



Rhetoric in the Islamic-Javanese Communication Pesantren Tradition: An Ethnographic Study of Instructional Communication at the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, East Java, Indonesia

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Abstract: *This study is rooted in the uniqueness of the pesantren tradition that combines local religious and cultural values in communication practices, which often differ from the concept of Western rhetoric oriented towards ethos, pathos, and logos. In the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, rhetoric not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a means to build and strengthen spiritual and emotional relationships between the kiai and the students, without ignoring the values of the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah tradition. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an ethnographic method, involving observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with the kiai and students to understand the dynamics of their communication and relationships. Data are processed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research findings show that Kiai Sholeh Bahrudin applies an emotional approach through the practice of nyuwuk, which strengthens the bond between the kiai and the students, creating a relationship that goes beyond just teacher and student, to resemble the relationship between father and son. This study also revealed that the rhetoric in this Islamic boarding school functions as a means to build deep spiritual relationships and integrate religious values with general education, as well as making a significant contribution to the formation of character and social integration of students.*

Keywords: *Rhetoric, Pesantren Tradition, Islamic-Javanese Communication, Ethnography, Instructional Communication.*

A. Introduction

In everyday life, communication plays a very important role.¹ Every interaction carried out by individuals, whether in the family, work, or in the social environment, always involves the communication process. Through communication, individuals convey ideas, share information, express feelings, and build relationships with others. Communication is not just an exchange of words, but also includes the use of body language, facial expressions, and voice intonation to convey messages.²

Communication science as a field of study has developed rapidly in understanding the various dynamics of human interaction. Studies in this science cover various aspects, from how messages are created and delivered, to how the message is received and understood by the audience. One of the main focuses in communication science understands the social, cultural, and political contexts that influence how people communicate.³ Every society has a unique way of communicating influenced by local values, norms and traditions.

One of the important branches in communication science is rhetorical communication. Rhetoric, as the art and science of persuasion, has been a subject of attention since ancient times.⁴ In Ancient Greece and Rome, rhetoric was an important skill for leaders and orators to influence and convince their audiences.⁵ Until now, rhetorical communication remains relevant and continues to be studied to understand how messages can be structured and delivered effectively to achieve certain goals.

¹ Edy Sutrisno, *Budaya Organisasi*, Cet. Ke-5 (Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, 2018), 29; See also Agus Hendrayady *et.al.*, *Mengenal Ilmu Komunikasi* (Batam: Cendikia Mulia Mandiri, 2023), 1.

² Evi Enitari Napitupulu and Rachel Mia Lorenza Lumban Toruan, "Efektivitas Komunikasi Verbal dan Non Verbal dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya Progam Studi Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Sari Mutara Indonesia," *Jurnal Teknologi Kesehatan Dan Ilmu Sosial (Tekesnos)* 5, no. 2 (November 30, 2023): 252–262.

³ Ahmad Khairul Nuzuli, *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi* (Yogyakarta: Jejak Pustaka, 2022), 30.

⁴ Aristoteles, *Retorika (Seni Berbicara)*, Penerjemah: Dedeh Sry Handayani (Yogyakarta: Basabasi, 2018), 11–12.

⁵ Relly Anjar Vinata Wisnu Saputra, *Retorika: Teori dan Teknik Praktis Seni Berbicara di Era Digital* (Jawa Tengah: Wawasan Ilmu, 2024), 9.

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Regarding rhetoric, Aristotle put forward three main strategies that are often used: ethos, pathos, and logos.⁶ Ethos relates to the credibility and character of the orator, pathos relates to the orator's ability to touch the emotions of the audience, while logos includes the use of logic and rational arguments. In addition, the rhetorical communication theory proposed by McCroskey offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing communication strategies that can increase effectiveness in influencing others.⁷ Many case studies have emerged from rhetoric, with its deep roots in the classical educational tradition, teaching how to construct convincing arguments, convey ideas clearly, and use language strategically to influence and inspire audiences.

Some experts such as Dissanayake and many figures from Asia have tried to strengthen the concept of non-Western thought in the process of dewesternization by strengthening Eastern studies.⁸ The efforts made by these experts from Asia aim to ensure that the concept of Asia or the Orient can be explained precisely in accordance with the themes and concepts typical of the Orient without the interference of Western conceptual thinking. Not only are the theories and principles of communication in general between the West and the East considered different, the philosophy of education between the two regions is also assessed and categorized differently by Western and Eastern scientists. This is in accordance with Joyce Lin's opinion in Hassan and Jamaludin that the view of Western education with the concept of creativity and assertiveness, while Eastern education is considered conservative and unfriendly.⁹

The different approaches to communication and rhetoric between the West and the East reflect differences in teaching and learning

⁶ Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 87; See also Jas Elsner and Michel Meyer, *Art and Rhetoric in Roman Culture* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 442.

⁷ James C. McCroskey, *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 198.

⁸ Georgette Wang, *De-Westernizing Communication Research: Altering Questions and Changing Frameworks* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 222.

⁹ Aminuddin Hassan and Nur Syuhada Jamaludin, "Approaches & Values in Two Gigantic Educational Philosophies: East and West," *Online Educational Research Journal* 1, no. 2 (2010): 7–8.

methods in the two regions. In the West, communication education often emphasizes critical, analytical, and argumentative thinking skills. Students are taught to develop logical arguments, build credibility, and use effective persuasion techniques. In the East, on the other hand, communication and rhetoric are more influenced by collectivist values and local traditions. Education in the East tends to emphasize the importance of harmony, respect for authority, and collective wisdom, with a more implicit approach to rhetoric and an emphasis on polite and indirect language.¹⁰ Students are taught to communicate in a way that respects social hierarchies and maintains good relationships within the community, as well as emphasizing memorization and in-depth understanding of material with the aim of maintaining and preserving traditions and cultural values.

By understanding these differences, we can see how important cultural context is in the study of communication and rhetoric. Globalization and cultural exchange have allowed for convergence and adaptation, where teaching methods from the West and the East have begun to influence each other. Some institutions in the East have begun to adopt the more open and critical approach of the West, while institutions in the West have also integrated the collectivistic values and holistic approaches of the East. The result is a more inclusive and diverse approach, which can enrich the literature and practice of communication studies globally.

In the context of modern education, the integration of Western and Eastern teaching methods is also seen in various educational innovations. Modern education emphasizes the importance of 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy.¹¹ This approach often combines elements of both cultures to create a dynamic and adaptive learning environment, enabling learners to develop a range of skills relevant to today's global demands.

¹⁰ Michael McVey, "Pathways: Between Eastern and Western Education," *International Review of Education* 57, no. 3 (August 1, 2011): 501–502, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-011-9237-5>.

¹¹ Maria Ulfa Lubis *et.al.*, "Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Keterampilan Abad 21 dalam Pendidikan," *Anthor: Education and Learning Journal* 2, no. 5 (July 9, 2023): 691–95, <https://doi.org/10.31004/anthor.v1i5.222>.

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In the world of education, communication and rhetoric play a central role in the process of teaching, learning, and developing critical thinking skills. Effective communication between educators and learners is a key to creating a productive and inclusive learning environment.¹² This involves the ability of educators to convey information clearly, interestingly, and relevantly, as well as the ability of learners to understand, process, and apply that information.

Islamic boarding schools, as traditional educational institutions in Indonesia, have also begun to integrate aspects of modern education without neglecting the religious values and traditions that are their foundation. Islamic boarding schools now not only focus on religious education, but also adopt general curricula and life skills that are relevant to the modern world. This includes teaching science, mathematics, foreign languages, and technology and information skills.¹³ Thus, Islamic boarding schools strive to create a generation that is not only religiously devout but also academically and professionally competent.

The combination of modern education and pesantren tradition reflects an effort to create a holistic and sustainable education system that respects local values while preparing students to participate in the global community. This approach also shows how cultural context can influence and enrich educational practices, resulting in a more adaptive and inclusive education model.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the communication behavior that occurs does not take place in a transactional manner. Nasvian et al. explain that the communication model between Kyai and Santri is influenced by three main factors: moral education, Kyai status, and Kyai charisma.¹⁴ Dhofier said that Islamic boarding schools have an important role in shaping the character and

¹² Nofrion, *Komunikasi Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2016), 68–69.

¹³ Harmathilda Harmathilda *et.al.*, “Transformasi Pendidikan Pesantren di Era Modern: Antara Tradisi dan Inovasi,” *Karimiyah* 4, no. 1 (June 4, 2024): 41, <https://doi.org/10.59623/karimiyah.v4i1.51>.

¹⁴ Moch Fuad Nasvian, Bambang Dwi Prasetyo, and Darsono Wisadirana, “Model Komunikasi Kyai dengan Santri (Studi Fenomenologi pada Pondok Pesantren Ribathi Miftahul Ulum),” *Wacana Journal of Social and Humanity Studies* 16, no. 4 (2013): 197.

knowledge of students, with communication playing a vital role in the teaching process and conveying moral values.¹⁵ Aminuddin et al added that kyai have a very big influence and integrity, with motivational power that is often based on charismatic power. The trained art of speaking and giving speeches combined with the ability to penetrate the soul, make kyai able to appear as a recognized spokesperson.¹⁶

The central role of the kyai in this communication reflects the collectivistic and hierarchical approach that is typical of the pesantren tradition. In this context, communication not only functions as a means of conveying information, but also as a means of strengthening moral and social values that are valued in the pesantren community. The kyai, as an authority figure and spiritual leader, plays a key role in maintaining and passing on religious teachings and social norms that are the basis of daily life. Through communication, the kyai conveys advice and counsel that is not only intended to educate, but also to build a sense of togetherness and mutual respect among members of the pesantren. Thus, communication in the context of the pesantren has a deeper and more complex dimension, where every message conveyed is considered a form of strengthening social and spiritual ties, as well as an effort to ensure that traditional values remain relevant and respected amidst changing times.

In addition to good communication, kyai often use rhetoric in their teaching process to convey religious messages and educate students effectively and persuasively. By applying rhetorical techniques, kyai not only convey religious teachings clearly, but also build credibility as a spiritual leader, touch the emotions of students, and construct logical and convincing arguments. In this case, rhetoric becomes an important tool for kyai to strengthen moral and social messages, and ensure that religious teachings are well received and understood by students.

¹⁵ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2016), 25.

¹⁶ Ahmad Aminuddin, Nurma Yuwita, and Gatut Setiadi, *Politik Kebangsaan: Netralitas dan Rekonsiliasi* (Malang, Jawa Timur: Institut Agama Islam Sunan Kalijogo, 2020), 5–6.

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Rhetoric plays an important role in the context of pesantren, which is a traditional Islamic educational institution in Indonesia. In pesantren, rhetoric not only serves as a tool to teach effective speaking skills, but also as a means to convey moral and religious values to students. Kyai, as spiritual and intellectual leaders in pesantren, often use rhetoric to influence and inspire students in understanding religious teachings and strengthening their Islamic identity. By using rhetorical strategies such as ethos, pathos, and logos, kyai are able to form in-depth discourses on religious values and develop adequate speaking skills for students.

The study of rhetoric in the pesantren tradition, especially in the context of Islamic-Javanese communication, is very important, especially in the ethnographic study of instructional communication at the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, East Java. This study plays a role in preserving local traditions, developing effective teaching methods, and understanding how rhetoric is used to integrate Islamic values into the lives of students. In addition, this study provides a unique perspective on cultural and social interactions in Islamic boarding schools, as well as enriching scientific literature in the fields of communication, education, and Islamic studies with a more inclusive and diverse perspective. This study also provides practical guidance for Islamic educators on the use of rhetoric in teaching, so that religious messages can be conveyed more interestingly and persuasively.

This study is a continuation of previous research that has examined the role of rhetoric in the context of education, including in Islamic boarding schools. Hani's research shows the role of kyai and power relations in influencing the lives of women in traditional Islamic boarding schools in Sundanese society.¹⁷ Meanwhile, Zulfa highlighted the use of ethos in Gus In'am's preaching rhetoric process, which shows the existence of an ethos dimension.¹⁸ In contrast to

¹⁷ Navita Hani R, "Retorika 'Kebenaran Tunggal': Peran Kyai terhadap Laku Hidup Perempuan Sunda di Pesantren," *Kontekstualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 29, no. 2 (2014): 183.

¹⁸ Laili Zulfa, "Retorika Gus In'am dalam Menyampaikan Pemikiran Kyai Soleh Darat Melalui Kopsisoda Semarang," *An-Nida: Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 15, no. 1 (June 16, 2023): 13–32, <https://doi.org/10.34001/an-nida.v15i1.4694>.

previous research, this study aims to make a significant contribution to the understanding of how effective communication can be conducted in a traditional educational environment, as well as to describe the effective application of rhetorical strategies such as ethos, pathos, and logos in the context of Javanese Islamic culture.

This study is a descriptive qualitative research with an ethnographic approach, which aims to provide an in-depth and detailed description of the way of life, values, and social dynamics in Islamic boarding schools.¹⁹ Determination of informants was carried out using purposive techniques, based on criteria that support this study.²⁰ Data collection was conducted through in-depth interview methods, observation, and documentation. Data processing involved data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.²¹ Conclusions were obtained through an inductive process by analyzing data from in-depth interviews and connecting them to relevant theories, so that broader conclusions could be reached.

B. Western Perspective Rhetoric

The concept of rhetorical theory has developed quite a long time along with the journey of time. Herrick, J. A., in his book "History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction", records in full the history of the development of rhetorical theory, starting from the rhetoric of the Sophists, Plato, Aristotle, the Romans, European Christians, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment/Modern Age, to contemporary issues I, contemporary issues II, and contemporary issues III.²² The division of rhetorical theory based on developments over time shows a long and complex history.

The history of rhetoric is a long journey that spans many periods and schools of thought from ancient times to the contemporary era. In

¹⁹ Urip Sulistiyo, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jambi: PT Salim Media Indonesia, 2023), 26.

²⁰ Rachmat Kriyantono, *Teknik Praktis Riset komunikasi*, Cet. Ke-7 (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2014), 157.

²¹ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D*, Cet. Ke-14 (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014), 247.

²² Read more in James A. Herrick, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), 110-121.

the 5th century BC, rhetoric first developed in Ancient Greece with the Sophists such as Protagoras and Gorgias, who taught the art of speaking and persuasion as essential skills in public and political life.²³ In the 4th century BC, Plato criticized the Sophists for their focus on persuasion without regard to truth. Aristotle, Plato's student, made a major contribution through his work "Rhetoric". He introduced three types of persuasive evidence: ethos, pathos, and logos.²⁴ Aristotle's approach is more systematic and focuses on how rhetoric can be used to achieve truth.

In the middle Ages, Christian rhetoric was influenced by church teachings.²⁵ Augustine of Hippo used rhetoric to spread Christian teachings and wrote "De Doctrina Christiana" which explains the use of rhetoric in a religious context.²⁶ In the Renaissance period from the 14th to the 17th centuries, a revival of interest in the Greek and Roman classics brought rhetoric back into the limelight. Humanists such as Petrarch and Erasmus emphasized the importance of rhetoric in education and culture.²⁷

In the 17th to 18th centuries, known as the Age of Enlightenment or Modernity, rhetoric began to be studied in new contexts, including science and politics.²⁸ Figures such as Francis Bacon and John Locke explored the relationship between rhetoric and the scientific method. Into the 19th century and beyond, rhetoric continued to evolve to include contemporary issues such as feminism, visual rhetoric, and digital technology. Figures such as Kenneth Burke and Chaim Perelman introduced new concepts relevant to the modern context.²⁹

²³ Edward Schiappa, "Sophistic Rhetoric: Oasis or Mirage?," *Rhetoric Review* 10, no. 1 (September 1, 1991): 5–6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350199109388944>.

²⁴ Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 87.

²⁵ Herrick, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric*, 117.

²⁶ St Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), 24.

²⁷ Jiri Kraus, *Rhetoric in European Culture and Beyond* (Czech Republic: Charles University in Prague, Karolinum Press, 2015), 136.

²⁸ Dwight Atkinson, *Scientific Discourse in Sociohistorical Context: The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, 1675-1975* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 144.

²⁹ Susi Susanti *et.al.*, *Retorika dalam Public Speaking* (Padang: CV. Gita Lentera, 2024), 16.

The history of rhetoric reveals how the art of speaking and persuasion has been an important tool in a variety of social, political, and cultural contexts throughout time. Each historical period makes unique contributions that enrich our understanding of rhetoric and its applications. The importance of rhetoric in everyday life is reflected in its crucial role in influencing public opinion, shaping policy, and building interpersonal relationships. In the context of education, rhetoric plays a role in supporting effective teaching and learning processes. Thus, a deeper understanding of rhetoric not only broadens our horizons regarding the art of speaking but also enhances our ability to communicate persuasively and effectively in various aspects of life.

Rhetorical strategies in practice involve various techniques and approaches used to influence the audience, convey messages clearly, and achieve the desired communication goals. Among the rhetorical strategies that exist are the strategies offered by Aristotle: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos is credibility or ethics. Logos is logic or fact while pathos is related to emotion or feeling. In essence, Aristotle's rhetorical theory focuses on thinking about rhetoric which he calls the available persuasive tools. This means that speakers who want to persuade their audience must pay attention to three important elements: ethos, logos, and pathos.

Rhetorical strategies in practice involve a variety of techniques and approaches designed to influence an audience, convey a message clearly, and achieve a desired communication goal. Rhetoric is concerned with how language and other symbolic forms influence the way an audience thinks, feels, or acts.³⁰ Among the various rhetorical strategies, Aristotle offers three main concepts: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos relates to the credibility and ethics of the speaker, ensuring that they are perceived as a credible authority. Logos focuses on logic and the rational use of facts to support an argument. Meanwhile, pathos involves appealing to the emotions and feelings of

³⁰ Colin Higgins and Robyn Walker, "Ethos, Logos, Pathos: Strategies of Persuasion in Social/ Environmental Reports," *Accounting Forum*, Analyzing the Quality, Meaning and Accountability of Organizational Communication, 36, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 204, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.accfor.2012.02.003>.

the audience to evoke an emotional response.³¹ Aristotle's rhetorical theory emphasizes that to persuade an audience effectively, a speaker must consider all three elements of rhetoric (ethos, logos, and pathos) as complementary tools of persuasion.

In more detail, it should be emphasized that ethos refers to the credibility and character of the speaker. In practice, ethos is applied by demonstrating the speaker's expertise, experience, and integrity to build trust with the audience. Pathos involves influencing the audience's emotions to evoke certain feelings that can strengthen the message being delivered. The speaker uses emotional stories, touching language, or strong visuals to create an emotional connection with the audience. While logos focuses on the use of logic and rational arguments to persuade the audience. In practice, this involves presenting well-structured data, facts, and arguments to support the claims made.

Rhetorical strategies serve to improve communication skills by making messages more persuasive, relevant, and effective. In practice, the application of appropriate rhetorical strategies can significantly affect communication outcomes, both in public, professional, and personal contexts. By choosing rhetorical strategies that are appropriate to the context and purpose of communication, speakers can adjust messages to be more relevant to the needs of the audience, clarify information, and motivate the audience to act according to expectations.

C. Communication in Javanese Islamic Perspective

Communication is the process of conveying information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings from one individual or group to another individual or group through the use of symbols, words, signals, or other media.³² This process involves a sender conveying a message

³¹ Relly Anjar Vinata Wisnu Saputra, *Retorika: Teori dan Teknik Praktis Seni Berbicara di Era Digital* (Jawa Tengah: Wawasan Ilmu, 2024), 32–34.

³² Abdi Fauji Hadiono, "Komunikasi Antar Budaya: (Kajian Tentang Komunikasi Antar Budaya di Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi)," *Jurnal Darussalam: Jurnal Pendidikan, Komunikasi Dan Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2016): 141, <https://doi.org/10.30739/darussalam.v8i1.12>; See also Faustyana and Rudianto, *Filsafat Komunikasi* (Medan: Umsu Press, 2023), 40–41.

through a channel to a receiver, who then provides feedback. Communication is the basis of human interaction and plays an important role in everyday life,³³ both in personal, social and professional contexts.

Communication can occur verbally, using spoken or written words, or nonverbally, through body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and intonation. Verbal and nonverbal communication often complements each other and reinforces the message being conveyed. This communication process occurs in various forms, ranging from interpersonal communication involving direct interaction between two people, to mass communication involving the dissemination of information to a wide audience through mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet.

The effectiveness of communication depends on the sender's ability to convey the message clearly and the receiver's ability to listen and interpret the message correctly. The context in which communication occurs also affects the meaning of the message. By understanding and mastering the various aspects of communication, individuals can build better relationships, work more effectively in teams, and achieve personal and professional goals more efficiently.

The study of communication has been conducted extensively, with the main focus on understanding the communication process in various contexts, whether interpersonal, group, organizational, or mass. This study also includes analysis of traditional and digital media, and the impact of new technologies on social interaction. The main goals of communication studies are to improve communication effectiveness, develop presentation skills, and understand the dynamics of communication in a global context.

In its development, Dissanayake explained that since the beginning, the field of communication studies has been dominated by Western theory, which has sidelined conceptualizations from Asia.³⁴ Eurocentric theories often claim normative universalism.

³³ Tommy Frans Pandaleke, Ferry V. I. A. Koagouw, and Grace J. Waleleng, "Peran Komunikasi Sosial Masyarakat dalam Melestarikan Bahasa Daerah Pasan di Desa Rasi Kecamatan Ratahan Kabupaten Minahasa Tenggara," *Acta Diurna Komunikasi* 2, no. 3 (July 29, 2020): 3.

³⁴ Wang, *De-Westernizing Communication Research*, 226.

Concepts such as Orientalism, Eurocentrism, and centrism attempt to affirm this fact. Asian communication theories and concepts can be used productively to deconstruct Western categories of thought. Huntington states that the development of communication studies from an Eastern (Asian) perspective is a manifestation of postcolonialism, an ideology that critiques Western culture.³⁵

The development of communication theory studies with a local perspective has become the concern of non-Western academics in this decade.³⁶ The perspective of Asian communication theory is a system of theory or thought in communication science where everything, be it concepts, propositions, or sources, is based on the values of wisdom and wisdom of Asian cultural traditions.³⁷ Dissanayake identifies four things that can be productively studied in relation to the emergence of Asian perspective studies, they are: *First*: investigating classical texts that contain communication values and content. *Second*: concepts that can strengthen classical concepts in other cultural practices. *Third*: ritual and performance arenas that can provide a space for cultural values, both in terms of traditional communication concepts and communication practices. *Fourth*: everyday communication behavior.³⁸ These four things are very important because research and observation of everyday communication behavior can enable communication scientists to see how a community is able to understand, interpret, and frame its own traditional culture.

In studying the form of communication from the perspective of Asian society, there are two important aspects that need to be considered: *First*: a non-Western perspective allows Asian

³⁵ Nurul Aini, *Kajian Postkolonialisme Dan Teori Komunikasi* (Jakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2001), 334–35.

³⁶ Baca penjelasan lebih lanjut dalam Yoshitaka Miike, “Theorizing Culture and Communication in the Asian Context: An Assumptive Foundation,” *Intercultural Communication Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 1–21, <https://www.s3-live.kent.edu/s3fs-root/s3fs-public/file/01-Yoshitaka-Miike.pdf>; See also W. Dissanayake, Asian Approaches to Human Communication: Retrospect and Prospect, in Wang, *De-Westernizing Communication Research*, 15.

³⁷ Miike, “Theorizing Culture and Communication in the Asian Context: An Assumptive Foundation,” 2.

³⁸ Wang, *De-Westernizing Communication Research*, 15–39.

academics to free themselves from the abstraction of thought that has been formed (i.e. Western concepts) and move to deeper thinking based on experiences that are in accordance with local socio-cultural conditions. *Second*: studies from a non-Western perspective will make communication in Asia more productively connected with communication academics throughout the world, both in the West and in the East.³⁹

The hegemony and dominance of Western science has caused Asian science studies to receive less attention. This dominance also has an impact on the equalization of perspectives in terms of behavior, both in the West and in the East, even though the socio-cultural conditions of Western and Eastern societies are very different. In the debate that occurs in communication science studies, Indonesia has contributed very little to building communication science with a local perspective compared to other Asian countries. Although several communication figures in Indonesia have actively invited other academics to study communication with a local perspective, attention to this effort is still lacking.⁴⁰

Indonesia, as a country with diverse cultures and characteristics of a pluralistic society, has great potential to contribute to the development of communication science based on local perspectives. One example is Javanese Islamic communication, which combines Islamic teachings with Javanese traditions and culture, creating a unique and rich form of communication. This approach not only enriches communication studies in Indonesia, but can also provide valuable insights for the global academic community on how local and religious values can interact and shape effective communication practices.

The discussion of communication in the perspective of Javanese Islam refers to ways of communication that integrate Islamic principles with Javanese cultural values. This approach offers a unique view of how religious messages are conveyed and received

³⁹ Muhammad Alfien Zuliansyah, "Sowan Kyai, Komunikasi Perspektif Islam-Jawa," *Komunikator* 9, no. 2 (November 3, 2017): 96.

⁴⁰ Zuliansyah, 96.

in the Javanese social and cultural context, and how communication is used to strengthen and harmonize local spiritual and cultural values.

In practice, communication from a Javanese Islamic perspective can be seen in various activities, such as religious studies, lectures, and religious celebrations. Speakers often use rhetorical strategies that combine Islamic principles with Javanese cultural values to ensure that religious messages are delivered in a way that is relevant and touching. This includes emphasizing moral and social values that are valued in Javanese society, as well as using language that is in accordance with local social norms.

Communication in the perspective of Javanese Islam shows how religious teachings can be integrated with local culture to create a more effective and harmonious form of message delivery. The principles of Javanese Islamic communication, such as the use of refined language, emphasis on the values of politeness and mutual respect, and the application of religious principles in daily interactions, strengthen religious understanding while maintaining cultural diversity amidst globalization and modernization. This approach not only enriches communication studies with a local perspective but also makes a significant contribution in maintaining the balance between tradition and cultural change at the global level.

D. Teacher and Student Relationship in the Pesantren Tradition

The term *pesantren*, like *mengaji*, does not come from Arabic, but from Indian languages. Likewise, other terms such as *pondok*, *langgar*, *surau*, and *rangkang* (dayah) are not Arabic terms, but come from Indian languages.⁴¹ The term *pondok* refers to a simple house or residence made of bamboo. Meanwhile, according to Dhofier, *pesantren* comes from the word *santri*, which means a place for

⁴¹ Latipah Harahap and Darwin Zainuddin, "Model Pembelajaran Kitab Al-Jurumiyah di Pondok Pesantren," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 3 (February 18, 2023): 9992, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i3.1879>; See also Iwan Siswanto and Erma Yulita, "Eksistensi Pesantren dengan Budaya Patronase (Hubungan Kiai dan Santri)," *Mitra Ash-Shibyan: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling* 2, no. 1 (2018): 94, <https://doi.org/10.46963/mash.v2i1.27>.

students to live. Dhofier predicts that the term *pondok* may come from the meaning of a student dormitory called *pondok*, from a residence made of bamboo, or it may also come from the Arabic word "*funduq*," which means hotel or dormitory.⁴²

Islamic boarding schools are a type of educational institution in Indonesia that developed in traditional communities with a focus on deepening Islamic religious knowledge.⁴³ In practice, Islamic boarding schools have traditional relationships that are characteristic of the institution. As explained by Dhofier, the tradition of Islamic boarding schools creates lifelong relationships between teachers and students, both for *kiai* and *santri*.⁴⁴ Students are expected to show absolute respect and obedience to their teachers, including their descendants, in all aspects of life. Neglecting the bond with the teacher is considered a great disgrace and can eliminate the blessings of knowledge.

According to Madjid, *pengajian* is the process of delivering material, advice, and orders by the *kiai* to the students. The cognitive aspect in *pengajian* is less emphasized, which can be seen from the lack of opportunity for students to express ideas or criticism. This causes the students' reasoning power to completely follow the construction set by the *kiai* and their teachers. Students are expected to respect the *kiai*, who is considered to have supernatural powers that can bring blessings or disasters.⁴⁵ The greatest fear of students is the curse of the *kiai*, which can cause the knowledge learned to be useless. Therefore, students try to show obedience to avoid the curse and gain benefits from the knowledge. As an ideal description of student obedience to the teacher, the *Ta'lim* book states: "One way to respect the teacher is by not walking in front of him, not sitting in front of him, not starting a conversation except with his permission, not talking too much near him, not asking something when the

⁴² Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*, 18.

⁴³ Riskal Fitri and Syarifuddin Ondeng, "Pesantren di Indonesia: Lembaga Pembentukan Karakter," *Al-Urwatul Wutsqa: Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (June 1, 2022): 42–54.

⁴⁴ Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*, 21.

⁴⁵ Nurcholish Majid, *Bilik-bilik Pesantren: Sebuah Potret Perjalanan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 21–22.

teacher is tired, and respecting the teacher also means respecting his children”.⁴⁶

Therefore, students continue to respect their teachers even after the teacher has passed away, by maintaining relationships and contact with the pesantren where the teacher taught. Zarnuji, in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, emphasizes that knowledge will only be beneficial if students respect their teachers.⁴⁷ This is confirmed by Sayyidina Ali's statement, who said, “I am a servant of the one who teaches me, even if it is only one word”.⁴⁸ This statement shows how important respect for teachers is in the pesantren tradition, which is considered one of the main ways to ensure that the knowledge learned is not only accepted intellectually, but also applied with respect and responsibility. This deep respect for teachers reflects the core values of pesantren education, where the relationship between teacher and student is not only academic, but also spiritual and moral. By maintaining a close relationship with the pesantren, students strive to continue to receive blessings from the knowledge taught by their teachers, even after the teacher has passed away.

The interaction between the kiai and the santri creates a strong status hierarchy and significant dependence of the santri on the kiai. In this relationship, the santri give high respect to the kiai, which in some cases can develop into a personality cult. The authority of the kiai is often reinforced by a lineage that can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In addition, the santri have a deep belief that questioning or debating the kiai can bring bad impacts or *kuwalat*.⁴⁹ This view instills a deep and unwavering respect for the kiai, reinforcing the existing hierarchy and dependency.

The relationship between the leader of the pesantren and his students goes beyond the mere interaction between teacher and student. This relationship is reciprocal, where the students view the

⁴⁶ Majid, 24.

⁴⁷ Muhamad Jaeni, *Sang Pecinta Ilmu: Simbah KH. Zainuddin Lasem (Pendiri Madrasah An-Nashriyyah)* (Jawa Tengah: Penerbit Nem, 2021), 39.

⁴⁸ Miftahuddin, *KH. Hasyim Asy'ari: Membangun, Membela, dan Menegakkan Indonesia* (Bandung: Marja, 2023), 56.

⁴⁹ Loubna Zakiah and Faturochman Ma, “Kepercayaan Santri Pada Kiai,” *Buletin Psikologi* 12, no. 1 (2004): 36, <https://doi.org/10.22146/bpsi.7467>.

kiai as a father figure, while the kiai sees his students as a trust from God that must be guarded.⁵⁰ The role of the kiai as a problem solver is not only limited to individual issues of students, but also includes conflicts between students. In addition, the kiai also plays the role of a father, functioning as an educator and spiritual leader who is responsible for the development of the personality and physical health of the students.

E. Rhetoric in Islamic-Javanese Communication Islamic Boarding School Traditions at the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, East Java

In the pesantren tradition, the credibility of the kiai is determined by several important factors, including social status, ethics, and religion. As spiritual leaders, kiai are recognized as having high credibility, which is built through a combination of social prestige and moral integrity. This credibility comes not only from their position in the pesantren structure, but also from their attitudes and behaviors that reflect the religious values they hold firmly.

The kiai is considered a legitimate authority figure in the eyes of the santri, and this is rooted in the trust and respect that develops from daily interactions and ethical traditions that exist in the pesantren. The santri accept and respect the kiai's authority because they see the kiai as an exemplary role model in terms of spirituality and morality. This respect is not only the result of a hierarchical relationship, but also a reflection of a long tradition that underscores the importance of ethics and integrity in spiritual leadership.

At the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, East Java, the credibility of the kiai is greatly influenced by the consistency of their practices and teachings that are in line with Islamic teachings and local social norms. The kiai at this boarding school are expected to demonstrate fairness, wisdom, and compassion in their interactions

⁵⁰ Tatang Hidayat, Ahmad Syamsu Rizal, and Fahrudin, "Peran Pondok Pesantren sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia," *Ta dib Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (November 1, 2018): 461–472, <https://doi.org/10.29313/tjpi.v7i2.4117>; See also Irfan Mujahidin, "Peran Pondok Pesantren sebagai Lembaga Pengembangan Dakwah," *Syar: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 1, no. 1 (June 5, 2021): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.54150/syar.v1i1.33>.

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with their students and the surrounding community. This is seen in the way they lead, educate, and solve problems, all of which must reflect the religious and cultural values of Java that they hold dear.

For example, kiai at Ngalah Islamic Boarding School often employ rhetoric and teaching techniques that not only deepen Islamic teachings but also respect local traditions, such as the use of refined Javanese. This approach not only strengthens their authority in the eyes of their students, but also increases their acceptance and recognition from the pesantren community as a whole. Kiai who successfully demonstrate harmony between religious teachings and local social norms tend to gain greater respect and trust, thus strengthening their position as spiritual leaders in the pesantren.

Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, located in Pasuruan, East Java, is one of the Islamic educational institutions that has a high reputation in Indonesia. Founded in the 19th century, this Islamic boarding school is part of the NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) Islamic Boarding School network spread throughout the country.⁵¹ In 2022, Ngalah Islamic Boarding School was recorded as one of 226 NU Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia with a significant number of students, reaching more than 3,000 people.

This pesantren is known for its unique characteristics that distinguish it from many other pesantren. The Kiai and Gus at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah have a distinctive approach in terms of political involvement, polygamy, and education. They choose not to get involved in politics and do not practice polygamy, reflecting their commitment to spiritual and educational integrity. In addition, many of them have a background in *thariqah* (Sufism) education as well as university education, demonstrating a combination of deep religious knowledge with broad academic skills.

The existence of the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School as a large and influential Islamic educational institution makes it an important center for religious and cultural studies. In this Islamic boarding school, students not only receive in-depth Islamic religious education

⁵¹ Admin, "Pondok Pesantren Ngalah," accessed May 11, 2024, <https://ngalah.net/?p1=ppnku>.

but are also involved in various activities that reflect local traditions and values. This Islamic boarding school functions as a center for character and moral formation, combining religious teachings with local Javanese wisdom in their educational process.

The results of field research found that Kiai Sholeh was the caretaker and founder of the Ngalah Darut Taqwa Islamic Boarding School.⁵² He was the first son of eleven siblings, the son of Kiai Bahruddin Kalam and Mrs. Hj. Siti Shofurotun, who was the daughter of Kiai Asy'ari from Ngoro, Mojokerto. Kiai Sholeh was respected by the community because of his high knowledge and charisma inherited from both of his parents. The community believed that the teachings he brought were the teachings of his parents, who were also kiai. The community continuously obeyed Kiai Sholeh's teachings, similar to the obedience of the previous community to the teachings of their predecessors.

Obedience to Kiai Sholeh has become a must among students and the community at the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, because his advice has become part of everyday life. This is in line with Aristotle's thoughts on the importance of ethos that must be possessed by an orator, which can be interpreted as credibility or moral authority. Ethos is one of the important elements in building trust and influence over the audience. In this case, Kiai Sholeh's credibility as a cleric and leader of the Islamic boarding school strengthens his influence on the trust of students and the community.

Field data also shows that students at the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School come from various regions, from Sabang to Merauke, reflecting the wide reach and influence of this Islamic boarding school throughout Indonesia. In addition, students who study at this Islamic boarding school also come from abroad, such as Malaysia and Australia, indicating that the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School has an international reputation. The diversity of the students' origins enriches the learning environment with various cultural

⁵² Ibnu Shofi and Talkah, "Analisis Teori Otoritas Max Webber dalam Kepemimpinan Multikultural Kiai Sholeh Bahruddin Ngalah: (Studi Kepemimpinan Multikultural di Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Pasuruan)," *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 11, no. 1 (June 20, 2021): 150, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jkpi.2021.11.1.134-156>.

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perspectives and different traditions, which contribute to the intellectual and social dynamics at the Islamic boarding school. This also shows that the teachings and educational methods applied by Kiai Sholeh and other caretakers at the Ngalah Islamic Boarding School have a strong appeal and are relevant not only to Indonesian society but also to Muslim communities in various parts of the world. The success of this Islamic boarding school in attracting students from various geographical and cultural backgrounds is clear evidence of the credibility and quality of the education it offers.

Rhetorical practices in Islamic-Javanese communication at the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, where Islamic religious teachings are integrated with local Javanese culture in the context of instructional communication, have resulted in effective communication at the Islamic boarding school. The combination of Islamic rhetorical principles with local wisdom values in accordance with the principles of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* results in a teaching method that is harmonious and relevant to the socio-cultural conditions of the local community.

The use of language in Ngalah Islamic Boarding School tends to be structured with full meaning, reflecting the integration between Islamic teachings and Javanese culture. The terms and metaphors used in instructional communication not only convey religious teachings but also strengthen the students' connection with their cultural traditions. This allows students to better understand and apply religious teachings in the context of their local culture, which in turn deepens their learning experience.

The instructional method at Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School involves a dialogic approach and in-depth discussions aimed at linking religious teachings to the students' daily experiences. This interactive dialogue not only helps students understand the subject matter, but also supports them in linking religious principles to their daily life practices. This approach reflects the students' active involvement in the learning process, which is an integral part of the pesantren tradition.

In the context of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*, this method is in line with the principle of active involvement and dialogue-based learning

that emphasizes deep and applicable understanding of religious teachings. Kiai, as the main teacher in the pesantren, plays a crucial role by using rhetoric that combines spiritual and cultural aspects. In the teaching process, the kiai applies communication principles that emphasize manners, ethics, and adaptation to the local cultural context. This approach not only ensures that religious teachings remain relevant in the broader cultural context, but also supports the preservation of Javanese culture amidst the current of modernization.

The principles of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* emphasize the importance of a comprehensive and harmonious understanding between religious teachings and daily life practices. Through a dialogical approach and in-depth discussions, this pesantren reflects these values by providing space for students to explore and discuss religious teachings in their social and cultural contexts. The kiai uses rhetoric that focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge, but also on the formation of the character and morals of students, in accordance with the values of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* which prioritizes balance between knowledge and charity.

Thus, this instructional method not only serves as a tool for religious education, but also as a means to integrate religious teachings with local culture, strengthens the bond between students and their community, and ensures that Islamic values can be accepted and implemented in everyday life. This approach reflects the pesantren's commitment to maintaining the relevance of religious teachings in an ever-evolving cultural context, while remaining faithful to the principles of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*.

In addition, Kiai Sholeh has a unique approach strategy in building emotional relationships with the community through the practice of *nyuwuk*. *Nyuwuk*, which is a prayer and spiritual ritual for healing and protection, serves as an effective means for Kiai Sholeh Bahruddin to get closer to the community. This practice allows Kiai Sholeh to build strong emotional and communication relationships with the community. This strategy is in line with Aristotle's thinking, which emphasizes that an orator must be able to make the audience feel safe and confident. In the context of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*, this approach also reflects the values of sincerity and concern for the

welfare of the community. By practicing *nyuwuk*, Kiai Sholeh Bahruddin shows genuine concern and attention to the welfare of the community, in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of compassion and social concern.

The sense of security and tranquility created by the practice of *nyuwuk* increases the community's trust in Kiai Sholeh. This strengthens the emotional connection needed to build *pathos*—an important rhetorical aspect in influencing and motivating the audience. Thus, this communication strategy not only strengthens the relationship between the Kiai and the community, but also supports the principles of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* in creating a harmonious and loving environment.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the communication behavior that occurs does not take place solely in a transactional manner. Nasvian, as previously mentioned, stated that communication between kiai and santri is influenced by three things: moral education, kiai status, and kiai charisma. Nasvian's research results show that communication behavior that occurs in non-Western societies, especially in the scope of Islamic boarding schools, is not individualistic. However, there are philosophical values that bind and shape the way the community communicates. These philosophical values are also in line with what happened at the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School.

At the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, Kiai Sholeh not only led the religious spirituality for his students, but also took on the role of a father figure. Kiai Sholeh emphasized that anyone who studied, either through lectures or boarding at the Darut Taqwa Foundation, regardless of tribe, language, background, or religion, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, was considered a student. Kiai Sholeh implemented the spirit of the song "Indonesia Raya" by building a strong soul for Indonesia Raya.

According to the results of interviews with several alumni of the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, data was obtained that Kiai Sholeh's success can be seen from his ability to produce quality generations who contribute to the country. This is realized by

establishing educational institutions that not only focus on religious education, but also include Early Childhood Education (PAUD) up to university level. The Darut Taqwa Foundation has proven to not only produce students to become kiai and gus, but also produce thousands of alumni who become Civil Servants (PNS), hundreds who work in the security sector and as state officials, pilots, members of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), and even some who occupy seats in the House of Representatives (DPR).

Kiai Sholeh builds relationships with all students using the nicknames “*Romo*” or “*Mbah Kyai*,” reflecting closeness and high respect. This approach is in line with Zakiyah’s findings mentioned earlier, which show that the relationship between the pesantren leader and his students goes beyond mere teacher-student interactions. Students view the kiai as a father figure, while the kiai sees the students as God’s trust that must be protected. The kiai not only provides assistance with students’ personal problems, but also handles conflicts between students.

In the Islamic Boarding School tradition, students view their kiai or teacher in their study as a figure that must be respected absolutely, and is even considered to have supernatural powers that can bring blessings (*barokah*) or disasters (*malati*). Kiai Sholeh serves students in various problems, whether personal, family, educational, economic, or political. *Sowan* (visits from students to ask for direction, advice) is open to anyone who needs guidance. Kiai Sholeh is ready to listen and provide advice and solutions in the period between after the Subuh congregation and Isha'. This approach is in line with the principles of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* which emphasize the concern and responsibility of leaders for the welfare of the people. Through this attitude, Kiai Sholeh not only plays the role of a teacher, but also as a spiritual guide who actively supports and maintains harmonious relationships within the pesantren community.

Sowan is a form of communication carried out by the Javanese-Islamic community at the residence of the Kiai, which involves an attitude of *tawadhu'* (humble or submissive) when asking for guidance, advice, permission, or prayer. This tradition shows that students do not dare to debate or contradict the kiai about anything,

because it is considered to bring disaster (*kuwalat*). Instead, students apply the principle of *sami'na wa atho'na* (we hear and we obey) to the teacher or kiai. Thus, the relationship between the kiai and students in this Islamic boarding school is very close, full of responsibility, and attention, resembling the relationship between a father and son.

The connection with the *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* tradition is very clear in the practice of *Sowan*. The *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* tradition emphasizes the importance of manners and respect for scholars and spiritual leaders. The attitude of *tawadhu'* and *sami'na wa atho'na* applied by students is a reflection of the core values in *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* which teaches obedience and respect for scholars as the heirs of the Prophet. Scholars in this tradition are considered as authoritative sources in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings, so that the relationship between kiai and students is not just an academic relationship, but also a deep spiritual relationship.

This approach reflects the principle of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* which emphasizes unity and harmony in the Muslim community, where the ulama act as trusted guides to direct the people in living their lives according to Islamic teachings. Therefore, the practice of *Sowan* not only maintains harmony and discipline in the pesantren, but also strengthens the spiritual bond between the students and the kiai, which is an important foundation in the *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* tradition. Through this approach, the students learn to respect and obey the ulama, as well as internalize religious teachings in a way that respects local wisdom and local culture.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the pesantren tradition places the kiai as a spiritual leader with high credibility based on social prestige and moral integrity. At the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, the credibility of the kiai is strengthened by consistency in practice and teaching that is in line with Islamic teachings and local social norms. The practice of *Sowan* in the pesantren tradition emphasizes the importance of the attitude of *tawadhu'* and the principle of *sami'na wa atho'na*, which is in line with the core values of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*, emphasizing

respect and obedience to the ulama as the heirs of the Prophet who is considered an authoritative source in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings. Ngalah Islamic Boarding School, with its unique approach to teaching that respects local traditions and integrates Islamic teachings with Javanese culture, is an important model for the integration of religion and culture in education. The success of this pesantren in attracting students from various geographical and cultural backgrounds shows the credibility and quality of the education offered, as well as its relevance in a global context. Kiai Sholeh Bahruddin, as the leader of the Islamic boarding school, uses communication strategies that reflect social and spiritual concerns, strengthen emotional ties and community trust, and maintain the principles of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* in creating a harmonious and loving environment.

F. Conclusion

The results of the study show that rhetoric in the pesantren tradition at the Ngalah Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School has a unique dimension in Islamic-Javanese communication that is in line with the tradition of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*. Kiai Sholeh Bahruddin utilizes an emotional approach through the practice of *nyuwuk* to strengthen bonds with the community and students, creating a relationship that goes beyond just teacher and student, to become like a relationship between father and son. Within the framework of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*, this relationship reflects the values of *tawadhu'* (humility) and *barokah* (blessings), which emphasize obedience and respect for spiritual leaders. Students uphold the principle of *sami'na wa atho'na* (we hear and we obey), which distinguishes it from the concept of Western rhetoric that focuses on *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. The integration of religious values with general education in Islamic boarding schools produces alumni who are not only knowledgeable but also contribute significantly to the country. The tradition of *Sowan*, as a form of respect from students to kiai, emphasizes the importance of the principle of humility and obedience in communication, in line with the teachings of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* regarding harmonious relations between leaders and followers in the Islamic community.

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