

## PRIORITY SCALE IN THE TIME MANAGEMENT OF *SANTRI NDALEM* IN BALANCING SPIRITUAL AND ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES

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### Abstract:

*Santri ndalem* is an essential part of the pesantren education system, carrying dual responsibilities as attendants to the kyai and as students engaged in formal religious education. This dual role demands strong time management skills, particularly in setting clear priorities amidst various obligations. This study aims to analyze the prioritization scale in the time management of students living in Islamic boarding schools (*santri ndalem*) and identify the adaptive strategies they develop. This research employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. We collected data through in-depth interviews and participatory observation involving ten *santri ndalem* from diverse educational backgrounds. The findings reveal that *Santri ndalem* applies a hierarchical priority structure: serving the kyai is the highest priority, followed by pesantren obligations, and lastly, personal needs. To navigate priority conflicts, they employ adaptive strategies such as adjusting personal schedules, collaborating with peers to share tasks, and delaying personal or academic activities when urgent religious duties arise. For instance, some delegate academic responsibilities to fellow students or reschedule personal study time to late-night hours. However, these efforts often lead to psychological strain, including fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and emotional stress, due to insufficient time for academic or personal well-being. This study underscores the need for pesantren to strengthen value-based time management education, incorporating flexibility and emotional support mechanisms to help *santri ndalem* maintain a healthier balance between spiritual service, academic achievement, and personal growth.

### KATA KUNCI

Manajemen Waktu,  
Skala Prioritas, Santri  
ndalem, Pesantren

### Abstrak:

*Santri ndalem* merupakan bagian penting dari sistem pendidikan pesantren yang memiliki peran ganda, yakni sebagai pelayan kyai dan sebagai santri yang mengikuti kegiatan pendidikan di pesantren. Kompleksitas peran tersebut menuntut santri ndalem untuk memiliki kemampuan manajemen waktu yang baik, terutama dalam menentukan skala prioritas di tengah berbagai tuntutan tugas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis skala prioritas dalam manajemen waktu santri ndalem serta mengidentifikasi strategi adaptif yang mereka kembangkan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi partisipatif terhadap sepuluh santri ndalem dari berbagai latar belakang pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa santri ndalem menerapkan skala prioritas secara hierarkis: tugas pelayanan kepada kyai menjadi prioritas utama, disusul oleh kewajiban pesantren, dan terakhir kebutuhan pribadi. Untuk mengatasi konflik prioritas, mereka menerapkan strategi adaptif seperti menyesuaikan jadwal pribadi, berkolaborasi dengan teman sejawat untuk membagi tugas, serta menunda kegiatan pribadi atau akademik ketika ada kewajiban agama yang mendesak. Sebagai contoh, beberapa santri mendelegasikan tanggung jawab akademik kepada

teman lain atau menjadwalkan waktu belajar pribadi pada malam hari. Namun, upaya-upaya ini sering kali menyebabkan tekanan psikologis, seperti kelelahan, kesulitan berkonsentrasi, dan stres emosional, akibat kurangnya waktu untuk kesejahteraan akademik atau pribadi. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya pesantren untuk memperkuat pendidikan manajemen waktu berbasis nilai, yang mencakup fleksibilitas dan mekanisme dukungan emosional, guna membantu santri *ndalem* menjaga keseimbangan yang lebih sehat antara pelayanan spiritual, pencapaian akademik, dan perkembangan pribadi.

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## INTRODUCTION

Pesantren, a traditional Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, possesses a distinctive social structure wherein a cohort of santri resides in the kyai's domicile and functions as the kyai's attendants or assistants, referred to as *santri ndalem*. This phenomenon is a longstanding tradition within the pesantren ecosystem, embodying profound principles of devotion in santri culture (Yusnadi, 2024). The *santri ndalem* bears a dual role, acting as the kyai's attendant while also fulfilling their obligations as students at the pesantren and addressing their personal needs. This role's intricacy poses issues in time management and prioritization. Within the framework of pesantren, a kyai functions not merely as an educator but also as a venerated spiritual authority possessing significant social prestige. Research (Hartono, 2020) indicates that the interaction between the kyai and the *santri ndalem* transcends the traditional teacher-student dynamic, incorporating intricate spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions.

The dedication of *santri ndalem* to the kyai is seen as a way to gain valuable knowledge (*barokah*) and personal growth that can't be achieved just through regular schooling. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the life of *santri ndalem* in the contemporary day encounter increasingly intricate obstacles. The escalating requirements of formal education, the necessity for skill enhancement to navigate the digital age, and the varied personal needs have emerged as critical issues in the time management of *santri ndalem* (Putra, Daflaini, & Pohan, 2022). Conversely, traditional beliefs that underscore complete allegiance to the kyai remain robust within the pesantren environment. This generates the possibility of priority conflicts that must be resolved through an efficient and equitable time management strategy.

The research by (Zahra, Nurkhanifah, Mindaria, Adinugraha, & Sholihah, 2023) indicates that *santri ndalem* who effectively manage their time and establish clear goals achieve higher academic success rates while maintaining the quality of their commitment to the kyai. The scientific exploration of successful time management practices among *santri ndalem* is limited, particularly regarding their ability to balance diverse demands and goals. Furthermore, research by (Saputra, Baharuddin, Rasyid, & Akidah, 2022) underscores the complexity of implementing time management effectively within the pesantren context. At MTs Pesantren

Pondok Madinah, while a significant proportion of students reported practicing structured time management, the correlation with academic achievement was minimal. This suggests that although time management is widely acknowledged as essential, its practical impact can be diminished by inconsistent application and strong cultural influences. The pesantren environment, deeply rooted in spiritual and communal values, may limit the effectiveness of standardized time management techniques. These findings highlight the necessity for adaptive strategies harmonizing spiritual commitments and educational aspirations.

The traditional priority scale approach in time management primarily highlights urgency and personal significance as the principal factors (Barri, 2016). In the context of *santri ndalem*, the spiritual dimension and the significance of devotion establish a distinct paradigm for prioritization. This paradigm underscores the significance of comprehending how *santri ndalem* formulate and execute a priority scale in their time management, with a hierarchy that prioritizes service to the kyai, followed by pesantren obligations, and ultimately personal needs. This research aims to look at how *santri ndalem* set their priorities in managing their time, find out the strategies they use to balance different responsibilities, and explore how these priorities affect their intellectual, spiritual, and personal growth.

By gaining a more profound understanding of these factors, this study aims to develop a more flexible and effective time management strategy for *santri ndalem* that respects their commitment to the kyai while also considering important aspects of their personal and academic development. The research seeks to explore how *santri ndalem* constructs their priority scale for managing time, as well as the strategies they employ to balance various complex roles and responsibilities. Specifically, this study focuses on the decision-making dynamics involved in time allocation and the impact of such time management patterns on their character development, academic achievement, and psychological well being.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The This research employs a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological framework to investigate the life experiences of *santri ndalem* in prioritizing their values (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it allows an in-depth exploration of subjective experiences and meanings. The study involved 10 participants, aged 21–28, consisting of 8 males and 2 females, with educational qualifications ranging from high school to bachelor's degrees. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, requiring a minimum of one year of experience as *santri ndalem*.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore respondents' perceptions and experiences in balancing their devotion to the kyai, pesantren obligations, and personal needs. All interviews were conducted with informed consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The participatory observation was also utilized to capture the everyday dynamics and social

interactions of santri ndalem within their natural settings, consistent with the principle of triangulation in qualitative studies to enhance data validity (Sanjani, Islamiah, & Maulidiah, 2024).

Thematic analysis was applied in processing the data, encompassing stages of familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and final reporting. Each transcript was carefully read multiple times during the coding process to identify meaningful units related to the participants' prioritization behaviors. Codes were developed inductively, allowing themes to emerge naturally from the data. These themes were then compared across participants to identify recurring patterns and divergences in priority management and value formation (Prasad & Shadnam, 2023). In this study, data triangulation was not used, as the research focused on the personal experiences of each informant, which did not require validation from others. To ensure the validity of the data, the peer debriefing method was employed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, wherein the coding and interpretation of themes were discussed with academic peers familiar with qualitative research and pesantren contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Suprayitno et al., 2024). This collaborative review process helped to challenge assumptions, reduce researcher bias, and strengthen the validity of the analysis. Ethical considerations were rigorously observed by ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality through initials, and securing approval from the local research ethics committee.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics Respondent**

Respondent	Education Level	Age	Gender
MKA	High School	24	Male
AAA	High School	23	Male
AF	Bachelor	26	Male
CF	High School	21	Female
FA	High School	24	Male
MKF	Bachelor	24	Male
HS	Bachelor	28	Male
IRF	High School	23	Male
RS	Bachelor	22	Male
HHK	Bachelor	24	Female

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT RESEARCH

**Table 2. Interview Data on Time Management between Fulfilling Duties as Abdi Ndalem Kyai, Pesantren, and Personal Life**

Respondent	Verbatim
MKA	Your life will be more blessed if you become a <i>Santri ndalem</i> . So, I always prioritize the needs of Kyai's household first, and only after that do I attend to the needs of the pesantren. If everything is done, then my personal needs come next.
AAA	If I'm honest, until now I haven't been able to manage my time between the tasks at ndalem, the pesantren, and personal matters. I

Respondent	Verbatim
	still prioritize the tasks related to the kyai, so it can't be balanced. I prioritize the tasks of ndalem, then the pesantren.
AF	Of course, we do this by prioritizing what is more important and urgent. Because our status is that of students, tasks assigned by the abah kyai take priority, followed by tasks at the pesantren.
CF	If I had to balance it, it would be difficult. There was once a college assignment that I had to complete by the deadline, and it coincided with a task from the teacher at that time, which was difficult for me. Whether I liked it or not, I had to prioritize my personal tasks.
FA	Actually, there are things I need to overcome, namely personal tasks, ndalem, and finishing up at the boarding house before focusing on personal matters later.
MKF	I still set priorities, of course. I finish ndalem tasks first, then personal ones, but if they can be done simultaneously, then why not?
HS	If I were to prioritize, of course, the priority would be Kyai and the ndalem first, then ourselves.
IRF	The way to balance it is that the important matters of ndalem should be prioritized first before personal matters, because there is already a fixed schedule, except if there is an urgent command.
RS	I haven't been able to share it yet because those 24 hours almost require me to be on standby at ndalem the whole day. So, there is no time for personal needs.
HHK	For me, everything is fine for now, so there are no schedule clashes between the duties of the ndalem kyai and the pesantren.

The analysis results regarding time management and the priority scale of the santri ndalem reveal a consistently hierarchical pattern that is systematically structured. This structure generally consists of three levels: duties as abdi ndalem to the kyai are given the highest priority, followed by pesantren responsibilities, and lastly, personal interests. However, interview data demonstrate significant individual variation in how these priorities are managed in practice. For instance, respondent AF stated,

“Of course, we do this by prioritizing what is more important and urgent. Because our status is that of students, tasks assigned by the abah kyai take priority.”

In contrast, respondent CF highlighted the difficulty of balancing obligations, noting,

“There was once a college assignment that I had to complete by the deadline, and it coincided with a task from the teacher. Whether I liked it or not, I had to prioritize my personal tasks.”

These contrasting approaches reveal that while the hierarchy is commonly acknowledged, its application is situational and influenced by academic pressure, personal capacity, and perceived urgency.

The psychological and academic impacts of these prioritization strategies are also notable. Respondent RS expressed a sense of fatigue and time scarcity, stating,

“Those 24 hours almost require me to be on standby at ndalem the whole day. So, there is no time for personal needs.”

This suggests a risk of burnout and academic disengagement due to constant role demands. On the other hand, some respondents like HHK expressed a more balanced experience, saying,

"For me, everything is fine for now, so there are no schedule clashes between the duties of the *ndalem kyai* and the *pesantren*."

These contrasting experiences indicate that while the structure of priorities is uniform, the psychological and academic outcomes vary widely depending on individual coping mechanisms and contextual factors. Exploring these differences helps to clarify how *santri ndalem* navigate their commitments and the consequences they experience both positively, in the form of spiritual fulfillment and discipline, and negatively, through stress or diminished academic performance.

The way this priority list is set up shows not just how time is spent, but also how deeply the core values of the *pesantren* tradition are accepted, highlighting the importance of devotion and putting the *kyai*'s authority above personal interests. This phenomenon correlates with the concept of "*ngalap barokah*" (seeking blessings), which is one of the intrinsic motivations of the *santri ndalem*, as revealed in the statement of respondent MKA, who stated,

"Your life will be more blessed if you become a *santri ndalem*."

The hope of gaining knowledge by fully dedicating oneself to the *kyai* shows how traditional *pesantren* values change the usual way of managing time into a spiritual and educational practice.

The implementation of a hierarchy of priorities in the context of time management for *santri ndalem* faces substantial challenges in the form of temporal conflicts between various role demands. The testimonial of respondent CF, which states

"If I had to balance it, it would be difficult. There was once a college assignment that I had to complete by the deadline, and it coincided with a task from the teacher at that time, which was difficult for me. Whether I liked it or not, I had to prioritize my personal tasks."

indicates a tension between formal academic demands and the obligations of being a *santri ndalem*. In such conflict situations, respondents consistently demonstrate a resolution pattern that accommodates an internalized hierarchy of priorities, with the consequence of sacrificing personal interests, as expressed by respondent FA,

"Actually, there are things I need to overcome, namely personal tasks, *ndalem*, and finishing up at the boarding house before focusing on personal matters later."

The phenomenon of value transformation in the time management of *santri ndalem* represents a reinterpretation of the concepts of efficiency and productivity within the framework of *pesantren*'s spiritual values. Unlike the conventional time management paradigm that emphasizes maximizing output, the time management of *santri ndalem* is oriented towards optimizing spiritual values obtained through devotion. This all-encompassing method combines time-saving practices with

traditional pesantren values, forming a complete and distinctive self-improvement model in today's pesantren education.

The consistent pattern identified from all respondents shows that the majority of *santri ndalem* apply the following hierarchy of priorities:

**Image 1.** Hierarchy of Priority Scale *Santri ndalem*

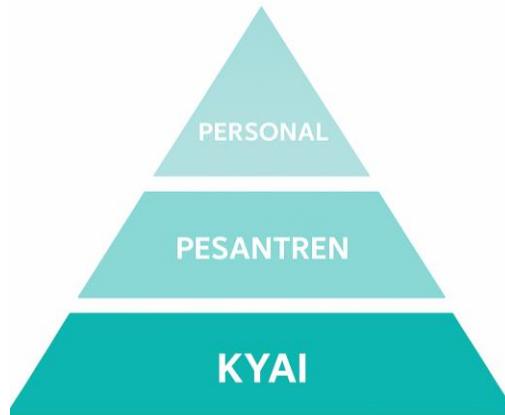


Image 1 shows the hierarchy of priority scale for *santri ndalem* in managing their time. This hierarchy consists of three levels arranged vertically, indicating the order of importance of the daily activities of the *santri ndalem*.

At the most fundamental level, the "Kyai" is the direct task assigned by the Kyai. This task becomes the top priority, demonstrating the importance of the role of devotion to the kyai in the lives of the *santri ndalem*. This priority is not merely about the organizational structure of the pesantren but reflects the spiritual value of the belief that serving the kyai is a path to obtaining *barokah* (blessing of knowledge). This placement also reflects the value of *ta'dzim*, which is deep respect for the teacher, the core of pesantren education.

At the middle level is the "Pesantren," which are the obligations of students towards the general activities of the pesantren, such as attending study sessions, collective activities, and assisting with daily operations. Although important, this duty is still subordinate to the direct duties from the kyai, emphasizing that the personal relationship between the santri and the kyai is more paramount than the relationship between the santri and the pesantren institution.

The highest level is "Personal" such as rest, self-study, or other personal needs. This placement reflects the values of simplicity and sincerity taught in the pesantren. Unlike modern time management that prioritizes work-life balance, the *santri ndalem* is trained to prioritize their duties of service over personal interests as a form of spiritual practice and self-control.

## DISCUSSION

### **Construction of a Priority Hierarchy in the Time Management of *Santri ndalem***

Building a priority system for managing time among *santri ndalem* shows a significant aspect of pesantren education, which includes spiritual, learning, and

social elements (Latifudin & Julaiha, 2024; Nur et al., 2024). This study found that *santri ndalem* have a structured and consistent priority pattern: serving the kyai is the top priority, followed by the obligations of the pesantren, and lastly personal needs. This structure is clearly evident in the statement of the MKA respondents who said,

"I always prioritize the needs of Kyai's household, and only after that do I attend to the needs of the pesantren,"

which reflects a deep appreciation for the value of devotion (Farihah & Puspitarini, 2022).

This priority pattern not only demonstrates the hierarchical relationship between students and the kyai but also serves as a tangible manifestation of the concept of "ngalap *barokah*," which is very important in the pesantren tradition. (Suradi, 2017) states that devotion to the kyai is believed to be a way to obtain spiritual blessings that can strengthen the learning process. This is reinforced by respondent AF, who stated,

"Because of our status as students, tasks ordered by the kyai are prioritized",

which shows how the identity of *santri ndalem* is shaped by the values of obedience and devotion (Anwar et al., 2025; Athoillah & Wulan, 2019).

(Simaremare, 2020) refers to this phenomenon as a paradigm shift in time management, from initially focusing on efficiency and productivity to becoming a form of spiritual practice and character building. In this context, serving the kyai is not just about completing tasks but becoming part of the character education process within the pesantren system. *Santri ndalem* not only manage their time to be efficient but also to attain spiritual values through devotion (Mariska & Muniroh, 2025). In terms of education, this structure plays a significant role in shaping mental attitudes such as sincerity and patience (Hidayati, Maemunah, & Islamy, 2021). This tradition of service has been part of the pesantren education system for centuries and shares similarities with the concept of experiential learning in modern educational theory, although it is distinguished by a strong spiritual foundation (Zahra et al., 2023).

More broadly, this structure demonstrates how pesantren have successfully maintained traditional values in a constantly changing world. Although the *santri ndalem* also face demands from formal education, they are able to balance both through understanding and appreciation of a clear scale of priorities. This reflects the ability of pesantren to adapt to modernity without losing its identity (Simaremare, 2020). Furthermore, the time management practices of *santri ndalem* exemplify how organizational behavior, shaped by the pesantren's cultural system, systematically directs their prioritization towards devotion above personal pursuits (Saleh & Arifiani, 2024). Nevertheless, in response to evolving educational demands, *santri ndalem* is required to enhance their academic and personal competencies, reflecting broader strategies for educational quality improvement (Maulidiyah, 2024). This adaptive process harmonizes traditional devotion with intellectual and

character development, aligning with integrative educational models in Islamic boarding schools (Jannah, Maulidia, & Rizal, 2024)

From a spiritual perspective, time for *santri ndalem* is not just a neutral duration but is viewed as something sacred. They view the time spent serving the kyai as a spiritual investment, not merely an obligation or a sacrifice of personal activities. This explains why many students prefer to serve the kyai even if it means reducing time for academic or personal interests. In situations with limited time, the *santri ndalem* demonstrate a different adaptation approach compared to conventional methods. They do not just allocate time based on efficiency but also change the perspective on the value of each activity. Devotion to the kyai is seen as an activity that strengthens the spiritual value of the overall time one possesses.

This habit also shapes a resilient mental attitude. By facing various conflicting role demands, the *santri ndalem* learn to be flexible and positive towards pressure. The duty to the kyai, although it consumes personal time, actually becomes a source of inner strength that enriches the meaning of all their activities. At the institutional level, this priority structure helps pesantren maintain their core values amidst the challenges of the times. The practice of devotion becomes an educational medium that not only imparts knowledge but also shapes the students' perspective on the meaning of activities and the purpose of life. In this case, the hierarchy of priorities of the *santri ndalem* shows a profound change in mindset that time management is not merely a technical strategy but also an expression of values and beliefs lived out in daily life.

### **Adaptive Strategy in Implementing Priority Scale**

*Santri ndalem* develops various strategies to face priority clashes in their daily lives (Soleh, 2024). The main strategy they use is flexibility in managing their personal schedules to accommodate the oftenchanging tasks of ndalem. As the IRF respondent said,

"The way to balance it is that the important thing is to finish the ndalem tasks first, then the personal matters, because there is already a fixed schedule, except if there is an unexpected order."

This statement shows that the ndalem students are accustomed to adjusting their schedules based on the situation, especially if there is an unexpected order from the kyai.

However, not all students find it simple to maintain this balance. Some admit to experiencing difficulties, as expressed by respondent CF

"For me, balancing it is difficult, there was once a college assignment I had to complete by the deadline, and it clashed with a task from the kyai at that time."

This situation reflects the reality also found by (Pavliuk, Pivnenko, Hryshyna, Kuravska, & Chumak, 2025) students who also attend college must develop more complex thinking strategies to face the piled-up demands. In the long term, this

condition actually trains them to be more skilled in time management (Putra et al., 2022).

When examined more closely, the adaptive strategies implemented by the *santri ndalem* reveal complex thinking in making decisions about time allocation. Not only technical matters, they also continuously weigh the demands of entrenched pesantren values against the practical realities they are facing. This strategy is not uniform but rather highly dependent on the type of task, the time available, the level of difficulty, and the social impact of completing or delaying the task. This enables them to assess and prioritize various aspects simultaneously be it urgency, spiritual value, or the practical consequences of their decisions.

This situation reflects what is called "structured contingency," which is a condition where flexibility and improvisation are carried out within the framework of established rules and values. Although the structure of priorities is clear, the students must remain flexible in the face of changing situations. Their resilience is evident in their ability to integrate unexpected time disruptions such as sudden instructions from the *kyai* into their life flow without feeling psychologically disturbed.

In moments of crisis such as when urgent tasks from the *kyai* coincide with academic deadlines *santri ndalem* demonstrates a remarkable ability to adapt through rapid task reallocation and communal cooperation. For instance, respondent CF shared a situation where an unexpected order from the *kyai* interrupted her university assignment deadline. She responded by delegating part of her academic responsibility to a fellow *santri*

"My friend recorded the study session for me while I helped in *ndalem*; I stayed up late to review it and submit the assignment."

While effective in meeting both spiritual and academic demands, these improvised strategies often come at the cost of rest and psychological strain, highlighting the latent tension in balancing multiple roles.

Over time, these adaptive mechanisms are practiced individually and collectively refined and transmitted within the pesantren environment. Experienced *santri ndalem* frequently serve as informal mentors, guiding newcomers in managing conflicting priorities through shared stories, group reflections, and practical advice. Regular peer discussions whether after evening prayers or during communal gatherings become spaces for exchanging coping techniques and reinforcing cultural norms of flexibility, patience, and mutual support. This dynamic process of communal learning strengthens individual resilience and fosters a collective ethos of adaptive time management rooted in pesantren values.

From a psychological perspective, this ability to adapt can be explained by the concept of "cognitive reframing," which is the viewpoint that time constraints are not a deficiency but rather an opportunity to practice one's beliefs. Thus, time-consuming devotion is not seen as a burden but rather as an important part of the spiritual journey. This makes the time pressure they experience a meaningful experience, not just a problem to be solved.

The adaptive strategies of the *santri ndalem* is also formed through social processes. They do not learn alone, but rather together in the pesantren environment. The experience of facing priority conflicts is shared collectively through stories, mutual imitation, and adjusting strategies with one another. In this way, their adaptive skills become part of the pesantren community culture, not just the result of individual efforts. The flexibility of thought they demonstrate can also be seen as "productive disequilibrium," a condition where imbalance actually becomes a driver for development. In this context, priority conflicts are not merely problems but rather educational tools that encourage students to develop more mature thinking and adaptive skills. Therefore, the experience of being a *santri ndalem*, despite being full of challenges, actually becomes a period of character building and essential life skills development for their future.

### **Psychological and Academic Impact of the Hierarchy of Priorities**

The strict implementation of a priority hierarchy has a dual impact on the *santri ndalem*. On one hand, some respondents showed awareness of the consequences of their priorities, such as RS's statement,

"I haven't been able to divide it because 24 hours almost have to be standby at the *ndalem* the whole day. So, there is no time for personal needs."

This statement highlights a significant potential influence on both psychological well-being and academic achievement, which should not be underestimated. The pressures from prioritizing communal and institutional needs over personal desires can create a challenging environment for students. On the one hand, it could lead to stress or dissatisfaction, which could negatively affect mental health and academic performance. However, on the other hand, it is important to recognize that a substantial number of respondents perceive this kind of sacrifice, putting personal priorities on the back burner as an integral part of a broader, deeply valuable process of character development. This process, they argue, offers long-term benefits that extend beyond the immediate discomfort or inconvenience of the situation.

In this regard, (Kinkie, Sabbilla, & Subroto, 2025) assert that adopting a priority structure in which personal needs are relegated to the background contributes significantly to cultivating vital personal virtues such as patience, sincerity, and self-discipline. These qualities, they argue, are fostered through the act of prioritizing the needs of others and the collective over individual comfort. The findings of (Sunarya, 2022) further bolster this perspective, suggesting that *santri ndalem* settings can adjust to such demands and develop critical stress management skills. Sunarya's research indicates that through their experiences, these students learn to navigate the complex, often competing needs of multiple roles, balancing academic expectations, religious obligations, and social responsibilities, which enables them to develop more robust mechanisms for managing stress. According to this research, such abilities enhance their capacity to cope with future challenges,

both within the pesantren environment and in their lives beyond it, ultimately fostering resilience and emotional fortitude.

These findings resonate with broader research on student mental health, which underscores that the psychological impacts of stress and burnout on academic performance are both significant and multifaceted. While some studies reveal a high prevalence of psychological distress among students, the relationship between such distress and academic outcomes is not always straightforward. For instance, although a study noted that 27.1% of first-year students experienced psychological distress and 7.3% faced burnout, many maintained moderate academic performance (March-Amengual et al., 2022). This complexity mirrors the experiences of *santri ndalem*, who often preserves their academic responsibilities despite the intense demands of their roles. Moreover, while certain mental health conditions like anxiety and depression have been linked to diminished academic success, other findings suggest that academic performance is not always directly correlated with mental health challenges (Mohamad et al., 2018). This nuance points to the potential role of internal coping mechanisms such as resilience and emotional regulation developed through the prioritization structures imposed in pesantren settings. The ability of *santri ndalem* to navigate multiple, sometimes conflicting, obligations may not only mitigate the effects of burnout but also contribute to their long-term psychological endurance and academic perseverance.

### **Transformation of Time Management Values in the Context of Islamic Boarding Schools**

The research found that the concept of time management practiced by the *santri ndalem* has undergone a significant change in values. Unlike conventional time management, which emphasizes efficiency and productivity, the *santri ndalem* place greater importance on the aspects of blessings and spiritual benefits from every activity they undertake. This is evident from MKA's statement,

"Because if you become a *santri ndalem*, insyaallah life will be more blessed."

This statement shows that they prioritize not only based on the importance or urgency of a task but also on the spiritual value believed to be contained within it. This change in perspective aligns with the concept of the spiritualization of time management proposed by (Mediawati, 2023), in this approach, the effectiveness of time management is not only measured by the number of tasks completed but also by the blessings felt in the process.

This phenomenon can also be explained by the theory of (Linando, Tumewang, Nahda, & Nurfauziah, 2023) who studied the influence of religiosity on work ethics in Islam. In the study, they found that a person's level of religiosity not only shapes work ethics but also changes their perspective on time and how they prioritize activities. For the *santri ndalem*, the internalized spiritual values become the main foundation in organizing their time. This is evident from their tendency to prioritize the duty of serving the kyai as a form of actualization of religious values,

especially in the practice of "ngalap *barokah*," which is an important part of pesantren life.

This approach shows that the way *santri ndalem* manage their time cannot be seen as a form of blind obedience to rules or authority figures. On the contrary, they build a rational way of thinking within a spiritual framework. In this context, devotion to the kyai becomes a rational choice because it is considered to have high spiritual value. (Linando et al., 2023) also note that religiosity has different impacts depending on the socio-cultural context, and in the case of *santri ndalem*, this is evident from their ability to adapt in facing the conflict between academic interests and spiritual devotion. They do not see these two things as contradictory but as part of a unified set of values that can be harmoniously practiced.

Understanding time in the context of religiosity provides a new perspective on the relationship between the pesantren value system and time management practices. (Fauzi, 2023) explain that religiosity can change the way people perceive time, from something linear that must be optimized productively to something that is spiritually meaningful. For the *santri ndalem*, time is no longer just a tool to complete tasks but a means to draw closer to God. Therefore, their prioritization of time is not only used for practical reasons but also to shape a spiritual identity in line with the values of the pesantren.

This explanation broadens our understanding of how the Islamic spirituality practiced in pesantren plays a significant role in shaping how the *santri ndalem* manage their time. They do not merely carry out routines but live them as part of a spiritual journey. (Harmathilda, Yuli, Hakim, & Supriyadi, 2024) add that this value-based time management approach produces a unique paradigm that combines modern efficiency with traditional pesantren values, thereby creating a comprehensive self-development model for the *ndalem* students.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the time management of *santri ndalem* is shaped by a structured and hierarchical priority scale that reflects the core spiritual values of the pesantren tradition. The consistent prioritization of serving the kyai over pesantren duties and personal needs illustrates a transformation of conventional time management values into a spiritually oriented paradigm rooted in pursuing *ngalap barakah* (spiritual blessings). *Santri ndalem* adapts to conflicting demands through flexible strategies, situational decision-making, and resilience, often sacrificing personal time to maintain spiritual commitments.

While this practice may impact personal well-being and academic achievement, most *santri ndalem* perceive these challenges as meaningful steps in character formation, cultivating virtues such as sincerity, patience, and self-discipline. Their ability to balance traditional devotion with academic pursuits demonstrates a unique integration of Islamic values and practical time management.

Based on these findings, pesantren are encouraged to develop structured time management education grounded in pesantren values, including mentorship

programs, peer sharing sessions, and reflective time planning that respects devotion and personal growth. Additionally, pesantren administrators should consider providing institutional support that allows more flexible scheduling, particularly during peak academic periods, to reduce psychological strain.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of this value-based time management on the career trajectories, emotional resilience, and spiritual development of former santri ndalem. Comparative studies involving santri from different pesantren models could also enrich our understanding of how institutional culture influences prioritization behavior. A cross-disciplinary approach combining educational psychology, religious studies, and organizational behavior would be valuable to deepen insights into how traditional spiritual commitments coexist with modern developmental needs.

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