

The Exemplary of Kiai and the Future Orientation of Santri: A Socio-Cognitive Perspective in the Pesantren Subculture

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Prophetic exemplary, social cognitive, future orientation, pesantren subculture.

Abstract

The research is based on the problem of understanding role models in Islamic education which is often treated in a homogeneous and value-neutral manner. This article aims to integrate the concept of prophetic exemplary with social cognitive theory to explain how the observational learning process and modeling of kiai shapes the santri's vision of life. Using a qualitative-conceptual approach with a theoretical-reflective analysis method through a review of literature sources. Conceptually, the kiai's exemplary grounded in prophetic ethics and actualized in daily interactions, emerges as a transformative model of living that shapes santri's worldview and conduct, reinforced by the pesantren environment that supports the continuous internalization of values. This modelling directly influences the santri's future orientation in three aspects: spirituality, social responsibility, and life planning. The study concludes that the prophetic exemplary played by the kiai within the pesantren subculture is a form of character development and future orientation formation that is relevant to the needs of contemporary Islamic education. Theoretically, this study extends Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory by contextualizing it within Islamic culture and pesantren subculture. Practically, it suggests the development of character education and collaborative policies to strengthen the formative role of pesantren.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berangkat dari problem pemahaman keteladanan dalam pendidikan Islam yang kerap diperlakukan secara homogen dan netral nilai. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengintegrasikan konsep keteladanan profetik dengan teori kognitif sosial untuk menjelaskan bagaimana proses pembelajaran observasional dan pemodelan kiai membentuk visi hidup santri. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-konseptual dengan metode analisis teoritik-reflektif melalui telaah terhadap sumber kepustakaan. Secara konseptual, keteladanan kiai yang didasarkan pada etika profetik dan diaktualisasikan dalam interaksi sehari-hari, muncul sebagai model kehidupan transformatif yang membentuk pandangan dunia dan perilaku santri, diperkuat oleh lingkungan pesantren yang mendukung internalisasi nilai-nilai yang berkelanjutan. Pemodelan ini secara langsung mempengaruhi orientasi masa depan santri dalam tiga aspek: spiritualitas, tanggung jawab sosial, dan perencanaan hidup. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa keteladanan profetik yang dimainkan oleh kiai dalam subkultur pesantren merupakan bentuk pengembangan karakter dan pembentukan orientasi masa depan yang relevan dengan kebutuhan pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperluas Teori Kognitif Sosial Bandura dengan mengontekstualisasikannya dalam budaya Islam dan subkultur pesantren. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menyarankan pengembangan pendidikan karakter dan kebijakan kolaboratif untuk memperkuat peran formatif pesantren..

Kata kunci:

Keteladanan profetik, kognitif sosial, orientasi masa depan, subkultur pesantren

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INTRODUCTION

Exemplary and role modelling is a central concept in Islamic education, but in practice and academic studies is often understood in a homogeneous and value-neutral manner. Exemplary behavior is the primary basis and foundation of Islamic education (Adiyono et al., 2025; Dewantoro & Susilo, 2025; Madkan et al., 2025). The Qur'an, as the primary normative foundation of Islamic teachings, emphasizes the importance of exemplary figures through the terms *qudwah* and *uswah hasanah*, each of which describes a figure worthy of imitation due to his moral integrity and spiritual direction (Jannah & Jumari, 2024; Sabarudin et al., 2023). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is described as *uswah ḥasanah* (Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]: 21), who not only serves as an ideal individual role model but also as a guide for social transformation based on prophetic values. In the classical Islamic educational tradition, this legacy of prophetic exemplary behavior is continued by the *kiai* (Islamic scholars), particularly in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) (Ma`arif et al., 2025; Paisun et al., 2025).

Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) is a form of non-formal educational institution in Indonesia and are considered the oldest traditional Islamic educational institutions in the archipelago (Azizah et al., 2025; Fatah et al., 2025; Masuwd et al., 2025; Utama & Salim, 2024). Historically, *pesantrens* have been an integral part in the spread of Islam in Indonesia, serving as educational institutions that not only impart religious knowledge but also contribute to the socio-political landscape of the Indonesian nation, including the struggle to gain and maintain independence (Ningsih et al., 2023). The *kiai*, as a central figure, holds scholar and moral authority, serving as the main axis in this system (Hamdanah et al., 2025; Rofiq, 2025). The learning process is not limited to the teaching of classical texts but also includes emulating the *kiai's* attitudes, habits, and daily lifestyle.

The process of learning through modeling in *pesantrens* can be understood through the lens of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997), which explains how humans learn through observing models considered authoritative. *Santris* observe, imitate, and internalize the actions of the *kiai* through observational learning, where attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are critical stages (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). In the *pesantren* subculture, the students' future orientation is formed through the interaction between the *kiai's* influence, the value-laden *pesantren* environments, and the *santris'* own personal dynamics.

Researches on the modeling and leadership of *kiai* has been conducted. Some have shown that the *kiai's* role in the *pesantren* subculture is highly dynamic. Interpersonal communication between *kiai* and students occurs through an ethical-pedagogical pattern characterized by emotional closeness based on familial relationships while maintaining hierarchical distance due to the *kiai's* charisma as a spiritual figure (Aziz et al., 2024; Dewantoro & Susilo, 2025; Hermawan et al., 2025). The *kiai's* charismatic leadership is supported by a long tradition of Islamic education that focuses on Quranic recitation and the formation of a religious subculture (Subekti & Mutamakin, 2022). The *kiai's* paternalistic leadership model tends to shape the character of students through habituation, role modeling, and sanctions (Sridadi, 2022). In the context of future orientation, it was found that adversity quotient and social support are positively correlated with students' future orientation (Assyafii & Nuryanti, 2023). More specifically, students' perspectives on the future significantly influence their adjustment to the *pesantren* environment (Tazakhrofatin, 2018). However, on the other hand, the demands of maturity in *pesantren* can trigger self-doubt and pessimism (Faristiana & Yudhistira, 2022). Religiosity is positively correlated with future orientation in the

professional field (Marliani, 2013). These findings illustrate the role of kiai's leadership within the pesantren subculture, the lives of santri within the subculture, and the santri's perspectives on their future. However, these studies have not yet explained how the interactions and exemplary of kiai within the subculture shape the santri's perspectives on their future.

This article explores in depth how the leadership, authority, and exemplary behavior of kiai within the pesantren subculture shape the future of santri. To gain an adequate perspective on this, Albert Bandura's (1925-2021) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is used as a paradigm. This theory is seen as a comprehensive framework that emphasizes the interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in the learning process. This article will also examine the effectiveness of observational learning in enriching students' understanding of the meaning of life and social responsibility, and test Albert Bandura's (1997) argument that modeling is more effective when the model demonstrates consistency between speech and actions; and that shared backgrounds between the model and the observer can strengthen the process of observation, retention, and imitation of behavior.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a qualitative-conceptual approach with a reflective-theoretical analysis method through a literature review. Primary data sources include the Qur'an, hadith, and classical Islamic literature. Secondary data sources include books, scientific journals, and academic articles on Bandura's social cognitive theory and the subculture of pesantren. The analysis process was carried out interpretively with three stages: (1) examining prophetic exemplary in Islam, (2) connecting them with social cognitive theory, and (3) integrating them in the context of Islamic boarding school education. The analysis is synthetic, combining normative (prophetic values), descriptive (Islamic boarding school structure), and functional (observation mechanisms) dimensions to build a conceptual framework on the role of kiai exemplary in shaping the future orientation of santri through the social learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Etymologically, the word "exemplar" (*teladan* in Indonesian) refers to an example or pattern worthy of imitation because it contains positive (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). This term comes from the Malay and Old Javanese roots, namely "*tuladha*", which means model or role model. In the context of social life, role models play an important role as a guideline for behavior, especially in the formation of individual character. Role models are not only abstract, but also manifested in daily practices that can be observed and internalized by the surrounding community. In the context of education, role models are an educational method through real examples provided by educators, leaders, or role models in everyday life. Role models are the main method in Islamic education because humans naturally learn by imitating the behavior of others, especially from figures they admire (Muhaimin, 2001)

The Qur'an uses two different terms to refer to exemplary behavior, namely *qudwah* and *uswah* which each have complementary meanings. Etymologically, *qudwah* comes from the root ق-د-و, which means "role model" or "figure followed and made an example," (Ibnu Manzûr, n.d.). While *uswah* comes from the root أ-س-و which means "example" or "exemplar" (Ibn Manzûr, n.d., p. (Ibnu Manzûr, n.d.). The Qur'an does not

mention the term *qudwah* explicitly, but in the form of the imperative verb *iqtidā* in Q.S. Al-An'am [6]: 90 and the subjective noun *muqtadūn* in Q.S. Az-Zuhruf [43]: 23. There is no specific limitation or *qayyid* (such as "*hasanah*" in the term *uswah*), so the moral meaning depends entirely on the context of the verse. These two verses show that the act of imitating (*iqtidā*) is not value-neutral; it depends on the source of reference. In Q.S. Al-An'am [6]: 90, Allah commands the Prophet to follow the previous prophets "with their guidance" (*bi-hudāhum*), indicating that *hudā* is the normative basis for valid exemplary behavior (ar-Râzî, 1420). On the other hand, in Q.S. Az-Zukhruf [43]: 23, the polytheists claim that they are *muqtadūn* (exemplary followers) in the footsteps of their ancestors (*āsārihim*), indicating that *āsār* can be a misleading source of role models if not morally criticized (ar-Râzî, 1420). Thus, the Qur'an distinguishes between *qudwah* built on divine guidance, and *qudwah* that relies on inherited traditions, which can lead to blind imitation. This framework is important in assessing forms of role models in the social environment, including in the context of Islamic boarding schools as a religious subculture.

On the other hand, the term *uswah* never stands alone but is paired with the adjective *hasanah*, thus forming the complete phrase *uswah hasanah*. This indicates that *uswah* in the Qur'an has an inherently positive connotative value (Ibnu Manzûr, n.d.). The Qur'an mentions the phrase *uswah hasanah* in three verses, namely in Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]: 21, Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah [60]: 4, and Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah [60]: 6 where each has a different context but has the same conceptual meaning (Abdul Baqi, 1998). These three verses emphasize that the Qur'anic exemplary is sourced from prophetic figures (Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Ibrahim), with the main dimensions of faith, firmness of principle, and eschatological awareness. This exemplary is not only symbolic, but touches on the practical aspects of the lives of believers. The phrase *uswah hasanah* indicates that the Prophet Muhammad SAW. is an ideal model in all aspects of human life both in individual and social contexts. The Prophet Muhammad's exemplary character is a perfect example and is measured proportionally. No single character dominates to the point of obscuring the others, so that every aspect of his life becomes a practical guide for believers (Al-Baz, 2007) Thus, the Prophet's exemplary character is not only an ideal concept, but a detailed, applicable, and contextual guide to life. The terms *qudwah* and *uswah* both refer to the concept of exemplary behavior, but *uswah* has more moral and normative weight in the Qur'an because it is always paired with "*hasanah*", while *qudwah* is more applicable and flexible, appearing in derivative forms and can have positive or negative meanings depending on the context and source of the example. In the context of Islamic education, the two complement each other: *uswah* builds a moral foundation, *qudwah* directs concrete actions.

In the context of Islamic boarding school education, the *kiai* serves as both an *uswah* and a *qudwah*. Although he does not possess infallibility or revelation, a *kiai* can serve as an *uswah* in his capacity as an "inheritor of the prophet." This inheritance is not in terms of prophethood, but in terms of knowledge, morals, and missionary mission. The *kiai*'s *qudwah* is based on his reputation for emulating prophetic values. The *kiai*'s exemplary conduct rests on authentic, ethical, and sharia-compliant Islamic guidance and values. In other words, a *kiai*'s *qudwah* is normatively valid if he is knowledgeable, has prophetic morals, practices and teaches sharia values. *Kiai* serves as *uswah* because they have absorbed, lived, and passed on the Prophet's exemplary values contextually; are concrete examples (*qudwah 'amaliyyah*) in daily Islamic practice; and act as direct moral and spiritual guides to their students. The role of *kiai* as *uswah* is not to replace the position of the prophet as a role model, but rather to be a reflection of prophetic

values in a specific time and space, especially in the Islamic boarding school subculture. He becomes a bridge that embodies *uswah nabawiyyah* in the concrete life of students, through behavior, speech and spiritual leadership.

Social Cognitive Theory is a development of Social Learning Theory. Social Learning Theory explains that individuals can learn new behaviors by observing and modeling others. According to this theory, learning is a cognitive process that occurs in a social environment and can occur only through direct observation or guidance. Furthermore, learning is also influenced by observing the consequences, such as rewards and punishments received by others, which is referred to as 'vicarious reinforcement'. If a behavior is frequently rewarded, it tends to be maintained; conversely, if a behavior is frequently punished, it tends to be abandoned. This theory complements traditional behavioral theory (behaviorism) which focuses solely on reinforcement, by highlighting the importance of internal factors in an individual's learning process. Albert Bandura is a key figure in developing this theory. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory represents a significant shift in understanding how individuals learn and develop behaviors through social contexts. Learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling, emphasizing the interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors (Abdullah, 2019).

Attention is the first step in observational learning, where individuals focus on the model's behavior to learn effectively. This process is influenced by the model's characteristics, such as attractiveness, competence, and similarity to the observer, as well as the observer's own cognitive abilities and interests (Saka, 2024). Models can be people in the learner's immediate environment, figures in the media, and their behavior can be adopted by the observer through a process called social transmission (Wild & Hoppitt, 2024). The level of attention that an observer can maintain cannot be separated from environmental factors, such as the complexity of the behavior and the presence of distractions (Ott, 2024).

Retention refers to a person's ability to remember observed information for future use. Without effective retention, observed information will not impact future behavior because the individual cannot recall or reproduce the behavior (Yanuardianto, 2019). Retention is a crucial process in observational learning, where a person encodes, stores, and retrieves information for future application. This process involves several stages: encoding, storage, and rehearsal. In the encoding stage, observed behavior is converted into mental representations in visual or verbal form. These symbolic codes are then stored in long-term memory so they can be accessed when needed. To strengthen memory traces and facilitate future information retrieval, repeated access to stored information is required for use in appropriate situations (Ansani & Samsir, 2022).

Reproduction is the stage in which individuals transform information stored in memory into actual behavior. To reproduce observed behavior, observers must possess the physical and cognitive abilities necessary to imitate the action. Success in behavioral reproduction depends on physical ability, cognitive ability, and practice and correction. Individuals must possess the motor skills necessary to perform the behavior, understand the sequence and structure of the observed behavior, and organize and integrate information stored in memory. Reproduction of behavior often requires repeated practice and correction to achieve the desired level of proficiency. Feedback from others or self-observation can assist in this process (Ansani & Samsir, 2022).

Motivation is the final process that determines whether an observer will perform a behavior learned through observation. Even if a person has noticed, stored, and has the ability to reproduce an observed behavior, they may not do so without sufficient

motivation. This involves evaluating the potential rewards or punishments associated with the behavior, as well as the observer's self-efficacy (Scott et al., 2024). A person's motivation to imitate another person's behavior can be influenced by several factors. These factors are: first, external reinforcement, where a person may be encouraged to imitate a behavior if they expect to receive a reward or want to avoid punishment from their surroundings. Second, vicarious reinforcement, where seeing another person (the model) receive a reward or punishment for a particular behavior can motivate a person to imitate or avoid that behavior. Third, self-reinforcement, the personal standards used to evaluate one's own behavior. If behavior aligns with these standards, they may reward themselves, such as by feeling proud. Conversely, if their behavior does not align, they may punish themselves, for example by feeling guilty. This process shows how motivation does not only come from outside, but also from within the individual (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2023).

This theory later evolved into social cognitive theory, which more explicitly integrates individual cognitive processes, such as the interpretation of observed behavior and expectations of future outcomes. In the social cognitive perspective, an individual's behavior is not only influenced by their environment but also has the capacity to shape and control their own behavior. Each observed behavior can change an individual's way of thinking, while the environment in which a person grows up also contributes to their future behavioral patterns. Within the Triadic Reciprocal Determinism framework, Bandura explains that there is a reciprocal relationship between personal factors, environmental influences, and personal factors (Bandura, 2009). Human behavior is the result of a dynamic interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and the behavior itself. This model suggests that these three components influence each other reciprocally in two directions, creating a complex system of interactions that shape an individual's actions and experiences. Personal determinants are the internal factors of an individual that influence their behavior, such as beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy (Etemi et al., 2024, 2024; Gunartin et al., 2025). Environmental determinants are aspects of the environment or setting that influence an individual's ability to successfully complete a behavior (for example, creating environmental conditions that support increased self-efficacy). Behavioral determinants are the responses individuals receive after they perform a behavior (for example, providing opportunities for learners to experience learning success as a result of performing the behavior correctly) (Bandura, 2009).

An important concept in the social cognitive theory is human agency, which emphasizes that individuals are not merely products of their environment but also actors who have control over themselves (Bandura, 2002). There are three forms of human agency: individual agency, where a person directly influences their environment; proxy agency, where individuals rely on others to achieve their interests; and collective agency, where a group of individuals work together to achieve common goals (Pajares et al., 2009). Human agency has four core characteristics that define its ability to act consciously and purposefully. These four core characteristics are: First, intentionality, which refers to an individual's ability to actively decide to engage in a particular activity. This indicates that humans not only react to the environment but also have a purpose and awareness in their actions (Ilham & Ramadani, 2024). Second, forethought, which is an individual's ability to predict or anticipate the outcomes of certain actions before they take them. This ability allows a person to plan the steps necessary to achieve their goals. Third, self-reactiveness, which refers to an individual's ability to construct and regulate behavior appropriate to the situation at hand. This includes the ability to adjust actions

based on context and needs. Fourth, self-reflectiveness, which is an individual's ability to reflect on and evaluate the appropriateness of their thoughts and behavior. With this ability, a person can assess whether their actions or decisions are in line with their values and goals (Pajares et al., 2009).

Individuals acquire knowledge and skills both directly and symbolically. There are four main cognitive abilities that form the essential foundation of Social Cognitive Theory: symbolizing capability, self-regulation capability, self-reflective capability, and vicarious capability (Bandura, 2009). Symbolizing capability enables humans to use symbols such as language, images, and sounds to convey meaning and create shared understanding. Symbols help individuals understand and interpret the messages conveyed (Aisah et al., 2025; Mumtahana et al., 2025). Rather than simply learning through a laborious process of trial and error, humans are able to symbolically understand the events conveyed in the message, construct possible solutions, and evaluate anticipated outcomes. Symbols are used as a means of communication with others. Symbolizing capability facilitates learning and modeling of behavior based on observations in the environment, which can then be used to guide one's behavior (Bandura, 2009).

Self-regulation capability allows individuals to evaluate the information and messages they receive and decide which messages to accept or reject. Individuals can regulate their own intentions and behaviors. Self-regulation relies on a system of negative and positive feedback, involving both discrepancy reduction and discrepancy production. In other words, individuals proactively motivate and guide their own actions by setting challenging goals and then striving to achieve them (Bandura, 2009). Self-reflective capability allows individuals to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in response to messages they receive through mass communication. This allows individuals to evaluate these thoughts against their own internal standards and goals then identify areas for improvement. By verifying the adequacy and accuracy of their thoughts through enactive, diverse, social, or logical means, individuals can generate new ideas, adjust their thinking, and take appropriate action (Bandura, 2009). Vicarious capability allows an individual to learn from the experiences of others. This allows one to acquire new knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors without experiencing the consequences of those actions themselves. Vicarious capability is invaluable for an individual's cognitive development in an era of media disruption, where most of the information encountered in daily life comes from mass media or social media, accessible anytime and from a variety of platforms, rather than from trial and error (Bandura, 2009).

In the behavioral learning process, individuals understand the potential consequences of observed actions. While individuals do not always expect the same rewards or punishments as those experienced by the observed model, they can anticipate similar outcomes when they imitate the behavior. This is known as outcome expectancies. This concept explains why modeling (behavioral imitation) has a strong influence on a person's cognition and behavior. Reinforcement plays a role in increasing or decreasing the likelihood of someone continuing or stopping a behavior. This form of reinforcement can come from within (such as pride or shame) or from the external environment (such as praise or punishment). This reinforcement can be positive (encouragement to continue the behavior due to beneficial consequences) or negative (reduction of behavior due to detrimental consequences) (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2023).

In Social Cognitive Theory, the most effective learning occurs when individuals can identify with observed models and have a high level of self-efficacy. A person's belief in their ability to achieve goals and obtain desired outcomes through their actions plays

a crucial role in determining their motivation, emotions, and behavior. This is because self-belief can influence how individuals face challenges and make decisions. This belief in their ability to organize and carry out the actions necessary to face future situations is referred to as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in overcoming problems, recover more quickly from failure, and have a strong sense of perseverance in achieving their goals. Conversely, individuals with low self-efficacy often lack confidence in their abilities, avoid challenges, and tend to give up when faced with difficult situations. Self-efficacy plays a central role in determining a person's behavior, including in the process of learning through observation (Bandura, 1997).

Finding

This research found that the concept of exemplary conduct in the Quran is composed of two complementary layers: *uswah hasanah* as a normative-moral framework and *qudwah* as an operational-practical framework. *Uswah hasanah* is intrinsically positive and rooted in prophetic figures, while *qudwah* is contextual and can have positive or negative values depending on the reference source and its normative basis. This finding confirms that exemplary conduct from a Quranic perspective is not value-neutral, but is always tied to moral orientation and sources of legitimacy.

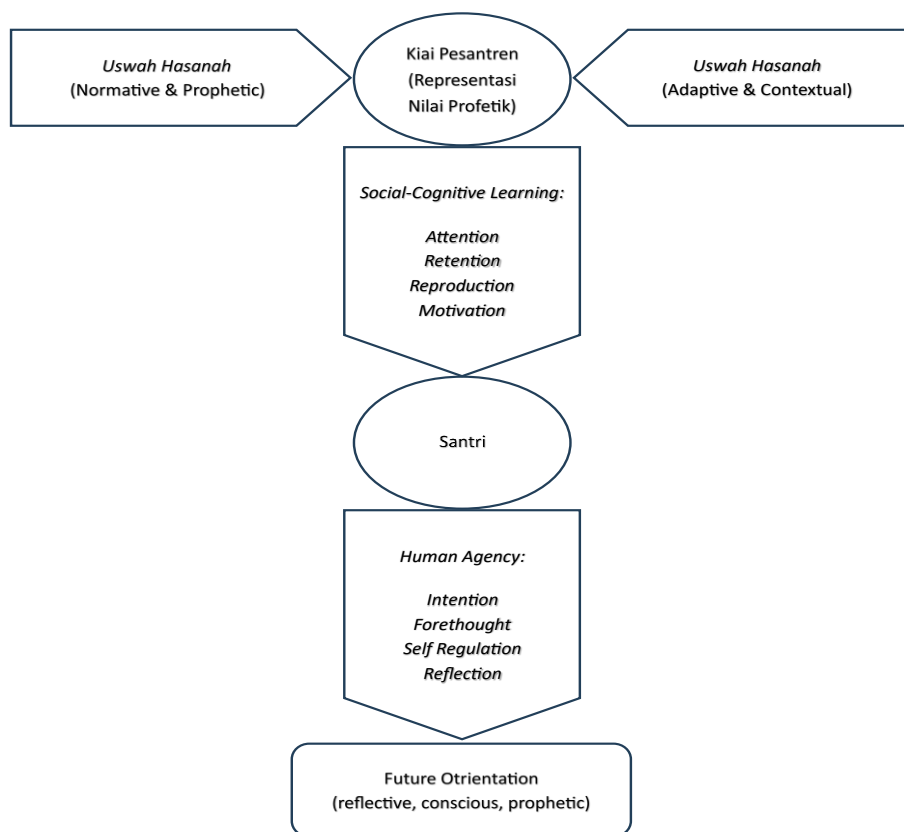


Figure 1. A chart of exemplary of Kiai in shaping Santri's future orientation from the perspective of Social Cognition Theory.

Pesantren kiai act as contextual representatives of prophetic exemplary values within the pesantren subculture. The kiai's exemplary conduct does not replace the Prophet's position as an ideal role model, but rather represents prophetic values practically within a specific time and place. The kiai's exemplary authority stems from the consistency between religious knowledge, prophetic morals, and sharia practices implemented in the real life of the pesantren.

The kiai's exemplary role model operates through social-cognitive learning mechanisms as explained in Social Cognitive Theory. Exemplary role models are effective because they serve as models with moral legitimacy and symbolic closeness to their students. Their behavior attracts attention, is reinforced through symbolic and practical ritual repetition, is reproduced through behavioral habituation, and is motivated by a combination of social reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement, and internal reinforcement based on religious values.

The kiai's exemplary role model does not shape the students' perspectives deterministically, but rather through strengthening their human agency. The exemplary process fosters the development of intentionality, forethought, self-regulation, and reflexivity in students, thus contributing to the formation of a conscious, reflective, and prophetic future orientation.

Discussion

The kiai is a central figure in the pesantren tradition, serving not only as a caretaker and educator, but also as a role model in the social, spiritual, and cultural lives of the santri and the surrounding community. The kiai's role in this context is not solely determined by their scholarly capacity, but also by the exemplary conduct they display in their daily lives. The kiai's exemplary conduct reflects the integration of Islamic values, leadership practices, and sensitivity to the social dynamics developing within the pesantren and the community. The lives of kiai in pesantren reflect effective role models that emerge from the harmony between words and actions. Kiai not only teach and explain the classic Islamic literatures, but also practice the values they teach. Their exemplary behavior is evident in their daily lives, from their speech and behavior to their community service (Rohani et al., 2025; Triana et al., 2025; Utama & Salim, 2024). When explaining their da'wah, santri can directly observe the kiai's preaching activities. This attention is key to observational learning, where students focus on modeled behavior to learn effectively. The kiai's charismatic leadership, simplicity, and piety serve as ideal examples to emulate (Hernawati et al., 2024).

The motivation for santri's behavior is not solely for personal gain, but also stems from a sense of moral or spiritual responsibility toward something greater. This motivation is often reinforced by self-reinforcement in the form of strong emotions such as love for the institution or pride in the student's identity. Furthermore, external reinforcement sometimes arises when santri hope to receive rewards or avoid punishment. In the context of pesantren, the kyai's recognition or emotional closeness to the santri is seen as a reward that fosters pride. On the other hand, ta'zir, commonly viewed as punishment for students, causes students to avoid certain behaviors that conflict with values aligned with the pesantren's traditions. Vicarious reinforcement arises when students perceive the kyai's charisma or authority, making him a respected figure with high social status, or when they see other students receiving rewards or punishments for certain behaviors.

The behavior of santri in pesantren can be understood through the interaction of three things: the pesantren environment, their behavior, and themselves. The pesantren environment, with its binding rules, traditional and religious values, and strong social relationships, shapes students to be disciplined, moderate, and religious. Santri's behavior, such as being diligent and persistent in worship, studying, and submitting to and obeying the kyai, is not only influenced by the pesantren environment but also reinforces the traditions and positive values within the pesantren. On the other hand, individual personal factors such as belief in religious teachings, motivation, and personality also play a significant role in shaping the behavior and traditions of the pesantren. For example, students who have a specific goal of mastering Arabic grammar (Nahwu) will be more persistent and enthusiastic in their studies, which in turn influences the pesantren environment. These three factors are interrelated and shape the dynamics of santri's lives, creating a balance between religiosity, academics, and social life in the pesantren.

Santri in pesantren learn a great deal by observing the behavior of the kyai, their primary role model. Through this observational learning, students observe the kyai's daily activities, from worship to teaching and behavior, and then try to emulate them. For example, when observing the authority of the kyai or his immediate family (Takdir et al., 2022), students are motivated to do the same. This process involves self-regulation, where santri regulate their behavior and monitor their interactions with their peers, in order to consistently emulate the kyai. Furthermore, santri's belief that they can also be successful like the kyai, known as self-efficacy, is strengthened when they successfully emulate these positive behaviors. This belief encourages them to continue striving, even when facing difficult situations. Thus, santri's observational learning of the kyai not only shapes their behavior but also helps them develop confidence in their own abilities, ultimately contributing to their success at the pesantren.

From santri's observation of daily activities and life of the kyai, they see a figure who not only possesses religious knowledge but also possesses integrity, exemplary behavior, and a positive influence in society. This inspires the santri to set similar life goals. In turn, the santri are motivated to achieve similar goals related to their prospective life direction and existence. The kyai serves as a role model, demonstrating that these goals are not merely dreams but can be achieved through hard work, discipline, and perseverance. The santri's motivation to pursue these goals cannot be separated from internal and external factors. Internally, the santri feel inspired by the kyai's piety, depth of knowledge, and exemplary behavior. Externally, the pesantren environment filled with support from the kyai and peers, also strengthens their motivation. The santri feel compelled to follow in the kyai's footsteps and are recognized as part of the pesantren's scholarly and spiritual tradition.

The vision of future achievement is a long-term vision, requiring persistence and perseverance to achieve it. This vision of the future represents a long-term orientation that cannot be realized in a short time. At the same time, santri must go through stages to achieve intellectual and spiritual maturity. Thus, santri are required to be able to map their attention focus across different time periods (present and future, now and later) proportionally. Excessive focus on long-term goals in the future can lead to neglecting equally important short-term achievements (Harackiewicz et al., 2000). This can impact their academic achievement, which in turn can limit opportunities for advancement in learning. Short-term achievements are crucial for maintaining santri's motivation and engagement. On the other hand, excessive focus on current short-term goals can enhance current well-being and satisfaction. However, it can also lead to impulsive decisions and

a lack of consideration for future consequences, which can negatively impact long-term goals (Shipp et al., 2009).

Therefore, it is important to balance long-term future goals with short-term achievements in the present, so that santri not only feel motivated by consistent small progress but also stay on track toward achieving their larger goals. By balancing these two aspects, santri can maintain motivation, achieve academic recognition, and remain focused on their long-term spiritual and intellectual goals. Self-continuity serves as a link between an individual's present and future selves. This continuity can enhance the connectedness individuals feel in long-term decision-making. When individuals feel a strong connection to their future selves, they are more likely to make decisions that benefit them in the long run. This perception can influence temporal orientation by making future rewards more appealing without neglecting current temporal goals (Hershfield, 2011).

Conceptualization of time and experience influences the cognitive processes of santri in pesantren. How santri perceive and understand time can influence their thinking and decision-making processes. Time perspective is a cognitive process that divides an individual's experience into temporal frameworks: past, present, and future. The religious doctrine underlying the values and traditions of pesantren teaches students to view time as infinite. Life on earth is temporary, while the afterlife is eternal and everlasting. A transcendental future perspective plays a crucial role in enhancing individual motivation by enabling santri to understand the connection between current actions and their eternal future consequences. Focusing on a transcendental future or spiritual goals can be a source of serenity and meaning in life, but neglecting the immanent future and present well-being can lead to psychological and social imbalance. Conversely, a focus on the immanent future can increase productivity and success, but without spiritual balance, a person can experience stress, a loss of meaning in life, and difficulty coping with failure. Therefore, a balance between immanent and transcendental orientations is necessary for santri to have a strong spiritual orientation without losing their ground in their mortal lives. Time perspective plays a key role in building sustainable motivation, enabling santri to connect their current behavior to their short- and long-term future.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the role model of kiai in pesantren is a practical representation of prophetic values, concretely manifested in the daily lives. Based on the integration of religious knowledge, prophetic morals, and social responsibility, kiai serve as formal educators as well as *qudwah* and *uswah hasanah* who guide the development of students' character and life orientation. This role model is strengthened by the collective, systemic, and value-laden structure of the pesantren subculture, which enables the continuous internalization of these values.

From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, the exemplary of kiai has been proven to function as an effective learning model through the mechanisms of observation, internalization, and motivation. This process does not shape students deterministically, but rather strengthens their ability to formulate future orientations that encompass spiritual, social, and intellectual dimensions, aligned with the Islamic vision of life. Thus, the kiai's exemplary not only impacts short-term moral formation but also contributes to determining the long-term direction of santri's lives.

Theoretically, this study expands the application of Social Cognitive Theory by contextualizing it within Islamic culture and the pesantren subculture, emphasizing the relevance of role models as a strategic pillar of values-based Islamic education amidst the challenges of the times. Practically, these findings provide a conceptual basis for the development of character education and the formulation of collaborative policies that strengthen the formative role of pesantren. However, this study has limitations because it relies solely on a literature review, necessitating further field research to verify, deepen, and expand the findings related to kiai role models and students' future orientations in more diverse empirical contexts.

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