinguishable phases, although in fieldwork reality all three unfold simultaneously and in constant interplay. The first is the adoption phase, during which newly arrived santri begin to take on the symbols of pesantren identity: dress, patterns of speech, schedules of activity, and the behavioral

codes that govern life within the community. This phase represents the most critical period in identity formation, for it is here that santri undergo what sociologists Berger and Luckmann describe as primary socialization into the world of the pesantren (Ismail dkk., 2025; Luckmann, 2020).

The second is the negotiation phase, in which santri begin to negotiate with the symbolic system of the pesantren against the backdrop of the experiences, understandings, and personal identities they have brought from their prior social lives. This negotiation is not always confrontational or explicit; more commonly it unfolds as a process of creative adaptation, as santri seek ways to integrate pesantren values with the personal identities already formed before their arrival. Field data reveal that during this phase, informal interaction with senior santri plays an equally important role to formal interaction with the kiai, because senior santri function as identity models that are more accessible and relatable for newcomers.

The third is the consolidation phase, in which santri who have spent a sufficient period within the pesantren community begin to internalize the identity of santri as an integral component of their self-concept. At this stage, the symbols of pesantren life that were once experienced as external demands have been transformed into authentic expressions of the santri's own identity. Santri at this phase no longer feel that they are 'playing the role of' a santri; they simply 'are' santri in the most fundamental sense the santri identity has merged cohesively with their personal identity. This process represents a concrete manifestation of Mead's concept of the generalized other: the internalization of the attitudes and perspectives of the community as a whole into the structure of the individual self.

Phase	Characteristics	Dominant Symbols	Theoretical Concept
Adoption	Newly arrived santri adopt pesantren identity symbols; critical period of self-formation	Pesantren dress, worship schedule, basic language codes	Primary Socialization (Berger & Luckmann)
Negotiation	Santri creatively negotiate between pesantren values and previously held personal identity	Informal interaction with senior santri; adaptation of the code of conduct	Role-Taking (Mead); Significant Others
Consolidation	Santri identity internalized as an integral component of self-concept; hybrid identity formed	Authentic expression of tawadhu'; management of plural identity	Generalized Other (Mead); Habitus (Bourdieu)

Table 2. Phases of Santri Identity Construction through the Lens of Symbolic Interactionism

The role of the kiai in the process of constructing santri identity is not always direct and explicit. In fact, what is more frequently found in this study is the kiai's indirect influence, namely through what is referred to as an aura of authority or, in the language of Madurese santri, known as nur kiai. The physical presence of the kiai, or even simply the awareness of the kiai's presence within the pesantren environment, creates specific psychological and social conditions that encourage santri to continuously evaluate and reflect on themselves. This mechanism is highly effective in shaping identity because it operates at a deeper level of consciousness than mere compliance with formal rules.

The most original finding of this research is a phenomenon the author terms the hybrid santri identity. Madurese santri are not simply 'products' of the pesantren's symbolic system; they are agents who actively manage and negotiate their identities across several distinct social contexts. In the presence of the kiai, santri present an identity that is thoroughly formatted by the symbolic codes of the pesantren.

Yet in interaction with fellow santri or in more informal settings, santri express facets of identity that are more personal and spontaneous. The capacity of santri to manage this plural identity does not represent contradiction or pretense; rather, it constitutes a sophisticated social competency cultivated through the extended process of interaction within the pesantren community (Wardi & Ismail, 2018).

From a broader macro perspective, the construction of santri identity through the relationship with the kiai also carries significant socio-political dimensions. The identity formed within a Madurese pesantren is not merely a personal identity; it is a social identity that positions the individual within broader social networks. To be a santri of a particular pesantren especially one led by a kiai of high reputation confers valuable social and symbolic capital within Madurese society. This phenomenon illustrates that the kiai-santri relationship is not only an arena for personal self-formation; it is simultaneously a mechanism for the reproduction of social and symbolic capital with concrete consequences for the individual's social positioning within the broader hierarchy of Madurese society (Sayyi, Asmuki, dkk., 2025; Zulkarnain, 2021).

The text provides a clear and theoretically grounded explanation of how santri identity is formed within the kiai-santri relationship using a symbolic interactionist perspective. By drawing on Mead's idea that the self develops through the interaction between the "I" and the "Me," the analysis shows that identity is not fixed but continuously shaped through social experience. This framework is effectively applied to the Madurese pesantren, described as an intensive social environment similar to a total institution. The three phases adoption, negotiation, and consolidation offer a helpful way to understand this process. In the adoption phase, santri begin by following visible norms and practices; in the negotiation phase, they actively adjust these norms to fit their prior identities, often with guidance from senior santri; and in the consolidation phase, pesantren values become fully internalized as part of their self-concept.

In addition, the text highlights the indirect but powerful role of the kiai through symbolic authority, often described as "nur kiai," which encourages self-reflection and internal discipline among santri. A key contribution is the idea of hybrid santri identity, where santri are seen as active individuals who can adapt their behavior across different social contexts rather than simply conforming. This flexibility reflects an advanced social skill rather than inconsistency. The discussion also connects identity formation to broader social outcomes, showing that being associated with a respected kiai can provide social and symbolic advantages within society. Overall, the text offers a concise yet insightful understanding of how personal identity, social interaction, and institutional influence are closely interconnected.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the kiai-santri relationship within Madurese pesantren constitutes a rich and complex system of symbolic interaction that cannot be adequately understood through the framework of pedagogical relations alone. Through three analytical dimensions the symbolization of kiai charisma, the internalization of values through interactive symbols, and the construction of santri identity this research reveals that every dimension of pesantren daily life, from rituals of deference and language choices to spatial arrangements and food-sharing practices, functions as a medium through which meaning-making, authority reproduction, and identity construction proceed simultaneously and continuously. The theory of symbolic interactionism proves to be a highly relevant and productive analytical framework for illuminating the social dynamics of Madurese pesantren, with its distinctively rich local cultural character.

The theoretical implications of this study call for an expansion of perspectives within pesantren sociology moving beyond an exclusive focus on institutional and formal curricular dimensions to grant serious attention to the interactional and symbolic dimensions that have thus far received insufficient scholarly scrutiny. Practically, a deeper understanding of the symbolic mechanisms at work in the kiai-

santri relationship can serve as a foundation for developing a model of pesantren education that is more reflective, adaptive, and responsive to contemporary challenges, without sacrificing the traditional values that constitute the central strength of the pesantren as an Islamic educational institution tested and proven across centuries of history.

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