

Ritual learning method for mystical ijazah at *pondok pesantren salafiyah*

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ABSTRACT

Pondok pesantren salafiyah (Islamic school) is an Islamic educational institution known for its traditional approach to Islam. The teaching of mystical science in *pondok pesantren salafiyah* includes the use of mystical *ijazah* (certification) and ritual learning methods, providing students with a unique education. This study's main focus is exploring the learning methods, processes, understanding, and ritual methods of mystical diplomas applied by *kiai* (leader of Islamic boarding school). This study aims to understand more deeply how this mystical ritual is taught and how it contributes to the spiritual development of students in *salafi* boarding schools. This research uses qualitative research techniques, participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. The results showed that practicing mystical rituals involves reading sacred texts (yellow book), *riyadah* (meditation), symbolic movements, and physical exercise. This contributes to the spiritual development of students and their introduction to mystical teachings. The research also highlights *pesantren's* unique approach to combining mystical teachings with traditional Islamic education, which supports a deeper understanding of spirituality. In addition, this study also discusses the challenges and opportunities faced by Islamic educational institutions in preserving and adapting ritual learning methods in the modern era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pondok pesantren salafiyah (Islamic boarding school) is the oldest Islamic educational institution and prioritizes understanding *salaf al sholeh* (early predecessor) in understanding Islam [1]. *Pesantren* is a traditional Islamic educational institution with a long history and an important center of religious education and intelligence for the Indonesian Muslim community; other things, *pesantren* institutions have their uniqueness and can adapt to modernity [2]. One exciting aspect of being studied is writing and transmitting knowledge in the context of a mystical science diploma in *pesantren*. Indonesian *salafiyah* Islamic boarding schools related to the transmission of mystical science are located in Banten, and the tradition of teaching mystical science has been carried out for a long time. This mysterious science can be called the science of wisdom, including the game of *debus* (traditional martial art unique). However, in 2010 this practice was declared haram (banned) by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Banten and Lampung. Nevertheless, the tradition of mysticism and *debus* is still carried out among Indonesian *salafiyah* Islamic boarding school's students. Process *ijazah* (certification) and transmission of mystical knowledge among *santri* (Islamic student)

and *kiai* (Islamic educator) in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools to understand the relationship of traditional and modern practices in contemporary Islamic education. Diplomas of mystical sciences are usually facilitated by *kiai*, highly respected religious teachers in the *salafi pesantren* system [3]. *Kiai* instructed his students to open the book taught and then continued by reading his characteristics. *Kiai* is thought to have a deep understanding of magic, which is believed to have originated from the *kitab kuning* (yellow book) [4]. As part of its teachings, *kiai* can provide its students with inscriptions known as prayer, *hizib* (prayer for salvation and rejecting calamities), *wafaq* (amulets), which are believed to meet its users' practical needs and expectations, such as the science of immunity, compassion, and merchandising [5]. The word "amulet" in Javanese culture describes an item worn or carried to ward off disease, bad luck, or other threats. *wafak* or amulet are two of the same things; which mostly consist of writings on materials containing magic such as inscriptions or iron plates. In general, *wafaq* or amulets come in three categories: alphabetic (consisting of Arabic letters), pictorial (pictures), and numeric (numbers) [6].

The role of *kiai* in transmitting mystical knowledge to students in *Salafi* boarding schools, is more deeply about the teaching and learning process of science in the context of this mystical science [7], as well as a contribution to the Islamic scientific tradition in Indonesia. A diploma is a license from someone with religious authority in specific texts and subjects, primarily related to Islamic spiritual science, directly related to mysticism or Sufism, and carried out by students in *Salafi* boarding schools. Both are carried out in weekly recitations of certain books and with *turats* (classics) [8]. The introduction of sufistic and mystical values is carried out in traditional recitation, namely by *qouliyah* (reading) both from Qur'anic literature and hadith [9]. Then explaining its meaning and purpose for the enlightenment of the souls of students in *pesantren*. More interestingly, they perform solemn mystical (magical) rituals (*uzlah*) in sacred places that have luck [10]. Another fact is that students can obtain a diploma of mysticism individually or in groups, and the most appropriate time for them to receive it is in the month of *Rabiul Awwal*, which coincides with the Prophet's mawlid, the birth of the Prophet carrying a deeper meaning to get blessings. Implementing *santri* rituals can occur in several sacred places [11].

However, this mystical science is an art that reveals strange manifestations of events. This science has existed in every age and every nation. Mysticism is an ancient science; the power of mystical beings influences how it works through words and actions [12]. In Muslim societies, it tends to have mystical views. This is because the source of their magic is believed to come from religious teachings. In the adventure genre, religious representations often incorporate mystical and magical elements [13]. People use supernatural elements to sustain life (survival), economy, love affairs, and physical power (magic).

This research focuses on teaching, understanding, practice, and rituals of mysticism among *kiai* and *santri* in *salafi* Islamic boarding schools. In addition, this study also considers the role of diplomas in the dissemination of mystical science, as well as the role of *kiai* in preserving and continuing the tradition of mystical science. This research contributes to understanding religious practices and beliefs in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Islamic education. This research aims to explore the process of ritual or abstract methods of mystical science diplomas among students in Islamic boarding schools and gain a deeper understanding of mystical practices inherited in *salafiyah* Islamic boarding schools and the role of *kiai* in transferring mystical knowledge to students as well as the part of mystical knowledge among students, as well as the role of mystical sciences research also aims to explore the differences in the process of obtaining diplomas and certifications of mysticism among different *kiai*.

2. METHOD

This qualitative research uses a case study approach in three *pondok pesantren Salafiyah* in Serang and Pandeglang regencies, Banten, Indonesia, and one *pesantren* in Muar Johor, Malaysia. The qualitative research format is shown to explain, infer conditions or symptoms of social reality, and bring the truth to the surface as characters, models, or descriptions of related phenomena, especially the learning of diplomas of mystical sciences. This study collects and analyzes data in the form of human words and deeds and does not try to calculate the data that has been obtained [14]. The data in this study were divided into primary and secondary data through observation and in-depth interviews [15]. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and observations with *kiai*, *ustadz*, and *santri*.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Pondok pesantren salafiyah center for Islamic intellectualism and mysticism

Studies on *pondok pesantren salafiyah* that have been carried out such as in Banten, West Java, or East Java have been carried out by Lukens-Bul and Dhofier [16], Bruinessen [17], and Azra [18]. These scholars discuss *pesantren* in social change; hence *pesantren* has an essential role in the Muslim community and can adapt to modernity [19]. *Pesantren* can also be called *perguron* (center religious learning and *silat*

practice) or *padepokan* (hermitage; *semedi*), two words similar to *pesantren*. Interm of language, *perguron* can be interpreted as learning (learning) with the teacher, as for the term *padepokan* according to Javanese Banten, taken from the word *depok*, with the addition of *pa* and *kan*, meaning sitting cross-legged while listening to the teacher convey his knowledge to his students. Apart from this meaning, *pesantren* were founded by a *wali* (Santos) and *ulama* (Muslim clerics), where students learn mystical and are taught intellectual and religious knowledge [20], [21]. So, in the hermitage and hermitage, a teacher and student live together to study and get a diploma or something related to *kanuragan* (magic). *Pondok* means a place used to eat and rest (dormitory) for students, while *pesantren* comes from the word *santri*, with the prefix “pe-” and the suffix “-an” which means students’ residence [22].

3.2. The role of kiai in the transmission of mysticism

In *Salafi* Islamic boarding schools, *kiai* is essential in transferring knowledge. They are widely recognized as the spiritual authorities of Islam and mystical sciences, and the *kiai* serve as mentors and caliphs in guiding students in the study of mystical sciences. The relationship between *kiai* and *santri* has a long history and cultural level, especially in the context of *Salafi pesantren*. The term “*kiai*” refers to an Islamic religious leader, teacher, or cleric [23], who usually runs *pesantren*, teaches and studies classical texts, theology, and philosophy, as well as preachers [24]. What is meant by “*santri*” is a student who studies Islamic science and practices it in *pesantren* [25]. *Kiai* is a person who has social status and symbols who are influential in organizing the unity of the group in the interior of the village. *Kiai* devotes themselves to the ummah and teach the science of Islam so that it is not subject to external threats such as secularism. The knowledge taught in *pesantren* is full of wisdom, morals, and sincerity, so teachers and students are always intertwined [26]. *Kiai* is a spiritual leader in society. *Kiai* spiritual leadership meditation, meditation, and reflection are three pillars. Inspiration, knowledge, cultural experiences, and local wisdom influence how we meditate. Self-integration, social contact, and intuition are factors in mediating behavior. At the same time, decision-making and self-adjustment are carried out through reflection [27]. *Kiai* plays an essential role in transmitting mystical knowledge in *Salafi* boarding schools. They are highly respected as spiritual leaders who have a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and mystical practices [28]. In addition, *kiai* have loyal steamers.

Thus, the trust of his followers is increasingly attached because the leader is considered to have the ability to know something that happens to his followers. Among members of the order, the term is often called *ma'rifat* [29]. In addition, *kiai* is considered to have religious beliefs and practices whose purpose is to purify teachings among the community. One of its purifications is through *dhikr*, a spiritual practice revitalizing faith. *Dhikr* can be done anywhere, at home, in the mosque, and when there is a special event, both day and night [29], [30]. Historically, the *kiai* not only had religious symbols but also *kiai* as political advisors to the sultans and governments. In his practice, *kiai* can also give diplomas of mysticism to students as politicians [31].

The upbringing of a *kiai* has several *santri*, in *pesantren*, some communities *salaf* students about specific concepts that have been very popular among them, namely the concept of the doctrine of *tafakur*, *dhikir*, and *tabaruk* (blessings); a *kiai* instills this [32]. So, in the future, the approval was obtained through the medium of *wasilah* [33]. *Santri* came to the *pesantren* at first to learn or gain knowledge, especially religious knowledge, from *kiai*; between *kiai* and *santri* interacting with each other, students understand that they are role models. Only when the students submit wholeheartedly will they get blessings from their *kiai* so that their efforts to know the truth will be achieved. A student's orientation towards the figure and personality configuration, or in other languages, is the perfect personal *muruah* (authority).

3.3. Practice and process of transmission of diploma in mystical sciences

3.3.1. Ijazah

Linguistically *ijazah* is a term derived from Arabic from the verb root “*ajaza*”, which means “to rest,” “to fill the rice field with water,” or “to quench thirst,” and to give “scientific permission or authorization” [34]. *Kiai* as a teacher (Sundanese: *digugu* = trusted and imitated), especially if the *kiai* has gone to Hajj, it is a religious symbol attached to the *kiai*, so *kiai* is a place of study and recitation. The term *ngaji* (learn) is known in the *pesantren* tradition, which describes the learning process with *kiai*. His students are *santri*, namely *santri* (pious students of religion), who usually ask for blessings from *kiai* [35]. In local tradition, the term “*ngaji*” comes from the word “*aji*,” which means noble and *Sakti* (powerful). We can prove this connection in the tradition of the Banten people with the word *aji-aji*, which means prayer, mantra (mantra), and amulet. So *ngaji* in this case, means seeking glory and magic. So *ngaji* can be interpreted as a *ijazah* is a learning activity to study classical religious books considered sacred by a student who gives himself to a *kiai* who has high charisma [36]. A *santri* who wants to practice the practice of mystical *ijazah* must first have a diploma from the *kiai* so that the knowledge provided is easy to practice. A diploma is a declaration of blessing from a *kiai* or *murshid* to his disciples to practice the path of “*suluk*”. The granting of this diploma is a form of legitimacy from which the student is considered to have mastered the knowledge (*elmu*) he learned [37].

Several methods are used in teaching mystical science diplomas in the *pesantren* tradition. First, give a record of prayers, namely the mystical knowledge diploma by *kiai*, who has mystical knowledge by delivering it directly to a student. *Kiai* usually does this method of inheritance of expertise but is rarely done if done on condition that a student is considered worthy to receive it. This eligibility criterion is an adult student considered capable of rational thinking, good behavior, and maintaining his faith creed. In Martin's view, this matter is passed on to senior students who have been reciting with the *kiai* for a long time, so the *kiai* is willing to give it. In addition, the *kiai* also gives authority and appoints other people (other *santri*) to be their caliphs, usually senior students. *Khalifa* can be interpreted as a representative and also a person who guides students in studying. However, there is also a confession from queuing person called *Kholil* that he got a diploma with complex waterproof knowledge, and he should not spread this science diploma. If this diploma is not heeded, then there will be an accident. See chart flow Figure 1.

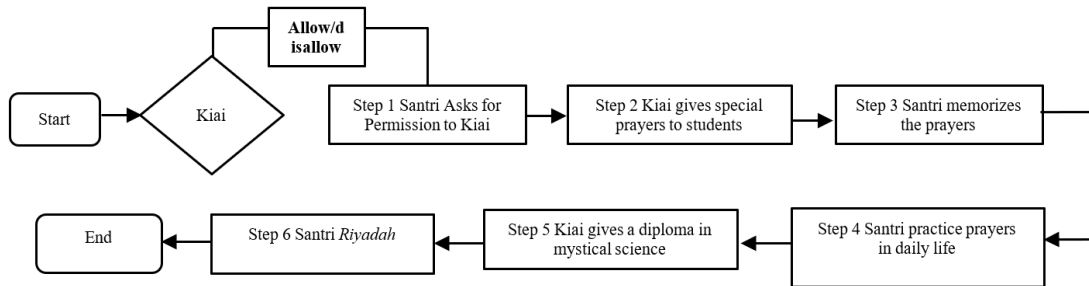


Figure 1. Steps of obtaining *ijazah* mystical science by giving prayers to *santri*

Second, according Abah KH. Harits, meet the *kiai* to ask permission and get a diploma to take a hydrogen chloride (HCl) bath. Suppose the *kiai* has permitted it. In that case, students are required to bring what has been given by the *kiai*, as a condition, including one rooster, preparing seven kinds of food (for *selamatan/prayer*), and HCl (for bathing). During the intermission process, it is required not to pass through the after maghrib/must not enter the time of Isha. After the ceremony, the certificate taker is sworn in by the *kiai* with a certain reading (the practice reading prayer of an HCl) and cannot sleep at night. *Subuh* (After the morning/morning prayer), the student has sworn back with the task of the practice that it is true that the night does not sleep. If the student sleeps, it is feared that the body will be peeled off by HCl because he violated his vow. After bathing, the student can sleep again during the day or the following days and finally practice the practice given by *kiai* in the form of practice that is read after every prayer and fasting for 7 days, and this *ijazah* is not done by just anyone. See flow chart Figure 2.

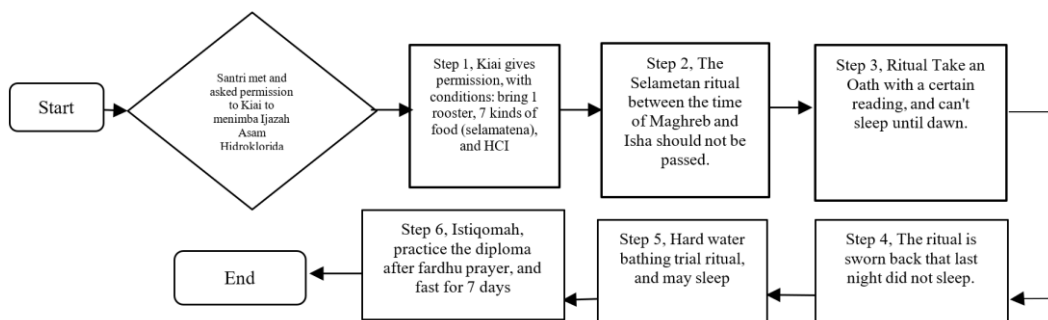


Figure 2. Steps *ijazah* mystical science immune to HCl

Third, by *qoul* (reading), quotations or summaries of mystical books (yellow book) follow the *kiai* reading, see Figure 1. In the realm of *pesantren*, the diploma of mysticism is in the context of achieving a student's life after graduation. The mystical sciences usually inherited by the *kiai* are Hizb-hizb (mystical and religious prayers) [38], virtue, *kebatinan* (mystical), for the strength of the body (physical), to obtain the power of punch (excellent), *kontak* (Ziyad), *asih* (love: *mahabbah*) and authority (to the authority of an). Just as a *Sufi* student gets a diploma of *asih* (love: *mahabbah*), which is much-loved by the students because considering that the students are still teenagers approaching adulthood, this tendency is very persistent in

practicing (*riyadah*), even he received help of more than ten diplomas, in addition, he also got a certificate of physical strength to prepare himself for life, five years he performed rituals and *riyadah* fasting every day except fasting which is prohibited in Islamic teachings, see Figure 3.

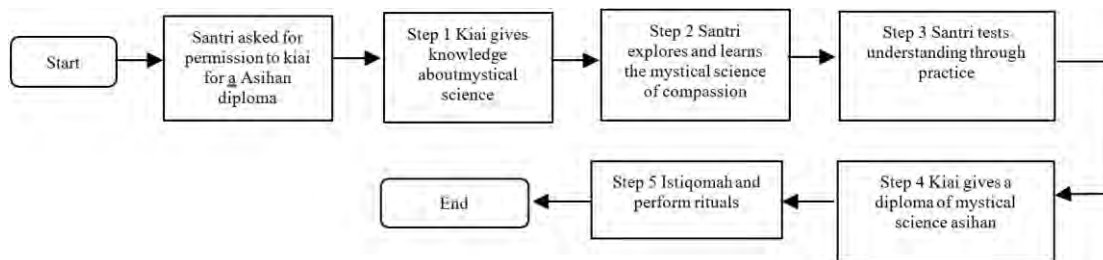


Figure 3. Steps of obtaining *ijazah* mystical science *asihan* (*mahabbah*; love)

Most students, when studying mysticism, come to several *kiai* in their residences in *pesantren*. Some students practice diplomas of mystical science from quotations from various books of wisdom written and quoted by *kiai*. This quote is written on paper and titled *Ijazah 'ilm al-hikmah*. The students practice wisdom from this *kiai* record diploma book because it is more efficient and practical than the original book (*mambaul hikmah*, *khazinatul asror*, and *shamsul ma'arif*). These brief notes are usually in Sundanese and Javanese Arabic Pegon. It seems that Ahmad Sufei revealed that in the quotation notes of writings, various kinds of diplomas, such as *hizb-hizb*, *asihan mahabbah* (love), making *wafaq*, selling merchandise, looking for a mate, getting blessings, and so on. In line with Marsim a practitioner of mysticism, he revealed that he got a diploma in the science of opening the veil, which is being able to see other mystical creatures. Marsim, one of the artists of Petan Wewe (Banten *ondel-ondel*), who needed help in the technique of summoning mystical beings, he received certificates from some parents who could see mystical creatures, see Figure 4.

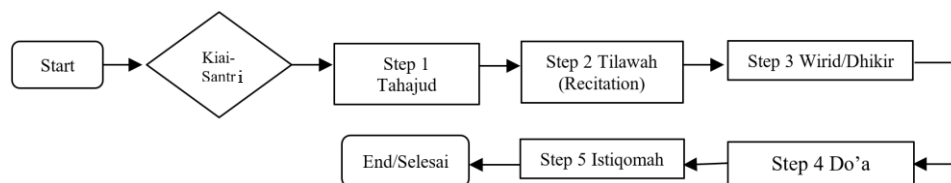


Figure 4. Ritual learning method for mystical *ijazah*

3.3.2. Mystical *ijazah* with dowry

Not all students who come to *kiai* will get what they want. Keep in mind that the requirements for acquiring wisdom are complicated. On the other hand, *kiai* determine the requirements only based on the maturity of the students, and there are also *kiai* that require a few carats of grams of gold called dowry. There are also *kiai* that only need a few thousand coins, even using coins in the form of *gobang* (coins). Rarely found, most *kiai* require a gram of gold carat and dowry. The inheritance and diploma of wisdom carried out by the *Kiai* are different. Certificates can be done *kiai* in the form of energy transfer to students; there are also *kiai* who only recite the prayers of the Prophet and Al-Fatihah to the students, who attract *kiai* to be passed on by reading *sholawat* and surah Al-Fatihah, and the students while opening each page of the book, on which he will receive a diploma, and on each page, the student recites the prayers of the Prophet (*sholawat*) and Al-Fatihah until the end of the book's pages.

According to Dani (*Santri* from Kalimantan), one of the students of the *salafiyah* Islamic boarding school revealed that he asked for a book certificate from a *kiai* named *kiai A* and was required to give a dowry of 10 grams of 24-carat pure gold as much as ten books of wisdom. If you want more readers, the gold dowry also increases; one book is priced at 1 (one) gram of pure gold. This is done for several days to a month, in addition to other conditions such as performing five daily prayers, *hajat*, prayer, *wirid*, and fasting. The use of this dowry is a symbol of strengthening so that students take wisdom and valuable knowledge.

The books of wisdom certified by a *kiai* to the students are not to be studied, but the books are wrapped in wrapping paper and stacked according to the first order certified and the book's thickness. The owner's name is written on the top of this package, with beautiful naskh calligraphy. This book package is stored in a place

other students need help to reach. Respondent Tubagus, one of the senior students of Pondok pesantren Salafiyah NH Baros Serang Indonesia, took the package from the roof of his *kobong* (room). When the author ordered to open it, he was unwilling because this was a testament to the *kiai* that validated and should not be disclosed until the end of his life. In the packaging of these books, for a student, it is a sacredness in itself, even more interesting; in the packaging of these books, in each stack of books, there are several thousand books, the smallest of which is IDR 1,000 to IDR 100,000 (one hundred thousand rupiah), and several grams of 24-carat gold.

In line with what was revealed by Sa'du, a student at Waringin Kurung Serang, he received a certificate from a *kiai* in Rangkasbitung, Indonesia. He told the process of making the diploma, at first, he was ordered by the *kiai* to open a page of the book; every time he opened the page, he read Al-Fatihah, and on it was placed a dowry of 10 grams of pure gold. After completing the diploma, Sa'du admitted that he was immediately tested for the efficacy of the knowledge he had gained. Sa'du was tested with a machete in his hand and stomach, but he felt no pain or blood. This is for Sdk because he believes in Allah that the machete will not hurt him.

While his friend was tested by his *kiai*, because he hesitated, a machete was stuck in his hand, finally bled, and the *kiai* immediately rubbed his hand, and then the blood and skin healed as before. This belief arose because he had received a certificate in the form of a book. The more book certificates he had, Sa'du felt the more and more guests came to ask for his help, such as guests who intended to sell land that sold quickly, help come to women who liked their guests, and so on. But Sa'du said there was a bit of confusion because he had always learned logic from his university. The process of teaching wisdom and magical powers in *pesantren* is enjoyable. Students are required to give dowry (gold/money) and buy books after completing lessons because this is their primary goal in studying. Regardless of whether the knowledge taught by the *kiai* is practical, the students test and apply it with their belief in Allah SWT.

3.3.3. Rituals, *riyadah* and *mujahadah*

To acquire the power of mysticism, it is necessary to perform *riyadah* (the practice of piety) and *mujahadah* (the practice of askesis, dhikr, and spiritual struggle through the Sufi path) in places that are safe and undisturbed by others [10]. In order to attain the power of mysticism, one must engage in the practices of *riyadah* (the cultivation of piety) and *mujahadah* (the practice of self-discipline, remembrance of God, and spiritual battle along the Sufi path) in secluded and secure locations, free from any disturbances caused by others [39]. These places are part of nature that humans can access. While some people practice *riyadah* and *mujahadah*, both *kiai* and *santri*, there is no boundary between the realm of the spirit and the nature of the world. They may encounter beings other than humans while performing this *riyadah*. The four places that are considered sacred and suitable for *uzlah* have various motives and have their meanings for those who practice *riyadah* [40].

3.4. The significance of mystical practices in Islamic education

Mystical practices in Islamic education are essential in understanding religion. Muslim scholars believe that mystical practices influence the individual on his god and more to understand the spiritual values of Islam [41]. In the context of modern and traditional education, mystical rituals will always occur (prevalent) in the practice of this mystical diploma. This will affect students and students in increasing spiritual values and philosophy and building community morality [42]. In the context of modern and traditional education, mystical rituals will always occur (prevalent) in the practice of this mystical diploma. This will affect students and students in increasing spiritual values and philosophy and building community morality.

3.5. Implications for Islamic education in Indonesia

The practice of mysticism carried out by the world of education, both modern and traditional (*pesantren*), has implications. First, the importance of the role of *kiai* in promoting the practice of mystical science diplomas as Islamic science. *Kiai's* mastery of traditional teaching, including mystical science diplomas, is essential for Islamic education [43]. Second, the importance of integrating traditional and contemporary practices in Islamic education. Traditional practices should not be ignored because they are essential to Islamic education. Third, some orthodox Islamic scholars view mystical practices as forbidden teachings. Another part is that mystical practices among students are an essential part of Islamic education, especially in Indonesia, which has been known for a long time.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on findings in the field, almost all *santri* at the *pondok pesantren salafiyah* want to obtain an *ijazah* in mystical (magic) science from *kiai*. The transmission of mystical knowledge to students from *kiai* is very difficult for *santri*. Transferring the learning of mystical (magi) in *pesantren* can be referred to as a diploma. A student who is not directly graduated by a *kiai*, namely by studying alone from several books

without a teacher, is believed not to achieve efficacy, his knowledge will not be blessed and endanger himself. *Ijazah* is a symbol of giving or a sign that he can convey the knowledge he has received.

There are several forms of certificates of *laduni* knowledge for students, namely through the direct provision of *kiai*, but with certain conditions so that *santri* gets knowledge, first, some only read the writing quoted by the *kiai* while shaking the *santri's* hand. Second, the *kiai* ordered to read the book that was opened on every page, but when the *santri* opened it, the *kiai* only read the *salawat* to the Prophet (PBUH), Al-Fatihah, and the book that had been certified - then wrapped it like a gift. Third, the *kiai* inherits occult knowledge by directly transferring the knowledge (*ziyad*) into the body of the *santri*.

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