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THE ROLE OF AJENGAN IN PESANTREN'S LEARNING SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the learning system in Islamic boarding schools from the perspective of source credibility theory in building the authority of Ajengan. The research method employed is a qualitative approach with a case study conducted at Sirojul Huda Islamic Boarding School in Bandung Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. The findings indicate that the Ajengan's deep understanding of religious knowledge, expertise in delivering religious teachings, authority, and respectful communication style influence the students' perception of Ajengan's credibility as an authoritative communicator. The implications of this research highlight the importance of strengthening Ajengan's authority through the development of a learning system that emphasizes source credibility, interpersonal communication, and considers students' perceptions as learners.

Keywords: learning system, Islamic boarding school, source credibility theory, Ajengan's authority, students' perception

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sistem pembelajaran di pondok pesantren dari perspektif teori sumber kepercayaan dalam membangun otoritas Ajengan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi kasus pada Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda di Kabupaten Bandung. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan analisis konten literatur terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman mendalam Ajengan tentang ilmu agama, keahlian dalam menyampaikan pelajaran agama, wibawa, dan sikap sopan santun dalam berkomunikasi memengaruhi persepsi santri terhadap kredibilitas Ajengan sebagai komunikator otoritatif. Implikasi penelitian ini adalah pentingnya memperkuat otoritas Ajengan melalui pengembangan sistem pembelajaran yang mengedepankan sumber kepercayaan, komunikasi interpersonal, dan memperhatikan persepsi santri sebagai peserta didik. Simpulan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa teori sumber kepercayaan berperan penting dalam membangun otoritas Ajengan dalam sistem pembelajaran di pondok pesantren.

Kata kunci: sistem pembelajaran, pondok pesantren, teori sumber kepercayaan, otoritas Ajengan, persepsi santri.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic boarding schools, known as pondok pesantren, play a crucial role in shaping the character and religious understanding of students in Indonesia(Tolib, 2015);(Sumardi, 2012);(Solihin, 2015). Within the pondok pesantren environment, Ajengan, or teachers, hold a central role as authoritative figures who provide religious teachings to the students. The influence of Ajengan as authoritative communicators is a key factor in the success of the learning system in pondok pesantren. Ajengan" is a general term used to refer to religious teachers in the Sundanese community in West Java, Indonesia(Hatami, 2017). They play a central role as authorities who provide religious teachings to their students, known as santri. The term "ajengan" is similar to the term

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"Kyai" in Javanese society. To understand the communication dynamics between Ajengan and students and its impact on the learning process, the perspective of source credibility theory can provide valuable insights(Bali, 2017).

Source Credibility Theory highlights the role of trust and communicator credibility in influencing communication effectiveness. In the context of pondok pesantren, trust can be understood as students' trust in the authority of Ajengan as holders of high religious knowledge. This trust encompasses students' perception of Ajengan's competence and reliability in delivering religious teachings(MELANI, 2021).

In the analysis from the perspective of Source Credibility Theory, Ajengan's competence becomes an essential aspect in building the authority of the communicator. This competence includes deep knowledge of religious teachings, experience, and expertise in understanding the broader religious context. Additionally, Ajengan's reliability and integrity also play a significant role in strengthening students' trust in the messages conveyed.

Previous researchers have examined related topics, such as Fuad & Oktaviani, (2021) in their study on Kyai's communication style in teaching Kitab Jalalain in Miftahul Hasanah Islamic Boarding School. Their findings show that Kyai's communication style is rooted in Islamic perspectives, employing verbal and nonverbal messages such as Qaulan sadida, Qaulan Baligha, Qaulan Ma'rufa, Qaulan Karima, Qaulan Layyina, and Qaulan Masyura.

Furthermore, Hartono, (2016) conducted a study on the role of communicator credibility in the learning system of pondok pesantren, focusing on a case study. Their findings revealed that the communication models used by Kyai, ustadz, and students were two-way during events like new student admissions, Friday dialogues, and addressing problematic students. However, during events like perlantasi, one-way communication was utilized.

Although there are similarities in the topics, this study differs from previous research in terms of the theoretical approach (Source Credibility Theory), the focus on building Kiyai's authority as a communicator, and the emphasis on the learning system in pondok pesantren. This research will contribute specifically to understanding the role of Ajengan's authority in learning within the pondok pesantren and its relationship with student trust.

Based on the background and previous studies, the objective of this research is to analyze the Learning System in Pondok Pesantren: An Analysis from the Perspective of Source Credibility Theory in Building the Authority of Ajengan, with a case study at Albayan Soreang Islamic Boarding School in Bandung Regency. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method.

Through this analysis, it is expected to gain a deeper understanding of how student trust in Ajengan influences the learning process in pondok pesantren. The findings of this research can provide new insights for the development of more effective learning systems in pondok pesantren and enhance understanding of the communication dynamics between Ajengan and students

METHOD

The This research utilizes a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the learning system at Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda, located in the Bandung Regency. The aim of this study is to analyze the development of Ajengan's authority as an authoritative communicator within the context of the pesantren, using the perspective of the Theory of Source Credibility.

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A qualitative approach is employed in this research to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and views of the santri (students) regarding Ajengan's authority in the learning system. In the case study method, Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda is selected as a representative research site to study the communication dynamics between Ajengan and the santri within the learning context. The research was conducted in May 2023 at Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda, Bandung Regency.

The data collection techniques used in this research include participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of documents related to learning at the pesantren. Participatory observation allows the researcher to actively engage in the learning activities and observe the interactions between Ajengan and the santri. In-depth interviews are conducted with six of santri to obtain their perspectives on Ajengan's authority and its influence on learning. Document analysis involves reviewing learning materials, teaching guidelines, and other relevant sources related to the learning system at Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results and Discussion chapter of this study will present the findings derived from in-depth interviews and participant observations conducted in the field. These findings will be thoroughly analyzed and interpreted within the framework of relevant theoretical concepts and previous studies discussed in the literature review. By integrating empirical data with existing knowledge, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. It will highlight consistencies and discrepancies with established theories and research.

Specifically, this chapter will explore key aspects of the study, including students' perceptions of the credibility of the Kiayi, the role of interpersonal communication in establishing the authority of the Ajengan, the impact of communicator credibility on the learning process in the pesantren, and the implications of these findings for the development of the learning system at Sirojul Huda Pesantren in Bandung Regency.

The result and discussion of the research cover 60% of the length of the article's body. The results of the research are the core part of scientific articles consisting of the results of data analysis and hypothesis testing. To explain the results of the analysis/research, it must equip the charts, figures, tables, and/or graphs. The discussion section presents the logical findings and relates to the relevant reference.

Islamic Boarding Schools in Bandung Regency

Islamic boarding schools in Bandung Regency are an integral part of the educational and religious traditions in West Java, Indonesia(Lugina, 2018). Bandung Regency is located in the province of West Java, which is known for its cultural diversity, history, and strong religious life. Based on data from the Open Data of West Java Provincial Government, Bandung Regency has a significant number of Islamic boarding schools. There are approximately 135 boarding schools operating in the area. Islamic boarding schools are traditional educational institutions that provide religious education and formal education to students (known as santri) with a focus on religious understanding, character development, and morality(Opendata Jabarprov, 2021b);(Damopolii, 2011).

The number of santri in Bandung Regency is also quite large. According to the reported data, there are around 17,561 santri living within the boarding school environment in this region. Santri are individuals who receive religious education and

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reside in boarding schools to deepen their religious knowledge and develop spirituality and character(Opendata Jabarprov, 2021a).

In carrying out educational and religious activities, boarding schools in Bandung Regency involve many religious leaders known as Ajengan. The number of Ajengan in this area reaches 2,516 individuals. Ajengan are scholars or spiritual leaders who possess profound religious knowledge and play an important role in providing religious teachings, guiding santri, and establishing authority within the pesantren community.

Islamic boarding schools in Bandung Regency play a crucial role in preserving and developing local wisdom, religious values, and enriching the religious life in the region. They also contribute to building strong character, morality, and religious understanding among the younger generation.

With a significant number of boarding schools, Ajengan, and santri, Bandung Regency has become one of the important centers for religious education in West Java. Boarding schools in this region make significant contributions to enriching the culture and religious understanding of the local community, as well as playing a role in nurturing young generations with religious competence and good character.

The Source Credibility Theory in Islamic Boarding Schools

The implementation of the Theory of Source Credibility in Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) is crucial to enhance the effectiveness of the education system. This theory emphasizes the importance of the communicator's credibility in influencing message acceptance and effectiveness. In the context of pondok pesantren, the figure of "Ajengan" (religious teacher) plays a central role as the primary communicator in the teaching and learning process. The application of the Theory of Source Credibility in pondok pesantren involves the formation and reinforcement of Ajengan's credibility as the main source of religious knowledge. Factors such as a deep understanding of religious teachings, expertise in delivering religious lessons, personal charisma, and respectful communication contribute to the development of Ajengan's credibility.

By implementing the Theory of Source Credibility, pondok pesantren can optimize the education system by strengthening Ajengan's credibility as an authoritative communicator. This can be achieved through efforts to enhance Ajengan's knowledge of religious teachings, develop interpersonal communication skills, and utilize effective teaching methods.

Furthermore, understanding the Theory of Source Credibility helps pondok pesantren build trust and engage students (santri) in the learning process. Students are more likely to accept and internalize religious messages conveyed by Ajengan, who possesses high credibility. In general, this theory outlines five factors that build authority, as shown in Figure 1.

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Figure 1.
Implementation of the Theory of Source Credibility in Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren).
Source: Adapted from William Hovland (Lowry et al., 2014).

The perception of the students towards the credibility of Ajengan refers to how the students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school perceive and evaluate Ajengan's credibility as the main communicator in the context of religious education. To obtain a comprehensive understanding, interviews with the students can provide insights into their views on Ajengan.

In interviews with the students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school, many of them stated that they consider Ajengan to be a highly credible figure in terms of religious knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings. The students respect and admire Ajengan for their expertise in delivering religious lessons in a manner that is easily understood and relevant to daily life.

Furthermore, the students also assess Ajengan's credibility based on the personal charisma possessed by Ajengan. They see Ajengan as a figure who can inspire and motivate them to delve deeper into religion. Ajengan is also considered as an exemplar who lives according to the values taught in religion.

During the interviews, the students also mentioned that Ajengan's respectful communication towards them significantly contributes to his credibility. Ajengan treats the students with politeness, patience, and understanding, making the students feel comfortable and open to asking questions and learning from Ajengan.

Overall, the students' perception of Ajengan's credibility at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school is highly positive. They see Ajengan as a reliable source of religious knowledge, possessing good communication skills, and playing a central role in their religious education. Ajengan's credibility plays an important role in influencing the acceptance of religious messages by the students, as well as enhancing their participation and engagement in the learning process at the Islamic boarding school.

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The students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school perceive Ajengan with respect and acknowledge several qualities that make Ajengan highly credible. The following is an ordered explanation of the students' perceptions of Ajengan:

The combination of religious knowledge, polite and courteous behavior, authority, and being a good role model makes Ajengan highly credible in the eyes of the students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school. This credibility contributes to Ajengan's influence in shaping the acceptance of religious messages, the students' participation in learning, and the development of positive attitudes and values within the students (explained in Table 1 below).

Table 1: Perception of Ajengan's Credibility
among Students at Sirojul Huda Islamic Boarding School

No	Credibility	Explanation
1	Proficient in Religious Knowledge	Ajengan is seen as someone with deep understanding of religious teachings and accurate knowledge.
2	Polite and Courteous	Ajengan treats students with politeness, patience, and understanding, creating a friendly environment.
3	Possessing Authority	Ajengan exudes influence and self-confidence in delivering religious lessons.
4	Being a Good Role Model	Ajengan embodies the values taught in religion, serving as an inspiring example for the students.

Surce: Resercher (2023)

The combination of religious knowledge, polite and courteous behavior, authority, and being a good role model makes Ajengan highly credible in the eyes of the students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school(Mansir & Purnomo, 2020). This credibility contributes to Ajengan's influence in shaping the acceptance of religious messages, the students' participation in learning, and the development of positive attitudes and values within the students(Alwi, 2013).

In the field of communication, perception refers to the way individuals understand, interpret, and give meaning to the messages and stimuli received from their surrounding environment. Perception is a subjective process influenced by factors such as personal experiences, values, beliefs, and social context(Broadbent, 2013).

In the context of communication, perception is crucial because each individual has a unique interpretation of the messages they receive. Perception influences how someone understands, interprets, and responds to communication. Differences in perception between the communicator and the message receiver can affect accurate understanding, proper interpretation, and the level of acceptance of the conveyed message. Communication theories, such as the previously mentioned Theory of Source Credibility, also acknowledge the importance of perception in influencing communication effectiveness. The perception of credibility of the communication source, such as Ajengan in the context of the Islamic boarding school, can impact the reception of messages by the listeners. If the communication source is perceived as credible, the conveyed message is more likely to be accepted and trusted by the receiver(Akram, 2019).

Understanding perception in the field of communication aids in designing effective communication. In the context of mass communication, for example, understanding audience perception can assist broadcasters or marketers in packaging messages that

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align with the desired interpretation and perception. In interpersonal communication, understanding perception can help individuals build strong relationships and mutual understanding by appreciating different viewpoints and interpretations(Han, 2018).

By considering perception in communication, communicators can strive to deliver messages in a clearer, more relevant manner while considering the diversity of perceptions that may exist. In this regard, understanding and acknowledging differences in perception become crucial in building effective communication and avoiding misunderstandings(Broadbent, 2013).

Impact of Ajengan's credibility

Based on in-depth interviews with the students, there is a significant impact of Ajengan's credibility on message acceptance. Here is an explanation of the impact of Ajengan's credibility on message acceptance, based on interviews with the students, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Impact of Ajengan's Credibility on Message Acceptance

No	Perception	Impact of Ajengan's Credibility
1	High Trust Level	Santri tend to have a high level of trust in Ajengan as a credible source of religious knowledge. Ajengan's credibility, built through deep religious knowledge and respectful behavior, helps enhance the trust of the santri in the messages conveyed by Ajengan. The santri accept the messages with conviction and believe in their truth.
2	Better Message Acceptance	Ajengan's credibility also influences a higher level of message acceptance. Santri are more open and receptive to the religious messages conveyed by Ajengan with a positive attitude. They perceive Ajengan as a trustworthy authority and someone who has the expertise to deliver religious messages accurately and relevantly. As a result, the santri are better able to understand and internalize these messages in their daily lives.
3	Greater Influence	Ajengan's credibility also affects the level of influence in shaping the thoughts and attitudes of the santri. Santri tend to be more influenced by the messages conveyed by Ajengan, who has high credibility. They regard Ajengan as a role model and show respect for Ajengan's authority in religious matters. Therefore, the religious messages conveyed by Ajengan have a strong influence in shaping the thoughts and attitudes of the santri towards religion.
4	Active Participation in Learning	Ajengan's credibility also impacts the active participation of the santri in the learning process. Santri who perceive Ajengan as a credible source of religious knowledge are more motivated to actively ask questions, engage in discussions, and interact with Ajengan. They feel comfortable and confident to contribute in class because they consider Ajengan as a reliable source of knowledge.

Source:Researcher (2023)

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Credibility is crucial for the success of message delivery as it influences how the message is received and trusted by the audience. When someone is perceived as credible, they are more likely to be accepted and trusted by others. In the context of communication, credibility refers to others' belief in the communicator's expertise, knowledge, integrity, and competence.

High credibility builds trust and reliability between the communicator and the audience. If the communicator is deemed credible, the message conveyed will be considered more accurate, valuable, and important. Conversely, if the communicator has low credibility, the message may be less trusted, ignored, or even rejected by the audience.

Credibility impacts the audience's perception and evaluation of the message being conveyed. If the communicator is seen as credible, the audience is more likely to be open to receiving and understanding the message effectively. They will view the communicator as an authoritative source that can be relied upon and possesses the necessary knowledge. High credibility can also motivate the audience to take action in line with the message conveyed(Adrianto, 2021).

In the context of business, marketing, and politics, credibility is key to building long-term relationships with consumers, customers, or voters. When communicators have high credibility, they can influence the behavior and attitudes of the audience more effectively. Credibility also plays a role in building a strong brand and gaining customer loyalty.

Therefore, high credibility is an essential factor in the success of message delivery. Communicators need to build and maintain their credibility through deep knowledge, integrity, transparency, and good interaction with the audience. With strong credibility, messages can be delivered more effectively, trusted by the audience, and achieve the desired impact(Agustina et al., 2018).

The Influence of Ajengan's Credibility on Students' Participation in Learning

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with the students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school, it was found that Ajengan's credibility has a significant influence on the students' participation in the learning process, as explained in Table 3.

Tabel 3. The Influence of Ajengan's Credibility on
Students' Participation in Learning

No.	Impact	Explanation
1	Motivation to Learn	Ajengan's credibility as a credible source of religious knowledge enhances the motivation of the students to learn. They feel encouraged and motivated to actively participate in lessons and develop their understanding of religion. Ajengan's expertise in delivering religious teachings effectively and accurately challenges the students and inspires them to engage actively in their learning.
2	Comfort and Confidence	Ajengan's credibility creates a comfortable and safe environment for the students to participate in their learning. The students feel confident to ask questions, engage in discussions, and share their opinions. The belief in Ajengan's expertise and knowledge makes the students

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		feel heard and valued, thus motivating them to contribute actively in class.
3	Influence as a Role Model	Ajengan's credibility as a religious authority holds significant influence in shaping the thoughts and attitudes of the students. The students are more influenced by the messages conveyed by Ajengan, who possesses high credibility. They perceive Ajengan as a good role model in practicing religion and aim to follow in their footsteps, which encourages them to be more active and engaged in religious learning.
4	Trust in the Messages	Ajengan's credibility influences the level of trust the students have in the religious messages conveyed. The students are more accepting and trusting of the religious messages delivered by Ajengan with high credibility. They believe that these messages hold value and truth that are important to be applied in their daily lives.

Source: researcher (2023).

Credibility has a significant influence on students' desire to engage in lessons. When a teacher or educator is perceived as credible by students, it creates the belief that the teacher possesses high knowledge, expertise, and integrity in the subject being taught. Students are more motivated to participate in lessons when they believe that the teacher can provide valuable and relevant knowledge. The credibility of the teacher also fosters respect and admiration for them as authorities in their field. With high credibility, students feel confident that they can acquire new knowledge and benefit from the lessons delivered by the teacher. They have trust that the teacher can assist them in achieving their learning goals(Pishghadam et al., 2019).

Conversely, if the teacher's credibility is low or questionable, students tend to lose interest and motivation in participating in the lessons. They may doubt the teacher's expertise and competence, leading to a lack of motivation to actively engage and learn. Therefore, teacher credibility plays a crucial role in creating a high desire and motivation to learn in students. Teachers need to build and maintain their credibility through deep knowledge, effective teaching skills, efficient communication, and an inspiring attitude. By having strong credibility, teachers can influence students to actively participate in the learning process and achieve better outcomes.

Similarly, in a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) setting, credibility also plays a crucial role in students' willingness to engage in learning. When an ajengan (religious teacher or scholar) is perceived as credible by the students, it enhances their motivation to participate in religious studies and activities(Pishghadam et al., 2023).

The credibility of an ajengan is built upon their deep knowledge of Islamic teachings, their moral integrity, and their ability to effectively communicate and guide students in understanding and practicing the faith. When students view the ajengan as a credible source of religious knowledge and guidance, they are more inclined to value and actively participate in the learning process.

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The role of Interpersonal Communication

The role of Interpersonal Communication plays a crucial role in building the credibility of Ajengan in the Islamic boarding school. Ajengan is regarded as having high credibility as a spiritual leader and religious teacher, and this is largely influenced by their ability to communicate interpersonally(Solihat et al., 2014). In interviews, the students revealed that Ajengan who is able to build close relationships, empathy, and mutual understanding with them have a positive impact on their perception of Ajengan's credibility. Effective interpersonal communication helps strengthen the bond between Ajengan and the students, build trust, and facilitate a better understanding of religious teachings.

Furthermore, the students also highlight the importance of Ajengan's ability to listen empathetically and provide relevant and wise advice. Students feel valued and understood when Ajengan takes the time to listen to their issues with full attention and provide appropriate guidance. This increases respect and trust in Ajengan as an authoritative communicator.

In the context of learning, good interpersonal communication also helps Ajengan effectively deliver religious lessons. They can use simple language, real-life examples, and a personal approach to explain religious concepts to the students. This makes the learning process more engaging, easy to understand, and relevant for the students, thereby enhancing Ajengan's credibility as an authoritative communicator in the context of learning in the Islamic boarding school.

Interpersonal communication is highly effective in the context of learning. Through interpersonal communication, teachers can establish close relationships with students. By building strong and understanding relationships, interpersonal communication helps create a positive and supportive learning environment.

In interpersonal communication, teachers can easily adjust their communication style to the needs and preferences of individual students. They can employ a personal approach that takes into account students' backgrounds, interests, and levels of understanding. This helps students feel valued and actively engaged in the learning process(Amrullah & Suwarjo, 2018).

Interpersonal communication also allows for more intensive information exchange between teachers and students. Teachers can provide specific and direct feedback to students, guide them individually, and respond to questions or concerns more effectively. Additionally, interpersonal communication opens up opportunities for discussion, collaboration, and interactive learning between teachers and students(Amrullah & Suwarjo, 2018). Thus, interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of learning. Through more personal communication, teachers can facilitate better understanding, increase student participation, and create an inclusive and responsive learning environment (Zebua et al., 2022).

The implications for the Development of the Learning System

Learning System in Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda from the perspective of the theory of source credibility are as follows: Building the authority of Ajengan as an authoritative communicator: It is important for the development of the learning system in the pesantren to strengthen the authority of Kiayi as a trusted and respected communicator. In this regard, factors that build Kiayi's credibility, such as a deep understanding of religious knowledge, expertise in delivering religious teachings, charisma, and respectful communication, should be considered. The learning system can provide opportunities for Ajengan to demonstrate their competence in these aspects.

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Enhancing communicative interaction between Kiayi and students: Effective interpersonal communication between Ajengan and students is crucial in building the credibility and authority of Kiayi as a teacher and spiritual leader. The learning system can support more intensive interaction between Kiayi and students through a personal approach, empathetic listening, providing relevant advice, and creating an inclusive communication environment. This will help strengthen the relationship between Kiayi and students and build trust in the context of learning.

Encouraging active and responsive participation: The learning system in the pesantren needs to encourage active student participation and respond to their needs and concerns. In the context of the theory of source credibility, active student participation in learning will reinforce their perception of Kiayi's credibility as an authoritative communicator. The learning system can provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions, collaborate, and interact with Kiayi in the learning process. One form of the layout of the learning process in the pondok pesantren, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Activities at Sirojul Huda Islamic Boarding School, Bandung Regency
Source: Satria Sunda Sakti (2022)

Integrating relevant literature and research: The development of the learning system in the pesantren can leverage relevant literature and research to support the application of the theory of source credibility. In this regard, a review of previous studies addressing Kiayi's credibility and factors influencing students' perceptions can be conducted. The use of relevant literature and research will provide a strong theoretical foundation and deeper insights into the development of the learning system.

By implementing these implications, the development of the learning system in Pondok Pesantren Sirojul Huda can be more effective in building the authority of Kiayi, enhancing communicative interaction, encouraging active student participation, and integrating relevant knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, the conclusions of this study are as follow: Ajengan's credibility is a critical element in shaping students' perceptions of religious authority. Students at Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school view Ajengan as a trusted figure with

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deep knowledge, experience, and integrity in religious matters. This perception allows Ajengan to influence students' attitudes, understanding, and behaviors effectively.

Interpersonal communication is pivotal in establishing and reinforcing Ajengan's credibility. The ability to communicate clearly, listen actively, and explain religious concepts in an accessible manner strengthens students' trust in Ajengan. These communication qualities enhance the effectiveness of the religious teachings delivered and reinforce the perception of Ajengan as a credible authority.

The credibility of Ajengan positively impacts the religious learning and character development of students. When Ajengan is perceived as a credible source, students are more attentive, receptive, and motivated to internalize and practice religious values in their daily lives. This influence is crucial in shaping students' moral and ethical behavior.

Ajengan's credibility not only facilitates a strong and respectful relationship between Ajengan and students but also contributes to the effectiveness of the learning process in the pesantren. This bond helps in molding the character and values of the students, thereby supporting the broader educational goals of Sirojul Huda Islamic boarding school and ensuring the development of a learning system that is both effective and deeply rooted in religious values.

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