

Strengthening Religious Moderation Through the Core Values of Islamic Boarding School Education

Miftahul Huda¹

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung, Jl. Soekarno Hatta No. 752, Bandung,
West Java, Indonesia
miftah.elhuda@umbandung.ac.id

ABSTRACT: *This research explores how the core values embedded in Islamic boarding school education contribute to developing a moderate and inclusive form of Islam. This study will focus on the impact of these values on individuals within the pesantren environment and, consequently, on broader societal dynamics. The approach employed in this research is qualitative, precisely a literature review type, which is a problem-solving method that seeks data sources, both primary and secondary, in the form of books, journals, essays, articles, and other document data. Data analysis in this study used content analysis techniques. The study results found that Islamic boarding school education is a vital moral force in Indonesia's education system, shaping unique social values like local wisdom within its distinct subculture. The research highlights strengthening these values as a novel foundation for Islamic moderation, presenting two education models. The innovative use of social construction theory identifies stages in value transmission, habitualization, and transformative shifts, enriching discourse on Islamic education. Urging a redefinition of education, the study emphasizes the coexistence of Islamic values with global trends. Pursuing moderate Islamic education aligns with togetherness, justice, tolerance, consultation, and social liberation, marking a significant stride in educational research and practice. This research explores the process of transmitting social values in Islamic boarding schools with a conceptual foundation of moderate Islamic education, emphasizing an inclusive paradigm for Islamic values alongside global trends.*

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana nilai-nilai inti yang tertanam dalam pendidikan pesantren berkontribusi dalam mengembangkan bentuk Islam yang moderat dan inklusif. Kajian ini akan fokus pada dampak nilai-nilai tersebut terhadap individu di lingkungan pesantren dan, akibatnya, pada dinamika masyarakat yang lebih luas. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif, tepatnya jenis kajian literatur, yaitu suatu metode pemecahan masalah dengan mencari sumber data baik primer maupun sekunder berupa buku, jurnal, esai, artikel, dan data dokumen lainnya. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan teknik analisis isi. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa pendidikan pesantren merupakan kekuatan moral yang vital dalam sistem pendidikan di Indonesia, yang membentuk nilai-nilai sosial yang unik seperti kearifan lokal dalam

¹  orcid id: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8644-8815>

subkulturnya yang khas. Penelitian ini menyoroti penguatan nilai-nilai ini sebagai landasan baru bagi moderasi Islam, dengan menghadirkan dua model pendidikan. Penggunaan teori konstruksi sosial yang inovatif mengidentifikasi tahapan dalam transmisi nilai, pembiasaan, dan pergeseran transformatif, sehingga memperkaya wacana pendidikan Islam. Mendesak adanya redefinisi pendidikan, studi ini menekankan pada koeksistensi nilai-nilai Islam dengan tren global. Mengejar pendidikan Islam moderat sejalan dengan kebersamaan, keadilan, toleransi, konsultasi, dan pembebasan sosial, menandai kemajuan signifikan dalam penelitian dan praktik pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggali proses transmisi nilai-nilai sosial dalam pesantren dengan landasan konseptual pendidikan Islam moderat, menekankan paradigma inklusif untuk nilai-nilai Islam berdampak dengan tren global.

Keywords: *Religious Moderation, Core Values, Pesantren Education.*

Received: September 24, 2023; Revised: December 25, 2023; Accepted: January 25, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

As Indonesia's oldest Islamic educational institution, *pesantren* has demonstrated its significance in the midst of community life, and its presence continues to play a vital and dynamic role up to the present day (Fauzi, 2018). This is rooted in the social values system established by *pesantren*, which serves as a universal framework reflecting Islamic education in Indonesia. The Islamic boarding school phenomenon holds multifaceted significance on a global, regional, and local scale. Globally, Islamic boarding schools, often called *pesantren*, represent vital components of the Islamic educational landscape. These institutions serve as focal points for disseminating religious teachings and cultural values, contributing to the broader global conversation on Islamic education (Bukhory, 2016; Zarkasyi, 2020).

Regionally, Islamic boarding schools influence the social and religious fabric of their specific geographic areas (Hamidah & Chasannudin, 2021)s. They often function as local hubs for religious scholarship, community engagement, and the preservation of cultural traditions. Regionally, these schools become integral to shaping the identity of the communities they serve. At the local level, the impact of Islamic boarding schools is deeply ingrained in the daily lives of individuals and communities. These institutions become not only centres of learning but also critical contributors to the local ethos, influencing attitudes, behaviours, and social norms (Muhyiddin, 2023).

The social values system in *pesantren* is the result of the global thinking and aspirations of the kyai (Islamic scholars and leaders) within *pesantren* about Islamic education, drawing from the Quran, Hadith, and local wisdom, in alignment with the multicultural socio-cultural context of Indonesian society (Hadi & Anggraeni, 2021). Therefore, internalizing these values is expected to serve as the foundational principles for maintaining Islamic moderation in Indonesia, enabling *pesantren* education to contribute to peace in the world, in line with the vision of Islam as a blessing to all of humanity (Fauzi, 2018).

Hence, the comprehensive internalization of these values is expected to give rise to a new paradigm regarding establishing a moderate (*wasathan*) Islamic educational institution (Surawan et al., 2022). This would be achieved through the *pesantren's*

values system as a pillar of Islamic education, hoping to create a more open and inclusive Islamic educational institution such as the pluralism camp program (Huda et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the *pesantren* values system highly regards the principle of balance or the middle path (*wasathiyah*), aiming to eliminate excessive extremism. In this context, balance is an integral part of attitudes such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), togetherness (*itima'iyah*), consultation (*syura*), and justice (*'adalah*) within the diverse fabric of society (Pranata & Sesmiarni, 2022). Consequently, Islamic moderation serves as a solution to the presence of two polarities within religion, namely the ultra-conservative or extreme right-wing pole and the liberal or extreme left-wing pole on the other side.

Substantively, social and religious life is fundamentally intertwined with Indonesian identity, valuing universal humanity in line with the diversity of Indonesian society. As a whole, Indonesia is home to many ethnic groups and sub-ethnicities. The form of this diversity is not negotiable but must be accepted and understood as part of the will of Allah Swt (Mun'im, 2021). In this context, religious moderation is understood as a perspective, attitude, and behaviour that takes a middle-ground position (*wasathniyah* or *wasath*).

Sociologically, religious moderation fundamentally emerged as an antithesis to the development of extremist Islam, which monopolizes its truth and that of its group as a manifestation of God's truth. Some Islamic groups consider themselves the only ones who are right and view all others as wrong. This underscores the importance of religious moderation in today's diverse society (Malik et al., 2021).

Based on the analysis of previous research, a study conducted by Nurdin and Naqiyyah focuses on the aspect of the religious moderation model based on the *salaf*-based *pesantren*. The study finds that Al-Anwar's religious moderation model involves a Salaf-based education system with *turāth*-derived materials. This, coupled with the influential kiai, effectively instils moderate attitudes in '*santri*' and the community. Religious moderation in the *pesantren* is realized through '*santri*' behaviours guided by two principles: acquiring specialized and general knowledge and addressing social issues by referring to the nation's four pillars (Nurdin & Naqiyah, 2019). Furthermore, Suprpto's study is related to the Integration of Religious Moderation in the Development of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum. This research produces a model for implementing religious moderation education through the development of the PAI curriculum to present a moderate Islamic movement among students that teaches (1) building tolerance among different groups of students, both outside Islam and within Islam; (2) spreading peace in their social environment; (3) prioritizing interfaith dialogue and (4) instilling openness with outside parties and 4) rejecting hate speech (hoaxes) both inside and outside schools. This study recommends teaching and practising religious moderation among students to present moderate Islamic movements and habituation of noble morals (Suprpto, 2020).

Aziz's research is related to the roots of religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools. The results stated that in *tanwirul afkar* magazine, it can be seen that they are very moderate. The Fiqh that they convey is seen not only as a product but also as a process, which is why their reasoning power usually always appears. The proposition is not only textual, but it is also contextual. Therefore, from this good struggle with various kinds of *fiqh madzhab* and strengthened by the concept of *ushul fiqh*, they mastered a moderate character formed well (Aziz, 2020). Finally, Jumhur's research is related to

the Internalization of Religious Moderation in the Curriculum of Islamic Boarding Schools; the result stated that internalizing religious moderation in the *pesantren* curriculum can answer the needs that are currently becoming problematic today as extremism and radicalism (Jumhur & Wasilah, 2023).

The originality of the research lies in its distinctive approach to strengthening religious moderation within Islamic boarding schools by focusing on the internalization of core values in the curriculum. While prior studies, such as those by Nurdin and Naqiyyah, concentrated on the effectiveness of a Salaf-based education system, the present research expands beyond this model. It specifically explores how core values are internalized within the *pesantren* curriculum, offering a unique and nuanced perspective on the mechanisms for instilling moderation. In contrast to Suprpto's emphasis on integrating religious moderation into the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum, this study hones in on the core values embedded in *pesantren* education. Furthermore, Aziz's investigation into the roots of religious moderation and Arifin's focus on countering extremism underscore the contemporary relevance of the research. The concentration on internalizing these core values within the curriculum emerges as a distinctive and comprehensive means to reinforce religious moderation, providing an original contribution to the academic discourse on this subject.

II. METHOD

The approach employed in this research is a qualitative research approach, precisely a literature review type, which is a problem-solving method that seeks data sources, both primary and secondary, in the form of books, journals, essays, articles, and other document data. The more sources used as research materials, the better the results produced. Various literature sources are related to strengthening religious moderation through the core values of Islamic boarding school education. Data analysis in this study used content analysis techniques (Creswell, 2012).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A Brief Examination of Religious Moderation: 4 Indicators of Success

Religious moderation is an understanding of religion that positions itself in the middle ground, not leaning towards fundamentalism (right-wing) or liberalism (left-wing). In the context of *wasatiyyah* in Islam, this understanding fundamentally aligns with the principles of religion that guide efforts to create a balanced life (Rosada & Shonhaji, 2023).

In essence, the term balance refers to equilibrium in practising the teachings of Islam, which is crucial for all Muslims to comprehend. With a balanced understanding of Islamic teachings, an individual steers clear from an emotionally charged inner state, as a moderate and reasonable religious attitude governs it. When religious behaviour is controlled by anger, it is inevitable that the person is being dominated by their desires and wrath, leading to potential imprudence in both behaviour and actions, especially towards groups with differences.

The rapid proliferation of diverse religious interpretations from various groups, each with distinct ideologies, whether related to narrow religious claims of truth or agendas stemming from specific political ideologies, must be examined thoroughly and

attentively. The emergence of these various religious perspectives challenges religious moderation, notably centred around how these ideologies interpret spiritual teachings. This condition raises particular concerns for advocates of religious restraint, especially the government, particularly the ministry of religious affairs of the republic of Indonesia (Singgih, 2023).

The focal point of religious moderation prioritizes justice and balance in understanding spiritual teachings, which is evident in indicators when the religious perspective aligns with the acceptance of values, culture, and nationalism. This religious perspective does not reject the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), emphasizing communal harmony in facing internal differences among fellow Muslims and external differences with followers of different religions. This religious understanding underscores a stance of tolerance for the progress of the nation and the state, rooted in the spirit of diversity (Singgih, 2023). Based on this reality, the indicators of religious moderation to be fostered include expressions of 1) national commitment, 2) tolerance, 3) opposition to radicalism and violence, and 4) accommodation of local culture (Ropi, 2019).

National Commitment

An individual's religious moderation indicators can be observed by the extent of their national commitment, including the responsibility to accept the nation's principles outlined in the 1945 Constitution and its regulations. Minister of Religious Affairs Lukman Hakim Saifuddin emphasizes the importance of national commitment as one of the indicators of religious moderation. He states that "practising religious teachings is equivalent to fulfilling the duties as a citizen, just as fulfilling the duties as a citizen is one form of practising religious teachings."

Tolerance

Tolerance, as an attitude towards differences, is a crucial foundation of democracy. This is grounded in the notion that democracy can only function when those involved can withhold their opinions while simultaneously accepting the views of others. Therefore, the maturity of a country's democracy can be gauged by the extent of tolerance within its society. If tolerance is high, the nation tends to be more democratic, and vice versa. Tolerance is not limited solely to differences in religious beliefs but also to differences in gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and so forth.

Opposition to Radicalism and Violence

Radicalism and violence, from the perspective of religious moderation, can result from a narrow understanding of spiritual teachings. This leads to the emergence of attitudes and expressions from individuals or groups inclined to employ violent methods to effect changes in the social and political order. The violence referred to here is not only physical but also non-physical. One example is accusing individuals or groups with different understandings of being deviant without being based on valid theological reasons (Nugroho et al., 2023).

Accommodation of Local Culture

Behaviour and religious practices that accommodate local culture can be used to assess the extent to which spiritual understanding is willing to accommodate local culture and traditions. Individuals with a moderate attitude are generally more open to accepting local culture and traditions in their religious behaviour as long as it does not contradict

the fundamental principles of spiritual teachings. The flexibility of one's understanding is marked by their willingness to accept behaviours and practices that emphasize normative truth paradigms and positive contextual paradigms.

Internalization of *Pesantren* Education Values

In reality, the social role of *pesantren* in society is of utmost importance, and it is expected to bring about significant changes. Therefore, sociologically, this role is intricately linked to the values system that *pesantren* has established, serving as social capital to influence social actions and behaviours, including promoting Islamic moderation (Zakariyah et al., 2022). Values are interpreted as beliefs within the context of an institution concerning an individual's role in what should be done and left undone (Mulyana, 2023).

Furthermore, values are also a process of interpretation and assigning meaning to the objective reality of objects in social life. The construction of social values within *pesantren* is developed through the thoughts of kiai (Islamic scholars and leaders) regarding things they consider important in life. In this context, values are a belief system that serves as the foundation for building social behaviour. Therefore, internalising social values within the *pesantren* tradition as a subculture of *pesantren* education is believed to influence individuals' behaviour and social actions (Ma'arif & Nabila, 2020).

The internalization of these values is expected to serve as social capital for *pesantren* education, fostering positive energy in the form of spiritual inspiration and acting as a means of purification and promoting actual human values. Therefore, internalising these values is a logical and appropriate choice in promoting moderate Islamic education. As a result, the role of *pesantren* is expected to shape social conditions amidst the diversity of pluralistic society through the paradigm of reasonable Islamic education, teaching values of brotherhood, tolerance, and humanism (Farida, 2015).

In this way, the portrayal of moderate Islamic education embodies social values constructed with wisdom to promote harmony and peace amidst the diversity (*ta'adudiyyah*) of Indonesian society. Thus, education with a reasonable paradigm as an Islamic education system is the actualization of the social values system established by *pesantren*, and it plays a crucial role in contemporary Islamic education. Therefore, education is an effort to influence and guide individual actions, especially in countering radicalization in Indonesia, through the shared values upheld by *pesantren* (Ma'arif & Nabila, 2020).

The portrayal of moderate Islamic education is expected to bring about social change in the diverse society through the values of the Quran and Hadith (Mahmud, 2022; Musyarrofah & Zulhannan, 2023). Thus, this values system should foster attitudes of peace, brotherhood, compassion (*mahabbah*), togetherness (*ijtima'iyyah*), equality (*musawah*), justice (*'adalah*), and fraternity (*ukhuwah*). This social capital is expected to strengthen Islamic education and be a centre of Islamic civilization in Indonesia (Rijal et al., 2023). To achieve these ideal aspirations, several reaffirmations regarding the internalization of *pesantren* values as a system of moderate Islamic education are needed, including the following steps: 1) Shifting the paradigm of Islamic education from a literal and formalistic approach to a contextual and dialogical one, 2) Developing Islamic education towards an ideological-dialogical direction, 3) Restoring the fundamental structure of Islamic education through interpretations that align with current social realities. The existence of Islamic education is driven by the manifestation

of values reflected in the Quran and Hadith as the primary sources that must be realized in social life.

Therefore, moderate Islamic education is not merely understood as the transfer of knowledge but rather as how expertise and experience can be applied in social reality. Islamic education positions itself as a driver of social change, emphasizing the importance of human values.

Strengthening Religious Moderation Through the Core Values of *Pesantren*

The significance of *pesantren* education demands a fundamental change in all areas in line with global challenges, including the influence of liberalism and fundamentalism within society (Thoriquttyas et al., 2020). Therefore, the role of *pesantren* education is expected to be dynamic and at the forefront of providing social and cultural enlightenment through the universal vision of Islam (Fauzi, 2018). As Indonesia's oldest Islamic education system, *pesantren* education possesses a values system rooted in local wisdom (local wisdom) as social capital in teaching Islamic moderation in Indonesia, in line with the social realities of Indonesia's pluralistic society (Astuti et al., 2020).

In this context, Islam calls for various fundamental changes by providing an open space for dialogue and promoting humane values such as compassion (*mahabbah*), togetherness (*ijtima'iyyah*), equality (*musawah*), justice (*'adalah*), and brotherhood towards others (*ukhuwah*). Departing from this context, there is a need to integrate and build moderate Islamic education through these social values using a social construction approach involving the dialectics of externalization and the objectification of internalization. Based on Minhaji's research, integration can be implemented through two methods: First, the internalization of values at the additive level (addition) and the transformative level (change). Second, the transformation patterns of value dimensions, including (1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process (cultural construction in knowledge), (3) an equality of pedagogy (adjustment of teaching methods), (4) culturally sensitive teaching strategies (interaction in teaching), and (5) prejudice reduction in instructional (Minhaji et al., 2020).

In the perspective of the theory of social construction of reality by Peter L. Berger and Luckmann, the concept of the dialectics of externalization, objectivation, and internalization is used to interpret and understand the values of local wisdom in *pesantren* as a form of moderate Islamic education (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). Therefore, externalization examines how the social value system can be constructed based on the scholarly tradition of *pesantren* that draws from the Qur'an and Hadith. This process shows how individuals can shape social reality through externality and make it objective (Rusli et al., 2022). This perspective births a value system within the *pesantren* culture as something institutionalized.

In social construction theory, the strengthening of *pesantren* values is believed to be a product constructed by each individual within the *pesantren*, influenced by the social conditions surrounding them. This perspective is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as something created through individuals' roles and social actions, making them the determinants of their social world based on their will. The social construction, through externalization, objectivation, and internalization, is used to explain how the actions and roles of individuals in the *pesantren* can give rise to a value system as a part of what they create for example through class-based design, school culture-based design and organization-based design (Arifin & Silvia, 2020).

According to Berger, social institutions are created, maintained, or changed through the interactive actions between individuals and social reality, as everything is essentially built within subjective definitions through an interactive dialectical process. Objectivation can occur through repeated affirmations given by others with the exact personal purpose. Generally, humans create the social world based on its symbolic meanings, encompassing a comprehensive worldview and providing legitimacy to social actions through the intended meanings according to social reality. The process of externalization is understood as the value system being a product of an individual's social role, generating positive energy that can influence the actions of other individuals while also serving as the primary asset for building a portrait of moderate and inclusive *pesantren* education (Mundiri & Bariroh, 2018).

This is where the importance of the social value system in question lies, as it significantly influences the dynamics of social life in society. The existence of these values continues to evolve from generation to generation as a human-made product (Chotimah et al., 2022). Although these values may never appear ideally in providing the best for humanity, it is through such processes that, on the one hand, the matters considered good can be maintained in human life (Husna & Thohir, 2020).

Strengthening values becomes social capital for *pesantren* to build a moderate Islamic education model (Bosra & Umiarso, 2020). In reality, the role of Islamic boarding schools has shown its significance in social life through the value system it has established (Buchori & Fakhri, 2023; Ikhwan, 2017). The habitualization of these social values constitutes a set of universal meanings and serves as social capital to drive, motivate, influence, and generate positive social actions in individuals through several approaches, including:

1. Transmitting the entire religious social value system, including monotheism, tolerance, justice, and brotherhood, into the curriculum, as the curriculum is fundamentally seen as a crucial part of the learning process capable of influencing individuals' social behaviour and serving as a means of cultural domination and control to determine graduates and shape the ideology of students (Dakir & Anwar, 2020).
2. Prioritizing dialogic methods in teaching as part of the belief system ultimately serves as legitimacy for change within society. This teaching model focuses not only on the transformation of knowledge but also on the transformation of attitudes.
3. Replacing indoctrination-based teaching patterns by considering individuals as learning subjects who are not taken for granted (Abror, 2020).
4. Eliminating the dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge, recognizing that the paradigm of knowledge is not value-free but open to evaluation. Teaching religion through learning should encompass both traditional aspects and rationality.
5. Shifting from an indoctrination paradigm to a participative one, allowing space for each individual to think critically, dynamically, and innovatively (Rohman & Muhid, 2022).
6. Changing from an ideological paradigm to a scientific one based on revelation, granting the human intellect the freedom to explore, research, observe, and discover knowledge.

7. Transitioning from theoretical approaches to contextual ones, aligning with the conditions of a pluralistic society. The human intellect has limitations despite the significant capabilities of reason in the thinking process, reasoning, conceptualization, and imagination to discover new knowledge.

The steps mentioned above are part of an effort to cultivate individual behaviour through *pesantren's* values system (belief system), with the hope that individuals can become more open amidst societal diversity. Therefore, the social values of *pesantren* encourage the emergence of individual social behaviours that have a global perspective and accept variety, eliminating claims to absolute truth and blaming other groups. In this context, *pesantren* has indeed proven to play a significant role in various aspects of life and bring about substantial changes amid Indonesia's diverse society.

IV. CONCLUSION

Islamic boarding school education grapples with significant challenges in the dynamic landscape of global trends. Yet, its profound impact on Indonesian society marks it as a crucial moral force within the nation's education framework. As the final bastion of morality, these institutions contribute to academic learning and the cultivation of distinctive social values, such as local wisdom, creating a unique subculture within the tradition of Islamic boarding schools. The internalization of these values is of particular interest, recognized as a novel foundation crucial for advancing Islamic moderation in Indonesia. Within the broader context, the exploration of moderate Islamic education unfolds through two models: one as a beacon of social enlightenment and the other intricately woven into the socio-cultural tapestry of Indonesia's pluralistic society. The application of social construction theory emerges as a novel approach, indispensable for universalizing Islamic boarding school values. This involves stages encompassing the transmission of religious and social values in the curriculum, the habitualization of these values, and a transformative shift from indoctrination to a participatory educational approach, fostering critical thinking and innovation. This research pioneers the foundation of moderate Islamic education by emphasizing the inclusion of Islamic values in global dynamics, promoting the principles of togetherness, justice, tolerance and social liberation, and recording significant progress in educational discourse.

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