

Kyai's Psychological Resilience in the Perspective of Pesantren: Lesson from Indonesia

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Abstract

This study focuses on exploring the experiences of the kyai who have founded a pesantren. Founding a pesantren can be interpreted as establishing, raising, and developing a pesantren. These activities, of course, lead to heavy psychological experiences. Although in the end, the kyai still did not step down from the struggle for the pesantren, whatever the challenges and obstacles they faced, their existence in developing resilience was increasingly strengthened. This study is field research using descriptive qualitative. The phenomenological approach is used in this study, which is an approach that pays more attention to the subjective experience of the individual. The setting of this study is the Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Ma'ruf Pesantren in Kediri, East Java. The primary informant is Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto as the pesantren's founder, developer, and caregiver. He has experienced firsthand the events during his time with the pesantren. The results of the study showed several findings, including the types of obstacles to the kyai, among others, receiving death threats, burned down residence, the access road to the house was closed, the recitation study was disbanded, receiving messages of witchcraft (santet), prejudice, and hate speech. The basic principles of the kyai's resilience in facing these obstacles are as follows: it is mandatory to have the will and ability to annul all personal weaknesses, being free from mental blocking and toxic thoughts, self-function with an accuracy of view, and focusing on self-strength as a human being who is given the potential to develop. The kyai themselves have skills in developing their self-resilience, i.e., by learning ABCS, avoiding thinking traps, detecting icebergs, challenging beliefs, putting in perspective, calming, and focusing. Several factors affect the quality of the kyai's resilience, including emotion regulation, impulse control, reaching out, a causal analysis. The benefits of this study are as a role model and as a form of self-preparation for (prospective) kyai to strengthen their mentality and self-resilience in facing any form of "tests and obstacles" when establishing, raising, and developing pesantren.

Keywords: Psychological Resilience, Kyai, Phenomenology, Mental Block, Toxic

Abstrak

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian yang berfokus pada penggalan pengalaman para kyai yang selama ini kebersamai pesantren. Bersamai dapat dimaknai sebagai upaya mendirikan, membesarkan dan mengembangkan pesantren, yang tentunya memiliki banyak pengalaman psikologis yang berat. Meski pada akhirnya sang kyai tetap tidak surut langkah dari perjuangan untuk pesantren, apapun hantaman dan rintangan yang menghadang, dengan eksistensi diri dalam mengembangkan resiliensi yang semakin dikuatkan dan dikokohkan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan dan deskriptif kualitatif. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan fenomenologi, yakni suatu pendekatan yang lebih memperhatikan pada pengalaman subjektif individu. Setting penelitian ini adalah Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Ma'ruf di Kediri Jawa Timur, dengan responden primer yakni Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto sebagai pendiri, pengembang dan pengasuh pesantren, yang pernah mengalami langsung kejadian-kejadian selama kebersamai pesantren. Adapun hasil penelitian menunjukkan beberapa penemuan diantaranya adalah; jenis-jenis hantaman kepada sang kyai antara lain; ingin dibunuh, rumah dibakar, akses jalan menuju rumah ditutup, pengajian dibubarkan, mendapatkan kiriman santet, berburuk sangka dan ujaran kebencian. Adanya prinsip dasar resiliensi dalam menghadapi hantaman oleh kyai yakni ; wajib dimilikinya kemauan dan kemampuan untuk menganulir segala kelemahan diri, bebas dari mental blocking dan toxic, memberfungsikan ketepatan pikir, dan fokus pada kekuatan diri sebagai manusia yang diberikan potensi berkembang. Para kyai itu sendiri memiliki keterampilan-keterampilan dalam mengembangkan resiliensi diri, diantaranya adalah ; *learning ABCS, avoiding thinking traps, detecting iceberg, chalanging beliefs, putting in perspective, calming and focusing*. Ada beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi kualitas resiliensi sang kyai di antaranya adalah: regulasi emosi, impulse control, reaching out, causal analysis. Adapun manfaat dari penelitian ini adalah sebagai role model serta sebagai bentuk penyiapan diri para calon kyai dan kyai agar semakin menguat mentalitas dan resiliensi diri dalam menghadapi apapun bentuk "ujian dan rintangan" semasa mendirikan, membesarkan dan mengembangkan pesantren.

Kata Kunci: Resiliensi Psikologis, Kyai, Fenomenologi, Mental Block, Toxic

Introduction

Kyai is a central figure who becomes the motor and the pesantren's founder, mover, and actual developer. Kyai is the "truth" because it contains elements of prolonged consistency and is constantly moving to develop and grow the pesantren, not only tentatively, or not only taking part once or twice before quitting. In addition, "truth" is labeled because of the element of "al-jihad" or genuine sincerity without any conditions in designing the pesantren, with all efforts to translate what is in the kyai's mind, to create the existence of

the pesantren. These characteristics are vital, unyielding, and whatever the obstacles are, the kyai is still at the forefront.¹

Kyai is also the main character who becomes a moral, ethical, aesthetic figure for the santri community inside and outside the pesantren. Based on the kyai's self-example, it shows that the kyai is not only thinking about how to design buildings but also how to design the morality of the pesantren community, how to build a moral civilization in the pesantren.² In other words, the kyai is fully responsible for the moral building of the santri from the beginning of the establishment of the pesantren to the development phase of the pesantren until the death of the kyai. After their death, the moral building still exists and thrives because it has been instilled since its inception to continue running without losing its identity³.

Becoming a kyai requires resilient determination, a strong mentality of self. All the kyai's struggles from the beginning of "*mbabat* (breaking the Ground)" and "*trukah* (building the foundation)" were not easy. In establishing a pesantren with the balance of pioneering the moral building of santri, the kyai will be confronted by conditions that are not comfortable for them, but it "must be done and acted upon." The kyai will face realities that will test their courage and sincerity. The kyai will face circumstances that lead them to hone further the quality of their patience, sincerity, and devotion to the real pesantren.⁴

The generally challenging and complicated phase for a kyai is the initial phase of establishing the pesantren. It is because the kyai must think about and translate the construction of the building, think about funds/money or the lack thereof, think about the mosque, the santri dormitory, the santri study room, the santri bathroom, and all of those generally begin with the simplicity of the place. After all, the kyai has limited funds. In general, this condition will run

¹ Bruinessen, "Pesantren and Kitab Kuning: Continuity and Change Ina Tradition of Religious Learning."

² Dhofier, "The Pesantren Tradition : A Study of the Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of the Traditional Ideology of Islam in Java."

³ Pramono, "The Authority of Kyai Toward the Santri: A Review of Gender Construction at Pondok Pesantren."

⁴ Muttaqin, "Types and Characteristics of Kyai Leadership Within Pesantren."

for a long and take a long process. The kyai's psychological dynamics, which fluctuates, could even take years.

In their journey of establishing and developing a pesantren, a Kyai must also be prepared to listen to insults, curses, harsh words, arrogant behaviors, and behaviors that oppose the existence of the pesantren, which hinder the progress of the pesantren. They must also be prepared for behaviors that want to shut down the pesantren, both from within and from outside the pesantren. All of these situations were undoubtedly done by irresponsible people. These hypocritical people have different behavior in front of or behind others or al-munafiq and people who were not kaffah in their religion, Islam, and Ihsan. These people, in the end, will "disturb" the pesantren, do an activity that will harm the pesantren, and make overt and underground movements that wish to destroy the pesantren.⁵

All kyai will undoubtedly experience the phases described above. These phases are as follows: First, the phase of thinking about the establishment of the pesantren; Second is the phase of facing insults from people who do not like the existence of the pesantren; Third is the phase of facing obstacles from inside and outside the pesantren; Fourth is the phase of strengthening the mentality of oneself in the face of various kinds of obstacles and people who will weaken the establishment and development of the pesantren; Fifth is the phase of increasing the spiritual quality of oneself by getting closer and attached to *Illahi rabbi*—as a form of final surrender to all experienced mental turmoil and self-anxiety.⁶

In their arduous journey with the pesantren, the Kyai should ideally be balanced with self-improvement by strengthening self-resilience. In other words, when a prospective kyai has pledged himself to struggle to establish a pesantren, then at the same time, the strengthening of self-resilience is increasingly sharpened, the awareness that there will be insults, obstacles, harsh attitudes, and temperaments of people who do not like the pesantren is increasingly strengthened because one form of the element of resilience is good self-awareness. A kyai must develop their self-awareness to support self-

⁵ Fitriani, "Kepemimpinan Kharismatis-Transformatif Tuan Guru Dalam Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat Sasak-Lombok Melalui Pendidikan."

⁶ Aziz and Taja, "Kepemimpinan Kyai Dalam Menjaga Tradisi Pesantren (Studi Deskriptif Di Pondok Pesantren Khalafi Al-Mu'awanah Kabupaten Bandung Barat)."

mentality, self-awareness to rise from adversity, self-awareness to face various difficulties and deal with stress.⁷

The kyai must strengthen ego resilience, a personality construct that allows them to adapt flexibly, persistently and try to be comfortable and make peace with stressful situations from various parties. Thus, it will be easier for the kyai to undergo multiple tests that come their way. In this case, ego resilience and resilience have a very close relationship. Strength is more of a dynamic development process, which involves maintaining positive coping and adaptation when facing various kinds of uncomfortable situations. Meanwhile, “ego resilience” is related to a relatively stable personality and reflects one’s ability to adapt to multiple painful environmental changes.

Based on searches related to discussions about resilience and kyai found no articles that specifically discuss the strength of kyai in the perspective of pesantren. What is often seen is related to the resilience of the santri in the pesantren, i.e., the stability of santri during their stay at a pesantren and the dynamics of being a santri. It shows that researchers do not widely explore a study on kyai’s resilience, especially on establishing, raising, and developing a pesantren. Thus, this study is expected to contribute ideas and scientific knowledge and can be helpful, especially as a reference for future researchers. It also shows how the sense of knowing and understanding of inquiry of psychological researchers is still relatively low because not many want to know about the psychology of the kyai in establishing, raising, and developing pesantren.

Therefore, in this case, the researcher explores the kyai’s resilience and/or ego resilience in founding a pesantren, from the beginning of its establishment to the time of the kyai’s death, which will be passed down to the next caregiver. The results of this study are expected to strengthen prospective kyai and those who aspire to become kyai so that they become more stable and prepare themselves, regulate self-emotions, develop a mentality in dealing with bitter and difficult times that they will be experienced.

It is a field research study using descriptive qualitative, in which the researcher conducts the analysis directly at the research location, a Pondok

⁷ Choi, “A Motivational Theory of Charismatic Leadership: Envisioning, Empathy, and Empowerment.”

Pesantren. Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution with different characteristics from other educational institutions. The research approach used is a phenomenological approach, which is an approach that pays more attention to the subjective experience of the individual. A person's behavior is strongly influenced by the individual's view of themselves and their world, the concept of self, self-esteem, and all matters concerning self-awareness or self-actualization. In this case, this study makes an effort to identify in-depth the experiences of the kyai during the establishment and development of the pesantren. These experiences tell a lot about the strengthening of the kyai's resilience.

The setting of this study is the Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Ma'ruf Pesantren in Kediri, East Java. There are several reasons this location is selected for this study: First, the kyai explained directly to the researcher and gave a natural story about how the kyai started to establish a pesantren and develop the pesantren, although it was not so big. Second, the kyai had many uncomfortable experiences with setting the pesantren. Third, the kyai is determined to continue developing and growing the pesantren, despite the various hardships he has endured, and the kyai remains to continue the struggle.

The researcher conducted direct observations and conducted interviews with Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto. It is because the primary source of this study is a kyai. In other words, the kyai is the primary (single) source in this study. The researcher made an effort to dig in-depth into the experiences of the kyai to get maximum results. The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively and interpreted. In contrast to other research approaches, in the ethnomethodological approach, the description and interpretation of the data were carried out since the first data collection, so there was no waiting for data accumulation. The analysis is carried out continuously and is simultaneous (cyclical) so that later a correct, natural, and data-desired conclusion is found.

Kyai's Psychological Experiences in Founding a Pesantren

Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto is a young 39-year-old kyai with medium stature and natural looks. Judging from his face, Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto has impressive charisma, an aura of great patience, and a tremendous al-ikhlas spirit. Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto is the main independent character in the

pesantren. The kyai built the pesantren from the start without any siblings accompanying the kyai's struggle. It is not shared and does not usually happen. Generally, a kyai will be assisted by one or two siblings attending their struggle. However, this is not the case with Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto. In other words, the kyai came from the bottom by himself, accompanied by the kyai's wife.

The struggle to find a pesantren is different from one pesantren to another. It depends on the individual experience of each kyai. Founding a pesantren itself can be interpreted as follows: founded from scratch, known as *trukah* and *mbabat* (al-mubtadi'), underwent developing a pesantren, and went through the bittersweet process of creating a pesantren. If the kyai has many siblings, two or three will help the kyai do these *trukah* and *mbabat*.⁸ They will together build a pesantren. However, some do not want to help the kyai's struggle despite having many relatives. They are instead harassing and trying to kill the pesantren.

What was conveyed above was in line with what was experienced by Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, who stated that his struggles of *trukah* and *mbabat* received no help from his siblings from the start. Even his relatives were mistreating and oppressive to the kyai during the early days of establishing the pesantren. However, the kyai, who has a "spirit of al-jihad" and "moving spirit," still does not back down and steps down to continue to find the pesantren. The more the relatives made efforts to kill the steps to build the pesantren, the greater the determination to construct the pesantren.

According to Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, there are several factors as to why siblings or close relatives are reluctant to help the struggle of the pesantren. Instead, they made an effort to destroy the pesantren (table 1).

Table 1. Triggering Factors of the Close Relatives "Spirit of Struggle" Crisis

No.	Triggers	Description
1	Never Attended Any Pesantren Education	The siblings of the kyai have never attended a pesantren, do not know, do not directly experience pesantren education, and do not study at any pesantren. Thus, the "ma'hadi spirit" does not appear or thrive. These conditions could be a trigger for "ngrusuhi pondok (making trouble on the pesantren)." it, however, cannot be generalized

⁸ Achidsti, "Eksistensi Kiai Dalam Masyarakat."

		because there are also siblings who, even though they do not have any pesantren education, still try to help find the pesantren and also support the establishment and the existence of the pesantren.
2	The shallowness of Science/Knowledge Understanding	Some siblings only study science/knowledge but cannot internalize science/expertise well. Thus, they do not enter the realm of <i>al-shudur</i> and <i>al-fu'ad</i> . As a result, the behavior shown is arrogance, know-it-all, but not wanting to help the struggle.
2	Jealousy and Envy	Envy or personal dislike from fellow siblings will make a person lose their mind, disrupting self-regulation. As a result, these siblings will commit immoral acts and show themselves as not fully functioning.
3	Personal Grudges	Personal grudges between siblings can happen to anyone, with any family, even the kyai's family. It is because not all kyai families have Quranic and Islamic personalities. These conditions, in the end, create hostility and detrimental behavior in the effort to establish a pesantren.

Source: Interview with Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, March 4, 2021

Various obstacles and challenges faced due to Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto's siblings in founding the pesantren have continued until now. It is as stated directly by Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto:

"The hardest thing in the struggle to find the pesantren is when there are family or relatives who are not supportive but instead take harmful actions. This situation leads to more patience and strengthened sincerity because the main capital is sincerity and patience. Maybe if someone else did it, it would not be too much of a burden, but if it is our own family, it was alarming." (Interview on March 14, 2021)

The kyai stated that the interference in establishing and developing the pesantren was carried out by siblings and close relatives and by other people who were "not relatives." Generally, these are neighbors around the place that will be used as a boarding school⁹. The kyai also experienced the same thing, where the kyai encountered various obstacles that led to the kyai's inner and mental turmoil. In the end, the kyai tried to get up from this uncomfortable condition. Thus, he again became mentally stable. The below are some forms

⁹ Jainudin, "Perjuangan Sang Pecinta Ilmu (Kyai Abdul Mujib Abbas) Analisis Dalam Perspektif Teori Kepribadian McClelland."

of obstacles created by people around that hinder the establishment of the pesantren (Table 2).

Table 2. Forms of Obstacles faced by the Kyai

No.	Type of Obstacle	Description
1	Burned Residence	Regarding the kyai's residence being burned, it did not only happen to the Kyai in this study only but there were also many kyai who experienced the tragedy of having their residences burned down. It occurred for various reasons, depending on the situation and the causes. One of the reasons is that they are disturbed by religious activities in the kyai's house as the religious center of the santri.
2	Closed Road Access to Kyai's residence	The access road to the residence of Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto was closed on purpose. People do not like that the kyai's house is made as a place of religious learning.
3	Disbanded Recitation Session	Some people dared to disband the recitation session led by the kyai. Their reason was that the recitation was disturbing, especially the mic used. They said it made them feel uncomfortable.
4	Slander Deliberately Made to Weaken the Struggle of the Kyai	One of the weapons of the pesantren rioters is to use the media of slander. It is because it is considered the lightest and easiest. There are various kinds of denigration, from the lightest to the most severe. The kyai also experienced the same thing. He had received slander—from light to vile.
5	Being a Target of <i>Santet</i> (Witchcraft) and Other Mystical Items	Another form of obstacle the kyai faced in founding the pesantren is generally done by "sending santet (witchcraft) or mystical items" to the kyai. The goal is to kill the kyai, so the kyai does not have the opportunity to preach in and strive for the pesantren.
6	Prejudice and Hate Speech	Another obstacle is the existence of <i>suu'dzan</i> or prejudice, which is deliberately created and made to destroy the kyai's struggle. Incitement will be sown for the sake of personal interests and closing the access to the interests of the pesantren. The same thing was experienced by Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, where the kyai often received incitement and hate speech because it started with prejudice deliberately planted on people.

Source: Interview with Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, March 4, 2021

The various obstacles above are also generally experienced by other kyai. It can be said that almost all kyai will share this. It is a true struggle that sharpens mentality, resilience, and ego-resilience. Therefore, in these conditions, the kyai must maximize their own self-resilience's potential so that the more obstacles come, the more mature their psyche will be. The more irresponsible people's barriers cause, the more the kyai will strive to actualize themselves. Further, the more the attacks on kyai's authority are planted by oppressive people, the more the kyai try to become an individual who can overcome themselves.¹⁰

Kyai and the Potential of Self-Resilience in Founding a Pesantren

As explained above, in the face of various kinds of obstacles, hate speech, and behaviors that undermine the authority of the pesantren, the kyai have maximized their potential for resilience. When the kyai develops self-resilience, then various incitements, hate speech, slander, and immoral behaviors carried out by hypocrites, people who have the principle of "different front and back," people who appear as if they are accompanying the kyai's steps but want to disrupt the kyai's struggle, will not be able to shake the kyai's efforts to continue to found the pesantren, to continue developing the pesantren, and to continue to glorify the pesantren.

it was also conveyed by Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, who stated that:

"In founding a pesantren, you will find people who are different in front of and behind us, two-faced, good in the front but harmful behind. I have experienced the same thing, and I'm sure other kyai must have experienced it too. However, I have my determination. Whatever the obstacle, the test, I will never step back. I will continue to move forward for the sake of the pesantren." (Interview on March 15, 2021)

Based on the kyai's statement, it means that;

1. Kyai inevitably will be met with these people, i.e., people who are different in front of or behind others, "*njobo njero ora podo*" (frontstage and backstage are different);
2. Kyai will be faced with people who are freeriding and looking for fame;

¹⁰ Horikoshi, *Kyai Dan Perubahan Sosial*.

3. Kyai will be faced with arrogant people (trying to thwart the interests of the pesantren subtly, even without any clear visible goal).

For Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto, what he experienced was part of a risk of making a choice. He believes other kyai will also be the same. In this way, because they fully understand the potential risks, the kyai will generally tighten their belts. They will always be ready and alert to face pressure, obstacles, immoral behavior from various angles and multiple directions. It is because, in general, people who have bad intentions towards pesantren will continue to try to carry out attacks both subtly and openly without any words of despair and even to the phase of “successfully destroying the pesantren.”

Therefore, it is not surprising that pesantren have collapsed, the santri disbanded, and the number of santri decreased drastically. Even though the pesantren is large, the thought of being collapsed is not even considered. However, because of the destructive nature of people who want to undermine the authority of the pesantren, their desires may be realized, and the pesantren collapses. The pesantren then only becomes buildings without content—magnificent buildings without the signs of santri¹¹.

One of the reasons for the collapse of the pesantren was that the attacks were getting more significant. At the same time, the kyai was unable to develop self-resilience, which in the end made the kyai experience psychosomatic condition.¹² This psychosomatic condition can be interpreted as mental pressure, which in the end makes them physically ill, and there are even those who are unable to find the pesantren anymore. Then, the pesantren might be held by instigators and untrustworthy people, which leads to the collapse of the pesantren, as stated by Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto:

“Pesantren can collapse and disband if there are many who join with bad interests, the level of su’udzan (prejudice) is high, there is a lot of incitement, conflicts cannot be quelled, and the resilience ability of the kyai as a top leader in a pesantren is weakened. These situations, in the end, may cause illness on the kyai, and the leadership turned to people who were not experts. These are people who do not have a pure-positive personality, especially people who do not understand pesantren, which in the end will destroy moral civilization, the civilization of santri in pesantren”. (Interview on September 15, 2021)

¹¹ Bashori, “Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kyai Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam.”

¹² Nurdin, *Tumbuh Kembang Perilaku Manusia*.

Therefore, the potential for self-resilience for a kyai should ideally continue to be developed. The more the kyai's self-resilience is established, the more powerful the kyai will be to face various obstacles deliberately created and designed by irresponsible people. With good self-regulation of emotions, every kyai will remain calm and able to control his emotions, attention, and behavior when facing unlikely problems. Therefore, they will not be quickly provoked by various unpredictable issues.

Resilience has a bi-dimensional construct, i.e., (a) a person can experience suffering, misery, obstacles. It means that a person is said to have or achieve a degree of resilience when they encounter an event that causes them to feel uncomfortable and deprives them of prosperity; (b) the embodiment of success in adapting to things that make someone suffer, dealing with things that make an individual feel miserable. In essence, a kyai involving themselves in all cases that cause them to suffer is closely related to adversity as a risk factor and positive adjustment, which is a reaction in dealing with risk.¹³

In this case, the kyai makes an effort to remain optimistic because one form of strengthening self-resilience is optimism. It shows great hope for creating better conditions. Optimism shows the quality of oneself and one's ability (sense of efficacy) to overcome adversity and prepare oneself for various unpleasant events. Optimism and self-efficacy are two things that always go hand in hand. These two strive to bring to the point of toughness and self-strengthening so that even when a person falls, they will get back up immediately with great strength and effort.¹⁴

In general, kyai everywhere will have similar conditions. They strengthen themselves in optimism and self-efficacy because they know that carrying out is a daunting missionary task. Of course, the challenges and obstacles are heavy, maybe even weighty, in the eyes of other people who see them.¹⁵ As illustrated in table 2, kyai whose residences are burned, who received death threats, is being slandered, threatened with santet/witchcraft, and faced with rampant hate speech. All of these are real and happened. Therefore, it is the

¹³ Nasution, *Resiliensi Daya Pegas Menghadapi Trauma Kehidupan*.

¹⁴ Hendriani, *Resiliensi Psikologis, Sebuah Pengantar*.

¹⁵ Machida and Schaubroeck, "The Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Leader Development."

responsibility of the kyai to continue to develop and be skilled in self-resilience so that they remain istiqamah in the struggle.

Kyai's Resilience Skills in Founding Pesantren

The kyai generally do not know the term self-resilience, even though, in reality, what they have developed so far in the struggle to join the pesantren is a form of resilience. Although the kyai do not know or do not explore the concept of resilience as well as academics, thinkers, and experts, Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto stated that:

“Ideally, the kyai should know about Psychology and have a proper understanding of that science. Because with this knowledge, they will at least be able to fortify themselves and understand how to fall and get up from their downfall. Kyai should know how to behave when fragile and how to rebuild.”

Great kyai does not mean that they have never experienced mental stress, frustration, anxiety, or worry. The more significant the obstacle, the bigger the negative feelings will come. However, the difference is that the kyai can immediately process their feelings and thoughts well, so these negative feelings do not last long. The kyai have various skills in developing self-resilience. Some of the basic principles of Kyai's resilience skills that are in line with Reivich & Shatte's statement¹⁶ are delineated below:

1. There is a robust basic principle that it is mandatory to have the will and ability to annul all personal weaknesses. It means that the choice must be great, the ability must be honed continuously to bring oneself to the existence of an essential struggle. Willingness and ability are the main points that must be possessed. The will without the ability will be fragile, and vice versa. The ability without the choice can collapse. It means that the will and ability must be unified for someone who enters the area of struggle.

¹⁶ Reivich and Shatt , *The Resilience Factor : 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles*.

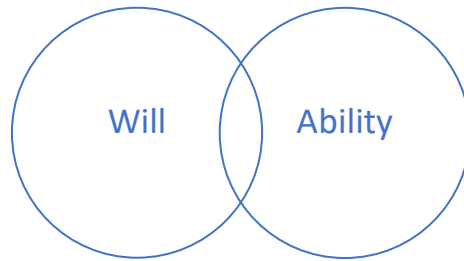


Figure 1. Harmony of Willingness and Ability in Developing Resilience¹⁷

In the image above, it is clear that there is a strong attachment between the will and the ability to overcome and deal with problems in the struggle phase. The existence of mutual assistance cannot be separated or stand-alone because both are one and will continue to unite and strengthen each other. It is in contrast with the following image, which shows the elements that stand alone without unification:

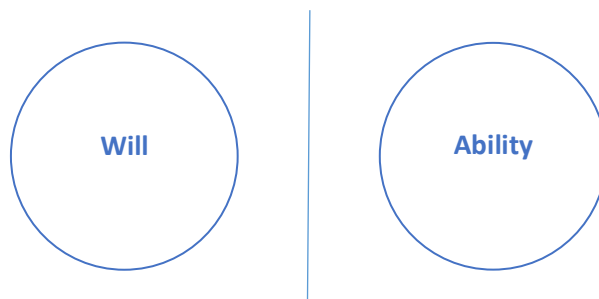


Figure 2. Disharmony of Willingness and Ability in Developing Resilience¹⁸

In the above image, it can be seen how there is a barrier between will and self-ability to develop self-resilience. This barrier ultimately makes a person weak and unable to rise from ridicule, beatings, insults, and various immoral behaviors.

2. The mind becomes the center of movement and behavior, which should remain uncontaminated by mental blocking and toxic thoughts, which interfere with moving forward because they are centered on negative

¹⁷ Reich, Zautra, and Hall, *Handbook of Adult Resilience*.

¹⁸ Reich, Zautra, and Hall.

thoughts.¹⁹ Studies that have been controlled by mental blockade and toxic thoughts will be easier to weaken themselves, and in the end, they may not have the courage to rise from the self-suffering phase.²⁰ Therefore, the mind is indeed the center of the self. Positive thoughts will ease the steps, while negative reviews will weigh down the steps.²¹ Ideally, the kyai should always be pure-minded without being accompanied by mental blocking and toxic thoughts. The kyai will find it easier to welcome various forms of obstacles that lie ahead.

3. The accuracy of thinking is again the primary key of self-resilience. It means that the power of thought should filter out which obstacles must be carefully considered for solutions. Those do not need to be considered seriously because the latter is only a minor stumbling block. The latter will be heavy when the power of negative thought responds to it. In this case, the kyai should ideally only think about things that need to be thought about, not think about things that should not be thought about, especially the obstacles that make them unproductive if they keep thinking about them.
4. Focus on the strength of oneself as a human being that is given the potential to grow. In this case, it is close to Positive Psychology which has two following main goals: (a) efforts to improve understanding of human strengths through the development of systems and classification methods to measure these strengths; (b) and the next step is to instill in-depth knowledge to build self-strengths and improve self-weaknesses.

There are several forms of kyai's skills in overcoming their problems by developing their resilience, according to Reivich and Shatte's²² statements (Table 3).

¹⁹ Pattinson and Cotterill, "Barriers and Facilitators to Overcoming Mentalblock in Springboard and Highboard Diving."

²⁰ Saskara and Ulio, "Peran Komunikasi Keluarga Dalam Mengatasi 'Toxic Parents'bagi Kesehatan Mental Anak."

²¹ Yusdarmanto, *Spiritual Mental Block Breaking: Bersama Allah Pasti Bisa*.

²² Reivich and Shatt , *The Resilience Factor : 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles*.

Table 3. Kyai's Resilience Skills

No.	Types of Resilience Skills	Explanation
1	Learning ABCS/ Learning about oneself	In this case, the kyai always actively identifies the occurring problems. Then, they try to make peace with the existing problems without putting forward their own emotions and making peace with uncomfortable feelings.
2	Avoiding Thinking Traps	In this case, the kyai makes an effort to be free from mental blocking and toxic thoughts. The kyai will continue to think positively while keeping the mind pure by avoiding these two things. Thus, the kyai's burden is lighter in their struggle. Generally, it is not surprising that the kyai is still unable to be shaken by attacks and obstacles from any direction. It is because they are always free from mental blocking and toxic thoughts.
3	Detecting Iceberg	There is a deep understanding or deep belief of the kyai, with which the kyai will know very well which things are harmful to the kyai and which are the things that build the kyai. The kyai will know which items in the future will be a significant stumbling block for the kyai's struggle and which things can lighten the kyai's steps in the battle.
4	Challenging Beliefs	There is an effort to study and test the accuracy of beliefs that the kyai has regarding the problems they face and how the kyai gets or synergizes with the right solution.
5	Putting in Perspective	The kyai can stop the "what-if" ways of thinking that they have so far. The kyai makes a strenuous effort to focus on preparing themselves to face various problems that will occur, which may not be comfortable for them.
6	Being Calm and Focused	So far, the kyai strives in their struggles even though some were restless at first. However, in the end, they returned to focus on their original goal, which was to continue the battle. After that, they try to stay calm and focused on the occurring problems so that feelings of anxiety and fear are no longer being ignored, turning them into an effort to keep calm in dealing with issues.
7	Real-Time Resilience	the kyai can turn counter-productive thoughts into resilience thoughts quickly. It means that the kyai makes an effort to move swiftly from the times that will lead them to burden beliefs and stop their struggle.

Source: K. Reivich and A. Shatte, The Resilience Factor, 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacle, New York, USA: Broadway Books

With the resilience skills of the kyai—including Kyai Ahmad Fauzan Pujianto at the Tahfidzul Qur’an Al-Ma’ruf Pesantren in Kediri, East Java—the kyai have a relationship between themselves and the problems they face as a test of struggle. Of course, they become more meaningful as they continue to produce productive works and benefits for the pesantren and the santri community in it and feel that the kyai’s life is still fun and passionate. However, the kyai does not use all of the above skills in their daily lives to improve the quality of self-resilience. They generally only develop or use some resilience skills that are considered essential to protect themselves and purify their soul from existing problems.

The seven skills performed by the kyai above are closely related to resilience abilities because by using these skills, certain factors in resilience abilities can be improved. The following factors affect the quality of the kyai’s resilience (Table 4).

Table 4. Factors Affecting the Resilience Quality of the Kyai

No.	Factors Affecting the Quality of Resilience	Explanation
1	Emotion Regulation	Emotion regulation is the ability to behave. It means that the kyai can synergize students’ inner condition and behavior to remain calm when under pressure. The kyai who can regulate emotions will appear clear and make an effort to make peace with problems. They will try to control their emotions, attention, and behavior.
2	Impulse Control	Emotion regulation and impulse control are two closely related things. The strength of a person’s ability to control impulses shows a person’s tendency to have high skills in emotion regulation. The kyai are likewise. The kyai who can control their impulses well will be significantly more successful socially and academically.
3	Reaching Out	Individuals who can reach out will not set rigid limits on their abilities. They do not get caught up in sadness for long, and even if they do, it will not last long. They quickly get out of their self-deprecating zone with good emotion regulation. Therefore, it is often found that kyai still exists in the struggle for pesantren despite various obstacles.
4	Causal Analysis	Causal analysis shows that a person can accurately identify the cause of the problem. This way, they will know the right solution to solve the issue at hand. The

kyai who can analyze the situation well will solve the problem. Generally, the kyai put forward an optimistic explanatory style, i.e., the ability to remain confident in the face of anything to be healthier than using a pessimistic descriptive style approach.

Source: K. Reivich dan A. Shatte, The Resilience Factor, 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacle, New York, USA: Broadway Books

Conclusion

In their efforts to find the pesantren, the kyai have their own psychological experiences. This experience ultimately brings color to the life of the kyai's struggle, where the kyai generally persists and continues their struggle despite having experiences that are not comfortable for their mind and do not prosper their soul. Despite various challenges and obstacles, the kyai generally do not falter in preaching to raise the pesantren. Some examples of barriers to the kyai include: receiving death threats, burned residence, having the access road to their living closed, having their recitation study disbanded, receiving *santet*/witchcraft, prejudice, and hate speech. However, the kyai still develops self-resilience in the face of these various obstacles. The kyai creates several things as an effort to build their resilience as the basic principles of stability, i.e., it is mandatory to have the will and ability to annul all personal weaknesses, being free from mental blocking and toxic thoughts, enabling accurate thinking and focusing on self-strength as a human being who is given the potential to develop. The kyai themselves have skills in developing self-resilience, including; Learning ABCS, Avoiding Thinking Traps, Detecting icebergs, Challenging Beliefs, Putting in Perspective, Being Calm and Focused. Several factors affect the quality of the kyai's resilience, including Emotion Regulation, Impulse Control, Reaching Out, and Causal Analysis.

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