



THE ROLE OF PESANTREN IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFESTYLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN MAKASSAR CITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to uncover the role of pesantren in shaping religious lifestyle patterns within the community in Makassar City. Using a qualitative approach, this study involved in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies at a pesantren in Makassar. The findings reveal that pesantren have a significant influence on forming the religious lifestyle of the community through three main aspects: transmission of religious knowledge, moral guidance, and participation in religious social activities. The pesantren functions as a center for religious learning, a place for character development, and a hub for social activities that strengthen the spiritual bond between the pesantren and the community. The kiai, as the spiritual leader, plays a central role in this process, providing guidance and setting an example for the community. Interaction between the pesantren and the community creates a strong bond, where the religious values taught at the pesantren influence the community's daily life. Despite facing modernization challenges, pesantren in Makassar have been able to adapt and maintain their role as a key pillar in preserving religious values and fostering a religious community. This research concludes that pesantren play a vital role in shaping the religious lifestyle patterns of the community in Makassar City, with a significant contribution to socio-religious life.

Keywords: Pondok Pesantren; Religious Lifestyle; Transmission of Religious Knowledge; Kiai

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious life in Indonesia indicates that pesantren holds a crucial role as Islamic educational institutions that not only provide students with religious knowledge but also contribute to the social and religious life of the surrounding community (Hannan, 2020; Prawoto & Anisa, 2023). Pesantren serve as centers for religious learning and character education, which have proven effective in shaping the religious lifestyle patterns of society, particularly in urban areas of Indonesia (Ahmad, 2019; Kariyanto, 2020). Large cities in Indonesia, including Makassar,

with their diverse social dynamics, present ideal locations to explore how pesantren influence the religious lifestyle of the community.

As one of the largest cities in eastern Indonesia, Makassar has a long history of Islamic educational development (Makkelo, n.d.). In this city, pesantren are not only centers for religious education but also serve as social institutions actively involved in various community activities (Ayyubi, 2020). Furthermore, pesantren located in urban and rural areas exhibit distinct differences, including the complexity of social, economic, and religious life, as well as the varying influences of globalization and modernization. Thus, the impact of pesantren on the religious lifestyle of the people in Makassar is a compelling phenomenon to study, especially in this modern era where the challenges of globalization and modernization often intersect with strong religious traditions.

Research on the role of pesantren in shaping the religious lifestyle of the Makassar community is crucial, particularly given the ongoing social and cultural changes in large cities. Pesantren not only serve as religious educational institutions for their students but also act as centers for preaching and references for the community in their religious practices. Amidst the dynamics of urbanization and modern influences, a deeper study is needed to understand how pesantren sustain their role as agents of religious lifestyle formation and contribute to social stability.

In Indonesia, pesantren are often regarded as bastions of religious and moral values within society. As institutions closely tied to Islamic teachings, pesantren play a role in reinforcing religious values through worship activities, education, and social interactions. Many previous studies have highlighted the central role of pesantren in religious education, yet few have specifically examined their direct influence on the general community, particularly in urban areas like Makassar.

In previous studies, pesantren have been explored from various aspects, including curriculum, teaching methods, and student life. Research by Azra highlights pesantren as one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, playing a significant role in the development of Islam in Southeast Asia. Azra notes that pesantren function not only as centers for formal religious education but also as hubs for social development in the community (Azyumardi Azra, Fathurahman, 2004).

Studies by Mita and Ashif discuss how pesantren shapes students' character amidst the challenges of globalization. Pesantren play an essential role as guardians of religious values, innovators of religious understanding, and drivers of local and regional development. The kiai (religious leader) plays a central role in this process by providing moral and spiritual examples. Despite facing modernization challenges, pesantren continue to play a crucial role in character education based on Islamic values (Mita Silfiasari & Ashif Az Zhafi, 2020).

Additionally, research by Dhofier examines the social structure of pesantren, especially the kiai's role in shaping students' and the surrounding community's mindset and behavior. According to Dhofier, the kiai hold strong authority in directing education within the pesantren and in exerting religious influence on the local community. This research also indicates that

pesantren act as agents of social change, capable of adapting to contemporary changes while preserving their religious identity (Dhofier, 2011).

Controversies often arise in studies on pesantren regarding the role of kiai in modern society (Geertz, 1960, 2014; Latif, 2019). Some researchers argue that modernization has diminished the traditional authority of the kiai (Geertz, 1960; Hasanah, 2024; Kamaludin, 2023; Latif, 2019). They highlight that, in this digital and globalized era, communities increasingly favor religious figures considered more modern, with a grasp of technology and broader access to information. These figures are seen as providing perspectives more relevant to contemporary life than the traditional approaches held by many kiai in pesantren.

However, despite such views, this study argues that in Makassar, pesantren and kiai remain central figures, especially within communities that are historically and culturally linked to Islamic values. In this context, kiai are not only respected as spiritual leaders but also as defenders of tradition who are perceived as capable of preserving the community's moral and religious identity. Despite the impact of modernization, many communities in Makassar still regard pesantren as the primary source of religious authority, reinforcing the kiai's role as a respected leader.

This study aims to delve deeply into the role of pesantren in shaping and influencing the religious lifestyle of the surrounding community, particularly in Makassar. As traditional Islamic educational institutions, pesantren play a strategic role in internalizing religious values and morality in daily life. Through intensive interactions with the kiai, students, and local communities, pesantren actively influence religious practices, both through ritual activities such as religious studies and congregational prayers and through exemplary behavior in daily life. Consequently, pesantren become a source of inspiration and a moral guide for the community, which in turn shapes their religious lifestyle.

Furthermore, this research examines the forms of interaction between pesantren and the community that impact social and religious life. These interactions can include community participation in activities initiated by pesantren, such as religious gatherings, social activities, and preaching, as well as informal interactions between students, kiai, and the surrounding community. Pesantren not only serve as centers of religious education for students but also function as agents of social and spiritual change within society. This symbiotic relationship enables pesantren to strengthen their presence as moral pillars within the community, while the community receives spiritual guidance that influences how they conduct their religious lives daily.

2. METHODS

This research was conducted at a pesantren in Makassar, referred to in this report as "Pesantren X." A qualitative approach was employed, as outlined by Creswell et al., which ensures that the researcher gains a comprehensive understanding of the research subject (Creswell, 2023b; Meloeng, 2015a; Miles et al., 2014a). The location was selected based on several critical considerations: the subject's relevance to the research topic, adequate accessibility, and ethical considerations prioritizing the protection of participants' rights and

privacy. Pesantren X was chosen because of its significant role in shaping the religious lifestyle of the community around Makassar, making it an appropriate location to explore the influence of Pesantren on religious life.

Moreover, adhering to ethical standards was a primary concern in this study. This includes the use of anonymity and data confidentiality to protect the identities and personal information of research participants. By prioritizing these protections, the research was conducted effectively, minimizing potential risks to participants and ensuring that the data collected was used responsibly and professionally. The researcher's commitment to maintaining strict ethical standards aligns with guidelines set forth by Creswell and Hopf, emphasizing the importance of integrity in qualitative research processes (Creswell, 2023a; Hopf, 2004).

In this study, three primary methods were used for data collection: open-ended interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Open-ended interviews were conducted with community members and pesantren stakeholders, including Anregurutta, Gurutta, and Asatids, to explore their views on the role of pesantren in shaping religious lifestyles. These interviews were conducted flexibly, allowing informants to express their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions in depth regarding the research topic. Through these open-ended interviews, the researcher was able to gather richer and more contextual information on how pesantren impact the religious life of the surrounding community (Creswell, 2023b).

In addition to interviews, participant observation was an essential data collection method. The researcher directly participated in pesantren activities to observe social interactions, religious activities, and routines within the pesantren. This observation provided a more concrete understanding of the ongoing dynamics, enabling the researcher to see firsthand how the pesantren influences religious lifestyle patterns (Fetterman, 2023). Meanwhile, documentation was used to collect data from various written sources related to the pesantren, such as reference books, journals, activity logs, teaching materials, and other pesantren documents. This documentation served as a complement to the information obtained from interviews and observations, providing additional data to build a more complete picture of the pesantren's role in the community's religious life.

The data analysis method developed by Miles et al. was used to analyze the collected data. The analysis process began with data collection, followed by data condensation to identify relevant and essential information. The data was then presented in narrative form to facilitate understanding of how the pesantren influences the community's religious lifestyle. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research results, conclusions were drawn and verified through data triangulation techniques. This approach ensured that the resulting conclusions accurately and comprehensively reflect the phenomenon under study (Miles et al., 2014).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Pesantren in Shaping the Religious Lifestyle of the Community

This study identifies the significant role of pesantren in influencing the religious lifestyle of the community around Makassar through three main aspects: the transmission of religious knowledge, moral development, and participation in religious social activities. Pesantren X has

played a crucial role as a center for the in-depth transmission of religious knowledge and as a spiritual driver among the community. The pesantren not only serves as a place of learning for students but also as a reference point for the community to gain a deeper understanding of religion. Here, religious activities such as study sessions, classic Islamic text studies, and regular religious lectures serve as a bridge connecting the pesantren with the community. These activities play a key role in enhancing the community's understanding of religion, as some researchers have explained that pesantren function as institutions that preserve Islamic scholarly traditions in Indonesia (Dhofier, 2011; Herningrum et al., 2021; Indonesia, 2019; Jannah, 2019; Panut et al., 2021).

Religious activities conducted in the community play a formative role in establishing a way of life based on religious values. Through these activities, the community does not merely attend or engage in formal religious learning but also has the opportunity to deepen their understanding of religious teachings. This provides them with the space to become more familiar with Islamic values both theoretically and practically.

Moreover, these activities encourage the community to view religion not only as knowledge but also as a guiding principle in communal life. By internalizing Islamic values, the community can practice these values in various aspects of life, such as social interactions, work, and family life. Thus, religious values are manifested in a lifestyle that reflects goodness and unity within the community. As noted by Azra et al., pesantren serve as religious educational institutions that strengthen religious values within society (Azyumardi Azra, Fathurahman, 2004; Kariyanto, 2020; Khoiri et al., 2021). The findings indicate that the influence of pesantren in Makassar extends to a broader context, where the community regards pesantren as institutions that enhance their spiritual quality.

This research reinforces the argument that pesantren function not only as formal educational institutions for students but also as agents of religious socialization that have a significant impact on the surrounding community. Pesantren not only educates students in religious aspects but has long played a dual role as an educational institution and as a spread of Islamic values to the broader society. Through religious and social activities, pesantren become centers for disseminating religious teachings, contributing positively to the community.

The religious education provided by pesantren also shapes the community's understanding and practice of religion. The surrounding community is motivated to increase their worship frequency and participate more actively in local religious activities. Thus, pesantren not only produces knowledgeable students but also helps strengthen the community's religious lifestyle, making it an inseparable part of the social and spiritual development in the surrounding environment.

Furthermore, this study reveals that Pesantren X has a broad role, not limited to formal education for students but also in moral guidance for the surrounding community. Pesantren acts as institutions that actively instill Islamic moral values and principles, such as discipline, honesty, respect for others' opinions, and responsibility, which are applied in various educational and developmental activities. With a holistic approach, pesantren equip students with religious knowledge and develop strong moral character, which they are expected to apply in social interactions and daily life.

The moral values taught at Pesantren X also impact the surrounding community's lifestyle. Values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility are internalized not only by students but also adopted by community members who interact with the pesantren. Over time, these values become a guide for the community's daily life, shaping a lifestyle that is religious and ethically grounded. Pesantren X thus functions as a center of moral development, influencing the community's spiritual and ethical growth and strengthening its role as an institution contributing to building a community rooted in Islamic values.

The kiai as the central figure in the pesantren plays a primary role in moral development for both students and the surrounding community. As a spiritual leader, the kiai not only imparts religious knowledge but also guides students in shaping good character and morals. The kiai provides a direct example through words, attitudes, and daily behaviors that demonstrate Islamic principles. Due to their close relationship with students, the Kiai have a profound influence in shaping their mindset and personality.

In addition to their role in student development, the Kiai also have a substantial influence on the broader community. As a respected figure, the kiai often serves as a role model in practicing religious and communal life. Their presence inspires the community to apply Islamic principles in social life. Thus, the kiai functions not only as an educator within the pesantren but also as an agent of moral and social change in the community, reinforcing their role in fostering a religious and noble-minded community. This aligns with Horikoshi's theory, which posits that kiai hold a strong moral authority in the community, making them key figures in influencing the religious behavior of the people (Horikoshi, 1987).

In Makassar, kiai at the pesantren act not only as religious teachers but also as moral leaders guiding the community toward a more devout religious life. This influence is evident in the way the community interacts with one another and in their social lives, where the religious values taught at the pesantren become a foundation.

One important finding from Geertz's research is the notion that kiai are perceived as unable to bridge pesantren with modernity. Geertz argued that pesantren struggle with modernity challenges, especially in building a strong educational system (Geertz, 1960, 2014; Latif, 2019; Muwaffiqillah, 2023; Zaki, 2022). However, this view is contradicted by the reality that Kiai can engage in dialogue with modernity without losing their traditional identity. The kiai can adapt to modern developments while preserving the pesantren's traditional values, demonstrating their ability to navigate between tradition and modernity wisely while maintaining their religious authority.

Apart from education and moral development, pesantren also significantly influence the community's religious lifestyle through involvement in various religious social activities. Pesantren often become the center of various local religious activities that involve the community directly. Activities such as Islamic holiday celebrations, routine study groups, and majelis taklim, provide opportunities for community members to deepen their religious understanding. Through these activities, pesantren actively fosters a religious environment that supports the community's spirituality.

The community's active participation in activities organized by the pesantren strengthens their spiritual bond with the institution. Community members' presence at these events is not only a sign of respect for the pesantren but also a moment to enhance religious awareness. By participating directly in these activities, the community becomes more motivated to internalize Islamic values in their social lives. This indicates that pesantren function not only as educational institutions but also as centers for nurturing and shaping a religious and virtuous community.

Previous research by Noer et al. revealed that pesantren play a significant social role within society, particularly in promoting religious solidarity (Muhaemin, 2019; Noor, 1980; Nurul Qomariyah & Mohammad Darwis, 2023). This is also reflected in the findings of this study, where the community in Makassar perceives the pesantren not only as a place of education but also as a social center that strengthens their religious life.

Community members actively involved in pesantren activities tend to have a stronger attachment to religious values, which impacts their religious lifestyle. They are more frequently engaged in worship activities, such as congregational prayers and study sessions, and have a heightened awareness of the importance of maintaining social relations based on Islamic teachings.

Forms of Pesantren and Community Interaction in Shaping Socio-Religious Life

One of the most dominant forms of interaction is community interaction in studying religious sciences. Pesantren routinely holds activities such as recitation, religious lectures, and yellow book studies, which are open to the general public. These activities strengthen the relationship between pesantren and the community, where pesantren become spiritual centers that not only educate santri but also provide religious education to the community. This is in line with the view of Dhofier et al. who emphasize that pesantren not only function as formal educational institutions but also as a place where people obtain religious guidance as well as current issues such as tolerance, the dangers of radicalism, multiculturalism (Dhofier, 2011; Marzuki et al., 2020; Muafiah et al., 2022; Sadiyah, 2022). In Makassar City, pesantren serve as the main reference in terms of religious teachings, and people feel attached to pesantren because of the access to religious education they provide.

Apart from education, pesantren are also often the center of socio-religious activities in the community. In the celebration of Islamic holidays such as Maulid Nabi, Isra Miraj, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, pesantren serves as a gathering place for the community to participate in religious activities that involve the wider community. This is in line with the findings of pesantren researchers that pesantren have an important role in strengthening socio-religious solidarity through these social activities (Furqan, 2019; Lintang Kusuma Hadi Aji Hartawan et al., 2022; Mustofa & Syah, 2019). In Makassar, this role is very visible, where pesantren become a bridge between religious teachings and socio-religious practices. Community participation in these activities reflects their attachment to pesantren as institutions that maintain religious traditions and become centers of spiritual life.

Furthermore, the kiai figure in pesantren plays a key role in interactions with the community (Faisal et al., 2022a; Nahara & Nurcholis, 2022). As a respected spiritual leader, the kiai is not only known within the pesantren but is also a figure of great influence in the

community. His presence provides guidance and advice needed by the community in living their daily lives. Kiai is often the place to ask and refer to various problems, both related to religious and social issues, so his presence is highly relied upon by the surrounding community.

In addition, kiai also actively participate in various social and religious activities outside the pesantren, such as leading prayers, lecturing, or attending important events in the community. Through these interactions, kiai build a strong relationship with the community, thus being able to spread Islamic values directly. The role of Kiai as a wise and authoritative figure makes him a role model in shaping a religious, ethical, and good moral lifestyle in the community. Thus, kiai not only play a role in educating Santri but also contribute greatly to the moral and spiritual development of the surrounding community.

Kiai are respected as spiritual and moral leaders, whose advice is often used as guidance by the community. Horikoshi emphasizes that kiai have strong moral authority in society (Horikoshi, 1987), and in Makassar City, this authority is manifested in the close relationship between kiai and the community around the pesantren. Communities often seek guidance from kiai in religious and social matters, and the presence of kiai reinforces the role of pesantren as centers of religious authority. This interaction between Kiai and the community creates a strong bond, where moral values taught in pesantren influence the social life of the community at large.

Pesantren also functions as an agent of socio-religious transformation in the community. Through close interaction with the community, pesantren not only instills religious values but also shape the religious lifestyle of the community. People's daily activities, such as worshiping and interacting with others, are strongly influenced by the teachings they receive from pesantren. This is in line with the findings of Hefner et al. who noted that pesantren play an important role in transforming socio-religious life in the community, especially in maintaining the continuity of religious traditions amid modernization (Robert W. Hefner, 2015; Wahid, 2010).

Nevertheless, pesantren in Makassar City also face challenges from modernization. Rapid social changes and technological penetration affect the way people interact with traditional institutions such as pesantren. However, many pesantren in Makassar City can adapt to this situation, without sacrificing their identity. They integrate modern approaches in their teaching methods and utilize technology to reach a wider audience, but still maintain the traditional values that are at the core of their education.

Overall, this study shows that the interaction between pesantren and society in Makassar City is very complex and significant. Pesantren not only act as educational institutions, but also as centers of socio-religious life that influence the lifestyle of the surrounding community. Interactions through education, socio-religious activities, and kiai leadership shape the religious lifestyle of the community, creating a strong bond between the pesantren and the communities they serve.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that pesantren in Makassar City has a significant role in shaping and influencing the religious lifestyle of the community through religious education, moral guidance, and participation in socio-religious activities. The pesantren functions as a center of learning and

transmission of religious knowledge, which not only educates the students but also provides comprehensive religious education to the community. The role of Kiai as a respected spiritual leader confirms the pesantren's position as a center of religious authority. Kiai plays a key role in providing moral guidance and modeling religious practices so that people make pesantren the main reference in running their spiritual lives.

In addition to the educational aspect, pesantren also shape the socio-religious life of the community through collective activities such as celebrations of Islamic holidays and open recitations. These activities strengthen socio-religious solidarity and increase the attachment between the community and the pesantren. Despite facing challenges from modernization, pesantren in Makassar City can navigate changes by integrating modern approaches without abandoning their traditional identity. Pesantren remains a relevant religious pillar and plays an important role in guiding the community to face the challenges of the times.

The implications of this study emphasize that pesantren have great potential as agents of social change that can bridge tradition and modernity. Government policies, educational institutions, and local communities are expected to utilize the strategic role of pesantren in religious education and character development to strengthen the socio-religious order. For academics, there is room to research further the role of pesantren in economics, sociology, politics, and so on. In addition, the adaptations made by pesantren in facing the challenges of modernity can be a useful model for other religious institutions that want to remain relevant in the era of globalization.

Authors' contributions

The first author served as the principal investigator, leading the research design, data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation. The second, third, and fourth authors acted as supervisors, providing critical guidance throughout the study. They contributed to refining the research methodology, offering theoretical insights, and reviewing the manuscript to ensure its academic rigor and alignment with relevant standards. Their collaborative efforts ensured the study's success and the quality of the final publication.

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