

Article

Constructing Gender Equality in Salaf Pesantren

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ABSTRACT ENGLISH:

Discussions on gender equality continue to evolve and warrant further research in various settings, one of which is religious educational institutions such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). The concept of gender equality is often perceived as conflicting with the *Pesantren Salafiyah* model, which typically features an authoritarian, conservative, and patriarchal culture. The objective of this study is to examine how gender equality is constructed at the *Pesantren Salafiyah* Kapurejo in Kediri Regency. The approach used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach that examines the construction of gender equality in social interactions within the *pesantren* from the perspectives of students, teachers, and the *pesantren* leader (*Kiai*). Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at the *Pesantren Salafiyah* Kapurejo, Kediri Regency, East Java. This study involved 14 informants, consisting of boarding school administrators, teachers, and male and female students. The results indicate that gender equality values have developed unevenly within the *pesantren* environment. First, in the externalization sphere, a culture of gender equality has been established through *pesantren* regulations and daily activities that provide relatively equal opportunities for male and female students to participate in learning, organizational activities, and decision-making. Second, in the internalization sphere, these values have been accepted and practiced by members of the *pesantren* community, as reflected in cooperation, tolerance, and the division of responsibilities based on competence, not gender. However, in the realm of objectification, the institutionalization of gender equality remains limited. Although *pesantren* formally promote equal treatment, these values have not yet been fully embedded in organizational structures, written policies, or leadership arrangements; consequently, the implementation of equality still relies heavily on individual awareness and informal practices rather than on permanent institutional mechanisms.

Keywords: Gender Equality; Pesantren; Social Construction.

ABSTRACT INDONESIAN:

Wacana tentang kesetaraan gender terus berkembang dan layak untuk diteliti di berbagai ruang, salah satunya adalah lembaga pendidikan berbasis agama seperti pesantren. Konsep kesetaraan gender sering dianggap bertentangan dengan konsep pesantren salaf yang umumnya memiliki budaya otoriter, konservatif, dan patriarkal. Tujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana kesetaraan gender dikonstruksi di Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo, Kabupaten Kediri. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif yang mengkaji konstruksi kesetaraan gender dalam interaksi sosial di pesantren dari perspektif santri, guru, dan pimpinan pesantren (*Kiai*). Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi di Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo, Kabupaten Kediri, Jawa Timur. Penelitian ini melibatkan 14 informan, yang terdiri dari pengasuh pesantren, guru, dan santri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai kesetaraan gender berkembang secara tidak merata di pesantren. Pertama, di ruang eksternalisasi, budaya kesetaraan gender telah terbentuk melalui peraturan pesantren dan kegiatan sehari-hari yang memberikan kesempatan yang relatif sama bagi santri laki-laki dan perempuan untuk berpartisipasi dalam pembelajaran, kegiatan organisasi, dan pengambilan keputusan. Kedua, di ruang internalisasi, nilai-nilai ini telah diterima dan dipraktikkan oleh anggota komunitas pesantren, sebagaimana tercermin dalam kerja sama, toleransi, dan pembagian tanggung jawab berdasarkan kompetensi, bukan gender. Namun, dalam ruang objektivasi, institusionalisasi kesetaraan gender masih terbatas. Meskipun pesantren secara formal mempromosikan perlakuan yang setara, namun nilai-nilai ini belum sepenuhnya tertanam dalam organisasi, kebijakan tertulis, atau pengaturan kepemimpinan, sehingga implementasi kesetaraan masih sangat bergantung pada kesadaran individu dan praktik informal daripada mekanisme kelembagaan yang permanen.

Kata Kunci: Kesetaraan Gender; Konstruksi Sosial; Pesantren.

Introduction

Gender equality is an interesting discourse to study within the scope of *pesantren*. The concept of gender equality is often considered contrary to the concept of traditional *pesantren* or better known as '*salaf pesantren*'. This is because in general, *salaf pesantren* are considered close to authoritative, conservative, and patriarchal cultures (Hamdi, 2017; Khuza'i, 2013). One of the main problems of gender equality in the scope of *salaf pesantren* is policy discrimination between male and female students, thus giving birth to a discriminatory *pesantren* culture (Meenu et al., 2023).

Gender construction has an important role in shaping the culture of social interaction in *pesantren*. Gender in general is present and becomes a pattern of social activity in various relationships (Nurhidayati & Nurhidayati, 2020). Understanding gender also affects the form of policies, access, participation, benefits, and control in *pesantren*. Biased gender understanding affects patterns of social interaction that are discriminatory against one gender.

The Al-Qur'an is often used as a reference source to legitimize the occurrence of gender inequalities in *pesantren*. In fact, when referring to the Qur'an as the main source of Islam, basically the position of women and men is the same (Muhammad, 2019a). Therefore, it can be ascertained that the occurrence of gender injustice is the result of inappropriate reading of religious texts that produce gender-biased interpretation products. These accusations are not in accordance with the face of Islam which is *rahmatan lil alamin*. Therefore, it is necessary to review whether Islam is a source of gender inequality in *pesantren* or an inappropriate interpretation of religious texts (Mu'ammam & Hasan, 2012). In line with this statement, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd argued that there must be a wise attitude in responding to religious interpretations that have "expired" in looking at the increasingly complex problems of the ummah (Mu'ammam & Hasan, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to read religious texts contextually (*al-qiraat al-siyaqiyah*) (Mu'ammam & Hasan, 2012).

The attitude of *pesantren* as a socio-religious institution in Indonesia is often questioned in responding to gender issues (Madjid, 1997). Religious narratives that are not wise in their interpretation also muddy the face of *pesantren* as a space for the development of gender inequality. This forms a stereotype in society that *pesantren* is an educational institution that is not gender-friendly. Even though these accusations cannot be generalized, because the reality is that there are several *pesantren* that are open to the concept of gender equality, based on the results of interviews with boarding school administrators such as the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* which has been trying to implement gender equality values since around 1950.

Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo is one of the *pesantren salaf* that is close to the history and culture of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama). The location is a trace of the struggle of the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama, KH. Hasyim Asyari. He is the son-in-law of *Kiai* Hasan Muchyi who is the founder of the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*. The presence of the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*, which carries an inclusive culture, is interesting to study to find out how the position of individuals in the *pesantren* in constructing gender equality values. *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* has been instilling the values of gender equality since around 1950

(*Wawancara Dzurriyah Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*), personal communication, Oktober 2023). The portrait of equality was found in 1950, when *Nyai* Masruroh (wife of KH. Hasyim Asyari) replaced the leadership of the *pesantren* when her husband was being held captive by the colonizers (C. Bik, personal communication, January 2, 2024). The representation of *Nyai* Masruroh can also be seen in the leadership of *Nyai* Mahmudah (*Dzurriyah pesantren*) who succeeded in becoming a female leader of the *pesantren* (Muna & Hamam, 2020). The female *dzurriyah* of the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* also has a history as an activist in the NU Muslim and Fatayat organizations. Since its inception around the 1800s until now, *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* has been able to survive in the midst of the current of cultural changes from traditional to modern. However, the characteristics of traditional *pesantren* are still maintained in maintaining the tradition of *pesantren* salaf by remaining open to the times (Budi, 2018).

Direct observation at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*, representation of gender equality values understood by *pesantren* can be observed through the culture of individual social interaction in the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*. As in general, *pesantren salaf* are closed and limit the association between male and female students, on the contrary, the interaction between individuals at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* looks very open and harmonious. Likewise, the relationship between students and teachers is not a relationship that is formally bound by full obedience and submission. Teachers as like parents for santri at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*. The closeness that is built at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* is like a big family that complements each other in every daily activity. The relationship between male and female students is not so strict as in most *pesantren salaf*.

Research on the issue of gender equality in *pesantren* has not been done much. Previous research that has existed has also not been carried out in depth and continuously. The majority of research that has been conducted, use linguistic studies in literary works, not many use the constructivist critical paradigm. Previous studies that have existed have not been done much on *salaf* or traditional *pesantren*. Previous research used as a basis for conducting this research includes; (1) journal article entitled *Feminism in Pesantren: Narratives of Women's Empowerment in Pesantren Buntet Cirebon* written by Nuroniyah (2019), (2) journal article entitled *Gender Construction in Pesantren (Qualitative Study on Santriwati at Pesantren Nurul Ummah Mojokerto)* written by Laksono (2017), (3) journal article entitled *Social Construction of Gender Equality Practice in Wahidiyah* written by Sardjuningsih (2023).

Research on gender equality in *pesantren* still has many limitations, both in terms of quantity and quality. Quantitatively, the number of studies in this field remains small, so they have not yet provided a comprehensive picture of gender dynamics within the boarding school environment. Qualitatively, existing research tends to lack depth because it relies more on linguistic approaches to texts or literary works rather than on the social practices occurring directly within *pesantren* life. Consequently, the realities of gender relations such as the division of roles, access to education, and power dynamics between male and female students, have not been critically examined to a significant extent. Furthermore, the critical constructivist paradigm which should be able to unpack how values, culture, and authority in

pesantren shape gender constructions, is still rarely employed. Another limitation lies in the research subjects, which generally focus on modern *pesantren*, leaving traditional or Salafi *pesantren* which possess distinct value systems, curricula, and authority structures largely unexplored. Therefore, previous studies such as those conducted by Wardah Nuroniyah, Puji Laksono, and Sardjuningsih are better understood as initial stepping stones that open up the discourse, but are insufficient to explain gender equality practices and constructions in *pesantren* comprehensively; thus, further research is needed that is more in-depth, contextual, and employs a critical approach (Laksono, 2017; Nuroniyah, 2019; Sardjuningsih, 2023).

Through the theory of social construction, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann seek to redefine the nature and role of social science. Through this theory, this study seeks to redefine the meaning of "reality" and "knowledge" in the context of gender equality. Social reality is implied in social associations, which are expressed through various social actions such as communicating through language and establishing joint activities through social institutions. This reality is found through the intersubjective experience of each individual (Alam & Syukur, 2024; Berger & Luckmann, 2018).

Social construction is a dialectical process between the self and the sociocultural world of the individual. The dialectic takes place through three processes: externalization (self-adjustment to the individual's sociocultural world), objectification (the process of institutionalization of the individual's intersubjective experience), and internalization (identification of the individual's self with social institutions) (Berger & Luckmann, 2018; Manggasri & Towaf, 2019). Through these three processes, this study will examine the social construction of gender equality in the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*, based on phenomena observed in daily social interactions.

Literature Review

Worldview *Pesantren* Salaf in Indonesia

The term *pesantren* which linguistically has the prefix *pe-* and the suffix *-an* is a place of residence for those called 'santri' who are studying Islam from *Kiai*. Meanwhile, according to the term, K.H Abdurrahman Wahid or who is familiarly called Gus Dur defines *pesantren* simply as a place where students (*santri*) live. However, in general, *pesantren* as a religious social institution refers to a place to study, study, and understand Islamic religious values to deepen and strengthen religion (*tafaqquh fiddin*). The scientific tradition used in *pesantren* refers to the study of classical literature which is often referred to as the yellow book (*kitab kuning*) (Muhammad, 2019b; Sundara & Solehah, 2019).

At first, people only knew *pesantren* as a traditional Islamic educational institution in Indonesia; there was no division of *salaf* and non-*salaf pesantren*. While the term *salaf pesantren* began to appear in the middle of the 19th century. The focus of learning in *salaf pesantren* generally only includes religious sciences; The Qur'an, Hadith, Sufism, Fiqh, Nahwu, Sharaf, and others (Madjid, 1997).

Salaf pesantren are generally led by a person called '*Kiai*' (leader/scholar). The role of *Kiai* in the *Salaf Pesantren* is like the heart of life. His position is expected to be able to dialogue the principles of Islamic religious teachings with the reality of daily life. As the term from Peter L. Berger goes, *Kiai* is a dialectical chain of relationships with society. In addition to being a product of the social structure, *Kiai* is also an actor who shapes the social structure of society. The figure of *Kiai* in *salaf pesantren* is generally a charismatic and fatherly leader (Ibrahim, 2015).

Generally, *Kiai* in *salaf pesantren* are the founders or the next generation in *pesantren* who have good capacity and authority of religious knowledge. The development and management of *pesantren* is the main responsibility of a *Kiai*. The role of *Kiai*, which is so crucial in the *pesantren* gives birth to an extraordinary sense of love from students (*santri*) and the society. However, this attitude is assessed and understood as cult behavior and fanaticism. The habit of respecting *Kiai* is by standing and sculpting when *Kiai* passes, walking on his knees when passing in front of *Kiai* or known among *pesantren* as '*ndengkul*', kissing *Kiai*'s hand or '*sungkem wolak walik*', flattening sandals for *Kiai*, '*nderek dawuh*' as a form of following *Kiai*'s orders, or spreading a prayer mat so that *Kiai* can pass through. This behavior has been understood by the *pesantren* as a form of respect and gratitude to *Kiai* as a parent as well as an educator for students (*santri*) (Ibrahim, 2015).

Kiai's leadership model in *pesantren* has a great influence on the cultural and *pesantren* patterns physically and mentally. *Kiai*, as the main figure in the leadership of the *pesantren* determines the typology of the *pesantren* in the scope of daily socio-culture (Machfudz, 2020). For example, *Kiai* Husein Muhammad, a member of National Commission of Women known as *Kiai* feminist who has produced various books on gender-friendly Islam so that the *Pesantren* Dar al-Tauhid Arjawinangun, Cirebon, which is under his *pesantren* leader adopted gender equality values (Nuruzzaman, 2022).

Clifford Geertz argues that leadership models in *pesantren* are generally divided into three types; (1) Individual leadership centered on the authority of *Kiai* as the owner of full power. (2) Collective leadership that focuses on the division of roles and responsibilities to several individuals. (3) Democratic leadership that is more open to the ideas of students (*santri*) in *pesantren* (Machfudz, 2020; White, 2007).

The character of the *salaf pesantren* is characterized as an educational institution whose scientific tradition is based on yellow books (*kitab kuning*). Dhofier (2011) claims that the yellow book (*kitab kuning*) is a mandatory pillar in *salaf pesantren*. Meanwhile, there are three typical yellow book (*kitab kuning*) learning models in *pesantren*; first, the *sorogan* model, which is an intensive learning method directly to the *Kiai* (individual system). Second, the *bandongan* method is carried out by making *halaqah* (circles) between 5 – 500 students. Third, the classical method, which is a tiered curriculum system similar to the formal education system, so that it gives birth to a structured learning process (Dhofier, 2011).

Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo

Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo as a *pesantren* which is familiarly known as Pondok Kapu was founded by KH. Hasan Muchyi. This *pesantren* is located in Kapurejo, Pagu District, Kediri Regency and has been recognized by the Indonesia Ministry of Religious Affairs since 1919 (Budi, 2018). *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo is one of the traditional or salaf schools that is close to the history and culture of NU (*Nahdlatul Ulama*). The location is a trace of the struggle of the founder of *Nahdlatul Ulama*, KH. Hasyim Asyari. He is the son-in-law of *Kiai* Hasan Muchyi.

Based on searches from various sources, no one can say exactly when this *pesantren* was established. According to several literatures contained in digital media, this *pesantren* was established in the early 20th century or around the 1900s. Based on information from *Dzurriyah*, the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo has been established since the construction of the 36 km Kertosono-Nganjuk railway line around 1881. This *pesantren* is a non-formal educational institution with traditional patterns and close to the culture of the village society. Despite this, the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo is known for its inclusive and open characteristics.

Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo is open to anyone who wants to learn and pursue knowledge. Not only students who live in the boarding school (*pesantren*), but also residents who live around the *pesantren* are free to enter and exit to just listen to the study of the yellow book (*kitab kuning*). Since its inception, Pondok Kapu has shown its identity as a *pesantren* that is open to anyone who wants to study and study religion (Basalamah, 2023). The values of gender equality have been applied in the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo since around 1950 through social and cultural activities within the scope of the *pesantren* and outside the *pesantren*. Equality in the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo can be seen from the open access and equal participation between men and women.

Method

This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative research with a sociological approach to observe an object related to society in the scope being researched (Cresswell & Poth, 2017; Mulyana, 2001; Rifa'i, 2018). Roucek (1962) and Warren (1971) put forward their opinion on sociology which is defined as the science that studies the relationship between human beings in groups. Meanwhile, according to some expert sociology is defined as a science of *das sein* (What Is), *not das sollen* (What Ought to Be). Thus, sociology is a science that examines society and its changes in real circumstances (Syam, 2012).

Using a sociological approach, this research focuses on social structures, the construction of human experience and culture – including religious phenomena (Adibah, 2017). Through a sociological approach, the researcher elaborated on the opinions of informants on how they give meaning to gender equality through daily social interactions. The researcher tried to see a social activity that was built at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*.

As a scientific method, the sociological approach provides a way for this research to formulate the construction of gender equality.

This research is a type of descriptive qualitative study using data collection techniques through observation, interviews and documentation. The researcher uses interview guidelines as a supporting instrument in searching for research data (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2000). The presentation of this data will describe gender equality in the externalization space, objectivity space, and internalization space in the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo*, Kediri Regency. The results of research in the field will be processed through the data analysis process from Milles and Huberman. Data analysis consists of three processes that occur simultaneously: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawn. This research was conducted from February 12, 2024, to March 12, 2024 at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo Kediri*. The location is in Pagu Village, Pagu District, Kediri Regency, East Java. The subjects of this study are 14 informants, as presented in the following table:

Table 1. Research Informant

No	Name	Position
1.	CB	<i>Pesantren leader</i>
2.	AL	<i>Pesantren leader</i>
3.	SY	Teacher
4.	MS	Teacher
5.	MSI	Teacher
6.	IM	Teacher
7.	IF	Female's <i>santri</i>
8.	NLH	Female's <i>santri</i>
9.	DRA	Female's <i>santri</i>
10.	MC	Female's <i>santri</i>
11.	MAI	Male's <i>santri</i>
12.	EF	Male's <i>santri</i>
13.	LK	Male's <i>santri</i>
14.	AK	Male's <i>santri</i>

Result and Discussion

The condition of gender equality in the externalization space of the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* is reflected in the daily activities at the *pesantren*. The practice of equality values has gone hand in hand since the establishment of the *pesantren* by *Kiai* Hasan Muchyi and has been maintained until the next generation. The representation of gender equality in the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* is explicitly supported by the layout of the *pesantren* building that is open and integrated between parts: students (*santri*), *pesantren* leader (*Kiai*), and the society. The *pesantren* deliberately made such building governance to create a harmonious and interrelated relationship between male students, female students, and the *pesantren* leader (*Kiai*). Close relationships in *pesantren* encourage the process of externalizing gender equality

values in *pesantren*. This information was strengthened by a statement from Chamdani Bik when interviewed:

"Since the upbringing period by the first founder, KH. Hasan Muchyi Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo was indeed formed into a place that is open to anyone who wants to come. So that from then until now the pesantren does not have a fence between the student areas as well as with the community outside the pesantren. We teach that every human being is equal before human beings. Nothing special. Men and women who study at this pesantren have the same obligations and rights".

Activities at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* apply the principles of gender equality using the practices of cooperation, tolerance, coordination, job sharing, and mutuality (Amalia, 2024). The division of tasks (job sharing) is carried out by adjusting to the abilities of the students (*santri*), although overall it remains a shared responsibility. One of the activities based on gender equality is extracurricular activities with various forms of activities; Culinary Arts, Fashion Design, Da'wah Training, Marriage Fiqh Practices, and others. Another activity is a '*gerakan*' or what the *pesantren* generally calls '*ro'an*'. Basically, the term is used to describe community service activities to clean the *pesantren* environment. However, '*gerakan*' at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* includes broader activities to solve every need of the *pesantren* through cooperation and job sharing between male and female students. This is in accordance with the statement from SY when interviewed:

"Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo does not have special rules that regulate the activities and duties of students (santri). The task division system is adjusted to the ability and appropriateness of each santri. For example, there is a mutual cooperation work to build a pesantren building. So, the task is given to male santri, not female santri. It is not because female students are not capable, because even though they are capable, it is a task that is not appropriate for women to do. Another example when there is a 'gerakan' activity - male santri is in charge of cleaning the entire pesantren area such as; cleaning the santri's pond, making 'satir' (such as a bamboo cover wall), cleaning all bathrooms of pesantren, cleaning garbage dumps, and others. Meanwhile, women are in charge of helping to provide equipment needed for men and consumption to be eaten together".

The process of externalization can also be observed in the scope of *pesantren* education, which has implemented the same educational curriculum for boys and girls. The values of equality can also be seen in madrasah activities that have implemented a shared class system between men and women (Kurdi, 2023). However, this equality has not been supported by the books (*kitab*) studied in the *pesantren*. The *kitab kuning* studied at the *Pesantren Salafiyah Kapurejo* is still limited to the basic *kitab*; there is no special curriculum that touches on the discourse of gender equality. This problem received a response from the *pesantren* leader by providing opportunities for students (*santri*) to study outside the *pesantren* both in formal educational institutions and to *dzurriyah* who live around the *pesantren*. This information was strengthened by a statement from IF when interviewed:

"In this pesantren, there are no special kitab about gender equality. But, when Kapurejo's santri want to study certain kitab that are not taught in the pesantren, they are allowed to study outside the pesantren, either to a formal school or to the

dzurriyah pesantren where they live in the vicinity of here. I also used to 'sowan' to ask for permission to go to dzurriyah pesantren to study the kitab I wanted to study. Alhamdulillah, they are very open and welcome my request with pleasure".

The externalization process in *pesantren* is also supported by a democratic *pesantren* leadership pattern that opens up a two-way discussion space (Berger & Luckmann, 2018; Mangasri & Towaf, 2019). This kind of leadership pattern is a strategic step that can build closeness among all individuals in the *pesantren*. *Pesantren* leaders provide opportunities for students to gather, express opinions, and exchange ideas. The values of gender equality in the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo are externalized in the values and policies in the *pesantren* which are taken based on deliberation. The regulations for male and female students are made equal in all aspects, and their supervision is the shared responsibility of all students in the *pesantren*.

In the process of internalization, individuals in *pesantren* have tried to identify themselves with the objective reality of their sociocultural world. Individuals begin to accept definitions of their institutional world and jointly construct a common definition. The appreciation of gender equality values understood in *pesantren* is reflected in the daily behavior of the individual *pesantren*. The relationship between *pesantren* leader, teachers and students has a closeness like parents and children. This was reinforced by a statement from MS when interviewed:

"I don't want to be seen as honored by the students. My job is only to teach them about morals. Teaching how to behave well to the elderly, to the younger; how to behave well to their teachers and parents. How they position themselves when they are with me is their right as a student. Because it would be dangerous if I wanted to be treated like this or that. But it is even more dangerous if they do not know how to treat others with good morals. So, my efforts are only limited to providing knowledge on how to have good morals".

The same thing was also conveyed by DRA when interviewed:

"I see that they (pesantren leaders) never discriminate between male santri or female santri. If they were in other pesantren, maybe they could not be so close to the leader of the pesantren, but they could make us all like their own children."

This information was strengthened by CB as the *pesantren* leader when interviewed about the closeness that the *pesantren* wants to build to their students:

"It's simple, I want to build a closeness like the father of his son"

Pesantren leader and teachers strive to establish closeness with students both through communication and interaction patterns that are not much bound by the standard rules that are 'saklek'. The majority of the traditions of *salaf pesantren* such as standing and sculpting when *Kiai* passes, walking 'ndengkul' (kneeling) when passing in front of *Kiai*, kissing *Kiai*'s hand (*sungkem wolak walik*), flattening sandals for *Kiai*, or spreading prayer mats so that *Kiai* can pass through, all of these are not customs in the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo. Relationships between individuals in *pesantren* are not limited by positions structurally (Achmadin et al., 2024). This is in accordance with the statement from SY when interviewed:

"Actually, the pesantren only teaches about morals. The rule for students is that they are obliged to respect their teachers. But the rule for teachers and Kiai is not to want to be respected by students. So there are some kiai who do not demand students like this and that is because he uses the second rule. In other pesantren, there is a culture of respect for the teacher by bowing down and kneeling (ndengkul), and so on – in Kapurejo there is none. We respect each other as much as the society in general".

The internalization of gender equality values at the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo is also found in the symbol of everyday clothing. Santri does not have a special dress code within the scope of the *pesantren*. Male and female students can use clothes according to their comfort provided that they meet the limits of religious law. In the majority of *salaf pesantren*, in general, female students are prohibited from using clothes made of t-shirts, but female students at the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo can use t-shirts just like male students. The clothing model in the *pesantren* also shows equality between the *pesantren* leader (*Kiai*), teachers, and students (*santri*). Unlike most *pesantren* that show social stratification between the *pesantren* leader and students, *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo does not use clothing symbols to show themselves as a figure of a higher social level. The portrait of simplicity has become a hereditary tradition from the previous *pesantren* leader. This statement was reinforced by a statement from NLH when interviewed:

"According to my assessment from the founder of the previous pesantren, it was indeed taught to live as it is, not to be seen as special in society. This has decreased in his children and grandchildren until now. Their simplicity and humility are very memorable and applied to everyday behavior and lifestyle. Such as simplicity in the needs of food and clothes used. People outside the pesantren who have first visited this pesantren, they must not be able to distinguish who the students, teachers, or pesantren leader are. If you are here, it is as if everything is the same".

Meanwhile, the level of objectification, there has not been a process of institutionalizing gender equality values. The process of institutionalization means placing a value on the social control of the *pesantren* and having normative power (Hasan, 2025). *Pesantren* has not realized the values of gender equality that have been lived into a segment that can be preserved. This is in accordance with the statements of all informants and corroborated by CB as the caregiver of the *pesantren*:

"This pesantren does not have a curriculum related to gender equality, the kitab taught are also limited to basic kitabs such as akhlak, fiqh, akidah. If santri want to learn about special issues related to gender, they can study outside the pesantren"(CB, personal communication, January 2, 2024).

Conclusion

Based on this research, it can be known that *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo as a traditional educational institution, or familiarly known as the *salaf pesantren* has shown its position that is open to the values of equality. The study results show that the construction of gender equality in the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo has been constructed in the space of

externalization and internalization of the pesantren. Meanwhile, gender equality in the objective space of the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo has not been achieved, so there is no institutionalization oriented to gender equality values. This study shows that gender equality is not related to the modernity of *pesantren*, but the result of cultural construction and values accepted in *pesantren*.

Through this research, it is hoped that traditional educational institutions such as the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Kapurejo will consider the existence of a special gender-based curriculum to strengthen the values of equality in *pesantren*. Gender discourse is a long-term issue that is of concern to various parties, especially gender observers. Further research is expected to use other theories to add to the scientific treasure of the construction of gender equality from different perspectives.

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