

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL-INTERACTION BETWEEN NYAI AND FEMALE SANTRI IN PESANTREN ANNUQAYAH, EAST JAVA

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Abstract

This article explains the model of social interaction between Nyai (female pesantren leader) and santri (female students) at Pesantren Annuqayah, East Java. Nyai is seen as having the authority to participate in developing education in pesantren. This view has implications for the model of social relationship between Nyai and her students, not only in the learning process but also in their daily life at the pesantren. This research uses qualitative methods through a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with Nyai and several students at the pesantren of Annuqayah. The results showed that the relationship between Nyai and santri tends to be in patron-client and associative models. These two models of interactions arise naturally as a tradition, as well as a form of application of the teachings they learn in classical books in pesantren. This relationship model aims to shape Islamic personality and teach the students morality and intellect.

Keywords: Social Interaction; Nyai; Female santri; Pesantren

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan model interaksi sosial antara Nyai dan santri perempuan di Pesantren Annuqayah, Jawa Timur. Nyai, sebuah sebutan untuk istri pemimpin pesantren di Indonesia, dipandang memiliki otoritas untuk ikut serta mengembangkan pendidikan di pesantren. Hal ini berimplikasi pada jenis relasi sosial diantara Nyai dengan murid-muridnya, tidak hanya dalam proses pembelajaran namun juga dalam keseharian mereka di pesantren. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui pendekatan fenomenologi. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara mendalam terhadap Nyai dan beberapa santri di Pesantren Annuqayah Jawa Timur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hubungan Nyai dan santri cenderung bersifat patron-klien dan asosiatif. Kedua jenis interaksi ini terjadi secara alamiah sebagai sebuah tradisi, sekaligus bentuk penerapan dari ajaran-ajaran yang mereka pelajari dalam kitab-kitab klasik di pesantren. Model hubungan ini bertujuan untuk membentuk kepribadian Islami, penanaman moralitas, dan intelektualitas pada diri para santri.

Kata Kunci: Interaksi sosial; Nyai; Santri perempuan; Pesantren

A. INTRODUCTION

Humans are one of God's creatures who need to interact with other creatures. This indicates that humans are social creatures who cannot live alone without the help of others. To ensure their survival, humans must interact and establish communication with other people to survive in the development of science and technology (Werungan 2004). This reality is a reflection of the significant development of human life in strengthening relationships and interactions with others. Humans experience a fairly rapid stage of development in building networks and cooperation to maintain a life full of challenges. This is because humans are considered God's creatures who have the most dynamic social interactions with fellow humans and the environment in this universe.

The fabric of social interaction between community groups has been built as a form of solidarity in strengthening brotherhood among others. In an Islamic educational institution, such as a *pesantren*, social interaction can be found in a unique way between caregivers as religious leader and female students as a person who learns religious knowledge. Two different social classes are working together to achieve the right religious and spiritual orientation. So far, people tend to view the interaction between caregivers and students as being rigid and formalistic. Unlike ordinary people—who have normal social interactions—caregivers and students show limited and distant relationships.

The Nyai as wife Kiai has the authority to develop the Islamic education system as the leader of the *pesantren*. Nyai has a significant influence on people's lives, so they are used as role models in guiding religious issues. When a Nyai is only silent in response to something, the students interpret the silence as "permissible". If there is something that is not allowed, the Nyai will respond to it (Utami 2018). Students can pick a positive

behaviour that is shown by the Nyai. Even if something is abstract, sometimes it is what makes religious goals uniquely achieved.

Research on the social interaction models of Nyai and female students was conducted at the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school. In this *pesantren*, there are thousands of female students as well as dozens of caregivers or *pesantren* leaders who are indifferent to Islamic boarding schools—still under the same Annuqayah shelter. In carrying out social interactions in the *pesantren* community, of course, the delivery method differs—but in general it is almost the same. For example, when female students want to convey something, they stand in front of the Nyai house with a slightly bent body, the right hand holding the left wrist with the hand under the stomach while saying greetings.

The pattern of social interaction that is practised in the Annuqayah *pesantren* is not much different. This is because interaction and communication within the *pesantren* community are based on the students' obedience to the Nyai as the policy leader of the *pesantren*. When a female student wants to convey important things related to the interests of the *pesantren*, she must be respectful and devoted to the Nyai as Islamic educational institution leaders. Likewise, the voice that is issued is, of course, at a low volume and usually uses soft language. The position of the female student is to listen carefully to everything that is said by the caregiver—as a response—to the end without interrupting the conversation. When it is finished, the Nyai will not continue the sentence, so the female students generally just give their responses.

The model of social interaction and communication practised in Islamic boarding schools can be said to be very unique and must be a good example for all elements of educational institutions in Indonesia. This is certainly different from the model of interaction that occurs among people outside the realm of Islamic boarding schools, which often ignore ethics and courtesy as

principles of life. There are spiritual values in the social interactions of students and caregivers that, which without realising it, trigger the achievement of religious goals, including “improvement of ethics and morals”. Overall, the activities in the *pesantren* are full of value and solemnity because, before the implementation, there had been communication with the caregivers as a *pesantren* leader.

From the interactions that occur between Nyai and female students, it is not uncommon for students to eagerly await their presence in society as the next generation of the people and nation. They used to solve problems in society, giving spirit to the younger generation and the issue of the sustainability of social institutions. This, of course, cannot be separated from the role of social interaction between female students and their caregiver as a religious leader in *pesantren*. As we know, a caregiver is a charismatic figure who touches the deepest hearts of the female students through every opportunity to interact them.

Research on the social interaction models of Nyai and female students has been widely studied by other researchers in the form of field research and literature, although overall the substance is not the same. Several studies are directly related to the model of social interaction between *pesantren* leaders and students in Islamic educational institutions. There is research on the language codes used by the *santri* for their daily communication at Assalam Modern Islamic Boarding School and Al-Mukmin Islamic Boarding School (SusyLOWATI et al. 2019). Another study looks at Kiai's authority over students, with the goal of informing gender construction and the social interactions between Kiai, students, and society (Pramono 2018). There is research on the rights and obligations of Kiai and *santri* in the context of social interaction patterns (Agmas, Pratama, and Yani 2018). Other research explains the interpersonal communication of kiai and *santri* in modern Islamic boarding schools. This study shows that

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interpersonal communication between kiai and *santri* is carried out in a balanced and equal way in developing Islamic boarding school scholarships (Zammil, Muttaqin, and Sembodo 2021).

Another is that there are some previous studies as a literature review about the leadership of female religious leaders in *pesantren*. One of the important pieces of research is the transformational leadership of the female leader at Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School, Yogyakarta. This research showed that Nyai as the female leader embodied transformational leadership traits such as charismatic influence, inspirational leadership, and intellectual stimulation (Rahayu and Faraz 2019). There is also research about the roles and positions of female religious leaders in Madura. This research showed that Nyai in Madura has a significant role in the Islamic teachings, *da'wah*, recitation, and charismatic aspects in the female-dominated community (Jannah 2019). Besides, there is a female leader of *pesantren* in Central Java, namely Nyai Dadah, who struggled to promote women's education for the students (Chusniyah and Alimi 2015). In Islamic propagation (*da'wah*), women leaders also have a significant position to conduct the *da'wah* activities. This research showed that Nyai, as a female leader initiated, led, and developed the Tablighi Jamaat as a religious activity that has attracted more followers (Machmudi and Ardhani 2020). There is also research on politeness in the social interaction between *santriwati* (female students) and *ustadz* (teachers) (Putri 2016).

Among the previous studies described above, there are no similarities in the aspects of theory, approach, and results studied because this study focuses on the model of patron-client and associative interactions that occur in the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school, South Lubangsa Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep. The difference between this research and previous research is that this research uses the phenomenological-sociological perspective to

understand the model of social interaction between Nyai as a female religious leader and female students in pesantren.

This study seeks to answer the question of how the model of social interaction between Nyai and female students at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in the South Lubangsa area is conducted. What are the factors that influence the model of social interaction between Nyai and female students in the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school? Moreover, this study aims to understand in depth the unique interaction models at the Annuqayah Guluk-Guluk Sumenep, the application of social interaction models that can be used as examples, and to encourage the spirit of the students in establishing good communication with the leaders of the *pesantren*, fellow students, and the *pesantren* community.

B. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a field-qualitative method to explore models of social relations between Nyai and female students at the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school. This study employs a phenomenological-sociological approach to strengthen the model of good relations between *pesantren* leaders and female *pesantren* students.

The phenomenological-sociological approach is used as a way to understand the model of social interaction between Nyai as a female religious leader and female students in Islamic boarding schools, which historically and genealogically are more feudalistic and centralized. This research is expected to be a good role model for humans when interacting with others, both when interacting with *pesantren* leaders. At the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, there are a variety of female students with different traditions, cultures, and social status backgrounds. This certainly has an impact on the model of interaction that is carried out by Nyai as a female religious leader with the female students in

building relationships and communication related to scientific development in the *pesantren*.

The researchers used three data collection techniques to collect data on how the social interaction models of Nyai and female students in building relationships and communication for the benefit of religious activities in Islamic boarding schools. The first is the interview method. This interview was conducted to find out the opinions of the informants regarding the pattern of interaction that occurred at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in the South Lubangsa area as well as the cause of the interaction pattern itself. Interviews were conducted with one of the senior students, the chairman of the board, and one of the caregivers who frequently interacted with the female students. The second is the observation method. Researchers used the observation method to determine the model of interactions that occurred between caregivers and students. Third, the method of documentation obtained from research results in journals, books, research reports, and important document forms that support data collection activities. The documentation method is used as a complement to research data from interviews and observations. By using the documentation technique, the confirmation of the truth value in interviews and observations can be reviewed.

The theory used is the theory of social interaction, which is a social process obtained from the reciprocal relationships between individuals, groups, or between groups and individuals. This social interaction theory is the background for social activities, both in the form of words and deeds (Soekanto 2012). In term of social interaction, social relations theory has the same meaning but is more general than social interaction. Social interactions are social relations that start from the complete absence of a relationship between the two parties; then one of the two has an awareness of the presence of the other party and is aware of the importance of establishing a relationship with others (Hidayati 2014).

There are several requirements for the formation of social interaction. The first is social contact, which refers to relationship that occurs between two or more people through conversation and understanding each other. Mutual understanding is very important because it can generate a positive reaction from each party. However, in essence, social contact can also lead to negative things, such as conflict between the two parties. Social contact can be done in two ways, namely directly and indirectly. Direct contact is to directly meet and talk. While telephones, letters, and other tools are used for indirect contact (Muliani 2017). Today, social contact often occurs through social media, namely WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, and so on.

The second is social communication. Before arriving at social interaction, each party will not miss social communication. This involves communicating with parties, information, and communication tools. In other languages, communication is defined as the delivery of information, ideas, values, or attitudes related to one's interests or those of others. Through communication media, feelings between parties are easy to understand and can be understood by each other. If communication cannot be realized, then social contact cannot occur. However, it should be borne in mind that the form of social interaction is not always positive but also has a negative side.

The interactions that occur among humans give rise to models of social relations, which are classified into two groups. The first is the associative pattern. The relationship in this model can be understood as a relationship of togetherness and unity between two parties who build relationships. This model is formed through several kinds of activities. Among them is cooperation, carried out between individuals or groups to achieve a goal. Second, in the form of accommodation that aims to prevent, stop or reduce tension from all parties. This model is an antidote to conflict and seeks neutrality from each party in two forms, namely tolerance

and compromise. The third model is in the form of assimilation, which is accepting different behaviours and cultures to give birth to a new culture. This model is also mentioned as an adjustment of things that were initially different. This happens for the harmony of living together. And the last pattern is acculturation, an effort to achieve a combination of two groups or individuals.

Third, is the dissociative pattern. The relationship in this model has the meaning of division. This pattern is expressed in several forms, namely in the form of competition, opposition, and controversy. Competition is defined by several parties vying to achieve a goal. Each party raises things that cause public interest. This model contains threats or violence. Meanwhile, conflict is the effort of one party to achieve its goals by opposing the other party using violence and threats (Kolip 2011). This pattern generally occurs among the wider community, such as conflicts between potential leaders and their minions, between company owners, and many others. Controversy is a pattern between the two previous patterns (competition and opposition).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the Pesantren and the Existence of the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, South Lubangsa Guluk-Guluk Sumenep

Pesantren can be interpreted as a place for students to study the religious sciences. *Pesantren* is a place where a person or student learns knowledge related to Islam and other sciences with a learning model that takes place in a dormitory (Hamid 2017). *Pesantren* has a unique and different character because it develops educational institutions through the application of religious values. In *pesantren*, there are no specific standards regarding physical appearance, for example in a dormitory building or the residence of a “caregiver” as a religious leader (Hidayat 2016).

The existence of this *pesantren* aims to develop the personality of Muslims, both in faith, piety, noble character, and social life. During those times, the existence of *pesantren* was aimed not only at developing character, morals, and intellectual strength, but also at promoting national progress and cultural citizenship. This is evidenced by the existence of a national *Santri Day* celebration which is held every year. This celebration shows that *santri* has an important role in the development of the Indonesian state, and there is a very high hope for the current and future young generations so that they can contribute to maintaining stability and advancing the country.

In addition, *pesantren* have enormous potential for developing an economy and entrepreneurship based on religion and sharia values. If seen from the activities of the *pesantren* as an example for the community, it will have a very big opportunity to change an economic system full of dirty practises into an economy that applies Islamic values. The existence of Islamic boarding schools and their human resources is expected to be a pioneer in moving the sharia-based community economy, which is not only concerned with profit but rather with aspects of the benefit of the nation and state.

When viewed from the historical aspect, *pesantren* is one of the Islamic educational institutions that is a tool for the success of da'wah and the spread of Islam in Indonesia. However, at the time of its initial appearance, it was still not called a *pesantren* but a boarding school or dormitory. This is because, at the beginning of its growth, it was only a small building as a gathering place for teachers (spreaders of Islam) and students who studied religious and spiritual knowledge. It includes the practises of the *Sufi order*, which are still preserved and continued to this day. Some of them are simple life, patience, and sincerity. The most visible thing from the realisation of *Sufi order* practise in *pesantren* is the spiritual teacher.

There are several elements that an Islamic educational institution can be classified as a *pesantren*, namely *santri*, boarding schools, caregivers (kiai/nyai), mosques, and the yellow books. The word *santri* comes from the Indian language, namely *shastri*, which means “people who know the scriptures about science”. *Pesantren* is a dormitory that is a residence for students in which there are also Islamic educational institutions (Basri 2010). Kiai or Nyai are people who act as teachers and educators of students in Islamic boarding schools. A mosque is a place of worship for Muslims that is also used as a place for students to recite the Koran and learn to read the yellow book. The yellow book is also an important element in the *pesantren* tradition (Takdir 2018).

Since the beginning of its development, Islamic boarding schools have applied distinctive learning methods. First, *wetonan*. The caregiver reads the yellow book along with the meaning and intent contained in it to the students, while the students listen, understand, and take notes on something that has been conveyed by the caregiver. This method shows that the teacher or caregiver plays an active role more than the student. Second, *sorogan*. This method requires students to read books, both from *lafadz*, meaning and intent to caregivers (Haedari 2006). This method is considered more effective because the students are more active. The third is memorization. *Santri* must understand the lessons taught by the teacher by using the power of memory. Fourth, *bahtsul masail*. This method of analysis is to solve a problem by collecting references as reinforcement for answers. References are obtained from the yellow book and community customs, which are still associated with the method of taking law in Islam.

Regarding the learning process and other activities, *pesantren* have a unique culture as a part of social interaction between Kiai or Nyai and female students. First is the

culture of blessing. *Barokah* is also known as a blessing, which is God's gift that brings goodness to humans. *Barokah* is a blessing from caregivers of the *pesantren* to students. A student seeks the blessing of a caregiver in the hope of getting blessings for a better life (Irawan 2018). Second, bend down and kiss the hand. This tradition symbolises the respect of the students for the caregiver as a religious leader. The tradition of bowing when dealing with caregivers is a legacy of the culture of the royal period. Third, *slametan*. Commemoration of certain days in Islam, for example, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday, the Hijrah of the Apostle, and others. In the *pesantren* system, commemorations are also held for days that are not directly religious, such as the commemoration of independence day and national *Santri* day. Fourth, wear noble clothes. *Santri* is known as a group of noble attire, who do not violate Islamic law. Clothing that symbolises this nobility includes Islamic clothes, caps, skirts, headscarves, and robes. Fifth, *sowan* tradition. *Santri* who have completed service-learning at the *pesantren* do not necessarily forget the *pesantren*. They still often take the time to communicate and meet directly with caregivers to ask for spiritual guidance.

Then, what about the profile of the *pesantren*, which is the location of this research? Research on the interaction and communication models of Nyai and female students was conducted at the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school in the South Lubangsa area of Guluk-guluk Sumenep. In particular, this research was conducted on female *pesantren* leaders, namely Nyai, and female students in the *pesantren* community. This research focuses more on one important issue related to the relationship between Nyai and female students, which is rarely studied by researchers who are concerned with the development of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

Based on the data collected, the history of the establishment of the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in the South Lubangsa

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area was marked by the excavation of a well in 1969. In that year, KH. Moh. Ishomuddin Abdullah Sajjad still lives in the parenting complex of the Lubangsa Islamic Boarding School and is a caregiver. This is because KH. A. Warits Ilyas is in the stage of completing his studies. As for the kinship between the two caregivers or the leader of the *pesantren* above, they are cousins and are still grandchildren of KH Syarqawi, the founder of the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School. He comes from Kudus. KH Moh. Ishomuddin is the son of KH. Abdullah Sajjad. While KH. A. Warits Ilyas is the son of KH. Moh. Ilyas. From this, the board of care at the Annuqayah in general is still in the same lineage.

Before growing and developing as it is now, PPA. At the beginning of its establishment, South Lubangsa was still a field of shrubs, some of which could already be planted. On Monday, October 9 1972, M, KH. Moh. Ishomuddin inhabited the grounds with simple residential facilities, divided into three rooms, each measuring 3 x 3 m. In that same year, the construction of the mosque was completed. Between 1972 and 1973, Kiai Moh. Ishomuddin was still not ready to accept students who wanted to stay in his new residence. One of the reasons was because of his initiative and effort to house the students in Lubangsa care. In addition, at that time, Kiai Moh. Ishomuddin had not yet settled permanently in South Lubangsa. This is because at that time he was still teaching at Lubangsa and Madrasah Annuqayah in general.

In 1974, Kiai Moh. Ishomuddin began to accept *Santri* who wanted to settle officially in the South Lubanga complex, and the first student to stay was Abd. Lathif from Ganding Sumenep. There are several reasons behind the acceptance of new students. First, is the pressure from the surrounding community and the guardians of Annuqayah students. It is very natural to see the establishment of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, which are generally initiated by the request and need of the community for

knowledge, so that, in the tradition of the *Salafiyah* community, they will feel proud of their sons and daughters being accepted as students in a boarding school. Second, the intensity of busyness in the Lubangsa area has begun to decline with the return of KH. A. Warits Ilyas from his studies. Third, he has officially resided in his new residence, the southern part of the Annuqayah complex, which is now known as the South Lubangsa area.

Furthermore, regarding the process of establishing, growing, and developing the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in the South Lubangsa area, chronologically it will be explained as follows. First, in 1969 was the beginning of the pioneering, which was marked by the digging of a well on a plot of land to the left (the compass direction of the Qibla) of the caregiver's residence. Second, in 1972, the caretaker moved from Lubangsa and occupied the new yard (south Lubangsa area). In the same year, the excavation of a well to the west of the location of the *pesantren* was completed and was initiated by an *abdhi dhalem*, namely Quddus.

Third, from 1972-1973, the caregivers still did not accept students in South Lubangsa. Fourth, in 1974, the caregiver received Abd. Latif was the first student. This year, the construction of bathrooms and toilets was also carried out. Fifth, in 1975, a simple hut made of bamboo was built for ten students, and in 1976, simple administrative reforms began, and improvements continued. Sixth, from 1978-1992, activities were carried out to expand places of worship for students, namely prayer rooms and the construction of student dormitories, as well as public bathrooms and toilets. Seventh, from 1992-1997, there was rehabilitation of the cooperative space, procurement of student creativity boards, newspaper boards, the South Lubangsa monument, and other boarding school facilities.

2. Models of Social Interaction Between Nyai and Female Students: The Patron-Client Culture in Pesantren

This section describes the models of social interaction between female students and Nyai, as women leaders of the *pesantren*. In particular, this interaction pattern involves Nyai as the female leader of the *pesantren* and female students as young Muslims who study religious knowledge in the *pesantren* community. In every religious activity at the *pesantren*, female students often interact and communicate directly with the Nyai who manage and lead the *pesantren*. Female students serving as *pesantren* administrators, for example, can almost always meet with Nyai, who is in charge of protecting all students. This also often happens to female students who have a desire to get spiritual or religious insight. The social interaction model that is practised is also different from the interaction between fellow students.

At the Annuqayah *pesantren*, there is a very strict application of religious values and its uniqueness when Nyai and female students interact and communicate about religious and societal issues. The interaction and communication that occur between Nyai and female students are different from interactions in non-formal educational institutions. Naturally, Nyai and the female students form a model of relations between parents and children. In terms of scientific status, as the female religious leader, Nyai has a higher position than the status of the students. In the *pesantren*, Nyai is the central figure. She has the authority and is the centre of policy and change in the *pesantren* (Samsu et al. 2021). Nyai is a female religious leader who can be categorised as a patron, which means an exemplary figure. In different languages, it can be interpreted as a figure who has power, status, authority, and influence in the life of society (Roqib 2021).

In the *pesantren* community, Nyai is indeed positioned as a patron who has some authority, such as the rule

of *pesantren*, knowledge, and charismatic power that can be imitated by all students. While the term 'client' means people who get help, both from social, economic, and religious aspects, clients are often understood as subordinates and parties who can be ordered because of their status under the patron. Another unique term that has a meaning not different from patron-client is *benevolent-authoritative*. This interaction model is closer to the authoritarian leadership model, although it is not in an authoritarian position. In term of status, Nyai and female students must interact formally because the status of the two is different (Nurdin 2015). In general, the social relationship that occurs between the patron and the client is a relationship that can be called the relationship between superiors and subordinates. However, the relationship between Nyai and female students in *pesantren* is more akin to a student's respect for his teacher.

Relationship between patron and client are also related to economic problems. Between the two of them, a mutually beneficial friendship is established, even though they are of different social and economic status. The patron shows generosity and concern by assisting the client (Hariadi 1987), while the party known as the client repays the kindness by providing only material protection and respect. Even in the general public, interactions are often close to this. This is because the human heart will automatically feel compelled to do good as much as possible, especially to people who do good to him.

In Peter L. Berger's view, the patron-client relationship emerges from a masochistic relationship. Masochistic itself comes from a concrete relationship between one party and other parties, including between the employer and his assistant or subordinates, lovers, and others (Berger 1991). Those who are in a lower position or who do not have full power do not feel objection or resistance, and even feel pleasure at things that can be done for the ruler. This

feeling is still deeply rooted even though he is suffering at the hands of the ruler.

In a different expression, for humans who have felt pleasure in this relationship, death at the hands of the patron will feel delicious and pleasant. It should be noted that this is the fruit of a properly patriotic view. This stance can be summed up in the phrase "I am nothing, while he is everything to me". At one time, those who are prioritised may forget that they are prioritised and even ignore them. However, this does not happen in the relationship between Nyai and female students in the *pesantren* community.

Although the relationship between Nyai and female students is in the patron-client category, it is a form of obedience and humility from a student to the teacher. This is a form of retaliation against the student who gets a free transfer of knowledge from her teacher, who has taken the time and concern to educate the community. The model of social interaction between Nyai and female students is not based on material interests but purely on the need for religious knowledge. This is certainly different from the relationship between an employer and a servant, which is only limited to a working relationship in taking care of household needs.

3. The Tradition of Distant Social Interaction Models Between Nyai and Female Students at the Annuqayah Pesantren

As discussed in the theoretical framework section, social interaction is a social process that occurs between individuals and other individuals, individuals with groups, or groups with groups. In a *pesantren*, social interaction is inevitable because there are many individuals living together. They live in a community and need each other. Apart from being an Islamic educational institution, *pesantren* is also known as a large organisation in which there are two important components, namely Nyai as a female religious leader and female students. Two individuals who

are quite different in many ways are the determinants of achieving or not achieving the vision and mission of the *pesantren*. Therefore, the engagement and social interaction between Nyai and female students has to be well established (Laily 2020).

Nyai and female students—who in many ways have differences—have the same goal, especially in the religious aspect. To achieve these goals, social interaction between the two is unavoidable. The management of educational institutions under the auspices of Islamic boarding schools, the established regulations, and the placement of students' belongings must be communicated properly. This is part of the cooperation that occurs in the *pesantren*. In general, the party that often coordinates with Nyai as a female religious leader is the *pesantren* administrator.

At the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school in the South Lubangsa area, the social interaction model that occurs between Nyai and female students is an associative and patron-client interaction model. These two models of interaction have been widely practised in the life of society. However, the model of associative and patron-client interaction practised in *pesantren* is very different in its application. In the life of society, the social interactions that occur tend to be very flexible and relaxed. This model of interaction can make the relationship comfortable and achieve much of the progress it wants to achieve.

In *pesantren*, the model of associative interaction that occurs looks so rigid and formalistic, and this persists from time to time. The students—especially the administrators during their dialogue with Nyai—did not interrupt her guidance and moral message at all. They would talk when it was felt that Nyai would not speak again. This is, of course, very different from what happens in society. The model of social interaction between Nyai and female students is limited by charismatic relationships. This means that students are obliged to respect Nyai as the female religious leader, and everything related to regulations must be followed by

female students. Meanwhile, Nyai has the authority to regulate all *pesantren* activities and provide guidance and moral messages to students.

The model of interaction between Nyai and female students shows a complementary relationship with each other. This is because Nyai has the authority to regulate *pesantren* policies with the goals and needs of *pesantren* in the future. A female student must believe that Nyai's policy as the female religious leader is not for her needs and interests but for the future of the female students themselves. The students' feelings of "trust" that obedience, submission, and listening more when interacting with Nyai are the paths to blessings. In such conditions, female students are accepted sincerely and do not take actions that violate the *pesantren* values and traditions. They believe that Nyai, as female religious leaders, are noble people who have been trusted by Allah to guide them to the path of truth and salvation.

The model of associative interaction between Nyai and female students can be seen as a way to solve problems in the *pesantren* community. Meanwhile, the administrators (female students who are given the mandate) tend to have a special position in the *pesantren* because if Nyai wants to discuss students' problems, those who are invited to deliberation are the *pesantren* administrators, especially the chairman of the board and the coordinator of each division. The administrators of the *pesantren* have a closer relationship with Nyai because all religious activities are entrusted to him. This, of course, aims to facilitate monitoring of students who often violate and ignore the rules of the *pesantren*. Thus, the task of the *pesantren* administrator is to carry out the policies of Nyai in terms of all religious activities and school regulations.

They—the administrators of the *pesantren*—will accept all the decisions of the Nyai when there is a new policy. However, when the Nyai as caregiver asks the administrator of *pesantren*,

such as, is it acceptable or do you have any other opinion? After Nyai asks about a student's problem, usually the administrator who wants to express his opinion will speak in a smooth Madurese language. This stiff conversation—according to some senior female students—is passed from generation to generation. Uzlifatul Laily, one of the senior students and vice chairman of the Islamic boarding school management, said that their behaviour came purely from a feeling of “reluctance” when interacting with Nyai as a caregiver of the *pesantren*. Besides, Nur Fiatin Hafidz, one of the senior students and former security coordinator for South Lubangsa, also believes that interactions with Nyai's mother as well as body movements that are very well maintained are studied in books at the *pesantren* (Hafidz 2020).

The second model of social interaction that is very typical in *pesantren* is patron-client relationship. This social interaction model shows that the female students respect the caregivers as spiritual guides. Everything that has been ordered will be carried out according to the ability of the female students to receive the directions. However, this model of relations cannot be interpreted as an authoritarian power in the *pesantren*. The description of the patron-client relationship changes to be like communication between parents and children. Logically, parents can't treat their children as slaves. Even though there are orders that tend to be obeyed, Nyai's affection as the female religious leader still dominates over other bad expressions.

In some of the cases, there was a female student who was passing in front of Nyai's residence. The caretaker finally called the female students for orders. In general, female students will bow their heads while walking towards the caregiver's call. When some of the decrees had been delivered, no unimportant conversation took place. This form of interaction seems very boring, and there is no intense interaction or communication. However, this is a form of

spiritual training that is carried out by students in carrying out orders from the *pesantren* leaders.

One of the caregivers who often interacted with the female students, namely Nyai Isyti Rozana, said that in the model of social interaction, Nyai was applicated of ethics and morals. Although interaction with female students is limited, on this occasion, students absorb everything that is in the Nyai as a religious leader in *pesantren*. From the aspect of words, actions, responses, and charisma, they are used as the basis for interacting with others. So, the female students have eagerly awaited their presence in a society that is being hit by moral degradation. According to Nyai Isty Rozana, social interaction with Nyai, as female religious leaders, is very important for the students so that they can find their true nature as female students in the *pesantren* (Rozana 2020).

Even though they are not free to interact with Nyai, it does not become a barrier for female students to become very multifunctional individuals. Barriers that occur naturally are also a way of obtaining blessings. Even the most misbehaving students will not be rude to their caregivers. In other words, there is a feeling of fear and respect when talking to Nyai as the leader of the *pesantren*. The charismatic attitude and guardianship possessed by the caregivers can be a strong reason for the formation of fear and respect—thus creating barriers or distances when interacting—which is experienced by the female students (Hafidz 2021).

Therefore, the researcher argues that the model of interaction that occurs in the *pesantren* is the result of the feelings that are present in each female student and the learning outcomes of the moral books that are studied in depth. Humility, respect, and obedience become the basis for female students when interacting with caregivers, fellow students, or the community in general. The interactions that occur in *pesantren* certainly do not

arise by chance, because female students can't come and interact with caregivers if there is no interest at all. The next sub-chapter discuss the factors of interaction between caregivers and students at the Annuqayah Guluk-Guluk Sumenep.

4. Building of Social Interaction and Harmony Between Nyai and Female Students in Pesantren

By using proper interaction and communication skill, female students can find out everything that is needed by Nyai as caregivers, such as the progress of the *pesantren*, the implementation of Islamic boarding school activities, and assistance from female students to do things that cannot be done. These intense interactions usually involve administrators, caregivers, and *abdhi dhalem*. They are the female students who interact the most with the Nyai and must have a special position because they have helped take care of the *pesantren's* activities and family needs.

Interactions that occur between Nyai and female students are usually when there are students who want permission, such as permission to go home because of illness, Ramadan holidays, or commemoration of other big days according to the provisions of the central management at the *pesantren*. Interaction also sometimes occurs when Nyai's mother is teaching and when recitation involves many students. Meanwhile, the interactions that occur with *pesantren* administrators are related to Islamic boarding schools, both in aspects of *pesantren* development, implementation of worship activities, or the behaviour and attitudes of the female students. This model of social interaction shows that female students must accept what Nyai has ordered as the leader of the *pesantren* in carrying out religious activities in the *pesantren* community.

When there is a new policy from the central board of the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, the administrator conveys it

directly to Nyai who then listens to his response and waits for his orders regarding the decision. As is the case with the policy set by the central board of the Annuqayah when there was an election for the regent and deputy regent of the Sumenep region. Female students who have ID cards and receive an invitation letter to vote are allowed to go home within 3 days. When the policy is conveyed to the caregiver, she then has the right to determine “if I agree or not” regarding the decision. The fact that this happened at the Annuqayah, the caregiver agreed to the policy but with the change in the holiday period, which was to 2 days. This decision is the right of each local caregiver and has been carefully considered for the interests of *pesantren* activities and female student activities at school.

After the decision is conveyed to the female students as a whole, there must be those who agree and those who do not agree. The voices of the students who did not agree are conveyed to the caregivers in many ways; some are not conveyed. In the case of the Sumenep regent election in 2020, the voices of students who did not agree were heard by the caregivers themselves through the intermediary of closer students. Finally, the caregiver acted wisely by allowing students who wanted to go home for 3 days, with the consequence that the length of the student’s Ramadan holiday was reduced by 1 day.

The factor of social interaction between Nyai and female students is something natural. One of the activities that female students rarely do in Nyai is conveying their hearts or personal or family problems. The activity of pouring out one’s heart or convey a problem is part of a very sensitive aspect because it is related to personal problems. The intense interaction between female students and Nyai usually only involves close students, who are tasked with taking care of the needs of the *pesantren* family. The position of closer students in the *pesantren* community is the party closest to Nyai as the leader of the *pesantren*. This is because they

consider caregivers as their parents, so the communication that occurs tends to be less rigid (Wahyuningsih 2020).

Some of them shared their problems and then asked for solutions. As far as the researcher observes, the caregivers, in this case, are more motherly and are not infrequently spiked with jokes to entertain the inner anxiety that is currently engulfing the closest students. All the triggering factors can essentially make the relationship between Nyai and the female students harmonious. Harmony between Nyai and female students in the *pesantren* community is a manifestation of advancing *pesantren* that improves the moral quality of female students who are experiencing a shift in today's digital developments.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the exposure produced in this study, it shows that the interaction pattern of female students and Nyai in Islamic boarding schools is very important to preserve the relationship between them. This is because the establishment of a good relationship pattern between Nyai and female students is a strategic step in achieving the vision and mission of the *pesantren* as an Islamic educational institution that aims to shape the morality, spirituality, and intellectuality of the Muslim generation. The harmony that exists between Nyai as a teacher and female students as students should be represented as a form of gratitude for the students to the caregivers and as a way of realising socio-religious activities in the *pesantren*.

The pattern of interaction that occurs in the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school in the South Lubangsa area is the model of associative and patron-client interactions. These two interactions are considered to arise naturally in every female student and as a form of application of the classical books studied in the *pesantren*. In conclusion, the interactions that occur are due to several factors, including those related to new policies, *pesantren*

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regulations, and problems in the hearts of students. These factors give rise to personal students who have ethics and morals in community life. So, female students must be the key actors in the socio-religious change of people who have lost their direction and purpose in living this life.

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