

## *Mahasantri* and Rational Choice: Shift of Obedience to the *Kiai*

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### Abstract

The traditional perception of a one-way, sacred communication between *santri* and *kiai* is no longer the accurate portrayal of their relationship in the *pesantren*. Through participant observation in two *pesantren* in Surabaya and Yogyakarta, this ethnographic study aims to reveal the shift in *santri*'s obedience to the *Kiai* after they become *mahasantri*. Rational choice theory emphasizing rational thinking, is employed in this study to examine the three dimensions of *mahasantri* obedience, including perception, embodiment, and response to the *Kiai*'s fatwa. The findings discovered that in social and political aspects, *mahasantri* no longer fully obeyed the *Kiai*, compared to when they were students. Obedience to the *Kiai* certainly still exists. However, with rational awareness, *mahasantri* begin to determine their boundaries. This article highlights the growing negotiation of religious authority among educated *santri* in modern *pesantren* environments.

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*Persepsi tradisional tentang komunikasi satu arah yang sakral antara santri dan kiai tidak lagi mencerminkan hubungan mereka di pesantren. Melalui observasi partisipatif di dua pesantren di Surabaya dan Yogyakarta, studi etnografis ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pergeseran ketaatan santri terhadap Kiai setelah mereka menjadi mahasantri. Teori pilihan rasional yang menekankan pemikiran rasional, digunakan dalam studi ini untuk menganalisis tiga dimensi ketaatan mahasantri, yaitu persepsi, implementasi, dan respons*

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*terhadap fatwa kiai. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dalam aspek sosial dan politik, mahasantri tidak lagi sepenuhnya patuh kepada kiai dibandingkan saat mereka masih menjadi siswa. Ketaatan terhadap Kiai tentu masih ada. Namun, dengan kesadaran rasional, mahasantri mulai menentukan batas-batas mereka. Artikel ini menyoroti negosiasi yang semakin meningkat terhadap otoritas agama di kalangan santri terdidik dalam lingkungan pesantren modern.*

**Keywords:** communication; *kiai*; *mahasantri*; obedience; *pesantren*

## Introduction

As one of the elements in the *pesantren* tradition whose position is lower than the *kiai*, *santri* are always portrayed as people who are full of obedience, sincerity, and high respect for the *kiai* (Abdillah & Maskuri, 2022). The ideal image of an obedient *santri* generally adheres to specific standards, such as not walking or sitting in front of the *kiai*, not starting a conversation without permission, not talking excessively near him, and not asking questions when tired. Most importantly, *santri* are expected to follow and practice all ordered actions as long as they do not conflict with religious teachings (al-Zarnūjī, 1773).

Obedience, which Baron and Byrne define as “a manifestation of a person's behavior due to social influence from figures who have authority,” is indeed essential in the *pesantren* tradition (Baron & Byrne, 2003). Greg Fealy states that the relationship between the *kiai* and the students is very complex, even exceeding the relationship between a child and his parents (Fealy, 2012). The *kiai*'s authority in the *pesantren* is absolute (Muttaqin, 2020). Submission to the *kiai* is the main rule and characterizes the cultural behavior of *pesantren* in Indonesia (Madjid, 1997). The *santri*'s obedience to the *kiai* reflects a sense of reverence and is believed to bring blessings to them (Anam et al., 2019). The figure of the *kiai*—with all the blessings and sacredness he possesses—places him as the most influential figure and the highest authority in the *pesantren*. In a more serious context, the *kiai* is considered a determinant of students' future—whether they will be successful or not (Syarif & Gaffar, 2019a, 2019b).

On the other hand, *mahasantri*, as a group that receives two sources of knowledge at once—the tradition of *tawāḍu'* in *pesantren* and the critical

tradition of the university—experience a shift in their thinking and attitude towards obedience to the *kiai*. This shift leads to conditional obedience, where *mahasantri* no longer accepts everything from the *kiai* as absolute truth. Instead, they begin to understand what is worth following and what needs to be criticized or even rejected (Warsah & Idi Warsah, 2023). Rationality, which is often emphasized by universities and assumes that individuals have rational goals and seek to achieve them in the most effective and efficient way (Amadae, n.d.), provides a new understanding for *mahasantri* that obedience does not mean total surrender. This rationality forms a critical attitude to examine pragmatic aspects and not make the *kiai*'s fatwa the primary reference.

Based on this, this study aims to explore the trust of *santri* in *kiai*, building on previous studies that examined the shift in the relationship between *santri* and *kiai*—from paternalistic to more functional—as a result of the presence of modernity (Zakiah & Faturachman, 2004). This study highlights the shift in the relationship between *santri* and *kiai* from absolute obedience to conditional obedience, which is significantly influenced by rational choices made possible through the critical climate in higher education. With this background, this study seeks to answer the question: What is the shift in *santri* obedience to *kiai* in the context of *pesantren* modern?

This study is a type of field research in ethnography that discusses *mahasantri*'s obedience to *kiai*. A study on social influence is a crucial topic in social psychology, examining how a person's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and behavior are influenced by the presence of others (Takooshian, 1999). The data collection process was carried out through participant observation, where, during the research period, the researcher was part of the *mahasantri* in the cities of Surabaya and Yogyakarta so that he could witness and experience firsthand how the *mahasantri*'s obedience to the *kiai* was demonstrated through several embodiments and responses to fatwas issued by the *kiai*. To strengthen data, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 12 student informants in *pesantren* in Surabaya and Yogyakarta to examine the reasons behind the shift in the meaning of obedience. To create more natural results,

interviews were conducted informally through casual conversations. The selection of informants was based on each individual's background, where they were *santri* who had experienced the *pesantren* climate for a long time, since middle school or high school. Demographically, the informants in this study are described as Table 1.

### ***Santri* and Absolute Obedience: General Principles**

Obedience to *kiai* is a reflection of the ethics that *santri* must have. As Martin van Bruinessen said, respect, reverence, and absolute obedience to the *kiai* are of the first values instilled in every *santri* (Bruinessen, 1999). In the world of *pesantren*, quite a few moral doctrines have been established. Generally, what is used is the book Ta'lim Muta'alim by al-Zarnuji, which incidentally contains the manners of being a *santri*. In this book, for example, it is stated that the condition for obtaining practical knowledge is to do two things: respect the teacher and the book (Al-Zarnūjī, 1773).

Table 1  
Informant Demographics

| Name        | Gender | Time as a Student<br>(Years) | <i>Pesantren</i> |
|-------------|--------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Zabran (25) | M      | 11                           | Surabaya         |
| Akbar (25)  | M      | 9                            | Surabaya         |
| Izza (24)   | F      | 7                            | Surabaya         |
| Risa (23)   | F      | 7                            | Surabaya         |
| Alin (23)   | F      | 7                            | Surabaya         |
| Nanda (22)  | F      | 7                            | Surabaya         |
| Fira (24)   | F      | 9                            | Surabaya         |
| Mala (23)   | F      | 10                           | Yogyakarta       |
| Alfi (24)   | F      | 11                           | Yogyakarta       |
| Ula (21)    | F      | 6                            | Yogyakarta       |
| Arin (20)   | F      | 6                            | Yogyakarta       |
| Ihsan (24)  | M      | 7                            | Yogyakarta       |

Being an obedient *santri* is often described by the attitude of accepting the *kiai*'s statement without the courage to ask again, speaking when asked, and carrying out orders without the courage to refuse (Syarif, 2012). In terms of attitude, for example, it is described as *santri* walking sitting (*ndengkul*) when they want to face the *kiai*. The *santri* looked down and stopped when they passed the *kiai*, then resumed walking when the distance between them increased (Aini, 2022). All forms of obedience are carried out because of the expected element of 'blessing'. The figure of a *kiai* is considered a human being whose level of piety cannot be doubted, so there is an assumption that being kind to them will automatically receive blessings from Allah (Syarif & Gaffar, 2019b). The *santri* generally believe that, although they are often perceived as unintelligent in the *pesantren*, if they receive blessings, they will usually be able to become "figures" in society. Likewise, even though they are smart in the *pesantren*, if they do not receive "blessings" or even receive "wrath", then it is believed that they will have difficulties in society (Nihwan & Paisun, 2019).

Furthermore, obedience is rooted in a patron-client relationship (Faraz et al., 2022). A term often used to describe the relationship between *kiai* and *santri*, where generally the *kiai*—as patrons—are those on whom the *santri* depend (Zakiah & Faturochman, 2004). *Kiai* is a central figure whose daily attitude has a significant influence on the personality of the *santri*. *Kiai* has a vital role in guiding *santri* in religious knowledge and morals. This obedience is not only to maintain discipline, but also as a form of respect and recognition of the knowledge and experience of the *kiai*. By following the advice and direction of the *kiai*, *santri* can deepen their knowledge and improve their quality (Muhakamurrohman, 1970). *Santri* views *kiai* as honorable people beyond their respect for their parents. It is motivated by the belief that *kiai* has contributed much to providing guidance and moral education (Chasanah, 2021). This concept is motivated by the two-way relationship between *kiai* and *santri*, namely an ethical and theological relationship. An ethical relationship fosters ethics, and a theological relationship cultivates a desire to serve and obtain blessings from the *kiai* (Wibowo, 2021).

The obedience of *santri* is usually based on al-Kahfi: 66. This verse tells the story of the process of Prophet Musa arriving at Prophet Khidhir, where as a

student, Prophet Musa was required to obey his teacher based on the belief that what the teacher had decided had gone through careful consideration, not only methodologically, but also intuitively, not only rationally, but also theologically. The *santri*'s obedience to the *kiai* is also an actualization of the meaning of al-Nisā: 59, which is focused on obedience to *uli al-amr*, which in the context of *pesantren* can be interpreted as *kiai*. Surah al-Nisa:59 provides a theological and practical basis for *santri* to actualize their obedience to the *kiai*. It strengthens the position of the *kiai* as an authority figure who must be respected and obeyed by *santri*. In addition, the hadith narrated by Abu Daud number 3157 also plays a role in encouraging obedience. This hadith encourages *santri* to obey the *kiai* as a teacher and role model in the context of *pesantren*. In general, this hadith teaches that obedience to the ulama is part of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, making it highly relevant in the educational environment of *pesantren*.

### ***Mahasantri* Obedience**

#### ***Kiai*, according to *Mahasantri***

One of the *mahasantri* said that his understanding of the figure of the *kiai* was formed long before he entered the *pesantren*, where he had learned this doctrine from his family.

“My family is quite religious and considers *Kiai* to be perfect figures. I easily absorbed this view by working like a doctrine. Moreover, like doctrines, we find it difficult to escape from them because of a cognitive dissonance bias: if we live in an environment that believes in a myth, we tend to assume the myth is real. If we grow up in an Islamic environment, it is difficult for us to escape Islamic beliefs. For followers of other religions, Islam is irrational because it worships the Kaaba stone. For Islam, other religions are irrational because, for example, they worship Diego Maradona. To atheists, all religion makes no sense. Moreover, religious adherents do not easily abandon their core beliefs. This difficulty in leaving can be called cognitive dissonance. Well, beliefs about *kiai* also work, such as cognitive dissonance. The family's trust persisted until he entered an Islamic boarding school. When studying, it is easy to respect the *kiai* as much as possible” (interview with Zabran).

This sentence illustrates how religious beliefs instilled since childhood can shape a person's thinking. My religious family considers the *Kiai* a perfect

figure, and this view is absorbed in a way similar to doctrine. This shows that beliefs taught in the family environment can be powerful and complex to question. An environment that believes in certain myths makes individuals consider these myths as reality. In this context, growing up in an Islamic environment creates a strong emotional attachment and identity, which makes it difficult to let go of these beliefs. When there are views from adherents of other religions who see Islam as irrational, or vice versa, Muslims who view other religions in the same way, a defensive attitude arises that strengthens existing beliefs. The difficulty in overcoming these ingrained beliefs reflects cognitive dissonance. The discomfort felt when a conflict arises between beliefs held and facts that emerge causes individuals to seek ways to maintain these beliefs, often by rationalizing or ignoring conflicting information. Beliefs about *kiai* also play a role in this context, where family traditions continue into the *pesantren*. There, respect for *kiai* becomes natural and easy to do, because these values are reinforced in the same educational environment. It creates a cycle where confidence is maintained and the discomfort of potential doubt is minimized.

He also said that the actual understanding of such a perfect *kiai* figure is not knowledge generated based on personal experience, but has been formed over a long time and passed down from generation to generation.

“Our view of *Kiai* is an ancient perspective of a figure who must be respected in this manner because he is the heir of the prophet. At a certain point, this view glorifies an idealized figure: a holy figure who is never wrong. If the *Kiai* makes a mistake, perhaps it only seems wrong because the saints often do wrong things, and we are forced to believe they are just right” (interview with Zabran).

This sentence illustrates how cognitive dissonance influences perceptions of *kiai*. First, the view that *kiai* are figures who must be respected because they are considered the heirs of the prophets shows the existence of strong traditions and values embedded in society. It creates a frame of reference in which *kiai* are seen as figures who are respected and idealized. This glorification produces dissonance when the *kiai*'s actions are considered wrong. When *kiai* makes mistakes, discomfort arises because it contradicts

the idealistic view that they are never wrong. To overcome this dissonance, individuals tend to rationalize the mistake, believing that the mistake only appears to be that way. It creates a cycle in which the belief about *kiai* as a holy figure is maintained, despite evidence to the contrary.

From this, we can conclude that Zabran wants to see that the view, which considers the *kiai* as a holy figure and never wrong, can lead to a refusal to admit their mistakes or shortcomings. In addition, deep-rooted dogma, where individuals are compelled to maintain beliefs despite evidence to the contrary, can hinder critical thinking and foster the acceptance of narratives that are not always rational, thereby overlooking more complex realities. Thus, a critical attitude towards authority and tradition is necessary, and the acceptance of human imperfection must be encouraged, including in respected figures such as a *kiai*.

### Body Attitude (Embodiment)

In terms of body posture (embodiment), many of the *mahasantri* no longer exhibit a '*munduk-munduk*' attitude when communicating, or even '*ndengkul*' as they used to do when walking in front of their *kiai*.

“In the past, when the *kiai* responded, they bowed because they were afraid, embarrassed, etc. However, now it is more relaxed (interview with Nanda), “Before every time you met a *kiai* you had to give way, standing politely while bowing your head” (interview with Akbar).

An attitude of respect is usually manifested by simply walking politely.

In addition, they stated that “*now they are more courageous in expressing their opinions.*” When talking to the *kiai*, the *mahasantri* not only started to look at the *kiai*'s face but even dared to express their opinions. It is evident in the teaching and learning process, where students no longer accept what the *kiai* conveys in the same manner. Through the question-and-answer method, they will generally provide alternative views or even offer criticism if they feel something is inappropriate.

“Because by being a student, you are taught to have the courage to speak up when you feel something is inappropriate” (interview with Mala).

Within the framework of Pierre Bourdieu's bodily hexis theory, changes in the body posture of *mahasantri* in interacting with the *kiai* reflect shifts in power relations and social structures. In the past, the '*munduk-munduk*' and '*ndengkul*' attitudes symbolized deep respect and fear of the *kiai*'s authority. This attitude is a form of embodiment that expresses social hierarchy and cultural norms that require submission to authority figures. However, with a more relaxed attitude and the courage to express opinions, we can see a transformation in the habitus of the *mahasantri*. They now not only dare to look at the *kiai*'s face, but also actively participate in discussions, which shows that they are starting to internalize more egalitarian values. The question-and-answer method applied in learning strengthens this dynamic, where *mahasantri* no longer receive knowledge passively, but play an active role as agents in the process. This change reflects a shift in the social and cultural capital possessed by the *mahasantri*. With their status as *mahasantri*, they gain the legitimacy to 'speak up' and explore critical thinking, which may have previously been unacceptable. It suggests that bodily hexis is not just a physical behavior, but also reflects changes in social relations and identities. This new attitude indicates that the *mahasantri* are increasingly adopting a more independent and confident position, while challenging the traditional norms that bind them to a position of submission.

### Response to *Fatwa*

Activities in college provide new perspectives for *mahasantri*. This education not only introduces academic knowledge, but also encourages them to think critically and independently. Thus, *mahasantri* began to question the authority of the *kiai* and no longer accepted teachings unquestioningly. In the past, before entering college, *santri* would voluntarily agree to everything from the *kiai*, including all the rules in the pesantren. However, this is different for male *santri*, who have been accustomed to the freedom to think and act.

"In the past, if the *kiai* told me to do anything, I was thrilled; I got the blessing. Now, it feels like a burden" (interview with Zabran).

The *mahasantri* also began to reason about what they needed and what they should pursue:

“My daily task is only to help the *kiai*, with trust in blessings. Maybe that is an innocent belief, but I am starting to feel stupid and want to be smart. How can you be smart if your daily activities turn your back on knowledge? Moreover, since I understood that my interests differed from the *kiai*’s, I looked for a way to leave the hut. In this effort to leave, I have increasingly come to realize that devotion is sometimes used for nothing. Some teachers are sometimes rigorous in giving various kinds of doctrine so that students serve unthinkingly” (interview with Zabran).

From here, we can see the self-awareness and rationalization of the *mahasantri*, which allows others, including the *kiai*, to utilize their devotion. There is a shift from an attitude that relies entirely on the *kiai*’s blessings to a more rational approach to personal needs and goals. They do not want to feel stupid because they follow without considering what is best for themselves. Regarding the *Kiai*’s orders or fatwa, they are no longer absolute and must be followed by *mahasantri*.

“Sometimes, some of the things that the *kiai* say are at odds with my beliefs. Moreover, since becoming a student, I no longer want to obey the *kiai*. Sometimes I do not even believe what the *kiai* says’ (interview with Ihsan).

“Of course, I respect them. They are knowledgeable people. However, when my goal is blocked, I must avoid it” (interview with Zabran).

When the *Kiai*’s teachings conflict with their personal beliefs, the *mahasantri* feel entitled to reject them. It suggests that they prioritize their personal beliefs and values over authority. This attitude reflects the transition from imitation to critical evaluation of the teachings received.

Not a few *mahasantri* reject the matchmaking system from their *kiai* because it does not meet the standard criteria for the candidate they want. Marriage is a lifelong commitment for him, so it must be a truly considered and well-thought-out decision. Even though they believe that the candidate chosen by their *kiai* will be good, they feel that ‘they know themselves better than anyone else’ (interview with Alfi). In other cases, for example, during general elections. Even though the *kiai* advised choosing a particular candidate, the *mahasantri* did not immediately choose that one. They will try

to find out and read each candidate's track record first and make a choice accordingly (interview with Mala). These changes reflect a shift in social structures and power relations, in which *mahasantri* began to take a more autonomous and critical position towards the authorities they had previously fully respected.

### Rational Choice: Shifting Roots

As students who live in *pesantren* and are active students at universities, *mahasantri* receive two sources of knowledge: learning patterns in *pesantren* that emphasize doctrinal traditions and universities that emphasize critical traditions. Learning activities for almost 24 hours, which take place in an integrated manner in *pesantren*, emphasize increasing '*ubūdiyyah* (*fiqh*) and moral obedience (*akhlāq*). In *pesantren*, the morality of obedience is absolute (Abdillah & Maskuri, 2022). Even *santri* are always told that “*politeness is of higher value than intelligence.*”

Meanwhile, in the Consideration of law no. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education states that “*higher education is part of the national education system which has a strategic role in educating the nation's life and advancing science*”. Becoming a rational thinker is a goal that every university strives for. *Mahasantri*'s open access to information and insight can make choices about everything based on doctrine and reason (logic). Rational choice is a type of thinking based on the assumption that individuals choose actions that best suit their preferences. As James S. Coleman said, which George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman quoted, individual actions lead to a goal. These goals are actions determined by values or preferences (choices). In rational choice, actors (in this case, individuals) are the key to achieving and maximizing their interests. It is done by making a choice that is considered to bring results to achieve those interests. In the learning system of higher education, receiving and giving criticism is a common practice, as this critical tradition is essential for maintaining the university's identity (Ritzer & Goodman, 2012). The critical climate accompanying *mahasantri*'s daily lives has resulted in a culture of questioning or discovering everything from its roots.

### Obedience Shift: From Absolute to Conditional

As central figures in *pesantren*, *kiai* play a crucial role in shaping the development of *santri* (Turmudi, 2006). The patron-client relationship that develops between the *kiai* and the *santri* at a later stage has the impact of a hierarchy of status dependency and respect, leading to a cult of the individual, where the *santri* are indirectly required to trust the *kiai* entirely (Setiawan, 2013). The higher the desire of the *mahasantri* to follow the *kiai's* orders, the stronger the students' degree of attachment. *Santri* who have difficulty freeing themselves from the power of *kiai* authority can hinder their independence, especially in terms of emotional and value independence. As stated by Zainuddin Syarif, those who are in a bond of obedience to specific authority figures will experience the feeling that they are at the mercy of other people (Syarif, 2012). Likewise, with *santri*, their absolute (*total*) obedience to the *kiai* will form a paradigm that they do not need to make decisions about their own lives because they will follow what has been determined by their authority figure. In these conditions, *santri* have limited opportunities to make choices and take responsibility for them independently. As a result, *santri* will find it challenging to develop their sense of independence (Syarif, 2012).

The transition from *santri* to *mahasantri* is not just a change in educational level. The consequences of change accompany it, in this case, especially the form of obedience to the *kiai* as knowledge becomes wider, with religious awareness that is not just a doctrinal compulsion but relies on an understanding of religious teachings (Sudrajat, 2019). Patronage between *Kiai* and *Mahasantri* does not fully occur. The *mahasantri's* attitude of respect towards the *kiai* is no longer in a very sacred form, such as '*munduk-munduk*', '*ndengkul*', not even daring to look at the *kiai's* face when speaking. In the past, before entering university, *Santri* would voluntarily agree to everything that came from the *kiai*, including all the rules for the *pesantren*. It differs from *mahasantri*, who already knows about freedom in thinking and acting. For some *mahasantri*, this pattern of *kiai-santri* relations does not originate from religious teachings. However, it results from adopting *keraton* (royal) traditions, which are then preserved in *pesantren* culture (interview with Risa, Ula, and Arin).

*Mahasantri* has benchmarks that represent its form of obedience. For *mahasantri*, being obedient does not mean losing your identity as a free individual. Obedience does not mean that you dare not refuse the *kiai*'s orders or wishes. Apart from authority figures in the religious field, where he is seen as a person who can always understand the greatness of God and the secrets of nature, so he is considered to have an unattainable position, especially for ordinary people (Dhofier, 2011), *kiai* are still human beings who cannot be separated from ego and personal interests. It requires students to be critical in examining pragmatic matters and not to use fatwas as the primary reference in responding to and accommodating events (Susanto, 2014). One answer is a mental revolution in rational thinking, where the *mahasantri*'s critical attitude balances the *sami'na wa atho'na* attitude. Finally—for *mahasantri*—rational acceptance of religion is seen as a good way of religion. This rationality of thinking at the next stage influences *Mahasantri*'s choices. If a fatwa or *kiai*'s order is contrary to what they believe, the *mahasantri*—using polite language—will express their views and then discuss them. Moreover, with various careful considerations, some *mahasantri* even chose not to follow the *kiai*'s orders, such as matchmaking and general elections.

As a religious leader with great morality believed to provide a correct understanding of religion to *mahasantri* and guide them towards the path acceptable to Allah (Asmani, 2018), *mahasantri*'s respect for *kiai* still exists. It is just that *Mahasantri no longer obeys all the Kiai's* orders. This view is motivated by the dialogue between different paradigms, specifically the *pesantren* doctrinal system and the critical thinking culture of higher education, which then produces a synthesis in the *mahasantri*'s view of life. Despite all the principles of rationality that the *Mahasantri* have—the courage to refuse or make their own choices in life, the obedience that has been internalized for a long time in the *mahasantri*'s body will remain attached. Therefore, the author refers to the *mahasantri*'s obedience to the *kiai* as conditional obedience. Conditional obedience is a synthesis between absolute (*total*) obedience, which generally occurs in *mahasantris*, and independent freedom, which is usually

adhered to by *mahasantris*. If *mahasantri*'s dare to express freely their choices (Efendi et al., 2022), and *santri* have limited freedom to make choices in their lives (Nuqul et al., 2019), this is different from *mahasantri*, where they can and dare to make their own choices but still pay attention to the ethics of obedience to the *kiai*. The rejection by *mahasantri* of something from the *kiai* generally remains with *santri* ethics.

## Conclusion

The ethics of the *santri*'s obedience to the *kiai* is an absolute necessity. The fixed values (ethics, religiosity) inherent in the *pesantren* tradition are challenging to eradicate. When discussing *mahasantri*, which in this context refers to those who reside in *pesantren* and engage in educational activities outside the *pesantren*, or in other words, those who are formed based on two paradigms (doctrinal and rational-critical), it can be observed that the ethics of obedience still exist. However, certain parts of the 'obedience' aspect are starting to shift. *Mahasantri* does not necessarily absorb the traditional values of obedience that *santri salaf* usually believe in, but instead enters into a dialogue with rationality. So this is what then produces the concept of conditional obedience.[]

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