



Pesantren as Social Capital for Regional Development: A Reflection on Kiai Leadership and Institutional Dynamics

Ali Ahmad Yenuri,^{1*} Ivan Nurseha,²

^{1,2}Universitas Kiai Abdullah Faqih Gresik, Indonesia

¹ali.yenuri@unkafa.ac.id, ²ivan.nurseha@gmail.com

Received: 17-11-2025

Revised: 03-12-2025

Accepted: 10-12-2025

Abstract

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have significant potential as a source of social capital to support regional development; however, this role has not been fully integrated into regional development policies. This study aims to analyze the contribution of *pesantren* as social capital to regional development through the leadership of kiai and the *pesantren's* institutional dynamics. This research employs a qualitative approach, drawing on literature review and empirical reflection on the social practices of *pesantren* in various local contexts. Data were collected from scholarly literature, policy documents, and empirical experiences related to social and community empowerment activities conducted by *pesantren*. The results indicate that *kiai* leadership plays a crucial role in building social trust, strengthening community cohesion, and encouraging public participation, which constitute the core elements of *pesantren* social capital. Furthermore, adaptive institutional dynamics enable *pesantren* to contribute to human resource development, community economic empowerment, and the internalization of religious values and local wisdom in regional development processes. These findings demonstrate that *pesantrens* can serve as strategic partners for local governments in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. This study concludes that optimizing the role of *pesantren* as social capital requires stronger institutional recognition and systematic integration into regional development policies.

Keywords: *Kiai Leadership; Pesantren Dynamics; Social Capital.*

Abstrak

Pesantren memiliki potensi besar sebagai modal sosial dalam mendukung pembangunan daerah, namun peran tersebut belum sepenuhnya terintegrasi dalam kerangka kebijakan pembangunan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi pesantren sebagai modal sosial pembangunan daerah melalui kepemimpinan kiai dan dinamika kelembagaan pesantren. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur dan refleksi empiris terhadap praktik sosial pesantren di berbagai konteks lokal. Data diperoleh dari sumber literatur ilmiah, dokumen kebijakan, serta pengalaman empiris terkait aktivitas sosial dan pemberdayaan pesantren. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan kiai berperan signifikan dalam membangun kepercayaan sosial, memperkuat kohesi masyarakat, dan mendorong partisipasi publik, yang menjadi elemen utama modal sosial pesantren. Selain itu, dinamika kelembagaan pesantren yang adaptif memungkinkan penguatan kapasitas sumber daya manusia, pemberdayaan ekonomi masyarakat, serta internalisasi nilai keagamaan dan kearifan lokal dalam proses pembangunan daerah. Dampak dari temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pesantren berpotensi menjadi mitra strategis pemerintah daerah dalam mewujudkan pembangunan yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa optimalisasi peran pesantren sebagai modal sosial memerlukan pengakuan kelembagaan dan integrasi yang lebih sistematis dalam kebijakan pembangunan daerah.

Kata Kunci: *Dinamika Pesantren; Kepemimpinan Kiai, Modal Sosial.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) represent the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and have historically played a pivotal role not only in the transmission of religious knowledge but also in the formation of social character and the cultivation of moral values within society.¹ Beyond their primary educational function, *pesantren* have long been embedded in local communities' social fabric, serving as centers of social interaction, moral guidance, and community-based problem-solving. Within the framework of regional development, *pesantrens* possess substantial potential as sources of social capital, as they can strengthen social cohesion, foster public trust, and promote civic participation through value-based leadership and community engagement. The dense social networks surrounding *pesantren*, coupled with the moral authority of *kiai*, enable these institutions to mobilize collective action and sustain long-term community involvement in various social and developmental initiatives.²

Despite this considerable potential, the *pesantren* contribution to regional development has not yet been systematically incorporated into local government development policy frameworks. In many cases, development planning continues to prioritize formal bureaucratic institutions and economic indicators, while underestimating the strategic role of socioreligious institutions such as *pesantren*.³ As a result, the social capital embedded within *pesantren* remains underutilized, and opportunities for collaboration between local governments and *pesantren* are often fragmented and incidental rather than structured and sustainable. This policy disconnect limits the effectiveness of development programs, particularly in areas where *pesantren* function as trusted community institutions and hold significant influence over social norms and collective behavior.

This gap underscores the urgency of examining the role of *pesantren*, particularly through *kiai* leadership and institutional dynamics, as value-based actors in regional development processes. Understanding how *kiai* exercises moral authority, builds trust, and guides institutional adaptation is essential for positioning *pesantren* as strategic partners in development planning.⁴ Moreover, analyzing the institutional dynamics of *pesantren*, including governance structures, program diversification, and patterns of collaboration, provides critical insight into how these institutions can respond effectively to changing social and economic contexts. By situating *pesantren* within the discourse of regional development, this study seeks to bridge the gap between socioreligious institutions and public policy, thereby contributing to more inclusive, participatory, and culturally grounded development strategies.⁵

Existing scholarship has consistently highlighted the significant role of *pesantren* in reinforcing religious education, cultivating social morality, and advancing community-based economic empowerment within Indonesian society. Numerous studies emphasize that *pesantren*

¹ Husnul Laili, "Dinamika Pesantren Nahdlatul Wathan : Refleksi Modal Spiritual Dan Sosiokultural," *Edisi: Jurnal Edukasi Dan Sains* (Lombok NTB) 2, no. 2 (August 2020): 269–84, <https://doi.org/10.36088/edisi.v2i2.894>.

² Khirjan Nahdi, "Dinamika Pesantren Nahdlatul Wathan Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Modal," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 7 (January 2014): 381–405, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2013.7.2.381-405>.

³ Amir Fadhilah, "Struktur Dan Pola Kepemimpinan Kyai Dalam Pesantren Di Jawa," *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 8, no. 1 (June 2011): 101–20, <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v8i1.89.101-120>.

⁴ Dakir Dakir and Umiarso, "Pesantren Dan Perubahan Sosial: Optimalisasi Modal Sosial Bagi Kemajuan Masyarakat," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 14, no. 1 (June 2017): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v14i1.587>.

⁵ Hery Agung Setyawan and Moh Roqib, "Membangun Peradaban: Dinamika Kelembagaan Pendidikan Islam Melalui Surau, Masjid, Dan Pesantren Di Indonesia," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 02 (July 2025): 289–315.

function not only as centers for Islamic learning but also as institutions that shape ethical behavior, social discipline, and collective responsibility among their members and surrounding communities. Research on *kiai* leadership further demonstrates that *kiai* exercises strong moral and social authority rooted in religious legitimacy, cultural tradition, and long-standing social trust. This authority enables *kiai* to shape social relations, build networks of trust, and mobilize community participation in a range of educational, social, and economic initiatives.⁶

Through these leadership practices, *pesantren* contribute to the creation of stable social networks that support cooperation and sustained community engagement. Other strands of research emphasize the adaptive capacity of *pesantren* in responding to social change, particularly through the development of educational, social, and economic programs aligned with local community needs. These studies show that many *pesantren* have expanded their institutional roles by integrating formal education, vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and social services into their traditional curricula. Such institutional adaptation reflects the ability of *pesantren* to remain socially relevant while preserving their core religious values. Collectively, these findings suggest that *pesantrens* possess significant potential as reservoirs of social capital, as they combine moral authority, dense social networks, and institutional flexibility in ways conducive to community resilience and social development.⁷

However, despite the richness of existing scholarship, much of the literature tends to conceptualize *pesantren* in a fragmented manner, either as religious educational institutions or as agents of community empowerment, without explicitly situating them within broader regional development and public policy frameworks. As a result, the analytical connection between *pesantren* and state-led development processes remains underexplored. The research gap thus lies in the limited number of comprehensive studies that conceptualize *pesantren* explicitly as social capital for regional development by foregrounding *kiai* leadership and institutional dynamics as central analytical variables.⁸ Moreover, prior studies often rely on normative discussions or narrowly defined case studies that focus on internal institutional practices, providing limited reflective insight into how *pesantren* can be strategically integrated into evidence-based regional development policymaking. This analytical limitation has important implications, as it constrains policymakers' ability to recognize and leverage the social capital embedded in *pesantren* for broader development objectives. Without a framework that connects socioreligious institutions to regional development policy, the contribution of *pesantren* remains marginal in formal planning processes. Addressing this gap requires an integrative analytical approach that bridges

⁶ Muhammad Makki, Khotim Hanifudin Najib, and Mansur Hakim, "Connections between Religious Leaders and Communities: The Role of Tuan Guru in Mobilizing Community Participation in Indonesia," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 10, no. 1 (April 2025): 15–29, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v10i1.5617>; Ahmad Zaenurrosyid, *Dinamika Sosial Transformatif Kiai Dan Pesantren Jawa Pesisiran* (Banyumas: Mangku Bumi, 2017); Suhermanto Suhermanto and Moh Jasri, "Kiai Kampung and Transformational Leadership: A Model for Non-Formal Education to Improve Community Quality of Life," *Journal of Pesantren and Diniyah Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 2024): 165–74, <https://doi.org/10.63245/jpds.v1i2.25>; Anasro Anasro and Muhammad Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi, "Leadership Style at the Contemporary Pesantren Al-Hilmu Prigen Pasuruan," *Journal of Pesantren and Diniyah Studies* 1, no. 1 (June 2024): 15–24, <https://doi.org/10.63245/jpds.v1i1.7>.

⁷ Yoyok Rimbawan, "Pesantren Dan Ekonomi : Kajian Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Pesantren Darul Falah Bendo Mungal Krian Sidoarjo Jawa Timur," November 5, 2012, 1180–99, <http://repository.uinsa.ac.id/id/eprint/1744/>.

⁸ Nini Indriyani et al., "Identifikasi Dan Pengembangan Potensi Ekonomi Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syaf'iyah Sukorejo," *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusanantara* 1, no. 6 (June 2025): 779–84, <https://doi.org/10.59435/menulis.v1i6.431>.

leadership studies, institutional analysis, and development policy, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of *pesantren* as value-based actors in regional development.⁹

Against this backdrop, the present study is positioned to support and extend previous research by broadening the analytical lens to encompass regional development and public policy perspectives. While earlier studies have provided valuable insights into the educational, religious, and social functions of *pesantren*, they have rarely examined these institutions as strategic actors within formal development planning processes. Rather than challenging or revising existing findings regarding the social and educational roles of *pesantren*, this study seeks to reinforce and contextualize these roles by demonstrating their strategic relevance to regional development agendas. By situating *pesantren* within the discourse of regional development, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how socioreligious institutions can complement state-led development initiatives through value-based leadership and community-rooted practices.¹⁰

The novelty of this study lies in its reflective-analytical approach, which explicitly positions *pesantren* as social capital within regional development discourse while emphasizing the integrative roles of *kiai* leadership and institutional adaptability in development policy contexts. Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on internal pedagogical practices or isolated community empowerment programs, this research adopts a broader analytical framework that links leadership dynamics, institutional transformation, and policy integration. By bridging socioreligious institutions and development policy, the study offers a more nuanced and practically relevant perspective for local policymakers, highlighting how *pesantren* can function as intermediary institutions that translate community values into development practices. This approach enables a deeper exploration of how trust, moral authority, and institutional flexibility can be mobilized to support inclusive and sustainable regional development.¹¹

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the contribution of *pesantren* as social capital in regional development through a critical reflection on *kiai* leadership and *pesantren* institutional dynamics. More specifically, this study aims to: (1) examine the role of *kiai* leadership in the formation and maintenance of community social capital, particularly in fostering trust, participation, and collective action; (2) analyze the institutional dynamics of *pesantren* in responding to regional development needs, including their capacity for adaptation, collaboration, and program diversification; and (3) formulate policy relevant insights that can strengthen the integration of *pesantren* into regional development strategies. Through these objectives, the study seeks to contribute not only to academic discourse but also to practical policy formulation by providing an empirically grounded and analytically informed framework for engaging *pesantren* as value-based actors in regional development.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative, reflective case study design to examine the role of *pesantren* as social capital in regional development through *kiai* leadership and institutional

⁹ Edy Setyo Utomo, "Rekonstruksi Regulasi Pengembangan Ekonomi Pesantren Menuju Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Yang Berbasis Nilai Keadilan" (doctoral, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, 2023), <https://repository.unissula.ac.id/31232/>.

¹⁰ Ahdi Makmur, *Ulama dan Pembangunan Sosial*, 1st ed. (Banjarmasin: IAIN Antasari Press, 2015).

¹¹ Guntur Cahaya Kesuma, "Refleksi Model Pendidikan Pesantren Dan Tantangannya Masa Kini," *Tadris: Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Tarbiyah* 2, no. 1 (June 2017): 67–79, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tadris.v2i1.1740>.

dynamics. The research was conducted at Pesantren Fathul Majid, Kasiman, Bojonegoro, an Islamic boarding school actively engaged in educational, social, and community empowerment programs related to regional development. The primary informant in this study was KH. Achmad Chabiburrochman, the *kiai* and leader of Pesantren Fathul Majid, whose leadership plays a central role in shaping institutional direction and community engagement. Additional informants were purposively selected and included *pesantren* administrators, teachers, and surrounding community members. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, directly involved in data collection and interpretation. Data were collected over six months through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, enabling a contextualized and in-depth exploration of *kiai* leadership practices and the institutional role of pesantren in supporting regional development.

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded thematically to identify patterns related to leadership, social capital, and institutional dynamics, which were then interpreted using social capital and leadership theories. The validity of the findings was ensured through triangulation of data sources and methods, member checking with key informants, and prolonged engagement in the research setting. The research was conducted in sequential stages, including the formulation of a research focus, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and the development of conclusions and policy implications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kiai Leadership as Social Capital in Regional Development

The findings of this study demonstrate that *kiai* leadership constitutes the core and most decisive element of *pesantren* social capital within the broader regional development framework. *Kiai* do not merely function as religious authorities responsible for transmitting Islamic knowledge and ritual practices; instead, they occupy a multidimensional leadership position that integrates moral exemplarity, cultural brokerage, and social integration. These leadership dimensions position *kiai* as key actors who shape not only religious life but also broader social, economic, and developmental processes within their communities. As moral exemplars, *kiai* embody ethical values, religious norms, and disciplined life practices that serve as moral references for both *pesantren* members and surrounding communities.

Their personal integrity, consistency between religious teachings and everyday conduct, and visible commitment to communal welfare contribute to the formation of shared moral frameworks that guide individual and collective behavior. These moral frameworks play a critical role in sustaining social order, reinforcing ethical conduct, and fostering mutual responsibility within the community. As cultural brokers, *Kiai* simultaneously mediate between Islamic traditions and contemporary socio-economic realities.¹² Through this mediating role, *Kiai* reinterprets religious teachings in ways that are responsive to changing social conditions, such

¹² Zainal Arifin et al., "The Strategic Role of *Kiai* in Embedding Qur'anic Educational Values within Rural Communities," *Edukasia Islamika* 10, no. 1 (June 2025): 17–34, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v10i1.10759>; Refki Rusyadi et al., "Negotiating Salafism: Local Muslim Identity and Religious Adaptation in Banten," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 15, no. 2 (December 2025): 429–58, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2025.15.2.429-458>; Suryati Suryati, Eka Sri Mulyani, and Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin, "Strategies for the Transformation of Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools in Aceh Singkil: Integrating Education, Social, and Religious Aspects," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2026): 80–94, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v7i1.2371>.

as economic transformation, modernization, and regional development agendas. This capacity enables *pesantren* to maintain doctrinal continuity while remaining socially relevant and adaptive. Rather than positioning religion in opposition to development, *Kiai* frames development initiatives as morally legitimate and religiously meaningful, thereby enhancing community acceptance and participation.

In their role as social integrators, *Kiai* facilitate cooperation among diverse social groups, including *santri*, alumni, residents, community leaders, and external stakeholders. Through religious gatherings, educational programs, and community-based activities, *kiai* foster social cohesion and collective identity, reducing social fragmentation and strengthening communal solidarity. This integrative function is particularly significant in plural, dynamic regional contexts, where social cohesion is a foundational requirement for sustainable development. This moral and symbolic authority enables *kiai* to generate high levels of trust, social cohesion, and collective commitment within *pesantren*-centered communities.¹³ Empirical findings indicate that community members place profound confidence in *kiai*, perceiving them as ethical, credible, and socially responsible leaders whose decisions are oriented toward communal welfare rather than personal gain. Such trust is not instantaneous but is constructed gradually through long-standing social relationships, religious legitimacy, and consistent leadership practices that reinforce credibility over time.

Trust generated through *kiai* leadership serves as a critical enabling mechanism, allowing *pesantren* to mobilize community participation in development-oriented activities. Communities are more willing to contribute time, resources, and labor to *pesantren*-led initiatives because they trust that these efforts align with shared values and collective interests. This trust facilitates participation in educational programs, social services, charitable activities, and community-based economic empowerment initiatives that directly support regional development objectives. Community participation in *pesantren* programs reflects substantial bonding social capital, while the *kiai*'s engagement with local leaders and institutions illustrates the bridging capacity of *pesantren* leadership.

Similar patterns are evident in other Indonesian *pesantren*. Pesantren Sidogiri (Pasuruan) demonstrates how *kiai* leadership mobilizes trust-based networks to support regional economic development through Islamic microfinance institutions such as Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT), thereby enhancing financial inclusion and strengthening local economic resilience.¹⁴ Likewise, several pesantren illustrate how moral authority and extensive alums networks function as enduring social capital that supports education, social services, and public engagement at both regional and national levels.¹⁵ Through leadership-based trust, *kiai* strengthens both bonding

¹³ Yadi Fajri, Munirul Abidin, and Achmad Khudori Soleh, "Kiai Leadership Strategy in Building Organizational Commitment in Pesantren," *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 28, no. 2 (2023): 106–20, <https://doi.org/10.19109/td.v28i2.20009>; Agus Nu'man, "From Authority to Institutional Trust; A Study of Kyai Modalities in Pesantren Communities," *Pedagogik: Jurnal Pendidikan* 12, no. 1 (July 2025): 74–88, <https://doi.org/10.33650/pjp.v12i1.11063>.

¹⁴ M. Falikul Isbah, "How Is Social Capital Converted to Be Economic Capital? A Case Study from Pesantren's Socio-Economic Projects," *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian* 14, no. 1 (May 2019): 18–35, <https://doi.org/10.31332/ai.v14i1.1240>; Mohammad Mufid, Eka Puspa Dewi, and Sebastiana Viphindartin, "A Business Ecosystem Model of Pesantren's Economic Self-Reliance: A Lesson Learn of Sidogiri for Pesantren in Jember," December 26, 2025, 115–29, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-956-8_10.

¹⁵ Nanang Arianto et al., "Cultural Politics and Communication Strategies in Pesantren Adaptation to Modernity: A Case Study of Pesantren Tebuireng," *Muharrrik: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 8, no. 2 (December 2025): 305–15, <https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrrik.v8i2.8568>.

and bridging forms of social capital. Bonding social capital is reflected in strong internal solidarity among *santri*, alums, and surrounding communities, sustained through shared religious values, collective rituals, and dense interpersonal networks. Bridging social capital emerges from *Kiai's* ability to connect *pesantren* communities with external actors, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and development institutions. Through this dual function, *Kiai* positions *pesantren* as intermediary institutions capable of translating community values into collective action aligned with regional development objectives, thereby reinforcing *pesantren's* strategic role as value-based actors in development processes.

Institutional Dynamics of *Pesantren* to Regional Development

Beyond leadership, the findings reveal that the institutional dynamics of *pesantren* play a crucial role in sustaining and enhancing their contribution to regional development. *Pesantren* that demonstrate adaptive governance, programmatic flexibility, and openness to innovation are better equipped to respond to evolving socio-economic challenges. Institutional adaptability is reflected not only in formal organizational structures but also in the capacity of *pesantren* leadership and management to reinterpret traditional religious missions in response to contemporary community needs. This adaptability enables *pesantren* to preserve their religious identity while simultaneously expanding their social and developmental functions. Rather than diluting religious values, adaptive institutional practices enable *pesantren* to embed these values in new educational and social initiatives, thereby reinforcing their relevance in changing development contexts. Such institutional flexibility positions *pesantren* as dynamic social institutions rather than static religious entities.

Empirical evidence indicates that institutional adaptability manifests in the diversification of educational programs beyond classical Islamic instruction. Many *pesantren* have introduced vocational education, entrepreneurship training, and life-skills programs designed to enhance employability and economic resilience among graduates and surrounding communities. *Pesantren Al-Ittifaq* (Bandung), for instance, has integrated agricultural entrepreneurship, cooperative-based economic models, and market-oriented production systems into its institutional framework, contributing directly to local economic development, food security, and rural empowerment.¹⁶ Furthermore, *pesantrens* are increasingly expanding their social services to address pressing regional issues, including poverty alleviation, youth empowerment, health awareness, and social welfare. Other *pesantrens*, as well as initiatives in community education and social assistance, illustrate how *pesantrens* respond proactively to local socio-economic challenges.¹⁷ These initiatives not only address immediate social needs but also strengthen long-term community resilience and reinforce the legitimacy of *pesantrens* within the regional development ecosystem.

¹⁶ Saktika Rohmah Fajarwati et al., "Model of Entrepreneurship Education in Islamic Boarding Schools in The Entrepreneurship Program at Al-Ittifaq Islamic Boarding School in Bandung Regency," December 31, 2025, 24–34, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-525-6_4.

¹⁷ Saiful Jazil et al., "Pesantren and the Economic Development in the Perspective of Maqashid Al-Shari'ah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 9, no. 1 (July 2021): 83–102, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2021.9.1.83-102>; Himawan Bayu Patriadi, "Surviving in the Globalized World Through Local Perspectives: Pesantrens and Sustainable Development," in *Sustainable Future for Human Security: Society, Cities and Governance*, ed. Benjamin McLellan (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 29–47, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5433-4_3.

Openness to collaboration with external stakeholders, particularly local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and development institutions, emerges as a key factor in strengthening *pesantren*'s institutional role. Through collaborative partnerships, *pesantren* gain access to financial resources, technical expertise, and policy support, while government actors benefit from the trust, networks, and grassroots legitimacy embedded within *pesantren* communities. In this collaborative context, *pesantren* function not merely as beneficiaries of development programs but as active partners and co-producers of development outcomes. From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that optimizing the role of *pesantren* as social capital in regional development requires formal institutional recognition, structured partnership models, and integrative governance mechanisms that connect religious institutions with regional development planning processes. The absence of such institutional linkages risks underutilizing the substantial social capital embedded within *pesantren* and limiting their potential contribution to inclusive development. Overall, this study demonstrates that the effectiveness of *pesantren* as agents of regional development depends on a synergistic relationship between *kiai* leadership, institutional adaptability, and supportive policy environments, underscoring the strategic importance of value-based community institutions in fostering inclusive, participatory, and sustainable regional development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *pesantren* represent a strategic form of social capital with significant relevance to regional development, particularly when supported by strong *kiai* leadership and adaptive institutional dynamics. The findings demonstrate that *kiai* leadership functions as the core driver of trust, social cohesion, and collective engagement within and beyond the *pesantren* community. Through moral authority and social legitimacy, *kiai* enable *pesantren* to mobilize community participation and to serve as intermediary institutions that connect grassroots communities with broader regional development initiatives. Furthermore, the study reveals that the sustainability of *pesantren*'s contribution to regional development is closely linked to their institutional adaptability. *Pesantrens* that are open to innovation, program diversification, and cross-sector collaboration are better positioned to respond to changing social and economic needs. Such adaptability enhances *pesantren*'s role in human resource development and community empowerment, reinforcing their function as enduring social capital. Overall, this study affirms that the effective contribution of *pesantren* to regional development depends on a synergistic interaction among value-based leadership, institutional resilience, and supportive policy environments.

Based on these conclusions, several policy recommendations are proposed. First, local governments should formally recognize *pesantren* as strategic partners in regional development planning. Second, policymakers should facilitate capacity-building programs to strengthen *pesantren* institutional governance and program management. Third, collaborative platforms should be established to foster regular dialogue and partnership between *pesantren*, local governments, and other development stakeholders. These platforms can function as spaces for knowledge exchange, joint program planning, and policy alignment, thereby ensuring that *pesantren* initiatives are integrated with regional development priorities. Finally, future development policies should adopt an inclusive, value-based approach that recognizes the importance of socioreligious institutions in fostering sustainable development.

REFERENCES

- Anasro, Anasro, and Muhammad Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi. "Leadership Style at the Contemporary Pesantren Al-Hilmi Prigen Pasuruan." *Journal of Pesantren and Diniyah Studies* 1, no. 1 (June 2024): 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.63245/jpds.v1i1.7>.
- Arianto, Nanang, Ridwan Nasution, Junedi Singarimbun, and Susanti Hasibuan. "Cultural Politics and Communication Strategies in Pesantren Adaptation to Modernity: A Case Study of Pesantren Tebuireng." *Muharrrik: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 8, no. 2 (December 2025): 305–15. <https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrrik.v8i2.8568>.
- Arifin, Zainal, Sholihul Huda, Mohammad Hasan Bisyrri, and Mamdukh Budiman. "The Strategic Role of Kiai in Embedding Qur'anic Educational Values within Rural Communities." *Edukasia Islamika* 10, no. 1 (June 2025): 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v10i1.10759>.
- Dakir, Dakir, and Umiarso Umiarso. "Pesantren Dan Perubahan Sosial: Optimalisasi Modal Sosial Bagi Kemajuan Masyarakat." *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 14, no. 1 (June 2017): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v14i1.587>.
- Fadhilah, Amir. "Struktur Dan Pola Kepemimpinan Kyai Dalam Pesantren Di Jawa." *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 8, no. 1 (June 2011): 101–20. <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v8i1.89.101-120>.
- Fajarwati, Saktika Rohmah, Jajat Sudrajat Ardiwinata, Asep Saepudin, and Yanti Shantini. "Model of Entrepreneurship Education in Islamic Boarding Schools in The Entrepreneurship Program at Al-Ittifaq Islamic Boarding School in Bandung Regency." December 31, 2025, 24–34. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-525-6_4.
- Fajri, Yadi, Munirul Abidin, and Achmad Khudori Soleh. "Kiai Leadership Strategy in Building Organizational Commitment in Pesantren." *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 28, no. 2 (2023): 106–20. <https://doi.org/10.19109/td.v28i2.20009>.
- Indriyani, Nini, Nayla Wardatul Jannah, Alviatul Hikmah, Qornafa Maysyaro, and Nibras Rohadatul Aisy. "Identifikasi Dan Pengembangan Potensi Ekonomi Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo." *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara* 1, no. 6 (June 2025): 779–84. <https://doi.org/10.59435/menulis.v1i6.431>.
- Isbah, M. Falikul. "How Is Social Capital Converted to Be Economic Capital? A Case Study from Pesantren's Socio-Economic Projects." *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian* 14, no. 1 (May 2019): 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.31332/ai.v14i1.1240>.
- Jazil, Saiful, Muhammad Fahmi, Senata Adi Prasetya, Moh Faizin, and Muh Sholihuddin. "Pesantren and the Economic Development in the Perspective of Maqashid Al-Shari'ah." *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 9, no. 1 (July 2021): 83–102. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2021.9.1.83-102>.
- Kesuma, Guntur Cahaya. "Refleksi Model Pendidikan Pesantren Dan Tantangannya Masa Kini." *Tadris: Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Tarbiyah* 2, no. 1 (June 2017): 67–79. <https://doi.org/10.24042/tadris.v2i1.1740>.
- Laili, Husnul. "Dinamika Pesantren Nahdlatul Wathan: Refleksi Modal Spiritual Dan Sosiokultural." *Edisi: Jurnal Edukasi Dan Sains (Lombok NTB)* 2, no. 2 (August 2020): 269–84. <https://doi.org/10.36088/edisi.v2i2.894>.
- Makki, Muhammad, Khotim Hanifudin Najib, and Mansur Hakim. "Connections between Religious Leaders and Communities: The Role of Tuan Guru in Mobilizing Community

- Participation in Indonesia.” *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 10, no. 1 (April 2025): 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v10i1.5617>.
- Makmur, Ahdi. *Ulama dan Pembangunan Sosial*. 1st ed. Banjarmasin: IAIN Antasari Press, 2015.
- Mufid, Mohammad, Eka Puspa Dewi, and Sebastiana Viphindrartin. “A Business Ecosystem Model of Pesantren’s Economic Self-Reliance: A Lesson Learn of Sidogiri for Pesantren in Jember.” December 26, 2025, 115–29. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-956-8_10.
- Nahdi, Khirjan. “Dinamika Pesantren Nahdlatul Wathan Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Modal.” *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 7 (January 2014): 381–405. <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2013.7.2.381-405>.
- Nu’man, Agus. “From Authority to Institutional Trust; A Study of Kyai Modalities in Pesantren Communities.” *Pedagogik: Jurnal Pendidikan* 12, no. 1 (July 2025): 74–88. <https://doi.org/10.33650/pjp.v12i1.11063>.
- Patriadi, Himawan Bayu. “Surviving in the Globalized World Through Local Perspectives: Pesantrens and Sustainable Development.” In *Sustainable Future for Human Security: Society, Cities and Governance*, edited by Benjamin McLellan, 29–47. Singapore: Springer, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5433-4_3.
- Rimbawan, Yoyok. “Pesantren Dan Ekonomi : Kajian Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Pesantren Darul Falah Bendo Mungal Krian Sidoarjo Jawa Timur.” November 5, 2012, 1180–99. <http://repository.uinsa.ac.id/id/eprint/1744/>.
- Rusyadi, Refki, Agwin Degaf, Muhammad Sulthon Aziz, and Mochamad Chobir Sirad. “Negotiating Salafism: Local Muslim Identity and Religious Adaptation in Banten.” *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 15, no. 2 (December 2025): 429–58. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2025.15.2.429-458>.
- Setyawan, Hery Agung, and Moh Roqib. “Membangun Peradaban: Dinamika Kelembagaan Pendidikan Islam Melalui Surau, Masjid, Dan Pesantren Di Indonesia.” *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 02 (July 2025): 289–315.
- Suhermanto, Suhermanto, and Moh Jasri. “Kiai Kampung and Transformational Leadership: A Model for Non-Formal Education to Improve Community Quality of Life.” *Journal of Pesantren and Diniyah Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 2024): 165–74. <https://doi.org/10.63245/jpds.v1i2.25>.
- Suryati, Suryati, Eka Sri Mulyani, and Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin. “Strategies for the Transformation of Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools in Aceh Singkil: Integrating Education, Social, and Religious Aspects.” *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2026): 80–94. <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v7i1.2371>.
- Utomo, Edy Setyo. “Rekonstruksi Regulasi Pengembangan Ekonomi Pesantren Menuju Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Yang Berbasis Nilai Keadilan.” Doctoral, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, 2023. <https://repository.unissula.ac.id/31232/>.
- Zaenurrosyid, Ahmad. *Dinamika Sosial Transformatif Kyai Dan Pesantren Jawa Pesisiran*. Banyumas: Mangku Bumi, 2017.