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RO'AN, KHIDMAH, AND THE PURSUIT OF *BARAKA*: A SUBCULTURAL PRACTICE IN INDONESIAN *PESANTREN*

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Abstract

This article examines ro'an, a communal activity in Indonesian traditional pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), as a distinctive subculture form through which santri (students) express khidmah (devotional service) and seek baraka (blessing). While communal work is often understood as a social and practical function, less attention has been paid to its religious meanings and its relationship to pesantren's cultural characteristics. This study shifts the analytical focus toward its spiritual meaning and cultural specificity within pesantren life, and how ro'an operates not merely as social labor but as a religiously meaningful practice embedded in the pesantren's values. Using a qualitative approach, this study analyzes interviews with 12 informants, including santri, alumni, and musyrif (supervisor) from pesantren in Yogyakarta and East Java, as well as pesantren officials. The findings demonstrate that ro'an reflects subcultural practices because it has its own uniqueness in the following aspects: the way of life adopted, the outlook on life and values followed, and a separate internal power hierarchy that is fully obeyed, reinforcing obedience and sincerity, and relying on the pursuit of baraka.

Keywords: *Baraka; Khidmah; Pesantren Subculture; Religious Practice; Ro'an.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji *ro'an,* sebuah aktivitas komunal di pesantren tradisional Indonesia, sebagai bentuk subkultur khas yang melalui aktivitas ini para santri mengekspresikan khidmah (pelayanan keagamaan) dan mencari *baraka* (berkah). Meskipun kerja komunal sering dipahami sebagai fungsi sosial dan praktis, makna religiusnya serta hubungannya dengan karakteristik budaya pesantren belum banyak mendapat perhatian. Penelitian ini mengalihkan fokus analisis ke makna spiritual dan kekhususan budayanya dalam kehidupan pesantren, serta bagaimana *ro'an* tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai kerja sosial, melainkan sebagai praktik yang sarat makna keagamaan yang tertanam dalam nilai-nilai pesantren. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis wawancara dengan 12 informan, termasuk santri, alumni, dan musyrif dari pesantren di Yogyakarta dan Jawa Timur, serta pengurus pesantren. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *ro'an* mencerminkan praktik subkultur karena memiliki keunikan tersendiri dalam aspek-aspek berikut: cara hidup yang dianut, pandangan hidup dan nilai-nilai yang dianut, serta hierarki kekuasaan internal tersendiri yang dipatuhi sepenuhnya, yang memperkuat ketaatan dan ketulusan, serta bergantung pada pencarian *baraka.*

Kata kunci: *Baraka; Khidmah;* Pesantren Subkultur; Praktik Religius; *Ro'an.*

A. Introduction

Indonesia represents a site where society has communal traditions that are embodied in multiple ways, resulting in different types of activities. In Indonesian society, culture inspires various terms for these practices, spanning communal activities across regions and communities, including assistance during family traditions, agricultural work, funerals, the construction of public facilities, and the maintenance of religious spaces. According to Koentjaraningrat, Java has seven types of communal activities: *rewang* or *beceran, guyuban* or *sambat-sinambat, grojogan, tulung layat, gugur*

gunung, alur waris, and *kerigan*.[1] Although these practices differ in purpose and local expression, they show how collective work is embedded in social relationships, reciprocal obligation, and shared cultural values.

Comparable practices go by different names across the Indonesian archipelago, such as the Balinese tradition of *Ngayah*. It involves voluntary communal work at the *pura* (temple), within the *banjar* (neighbourhood association). This tradition illustrates that communal activities in Indonesia cannot be understood solely as a practical means of accomplishing a collective task; they may also express moral commitment, social belonging, and religious devotion. Communal activities are also linked to religious practices rooted in long-standing education; one form is *ro'an* (communal work). *Ro'an* marks the unique communal tradition of Javanese *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. *Santri* (students) usually carry out this communal activity by cleaning and tidying the *pesantren* environment, building or repairing *pesantren* facilities and surroundings, and assisting with the *pesantren* agendas. Although this activity resembles the broader Indonesian tradition of *gotong royong* (cooperation), *ro'an* carries particular meanings within the *pesantren's* religious, educational, and social structures. On the other hand, the *ro'an* tradition is not only framed by Islamic values, but also by how this culture is transformed within the meaning of "local *pesantren*". It means *ro'an* should be examined not merely as collective work, but as a culturally and religiously situated practice through which *santri* understand their relationships and loyalty to *kiai* (leader), *ustad* (teachers), *asatidz* (administrators), fellow students, and the *pesantren* itself. However, the broader debate

[1] *Rewang or beceran* is an activity to help neighbour who had a feast. *Guyuban* or *sambat sinambat* is done to help villager who needs help around the house. *Grojogan* is an activity helping villager complete work on farm. *Tulung layat* means communal tradition when the neighbour dies or another disaster befalls a family. *Gugur gunung* was undertaken by whole village when there is a public facilities construction such as bridge, canal, or road. *Alur waris* means to care and clean the ancestral graves. *Kerigan* is an activity carried out under the orders or village official. See at Koentjaraningrat Koentjaraningrat, "Some Social-Anthropological Observations on Gotong Rojong Practices in Two Villages of Central Java" (Dissertation, Cornell University, 1961).

should not be reduced to a simple question between outsiders who regard *ro'an* as authority legitimation and *pesantren* communities that regard it as devotion. The same activities may carry religious significance for participants while also raising legitimate questions about institutional power, voluntariness, and so forth.

Previous studies have highlighted *ro'an* from several complementary perspectives. First, studies have linked collective activity in *pesantren* to environmental awareness. Fua et al., for example, discuss how collective activity like "Clean-up Friday" at *pesantren* can build awareness regarding the importance of environmental management.[2] Zahid et al. similarly examine how Quranic teaching shapes the ecological awareness of *ro'an*.[3] Meanwhile, Adabi and Awwaliyah interpret *ro'an* as a harmonious activity between physical and spiritual cleanliness.[4] Romadhon et al. describe *ro'an* as an activity rooted in deep care, awareness, solidarity, self-sacrifice, and sincere character.[5] *Ro'an* is not only for the *santri* but also for *pesantren* caregivers, making it a joyful activity without reluctance or unwillingness.[6] In addition, a literature study by Wasim et al. finds that *pesantren* subculture is shaped by the *kiai's* prophetic example, which builds *santri* character development.[7]

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[2] Jumardin La Fua et al., "Islamic Education on Formation of Environmental Awareness in Pondok Pesantren Indonesia," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 156 (May 2018): 012035, https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/156/1/012035.

[3] A. Zahid et al., "Ro'an Tradition: Building Ecological Awareness of Mamba'us Sholihin Blitar Islamic Boarding School," *Dimensia: Jurnal Kajian Sosiologi* 12, no. 1 (May 2023): 47–60, https://doi.org/10.21831/dimensia.v12i1.58127.

[4] Muhammad Akrom Adabi and Neny Muthi'atul Awwaliyah, "The Phenomenon of Islamic Life in the Movement of Ro'an Akbar Pesantren into the Industrial Era," *Kawanua International Journal of Multicultural Studies* 2, no. 2 (2021): 63–71, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30984/kijms.v2i2.41.

[5] Saiful Romadon et al., "Trans7 Editorial Misinterpretation in The Uncensored Xpose Program Regarding the Traditions of Islamic Boarding School Symbolic Interaction Theory Study," *Akrab Juara: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 10, no. 4 (2025): 1919–25, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58487/akrabjuara.v10i4.2668.

[6] Muhammad Irfan Zidni, Hasyim As'ari, and Saidun Anwar, "Character Cultivation through Ro'an (Gotong Royong) Tradition in Walisongo Islamic Boarding School," *International Journal of Education and Literature* 4, no. 1 (2025): 17–24, https://doi.org/10.55606/ijel.v4i1.180.

[7] Arif Al Wasim, Fatah Syukur, and Abdul Wahib, "The Exemplary of Kiai and the Future Orientation of Santri: A Socio-Cognitive Perspective in the Pesantren Subculture,"

Another line of inquiry suggests that communal work can become problematic when cultural expectations and religious authority legitimize obligations without adequate attention to *santri's* rights. For instance, Rahmania et al. note that *ro'an* can shift into a covertly exploitative practice cloaked in cultural and religious legitimacy if it is not constrained by educational ethics and the protection of *santri's* rights.[8] Another study by Safitri and Ronaboyd argues that *ro'an* should not be viewed merely as a *pesantren* tradition of character education, but as an activity that must simultaneously comply with child protection regulations, building safety standards, and modern legal responsibilities.[9] While these critical perspectives highlight essential administrative and legal safeguards, viewing communal service purely through a modern secular labour lens risks overlooking how informants experience these duties through the indigenous spiritual epistemology of *tabarruk* (blessing pursuit). This creates an important analytical gap between external bureaucratic critiques and internal pedagogical ethics that our study addresses. Despite these valuable contributions, the existing literature leaves an important analytical question insufficiently explored: how does *ro'an* acquire its distinctive meaning within the *pesantren* subculture, how do religious aspirations and institutional relationships shape students' understanding of *ro'an*, how does the pursuit of *baraka* inform its meaning, and how are such interpretations reproduced through the everyday relationships and norms of *pesantren* life.

To contribute to the academic discussion of *pesantren*, this article treats *ro'an* as a window into the unique forms of communal

Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education 7, no. 2 (2026): 461–75, https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v7i2.2586.

[8] Almaniatu Inda Rahmania et al., "Ro'an di Pesantren Dialektika antara Eksploitasi dan Perbudakan dalam Bingkai Tarbiyah Kehidupan Santri di Pondok Pesantren An-Nur II," *QOUBA : Jurnal Pendidikan* 2, no. 2 (December 2025): 415–22, https://doi.org/10.61104/qb.v2i2.600.

[9] Wulan Regita Safitri and Irfa Ronaboyd, "Tanggung Jawab Hukum Pemanfaatan Santri dalam Pembangunan Pesantren Berbasis Ro'an," *Jurnal USM Law Review* 9, no. 3 (2026): 1181, https://doi.org/10.26623/julr.v9i3.13296.

activity and knowledge transmission. Moreover, the community interprets the same practice differently (i.e., *gotong royong*), and it has become part of a subculture. To date, several studies treat *gotong royong* as social capital. Still, this study goes beyond that by framing *ro'an* as a subcultural practice in *pesantren*, rooted in a willingness to seek *baraka* (blessings). Furthermore, this study will compare existing approaches to *ro'an* as an ecological practice, pedagogical and character education, social solidarity, and a potentially exploitative activity with the proposed interpretation of *ro'an* as a *baraka*-oriented subculture. In the *pesantren* context, Abdurrahman Wahid, or Gus Dur, first uses the term subculture.

A subculture must have its own uniqueness in the following aspects: the way of life adopted, the outlook on life and values followed, and a separate internal power hierarchy that is fully obeyed. For instance, a key aspect of *pesantren* pedagogy is the relationship between *kiai* and *santri*, not only for knowledge transmission, but also for respect for the kiai, which students refer to as *khidmah* (devotional service). They also have different ethical relations with cults. This article explains *ro'an* as the seeking of *baraka* that was internalized long ago. This study addresses this analytical gap by examining *ro'an* as a subcultural practice in which communal work, religious aspiration, institutional belonging, and hierarchical relationships intersect. I argue that *ro'an* is not social labor in the way commoners see it because *santri* do it willingly and modestly. Instead, this study will investigate how religious meanings are constructed and sustained within a particular institutional and cultural setting. The study begins with the research background and identifies different views on *ro'an*. It then reviews existing literature on the history, essence, and value of *ro'an*. Furthermore, this article discusses *ro'an*'s emergence as a form of piety formation in subculture. This article examines *ro'an* as a communal practice, a unique *pesantren* tradition, and a social practice among *santri*.

B. Discussion

1. *Kiai* and *Baraka* in *Pesantren*

Pesantren have been present in Indonesian society since around the 19th century[10]— but the exact timing is still debated among scholars. One thing is clear: *pesantren* are traditional educational institutions that originated in and are deeply rooted in Java. Culturally and socially, they are closely identified with Javanese society characteristics.[11] The factors that give the *pesantren* educational model its distinctive Javanese characteristics include the relationship between the *kiai,* as spiritual, moral, and intellectual teachers, and the *santri,* as students.

In Java, the term *kiai* is used in several contexts. First, it is interpreted as *iki wae* (a chosen person) who is close to God and has above-average abilities. Second, it refers to royal heirlooms such as *keris* (traditional daggers) and royal horse-drawn carriages.[12] Third, it refers to elder men who are respected for their age.[13] A *kiai* is a charismatic religious leader with an eloquent tongue and a shrewd ability to read his followers' minds. A *kiai* is characteristically blunt, outspoken, and outrageous in his demeanor.[14]

The *kiai* is not only a mediator of knowledge but also a guide for *santri* on their journey toward God. Meanwhile, *santri* study religious knowledge from the *kiai* and are considered successful when they receive an *ijazah* (certificate of legitimacy)

[10] Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Gading, 2012).

[11] Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya, 1995).

[12] Ronald Lukens-Bull, *Jihad ala Pesantren di Mata Antropolog Amerika* (Yogyakarta: Gama Media, 2004), 89.

[13] Millatuz Zakiyah, "Makna Sapaan di Pesantren: Kajian Linguistik-Antropologis," *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 3, no. 1 (2018): 11.

[14] Hiroko Horikoshi, "A Traditional Leader in a Time of Change: The 'Kijaji' and 'Ulama' in West Java" (University of Illinois at Urbana, 1976), 1, https://www.proquest.com/openview/09ecc162ce42b3a24aefebd5624919e5/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y.

from their *kiai*.[15] The *santri* and alumni also hope for blessings in every prayer the *kyai* makes for themselves and their families. This is because the *kiai* are believed to have a closer connection with Allah SWT and extensive knowledge of the secrets of human life.[16]

Lukens-Bull writes in his book that spiritual strength comes from *karomah* (closeness to God) that appears in religiosity and morality.[17] *Kiai* are believed to possess and bestow blessings because they have supernatural, magical, and similar powers.[18] Especially in rural areas, adherence to Islamic norms of behavior reflects their tendency to obey the *kiai's* Islamic traditions.[19] In one book, Zamakhsyari Dhofier writes, "Most *kiai* contribute to the public perception that some *kiai* are extraordinary people who have the spiritual title of *karomah* (a person who Allah greatly loves) and are a source of *baraka* (Allah's blessings) for their followers."[20]

Even after a *kiai* passes away, people believe *baraka* still resides within him and around his *maqbarah* (tomb). The more famous the *kiai* is for his special qualities, the more students will come to his *pesantren* to seek knowledge and blessings. However, these blessings are considered nonexistent if the *pesantren*

[15] Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren* (Bantul: LKis Yogyakarta, 2001), 15.

[16] Ramadhita Anwar and Ramadhita Ramadhita, "Menggapai Keluarga Sakinah Melalui Berkah Kyai: Strategi Pemilihan Pasangan Hidup Santri Tradisional di Kabupaten Malang," *Al-Aḥwāl* 12, no. 2 (2019): 138, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2019.12202.

[17] Lukens-Bull, *Jihad Ala Pesantren Di Mata Antropolog Amerika*, 88.

[18] Sartono Kartodirjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888: Its Conditions, Course and Sequel: A Case Study of Social Movements in Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 163; Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: Sebuah Studi Tentang Periode Mataram Terakhir Abad 16-19* (Itcha New York: Cornell University, 1968), 80; Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 rev (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 53; Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 44.

[19] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (LP3ES), 1982), 43.

[20] Dhofier, 53.

founder is not a *kiai*, as in the case of the *pesantren* owned by Amien Rais and B.J. Habibie.[21]

Traditional *pesantren* highly value the *baraka* that comes from *santri* (students)' obedience to their *kiai*. *Pesantren* that maintained the "traditional" curriculum and teaching methods came to be known as *salaf* or *salafiyah*, which may be translated as "old," "former," or "traditional."[22] The term *salaf* is loaded with the notion of traditional *pesantren* that prioritize religion, both Sharia and Sufism[23] for the cultivation of the Muslim mind and spirit.[24] *Pesantren*, especially those that still uphold *Salafi* traditions, base their relationships on *khidmah* (service) and *baraka* (blessing).[25]

Pesantren are the central institution in the Javanese community.[26] Traditionally, until the end of the 20th century, they charged no tuition fees. Traditionally, the *kiai* is not allowed to charge money for teaching.[27] The *kiai* and *santri* share a reciprocal relationship: *santri* see their *kiai* as their own father, and the *kiai* view *santri* as a gift from God that they must protect. This reciprocal attitude creates intimacy and mutual connection between them. In addition, the *kiai* feel responsible for providing accommodation for the *santri* and for fostering and improving their morals and behavior. On the other hand,

[21] Ronald Alan Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 10.1057/9781403980298.

[22] Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand, and Martin Van Bruinessen, *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 222.

[23] Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi di Tengah Tantangan Milenium III* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2019), 107.

[24] Fazlur Raḥmān, *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 8. impr, Publications of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies 15 (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 47.

[25] Mika Edison, "Integrasi Nilai Ikhlas dan Profesionalisme dalam Manajemen Sumber daya Manusia di Pondok Pesantren," *Al-Munawwarah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 2 (2026): 4, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35964/munawwarah.v18i1.558.

[26] Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*.

[27] Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren Madrasah Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Moderen* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (LP3ES), 1986), 127.

the *santri* develop a desire to serve the *pesantren*.[28] *Santri* believed *baraka* will come to *santri* if they *tawadhu* (modest) and obey what the *kiai* or *ustadz* says.

The Arabic word *baraka* (pl. *barakāt*) is often translated into English as blessing, holiness, sanctity, supernatural power, or charisma. *Baraka* appears in the Qur'an thirty-two times.[29] Related words include blessings, holiness, charisma, and 'closeness that allows for prosperity.' James Edmonds defines *baraka* as the infinite, non-reciprocal manifestation of gifts from God, the only source of *baraka*, in both the visible and invisible worlds, affecting people's spiritual, economic, and social lives. *Baraka* is something that could not be seen, understood, or 'captured'. The only thing we can observe is the result of *baraka*, the feel of it.[30] According to Benjamin Soares, *baraka* is usually glossed as blessing or 'grace'.[31] Lukens-Bull defines *baraka* as a spiritual essence that conveys blessing and power.[32] *Baraka* is never guaranteed.[33] It means that we never know when the *baraka* came to us or was given to us.

Edmonds shows that the presence of *selawat* (invocation of peace and blessings) by Habib Syech can be a place for some Muslim communities to find *baraka*. This is evident in the way they reach out, inhale briefly, and kiss Habib Syech's hand. Even the musicians of the *selawat* assembly said he cannot sleep at night after performing because the *baraka* makes him excited. Another explanation from the musician is that *baraka* is a

[28] Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, 83.

[29] James Edmonds, "Smelling Baraka: Everyday Islam and Islamic Normativity," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 36, no. 3 (2019): 38, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v36i3.193.

[30] Edmonds, 36.

[31] Benjamin Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy: History and Authority in a Malian Town*, International African Library IAL (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474472753.

[32] Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*, 100.

[33] James Edmonds, "Chapter 7. (Re)Enchanting the Digital: Technological Manifestations of Baraka," in *Digital Humanities and Material Religion*, ed. Emily Suzanne Clark and Rachel Mc Bride Lindsey (De Gruyter, 2022), 163, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110608755-008.

perfume. When others smell it, it makes them want to go to the *selawat* too. The perfume sold by small vendors and agarwood smoke spread through the crowd, creating a sensory *selawat* experience. Perception by Syekhermania, fans of Habib Syech, believe *baraka* is contained in the water sold during *selawat* performances. Even by watching *selawat* recordings on a cell phone, they assume the feel of *baraka*. The next section elaborates how *ro'an* creates the building, the stage where *baraka* grows and blossoms, as a way of conceiving of the ontology and circulation of *baraka*.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative method to examine how *ro'an* is understood and practiced within the *pesantren* subculture, particularly in relation to religious devotion, the pursuit of *baraka* (blessings), and the relationship between *kiai* and *santri*. A qualitative research design was appropriate because the study explored informants' interpretations, experiences, and understanding of *ro'an* within their respective institutional and cultural contexts. Rather than treating *ro'an* solely as communal labor, the study examined how religious values, social relationships, institutional belonging, and the norms that regulate everyday life in Javanese *pesantren* shape its meaning. The concept of subculture is used because *pesantren* have distinctive characteristics compared with other subcultures in society.

The data came primarily from in-depth interviews with 12 informants, *santri*, alumni, and *musyrif*, and *pesantren* officials from Yogyakarta and several cities in East Java, Indonesia. This geographic spread across Yogyakarta's urban-academic *pesantren* networks and East Java's classic rural *salaf* institutions captures subtle ecosystem variations in how *ro'an* scales, ranging from structured daily institutional routines to *ro'an akbar* (large-scale seasonal communal projects).

The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and lasted approximately one hour. Informants included males and females of various ages and had experience as *santri, alumni, musyrif,* or *pesantren* officials. This diversity aimed to capture different perspectives on the practice and meaning of *ro'an* across institutional settings and informant roles. The data were selected through purposive sampling to recruit individuals with experience and knowledge directly relevant to the research questions. The questions varied from one informant to another regarding in roles, experience, and previous research answers. We recruited informants through referrals and personal contacts. Data collection took place from September to October. With informants' permission, we recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim. The transcripts were anonymized, and identifying details were concealed to protect informants' privacy. The selection aimed to capture variation in gender, role, educational background, duration of study at *pesantren*, and individual experience in traditional or modern *pesantren*. These variations were intended to provide a broader understanding of how *ro'an* is interpreted and practiced. However, this study should not be assumed to represent all *pesantren* in Indonesia because it may be biased when similar studies are conducted in *pesantren* with different characteristics.

In addition, researchers used secondary data, including articles published in nationally and internationally accredited journals and scholarly books. Researchers also considered various sources, including news reports, online media posts, YouTube videos, and other materials relevant to the research case. News reports and online media materials provided context on public discussions about *ro'an,* including debates about *santri* participation and institutional authority. The secondary data were evaluated based on the publisher's identity, publication date, relevance, and how the content could strengthen the findings. These sources contextualized and compared

perspectives rather than replacing informants' statements about their experiences.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's models: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. Data condensation was carried out in multiple processes, including preparing research questions and collecting secondary data. After identifying representative informants, researchers conducted interviews and categorized data, filtered out unnecessary and corrupted information, and sorted and combined it to reduce complexity. During filtering, researchers also reread informants' statements to identify meaningful arguments. The interviews explored informants' experiences of *ro'an*, interpretations in their own terms, their understanding of *khidmah*, and their views on the obligations and expectations associated with *ro'an* in *pesantren*. The second stage then presented the condensed data in narrative descriptions and linked them to Abdurrahman Wahid's subculture concept. It also considered whether and how these meanings intersected with expectations of obedience and unequal authority. In the final stage, the study analyzed, interpreted, and linked the findings to the theoretical framework.

The study addressed data validity through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing informants' perspectives across roles and institutional backgrounds and by examining those statements alongside relevant scholarly publications. In addition, researchers conducted a peer review process to reduce researcher bias. Ethical considerations remained particularly important because the study examined a relationship involving religious authority. The informants were first informed about the study purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the use of interview data, and their right to decline questions or withdraw.

3. *Ro'an*, the Communal Activities Tradition in *Pesantren*

In this section, I will briefly describe *ro'an* to clarify what *ro'an* is, and when this activity is held. According to *qiil* (some argumentation), *ro'an* comes from the Arabic "*tabarro'a-yatabarro'u-tabarru'an*" (sincere) or "*tabarroka-yatabarroku-tabarrukan*" (pursuit of blessings).[34] This term was later shortened to *rukan*, then became *ro'an.*[35] *Ro'an* is another name for *kerja bakti*,[36] or *gotong-royong* (community service), a tradition in most traditional *pesantren* in Java. *Ro'an* means teamwork carried out by *santri* (*pesantren* students) in the form of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *ta'awun* (cooperation), fostering a strong sense of responsibility and social solidarity.[37] In fact, this tradition trains students to be socially minded and instills patience and sincerity. *Ro'an* is also seen as cultural and ritual communication[38] that reproduces the structure of social relations among actors within the *pesantren.*[39]

Several terms that appear alongside *ro'an* are *piket*; *piket harian, piket komplek,* or *piket negara* (work shift) and *amal masa'* (devotional activities). *Ro'an* activities include sweeping and mopping the floor, cleaning the *pesantren* bathroom and drain, disposing of garbage, tidying the garden, renovating *pesantren* facilities and infrastructure, and assisting with the *pesantren's*

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[34] Pesantren An-Nur H.A, *Asal Muasal Kata Roan*, 2019, https://www.facebook.com/100063607725112/posts/asal-muasal-kata-roan_____menurut-sebagian-qiil-roan-berasal-dari-bahasa-arab/923419668025826/.

[35] Pondok Pesantren Babussalam, *Ro'an*, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C-MdCRLygIX/?hl=en.

[36] Ahmad Zainal Abidin, Imam Ahmadi, and Fardan Mahmudatul Imamah, "Kiai, Transformasi Pesantren dan Pencarian Model Gender Mainstreaming di Pesantren Subulussalam Tulungagung," *Jurnal Penelitian* 14, no. 1 (June 2020): 17, https://doi.org/10.21043/jp.v14i1.7128.

[37] Ahmad Tholabi Kharlie, *Tradisi Ro'an di Pesantren: Antara Tabarruk dan Kehati-hatian*, 2025, https://kemenag.go.id/opini/tradisi-ro-an-di-pesantren-antara-tabarruk-dan-kehati-hatian-mu6lQ.

[38] Mutiara Rahmadini Setya Lestari and Desi Dwi Prianti, "Sacred Cleanlines, Silent Ecology: Ritual Communication and Environmental Awarenenss in Indonesia Pesantren," *Alphabet* 8, no. 2 (January 2026): 83, https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.alphabet.2025.08.02.03.

[39] Rahmania et al., "Ro'an di Pesantren Dialektika antara Eksploitasi dan Perbudakan dalam Bingkai Tarbiyah Kehidupan Santri di Pondok Pesantren An-Nur II," 416.

agenda. FR, a *santri* alumnus from two different pesantren, describes *ro'an* as community service. She emphasized,

> "R*o'an*, if I'm not mistaken, is derived from the word *tabarukan*, which means seeking blessings, of course with sincerity. One of the *ro'an* activities at *pesantren* is synonymous with community service, usually in the form of cleaning. At the two *pesantren* I have stayed at, the activities were the same, cleaning the *pesantren* area, from the *santris*' rooms to the *kiai*'s quarters."

This account shows that sincerity gives communal work a religious meaning that extends beyond the immediate task. Furthermore, FZ stated that most *pesantren*—especially *Salaf*/traditional *pesantren*—refer to cleaning and community service activities as "*ro'an*." Before *ro'an*, the schedule is usually divided beforehand so everyone knows their respective tasks. In her personal opinion, *ro'an* has a deep meaning because it is grounded in faith. Therefore, the *santri* believed it was no longer about what they did, but how they did it with pure intention.

Several *santri* said that participating in building a mosque, a place that would later be used for learning and worship, made them happy because they were contributing to the common good. In this sense*, ro'an* is seen as both self-devotion and an expression of gratitude to the source of the knowledge they have acquired. Many *santri*s consider their involvement in the physical construction of the *pesantren* as a form of worship and spiritual investment. In this context, *ro'an* is not only about building construction but also about constructing values.[40] The *pesantren* system's most striking feature is not radicalism but Muslim educators' willingness to adapt their educational programs to the ideals of Indonesian

[40] By Adzin Aris Aniq Adani, "Meninjau Ulang Tradisi Roan di Pesantren," *Semilir.Co*, 2025, https://semilir.co/meninjau-ulang-tradisi-roan-di-pesantren/.

nationhood and the Muslim public's demand for marketable skills and general education.[41]

4. *Ro'an* as subcultural practice in *pesantren* to seek *baraka*

Socially, life in *pesantren* cultivates a religious, harmonious culture grounded in mutual respect and cooperation.[42] *Ro'an* is a form of *khidmah*, devotion and service carried out by *santri* for the benefit of the *pesantren* and the surrounding community.[43] Among *santri*, *khidmah* is not seen as an act of submission, which implies weakness and therefore seems lowly. Here MN says about *khidmah*,

> *"Khidmah* has been a hallmark of *santri* since the establishment of *pesantren* in East Java. Many *santri* come from lower-middle-class families, but they still want to help and do not want to receive knowledge for free. Therefore, they work together to help each other and assist the *kiai* or *ndalem* (*pesantren* caretakers), whether asked to or not."

MN's statement connects service to a perceived relationship of reciprocity, principle, or condition of mutuality. Reciprocity can be experienced as a meaningful expression of gratitude whilst also creating expectations about what *santri* owe to their *kiai/ustadz* and their *pesantren*. For *santri*, *ro'an* is an honorable endeavor to the *pesantren*. When they willingly serve,

[41] Irfan Abubakar and Idris Hemay, "Pesantren Resilience: The Path to Prevent Radicalism and Violent Extremism," *Studia Islamika* 27, no. 2 (August 2020): 397–404, https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.16766; Azyumardi Azra, Robert W. Hefner, and Dina Afrianty, "Pesantren and Madrasa: Muslim Schools and National Ideals in Indonesia," in *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 2007), 173.

[42] Zaenal Arifin and Muhammad Shobirin, "Moral Development and the Enhancement of Students' Religiosity from a Socio-Psychological Perspective through the Pesantren Program," *Jurnal Penelitian* 19, no. 2 (2025): 245, https://doi.org/10.21043/jurnalpenelitia.v19i2.33723.

[43] Zainal Abidin, "Tradisi Pendidikan Pesantren dalam Mengembangkan Jiwa Kepemimpinan Profetik," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 1 (December 2023): 90, https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i1.773.

it brings *baraka* to their lives.[44] It is because the *pesantren* is where they seek knowledge and also perform their worship. FQ, a *santri* who has lived at the *pesantren* for a long time, tells the story of when she was given a sermon from his teacher regarding *baraka* (for more detail, check دار الإفتاء المصرية, 2012)

> "There is a hadith that mentions *baraka*. *Fayasyrab yarju barokata aidil Muslimin,* which means that the Prophet drank while hoping for *baraka* from the hands of the Muslims. The story is that the Prophet's companions asked him which water to drink, the new one or the used one. Then the Prophet chose the used water. The word *tabaruk* is found in the explanations of the hadith. This means the scholars of the Tabi'in or Tabi'ut-Tabi'in explained the hadith. This is the practice of *tabaruk*. But the point is the behavior itself. This is not explicitly explained. If it is *tabaruk*, it is clear that it is taking *baraka*."

Unlike other theoretical scopes, this discussion of *baraka* through *santri*'s *khidmah* (the blessings of *santri* service) takes the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid, or Gus Dur, in "*Pesantren* sebagai Subkultur" (*Pesantren* as a Subculture) in the book entitled "Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren"[45] as a reference, both as a theoretical reconstruction and empirical verification. According to Ruslana and Mulyono, Gus Dur's work on *pesantren* as a subculture explains the values that have shaped varied *santri* habits.[46] This characteristic helps examine how routine practices acquire meaning. A subculture must have its own uniqueness in the following aspects: the way of life adopted, the outlook on life and values followed, and a separate

[44] Samsudin Samsudin and Anis Tyas Kuncoro, "Tradisi Khidmah dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal PROGRESS: Wahana Kreativitas dan Intelektualitas* 10, no. 1 (May 2022): 300, https://doi.org/10.31942/pgrs.v10i1.6383.

[45] Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren.*

[46] Fadhila Hanifatur Ruslana and Sigit Mulyono, "The Relationship of Cultural Values with Clean and Healthy Life Behaviour among Islamic Boarding School Students in Indonesia," *Journal of Public Health Research* 11, no. 2 (April 2022), https://doi.org/10.4081/jphr.2021.2739.

internal power hierarchy that is fully obeyed.[47] Applied to *ro'an*, the framework allows to examine how communal work becomes integrated into institutional life, acquires religious meanings, and is organized through relationships between *kiai* and *santri*.

In the *pesantren* subculture, *santris'* future orientation is shaped by their personal dynamics, the value-laden *pesantren* environment, and *kiai*'s influence.[48] According to Wahid, *pesantren's* distinctive elements reveal detailed and profound differences between *pesantren* and the wider community. The *pesantren's* characteristics are useful for examining how routine practices acquire meanings that are specific to the institutional and religious site in which they occur. Although a subculture distinct from the outside community, *pesantren* does not oppose existing culture. *Pesantren* have strong ties to the community, not only to the *santri* who seek blessings, but to the community as a whole. For example, when a mosque, teaching room, or other building is constructed in a *pesantren*, the community contributes money for building materials and human resources assistance. FF, an official in one of the *pesantren* in East Java, stated that every help to *pesantren* like *ro'an* is a form of charity to the *pesantren;* she stated:

> "In *pesantren*, there is something called *khidmah*, which is community self-reliance, so assistance comes from the community, not the government. Starting with the costs, the work also involves many people. However, because these are considered forced labor, outsiders do not understand. What we instill in *pesantren* is that some help materially, while others help with their labor. *Amal jariyah* (continuous charity) is not only material but also includes *khidmah*. For some students, they feel that this is a good opportunity, a form of charity to the *pesantren*."

[47] Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren*, 9.

[48] Wasim, Syukur, and Wahib, "The Exemplary of Kiai and the Future Orientation of Santri," 462.

What makes *pesantren* different from other subcultures is that they are unique and authentic, yet still have an Indonesian identity. The unique teaching methods, distinct features, and characteristics begin with a schedule of activities that differs from the surrounding community. *Pesantren* education is a 24-hour boarding school system where the three centers of education, institutions, family, and community, are integrated into one unit within one environment. Within a subculture framework, *ro'an* can be analyzed not simply as a scheduled collective activity, but as a practice embedded in *santri* life at the *pesantren*. To do this, *santri* must adapt to the *pesantren* way of life, which may differ from the daily activities of other educational institutions. Before living at the *pesantren,* they rarely cleaned their own rooms; at the *pesantren,* they must participate in *ro'an* to clean and maintain the *pesantren* grounds and *ndalem* (*kiai's* or *asatidz's* quarter). Nurul Firiyah et al. note that the difference between *pesantren* life and the outside community is not a challenge but a difference, presenting *pesantren* as a counter-culture.[49]

Drawing on personal experience as a *pesantren* official, MA shows that *ro'an* is *khidmah* and differs from other forms of social work. He stated,

> "We are living in a community, there is an RT (neighborhood) that is responsible for guarding the area, whether it be cleanliness, security, or other matters. This is what happens in the social sphere. Now, in *pesantren*, the scope is different. Why is it called *khidmah* rather than social? It means the work is the same, but the value is different. Where does the difference in value come from? From intention. If *khidmah* is purely cleaning something to get rewards, social work is more about togetherness. Now, in the *pesantren* itself, when we talk about *ro'an*, it means *tabarukan*. This means that, besides fulfilling a

[49] Nurul Fitriyah, Azam Syukur Rahmatullah, and Mohd Sukki Othman, "Internalization of 'Panca Jiwa Pondok' in Pesantren: An Ethnomethodological Study," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2023): 58, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2023.

> social function, we also gain the value of reward and the value of intention, especially when we serve the *pesantren*, the teachers, and the community. That is where the *baraka* comes from."

*Santri*s believe that the *baraka* of *ro'an* at *pesantren* is different from communal activities elsewhere. This is because the cleaned areas serve good purposes, such as congregational prayers, reciting the Quran and *Kitab Kuning* (classic manuscripts), deliberations, and so on. The concept of subculture, however, allows us to examine how *ro'an* becomes part of an institutional way of life and how repeated participation and shared expectations sustain its meaning. Its significance arises from the relationship between repeated communal activity and the institutional need for collective support.

As sociological analyses often note, a subculture must, at a minimum, have distinct characteristics in the values and worldviews it embraces. The *pesantren* is a cultural unit that stands apart from, yet remains an integral part of, community life. This dual role defines the *pesantren* as a subculture. This is reflected in the following: strict adherence to ritual worship, acceptance of relatively meager material conditions, and *esprit de corps* (a strong sense of group solidarity). The second element is ostracism, which primarily manifests in the *pesantren's* strict social discipline.[50] These values help explain why *ro'an* may be understood as more than a practical task and why *santri* may associate it with religious commitment and personal development.

In practice, *santri* must participate in *ro'an* activities, which the *pesantren* conducts both routinely and seasonally. *Takzir* (punishment) for those who are absent is usually educational

[50] M. Sufyan Riady and Moh. Wardi, "Telaah Pemikiran KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Tentang Pondok Pesantren," *Dirosat: Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 44, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.28944/dirosat.v6i1.468.

and aims to foster *khidmah* (devotional service).[51] For example, they may be required to clean the *pesantren* grounds or bathrooms the following week, recite the Qur'an, or recite a specific number of *selawat*.

Santri understand *ro'an* not as forced labor but as *khidmah*, which also differs from cooperation. Communal life reinforces traditional values of being sincere (selfless, genuine).[52] At first glance, it looks like cooperation, but it is a unique practice within *pesantren* tradition, which I assumed was subcultural. These elements have evolved alongside *pesantren* dynamics, eventually forming their own culture.[53] This difference lies in the students' intentions and the *baraka* that surrounds *ro'an*. According to MR, as *santri* and *musyrif*, *baraka* is an addition of goodness, so *santri* must seek blessings in all ways. He added,

> "Baraka is a concept and ideology for us as *santri*. We uphold an important principle: knowledge comes through learning, *baraka* comes from *khidmah* (serving), and benefits come through obedience. Baraka means *ziyadah al khoir* (the addition of goodness). So, it is understandable that someone seeking more goodness would seek *baraka*. Returning to the initial concept that *baraka* is obtained through our *khidmah*. This can be interpreted as serving or doing various things that benefit others."

MR's account is particularly relevant because it associates *baraka* with sincere effort to help others. This interpretation suggests that the task does not necessarily determine the religious significance of *ro'an*. Instead, the intention behind the activity is central to its meaning. Within this understanding, a

[51] Kendi Setiawan, "Tradisi 'Roan' Membangun Karakater Santri," NU Online, 2018, https://nu.or.id/pesantren/tradisi-roan-membangun-karakater-santri-pqqRm.

[52] Ronald Alan Lukens-Bull, "Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (September 2001): 350–72, https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2001.32.3.350.

[53] M. Syaifuddien Zuhriy, "Budaya Pesantren dan Pendidikan Karakter pada Pondok Pesantren Salaf," *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 19, no. 2 (2011): 306, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.19.2.159.

seemingly ordinary task becomes a meaningful expression when performed with an appropriate intention. Repeated practice of togetherness in *ro'an* lays the foundation for developing a cultural value system and sustains a shared institutional way of life. Thus, the cultural value system serves not only as a guide but also as a driving force behind the *santris'* behavior in daily life, functioning as a code of conduct.[54]

Santri believe that *baraka* cannot be felt immediately. They feel the benefits of *baraka* after some time, usually after they graduate or move out of the *pesantren*. This connects practical action with a spiritual horizon that may not be reducible to immediate or measurable rewards. From this perspective, *santri* participation in *ro'an* activities instills sincerity, self-reliance, respect, simplicity, belonging, care, and Islamic brotherhood. Likewise, an activity may be spiritually meaningful, while others may be experienced with varying degrees of willingness or satisfaction. From a subcultural theory perspective, this understanding shows how values can guide conduct beyond formal rules. If *ro'an* is regarded as a valued expression of sincerity and gratitude, *santri* may participate because they consider it appropriate within the religious community to which they belong.

The third characteristic of subculture in Wahid's conceptualization concerns an internal hierarchy of authority. This dimension is particularly important to understand *ro'an* because the practice takes place within an institution where interaction between authority and *santri* may shape expectations and responsibilities. The value of sincerity makes *santri* obedient to *kiai* commands and *pesantren* rules. Kiai's role in the *pesantren* is highly dynamic; they maintain hierarchical distance while also serving as a bridge that embodies *uswah nabawiyyah* (the prophetic model) in *santri* life through behavior, speech, and

[54] Zuhriy, 297.

spiritual leadership.[55] Crucially, this internal power hierarchy operates not through bureaucratic coercion or corporate management, but through *adab* (spiritual ethics) and *tarbiyah* (moral nurturing). Consequently, *santri* experience obedience as a voluntary spiritual investment rather than subjugation. It is difficult to identify *pesantren* as a whole as a subcultural unit. Abdurrahman Wahid noted that not all aspects of life in *pesantren* are subcultural; even the main aspects sometimes run counter to the boundaries usually given to a subculture.

In the *pesantren*, the relation between *kiai* and *santri* is not only about transferring knowledge, but also about seeking *baraka* through *ro'an*. MM, a *pesantren alumnus*, concluded that when a *santri* performs *ro'an*, the hope is that the *kiai* will be pleased so that knowledge that was previously difficult to understand becomes easier, and sustenance that was difficult to obtain becomes easier. This is because *santri* who live in *pesantren* are bound by rules, coupled with prayers from the *kiai* himself. So, he believes that *baraka* from *ro'an* differs from that in community work outside the *pesantren*. Therefore, the *kiai, ustadz, santri, pesantren*, and Islamic scholarship profoundly influence *khidmah* practice and shape traditional social structures and institutions.[56] From this, *ro'an* is particularly relevant to subculture because it occurs within an institutional setting where relationship among *kiai, ustadz*, and *santri* may shape how duties are assigned, interpreted, and fulfilled.

Santri follow a principle, "*Al-ilmu bita'alum, wal baraka bil khidmah*" meaning knowledge comes through learning, and *baraka* comes from *khidmah*. As added by FQ:

[55] Wasim, Syukur, and Wahib, "The Exemplary of Kiai and the Future Orientation of Santri," 462.

[56] Muhammad Shalahuddin, Moh Irmawan Jauhari, and Ahmad Ali Riyadi, "Aktualisasi Konsep Khidmah di Pondok Pesantren (Studi kasus di Pondok Pesantren Al-Mardliyah Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang)," *Mujalasat: Multidisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 104, https://ejournal.uit-lirboyo.ac.id/index.php/mujalasat/article/view/7313.

> "*Santri* at the *pesantren* are indeed seeking *baraka* from their *kiai*. They are convinced that their *kiai* has a spiritual connection with Allah. We hope that this will inspire goodness. I was once told a story about *Isra Mi'raj*, the Prophet Muhammad sought blessings from the previous prophets. So that's one form of *baraka*, seeking closeness to Allah. The analogy is that righteous people are already close to Allah. We want to have a smooth path too, so that we can be known by Allah, we use the "insiders," the righteous people. They are religious leaders. So that our prayers are answered, and in that way, we can also obtain *baraka*."

As Geertz notes, *baraka* literally means blessing, divine grace. He expands this meaning to include material prosperity, good fortune, abundance, physical satisfaction, physical well-being, perfection, and, as Western scholars emphasize it as a magical power.[57] Additionally, MN, a *pesantren* alumnus, stated that *baraka* is obtained through sincerity of heart when doing something helpful. With that sincerity of heart, *santri* can find ease in their lives from things they never thought possible. At that moment, they often say, "This is a blessing from effort and sincerity of heart. This is a blessing from *kiai*, *ustadz*, and others who helped by the *santri*."

In *ro'an* practice, the *kiai* and *asatidz* convey instructions through effective verbal communication. Their vocabulary carries no commanding connotations and is neither exploitative nor authoritarian. In everyday *pesantren* language, this is known as *khatibū al-nās 'alā qadri 'uqūlihim* (speak to people according to the level of their intellectual capacity).[58] As in the previous quote, the *kiai* recounts a story about *baraka*, indirectly encouraging *santri* to do good deeds that bring *baraka*, including participation in the *ro'an*. From the above explanation, the three dimensions are interconnected. A shared practice may become

[57] Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, 44.

[58] Zuhriy, "Budaya Pesantren dan Pendidikan Karakter pada Pondok Pesantren Salaf," 305.

part of the institutional way of life because it is associated with valued religious commitments and reproduced through authoritative interaction.

C. Conclusion

Santri understand *ro'an* in *pesantren* not merely as social cooperation, but as *khidmah* (devotional service) associated with sincerity, reciprocity, institutional responsibility, and the pursuit of *baraka* (blessings). Through Abdurrahman Wahid's subculture framework, the findings illustrate how *ro'an* reflects the *pesantren's* distinctive way of life, religious value system, and internal hierarchy. Ultimately, this study contributes to broader theoretical discussion on *pesantren* by highlighting *ro'an* as an activity in which social, cultural, and spiritual transmission intersect across these three dimensions. Understanding *ro'an* as a subcultural practice of seeking *baraka* offers a more nuanced perspective on how *pesantren* sustain their tradition while remaining closely connected to the surrounding community, since institutional self-reliance may coexist with community support and is not isolated from wider society. However, this research is limited by a small, geographically specific sample of *ro'an* as a subcultural form in *pesantren*. It implies that the findings may not be universally applicable or generalizable to all *pesantren* in Indonesia. This study could be strengthened by including a wider range of regions and a more comprehensive field, including perspectives from current *santri* who critically question, resist, or struggle with *ro'an* practice.

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