



Strengthening Religious Moderation through Religious Education Based on Local Wisdom of *Pesantren* in Madura and the *Tapal Kuda* Region

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Abstract

Keywords:

Religious Moderation;
Local Wisdom;
Pesantren in Madura;
Tapal Kuda.

This study examines strengthening religious moderation through religious education based on the local wisdom among the Pesantren in Madura and Tapal Kuda regions. This study is a field study conducted based on qualitative research. Based on the analysis of field data, this study found that strengthening religious moderation through local wisdom values of pesantren in Madura and the Tapal Kuda region requires three elements, namely the existence of kiai, santri, and alumni, along with their social networks. These three elements are inseparable from Islamic boarding school life in educational activities and preaching. In strengthening religious moderation, all three play central and strategic roles and functions. They generally carry out these roles and functions in two approaches at once. First, the structural approach is carried out by strengthening moderation at the institutional level, in this case, education, and implementing teaching activities. Second, the cultural approach that strengthens religious moderation among pesantren in Tapal Kuda is carried out through cultural methods. The artistic process in question includes two things, namely religious understanding, and rituals in pesantren, where the majority of religious paradigms among pesantren in the Tapal Kuda region of Madura adhere to the knowledge of Ahlu sunah wal jamaah an-Nahdliyyah.

Abstrak:

Kata Kunci:

Moderasi Beragama;
Kearifan Lokal; Pesantren
di Madura;
Tapal Kuda.

Studi ini fokus mengkaji penguatan moderasi beragama melalui pendidikan keagamaan berbasis kearifan lokal pada kalangan pesantren di wilayah Madura dan Tapal Kuda. Penelitian ini merupakan studi lapangan yang dilakukan berdasarkan jenis penelitian kualitatif. Berdasarkan analisa data lapangan studi ini mendapati temuan bahwasanya penguatan moderasi beragama melalui nilai kearifan lokal pesantren di Madura dan wilayah Tapal Kuda meniscayakan pada tiga unsur, yaitu keberadaan kiai, santri, dan para-alumni beserta jejaring sosial mereka. Ketiga unsur tersebut merupakan elemen tak terpisahkan dari kehidupan

pesantren, baik pada aktivitas pendidikan maupun dakwahnya. Dalam hal penguatan moderasi beragama, ketiganya memainkan peran dan fungsi yang tidak saja sentral namun juga strategis. Secara umum, peran dan fungsi tersebut mereka jalankan dalam dua pendekatan sekaligus. Pertama, pendekatan struktural, peran ini mereka jalankan melalui penguatan moderasi di level kelembagaan, yang dalam hal ini adalah pendidikan beserta penyelenggaraan kegiatan pengajaran di dalamnya. Kedua, pendekatan kultural, bahwasanya penguatan moderasi beragama di kalangan pesantren Tapal Kuda dilakukan melalui cara-cara kultural. Cara kultural dimaksud mencakup dua hal, yakni paham dan ritus keagamaan di pesantren, di mana mayoritas paradigma beragama kalangan pesantren di Madura wilayah Tapal Kuda menganut paham ahlu sunah wal jamaah an-Nahdliyyah.

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1. Introduction

As with the typology of regions in Indonesia in general, Madura has been known as a region thick with nuances of religiosity. One dimension of their religiosity is reflected in the socio-cultural system of self, which always has relatively high respect for religious symbols and emblems. In this regard, various religious symbols and structures, such as *pesantren* (English: Indonesian terminology referring to an Islamic Boarding School), *kiai*, and Islamic organizations Nahdlatul Ulama (read: NU), are all local religious structures that strongly influence the construction of the local socio-religious system.¹

According to the study by Abd Hannan (2018), at least two significant factors influence *pesantren's* strategic influence on the culture of Madurese society, especially in producing Islamic discourse.² First is the power factor. The concept of power assumes the ability of *pesantren* to transmit their influence to the surrounding community. Sociologically, this is formed because *pesantren* have quite a sizeable social capital, both structurally and culturally. Structurally, the social capital of *pesantren* is attached to their social status as influential Islamic institutions in society. Meanwhile, culturally, the social capital of *pesantren* is in building their social system, which is closely related to the existence of the *kiai kiai* (English: Indonesian terminology referring to a Muslim cleric) as an influential local figure.³ Second, religious factors. In the culture of Madurese society, the symbol of the *pesantren* is identical to a sacred and holy religious educational institution. This view places the *pesantren* as a sacred institution. Therefore, it is natural that, in general, the Madurese people consider the *pesantren* not only as a place to

¹Martin van Bruinessen, "Tarekat and Tarekat Teachers in Madurese Society". In *Across Madura Strait: The Dynamics of an Insular Society*, Edited by Kees van Dijk, Huub de Jonge, and Elly Touwen- Bouwsma (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995).

² Abd - Hannan, 'Agama, Kekerasan, dan Kontestasi Politik Elektoral: Penggunaan Simbol Keagamaan Kiai dan Kekuasaan Blater dalam Pertarungan Politik Lokal Madura', *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 12, no. 2 (18 December 2018): 189, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2018.122-02>.

³Kuntowijoyo, *Perubahan Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Agraris Madura 1850-1940* (Jogyakarta: Mata Bangsa, 2002).

study religion but also as a place to obtain blessings and strengthen one's spirituality.⁴

Thus, referring to the reality above, it can be said that the *pesantren* and all its elements, such as the *kiai* and the Islamic mass organization NU, themselves do not only have the position of a traditional educational institution that contains the local wisdom of the local community. More than that, the *pesantren* is a set of cross-aspect social structuring agencies that play a strategic role and function in producing and reproducing local religious discourse.⁵ This includes strengthening religious moderation among the Madurese people in theoretical and practical areas. Based on this reading, this study is entitled, *Strengthening Religious Moderation through Religious Education Based on Local Wisdom of Pesantren in Madura and the Tapal Kuda Region*. In general, this study has a special interest in finding out, revealing, and then describing as profoundly as possible the social construction of religious moderation through religious education based on local wisdom in the Islamic boarding school environment in *Tapal Kuda*.

2. Methods

Methodologically, this study is field research conducted based on qualitative research. At the operational level, qualitative research in this study is carried out by conducting observation or direct observation activities in the field, visiting the research location, establishing social relationships with research subjects directly, and conducting interview activities with several research informants, both key informants, and supporting informants. The selection of qualitative research methods in this study is based on considerations of the main objectives of the study, namely to explore and identify various local wisdom values in Islamic boarding school education in Madura and some *Tapal Kuda* areas, observing how their role and influence are in strengthening local religious moderation,

Regarding the data, the researcher compiled this study by utilizing and using two data at once, namely primary data and primary data. Primary data in this study is the leading data that researchers obtain directly in the field and comes from the first parties, the research subjects. The concrete form of primary data in this study is the results of interviews with Islamic boarding school communities in Madura and the *Tapal Kuda* area, starting from Islamic boarding school leaders, Islamic boarding school administrators, students who study at Islamic boarding schools, as well as the community around the Islamic boarding school. In addition, the primary data in this study also consists of visual documentation data, both images and text, all related to the themes of Islamic boarding schools and are part of the local wisdom of Islamic boarding schools. For example, images of the existence of Islamic boarding schools, learning activities, documentation of daily Islamic boarding school religious activities, and so on. As for secondary data, the use of secondary data in this study focuses on

⁴Abdur Rozaki, *Menabur Kharisma Menuai Kuasa; Kiprah Kyai Dan Blater Sebagai Rezim Kembar Di Madura* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Marwa, 2004).

⁵ Fiena Saadatul Ummah, 'Modernisasi Pendidikan melalui Implementasi Manajemen Mutu di Kalangan Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulama di Madura', *NAHNU: Journal of Nahdlatul Ulama and Contemporary Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023); Shidqi Junaidi, 'Paradigma Pedagogik Humanistik Perspektif Imam Az-Zarnuji dalam Kitab Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim dan Relevansinya dengan Merdeka Belajar', *NAHNU: Journal of Nahdlatul Ulama and Contemporary Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023).

previous study sources, which, in general, are still related to the central theme of this study.

Regarding field data analysis activities, as with qualitative research in general, this study will use data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman. According to Milles and Huberman (in Lincoln, 1994), field data analysis activities in qualitative research include three (3) stages: data reduction, data presentation, and finally, making conclusions (Lincoln, 1994). At the operational level, data reduction and data presentation activities in the research are carried out repeatedly in each field activity. To make data reduction activities more directed and focused, the researcher grouped the data reduction activities into four main keywords. 1) Discourse on religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools in Madura and the *Tapal Kuda* region.; 2) Dynamics of Islamic boarding schools in the *Tapal Kuda* region. 3) Local wisdom values of Islamic boarding schools in Madura and the *Tapal Kuda* region.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 General Description of Madura and the *Tapal Kuda* Region

Based on its location, this research was conducted in several *pesantren* in the Madura and *Tapal Kuda* regions,⁶ which include four different *pesantren*, namely the *Pesantren* of Panyepenin Pamekasan Regency, the *Pesantren* of Al-Mubarak in Jember, and the *Pesantren* of Salafiyah Al-Utsmani in Bondowoso. However, before further describing the four *pesantren*, the researcher will briefly describe the *Tapal Kuda* area. Thus, the researcher must comprehensively explain the *Tapal Kuda* area in terms of demographics, culture, and socio-religious aspects.

The social researchers have different opinions regarding the clarity of geographical areas in social sciences discourse. Some sources explain that the *Tapal Kuda* area is in some places in the eastern part of East Java Province. The eastern region includes seven regencies: Jember Regency, Probolinggo Regency, Lumajang Regency, Banyuwangi Regency, Situbondo Regency, Bondowoso Regency, and the east part of Pasuruan Regency. In other literature, it is also mentioned that the *Tapal Kuda* area is several areas in three sub-regions, including first the Madura sub-region; this part consists of four regencies on Madura Island, namely Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep Regencies. Second, Madura Bay consists of Surabaya, Gresik Regency, and Sidoarjo Regency. Third is the Madura Strait sub-region, which consists of three regencies in the eastern Pantura region of East Java Province, namely Pasuruan, Probolinggo, and Situbondo Regencies.⁷

However, regardless of the various versions and opinions above, it should be underlined that although the term *Tapal Kuda* is identical to certain areas mentioned above, the term *Tapal Kuda* is not an administrative area. The term *Tapal Kuda* is a regional typology given explicitly by many groups to several regions with similarities in terms of system, structure, and socio-

⁶ Tapal Kuda is the name of an area in the eastern part of East Java Province. This area is thick with Madurese culture on the island of Java, so Javanese people call it "*Budaya Madura Pendalungan*." This area is called Tapal Kuda because its shape resembles a horseshoe if drawn with an imaginary line. This area covers seven (7) regions: Banyuwangi Regency, Bondowoso, Jember, Lumajang, Pasuruan, Situbondo, and Probolinggo.

⁷ Benny Kristianto, 'Perancangan Buku Wisata Alam di Wilayah Tapal Kuda, Jawa Timur Untuk Anak Usia 6 ± 12 Tahun', *Jurnal DKV Adiwarna* 10, no. 1 (2017): 10.

culture. This similarity is formed because most people who live or settle in the *Tapal Kuda* area are ethnic Madurese. Therefore, no matter how transparent the geography of the *Tapal Kuda* area is, it reaps debates regarding the region; beyond that, social researchers agree that the *Tapal Kuda* area is a specific area that is sociologically identical to the existence of the Madurese ethnic group. In Madurese jokes, those who live in the *Tapal Kuda* area are usually referred to as *Madura Swasta*, which means they come from a regional unit that is not native to Madura Island. On the other hand, those who live in the Madura Islands, such as in Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep Regencies, are all referred to as *Madura Negeri*.

As with Madurese society's culture, *Madura Swasta* (*Tapal Kuda* area) and *Madura Negeri* have the same social system and structure. At least these similarities can be seen from two things. First, Madurese society is generally known as a society close to traditionalism, especially in religious matters. The element of traditionalism can be traced from their religious, social understanding and organization. Related to this, it is no longer a public secret that the religious culture of Madurese society has quite a big fanaticism towards the Islamic mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama. The Islamic mass organization is based on the teachings of *Aswaja*, which is known to be entirely cultural or traditional Islam in terms of religious understanding and its worship rituals. Madurese society is so close to NU that they will immediately answer NU when asked about their religion. Second, Madurese society has always been identical with the value of religiosity; in general, the concrete picture of Madurese society's religiosity is depicted in their attitudes and behavior, which have an attitude of respect and recognition of religion along with its teachings and sacred symbols. There are three symbols of religious sacredness that are respected by Madurese society: the figure of *kiai*, religious mass organizations, and finally, the existence of *pesantren*.⁸

3.2 The Existence of Pesantren in the Tapal Kuda and Madura Region

In the context of this study, the two typologies above can generally also be found among the *Tapal Kuda* community. The *Tapal Kuda* community also has the same characteristics as the Madurese community in general, including respectful behavior towards the existence of *pesantren*. There is quite a lot of *pesantren* spread throughout the *Tapal Kuda* area, including four *pesantren* that are the locus of study in this study, namely Islamic Boarding School in Jember, Islamic Boarding School in Situbondo, and finally, Panyepen Islamic Boarding School in Pamekasan.

a) General Description of the Panyepen Islamic Boarding School

The *Pesantren* of Miftahul Ulum Panyepen is one of Madura's large *pesantren*. This Islamic boarding school is located in Potoan Laok Village, Palengan District, Pamekasan Regency. Like *pesantren* in Madura in general, Panyepen Islamic Boarding School is known as a traditional religious institution that upholds the values of ancient Islam based on its religious understanding and teachings on the values of *ahli sunna wal jamaah An-Nahdliyyah* (a popular term for NU followers). Because of its spiritual tradition or culture, the Madurese community, especially Pamekasan, makes Panyepen a place of education and a

⁸ Akhmad Haryono, 'Strategi Komunikasi dalam Proses Bhâkalan Etnik Madura di Daerah Tapal Kuda', *LITERA* 17, no. 3 (November 2018): 20.

source of examples in religious matters, both in terms of understanding and practice of worship rituals.⁹

Based on its history, *Pesantren* of Panyepen was established or born in 1827. It was KH. Nasiruddin Bin KH. Istbat, a senior and charismatic Madurese cleric, was the leading figure who contributed to establishing the Panyepen Islamic boarding school. If you look at his name, it is clear that KH. Nasiruddin is a descendant of KH. Istbat, a cleric in Madura, is considered the elder of the great *pesantren* in Pamekasan. Since it was first established that year, the leadership of the Panyepen Islamic Boarding School has gone through many generations. Based on field data tracing, there were five generations, namely the leadership generation of KH. Nasiruddin, KH. Siradjuddin, KH. Badruddi, KH. Asy'ari, and KH. Mudassir Badruddin, the prominent leader of *pesantren*, is still the leader.

Since leading Panyepen in 1970, KH. Mudatsir has led the *Pesantren* of Panyepen for 52 years. During this long and long leadership, KH. Mudassir has succeeded in making many developments and progress, both physically and in terms of quality at the human resource level. In the field of education, during the leadership of KH. Mudatsir, the *Pesantren* of Panyepen, experienced a relatively rapid and advanced leap. In 1972, the Panyepen Islamic Boarding School made a breakthrough, establishing a formal Junior High School institution (Indonesian: *SMP/Sekolah Menengah Pertama*). Six years later, KH. Mudatsir again made a further leap forward, establishing a formal Senior High School (Indonesian: *SMA/Sekolah Menengah Atas*) institution, which was still taboo in most Islamic boarding schools in Pamekasan. The peak was the leap in progress and development of the management of Islamic boarding school education under the leadership of KH. Mudatsir reached its peak precisely in 1995. KH. Mudatsir founded a religious college, *Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAIMU)*, with two concentrations in religious knowledge, namely *Da'wah* and *Sharia*.

Like *pesantren* in Madura, *Pesantren* of Panyepen emphasizes education and other Islamic boarding school activities to strengthen the religious field. Based on its religious understanding, the *Pesantren* of Panyepen adheres to the knowledge of *ahli sunnah wal jamaah (ASWAJA) An-nahdhiyyah*. This understanding is ingrained in their religion and has been firmly embedded from generation to generation, even since the first leadership under the care of KH. Nasiruddin, the *Pesantren* of Panyepen, has been identical to *Aswaja An-Nahdhiyyah*. This can be traced to historical evidence when KH. Nasiruddin was still leading. During his time, KH. Nasiruddin was known to be active in the Nahdlaul Ulama organization, the most prominent Islamic organization in Indonesia, which, since its establishment, has remained consistent with the teachings of *Aswaja An-Nahdhiyyah*.

The strong socio-religious ties of Panyepen Islamic boarding school with *Aswaja An-Nahdhiyyah* are still well-maintained and strong until now. In the context of religious dynamics in Pamekasan and Madura, The *Pesantren* of Panyepen is recorded as Madura's largest and most influential NU-affiliated Islamic boarding school. On many occasions, the *pesantren* of Panyepen always appears in public if socio-religious issues are suspected of being contrary or contradictory to *Aswaja An-Nahdhiyyah*. The commitment to fight for and revive religious values within the framework of *Aswaja An-Nahdhiyyah* in Pamekasan is still being carried out. At a more macro or broad level, structurally, the character of *Aswaja* in the socio-religious Panyepen Islamic Boarding School is depicted

⁹ Rusdi, Wawancara Bersama Ketua Dewan Ma'hadiyah tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama di Pesantren Panyepen Pamekasan, Agustus 2022.

from the strong emotional ties of NU with the building of the socio-religious system in the local Islamic boarding school, both culturally and structurally.

b) Pesantren of Al-Mubarak Jember

Jember is one of the large regencies in East Java, located in the easternmost region of the province, along with several other regencies such as Probolinggo, Bondowoso, Lumajang, Banyuwangi, and Situbondo. Due to its geographical position, Jember Regency is included as one of the *Tapal Kuda* regions, among several others. Interestingly, although Jember is administratively and geographically located right on the mainland of the Java archipelago, in terms of population and socio-culture, its existence is dominated by people of Madurese ethnic descent. Therefore, it is unsurprising that in Jember, people communicate and interact using the Madurese language. Even on many occasions, the forms of their traditions and cultures have similarities with the socio-cultural constructions that have existed and developed in the Madura Islands. This also applies to their socio-religious affairs.

Regarding religious construction in Jember, as in other areas in Madura in general, the building of the social system and structure of society in Jember is thick with religious values. In general, the content of these religious values is reflected in their attitudes and behaviours of respect for the symbols and teachings of Islamic sacredness. In this context, many symbols of Islam currently apply to gain considerable recognition from the local community, including their recognition or respect for *pesantren*. *Pesantren* are an inseparable part of their daily lives, especially regarding educational and religious activities. In terms of education, it can be said that *pesantren* are popular educational institutions there. Almost all Jember people take their education at *pesantren*, especially regarding religious education. It is not difficult for them to find *pesantren* because the existence of *pesantren* in Jember is widespread in many corners of the region, from urban areas even to rural and remote areas. One of the *pesantren* referred to by the local community that still exists in the Jember area is the *Pesantren Al-Mubarak Jember*.¹⁰

The *Pesantren Al-Mubarak Jember* is on Kalisat Ajung village, Jember Regency. This Islamic boarding school was established in the 19th century, but it is unclear exactly what year it was established. However, he explained that this Islamic boarding school was initiated by a charismatic cleric from Madura named KH. Muhammad Yusuf Faruq. The Al-Mubarak Islamic boarding school is known as a *salaf* Islamic boarding school, a characteristic of the Islamic boarding school tradition in Madura, especially those with institutional affiliations with the Islamic mass organization NU. Based on field data tracing, the Al-Mubarak Islamic boarding school has run for three generations of leadership, and the first generation is KH. Muhammad Yusuf Faruq (died in 2004); the second is the leadership generation of KH. Abdul Mukti, from 2004 to 2021. Currently, the Al-Mubarak Islamic boarding school is being looked after by KH. KH. Firqi Ibnu Abdul Mukti, the first son of KH. Abdul Mukti.

If examined in depth, the socio-religious dimension of *pesantren* holds interesting and important aspects to study. It is interesting because *pesantren* are the only traditional institutions proven to adapt and survive amidst modernization and globalization. Even amid the current global education world experiencing a crisis and extraordinary challenges of spiritual crisis, *pesantren* with their classical elements are present and appear on the surface, offering various solutions. In this context, the distinctive character of Islamic boarding school

¹⁰ KH. Firqi Ibnu Abdul Mukti, Interviewe Bersama Pengasuh pesantren tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama di Pesantren Al-Mubarak Jember, 29 July 2022.

education, which is thick with religious values, becomes a solution, an answer to the religious moral crisis currently faced by the world community. It is pretty crucial because the socio-religiousness of *pesantren* is a reflection of religion that is right to overcome various religious problems that are currently haunting the world community, especially the problems of radicalism, fundamentalism, and religious extremism. In Indonesia, such religious problems are classic problems, which, until now, the world of *pesantren* has tried to face and resolve. The Al-Mubarak Islamic boarding school in Jember is no exception.¹¹

In the context of this problem, the Al-Mubarak Jember Islamic boarding school tries to remain consistent in spreading the values of classical Islam based on *Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah An-nahdliyyah*, as an instrument to ward off and protect society from all forms of deviant sects, both extreme right and extreme left. To strengthen the religious values of *Aswaja An-Anhdliyyah*, the Islamic boarding school has created a unique program or routine, one of which is holding a special religious study group every Friday night. This study group is held together with the local community, and the material presented is generally basic religious material, for example, about prayer, good deeds, and so on.

c) *Pesantren of Salafiyah Al-Utsmani Bondowoso*

In addition to the *pesantren* of Panyepen in Pamekasan and *Pesantren of Al-Mubarak* in Jember, the list of other *pesantren* that are the locations of this research is the *pesantren of Al-Utsmani Salafiyah*. Based on its geographical location, this Islamic boarding school is located right in Beddian Hamlet, Jambesari Village, Jambesari District. This Islamic boarding school was founded in 1930 AD based on field data tracing. Like *pesantren*, this Islamic boarding school was pioneered by a local great Islamic cleric named KH. Utsman. Genealogically, KH. Utsman himself is the son of KH. Jumadi and Nyai Kanimah are the eldest sons of six siblings, KH. Dhafir/KH. Sudarmi; Nyai Maryam/Nyai Hj. Manshur; KH. Hasbullah/KH. Haji Mawardi; and KH. Sa'adi/KH. Haji Umar.

Interestingly, based on his family lineage, the KH. Utsman's family lineage comes from KH, who was outstanding in Madura, namely his mother's line, who was the daughter of KH. Marjani. KH. Marjani is a figure of KH. from Madura who played a significant role in spreading Islam in Beddian village. KH. Marjani came from Berekas, a village in Guluk-Guluk District, Sumenep. Thus, based on this data, it is clear that this Islamic boarding school has a strong emotional bond with the religious culture in Madura, especially with *pesantren*. Not only that, field data also states that KH. Utsman studied at one of the *pesantren* in Madura during his youth. To be precise, at the Banyuanyar Islamic Boarding School, under the direct guidance of KH. Abdul Hamid Bin KH. Istbat.¹²

In Banyuanyar, KH. Utsman studied there for quite a long time, for fifteen years (other sources say seventeen). While in Banyuanyar, KH. Utsman had the name Masudin. At this Banyuanyar Islamic Boarding School, the young KH. Utsman began to study several branches of knowledge. Among them are Ulumul Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Tasawuf, and the science of tools under the direct guidance of KH. Abdul Hamid. He was very good at Arabic grammar (Nahwu), and many testimonies state that he memorized the book *Alfiyah Ibn Malik* with its contents in just 11 days. So, it is not surprising that KH. Subhan, his grandson, could learn the book in 21 days. When studying at the *pesantren* of Banyuanyar, KH. Utsman

¹¹ Ali Muddin Wahed, wawancara Bersama Kepala Sekolah SMP tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama di Pesantren Al-Mubarak Jember, 29 July 2022.

¹² KH. Alghazali Ibnu Utsman, Interviewe Bersama Pengasuh tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama di Pesantren di Pesantren Salafiyah Al-Utsmani Bondowoso, 30 July 2022.

had many close friends who would later become great scholars. Among them was KH. As'ad Syamsul Arifin (Sukorejo), KH. Zaini Mun'in (Paiton), KH. Asmuni (Genteng) and several others. He was also very close to the son of KH. Abdul Aziz, the son of his teacher. He was often assigned to wash clothes and serve his needs. Therefore, after boarding in Banyuwangi, he accompanied KH. Abdul Aziz is on the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School board under the care of KH. Nawawie Noerhasan. Another story states that before returning to study at the Sidogiri Islamic boarding school, the young KH. Utsman studied in Lasem under the guidance of Mbah Maksum, although not for long, and then moved to Sidogiri.

Pesantren is a traditional religious institution unique in Indonesia, and its existence is not in any other place or country except in Indonesia. Because of its uniqueness, many people say that *pesantren* is an institution full of uniqueness, both in its governance system and the teaching system that applies to it. *Pesantren* has long been thick with traditional leadership modes in its governance system. With this classic system, the leadership of the *pesantren* is always in the hands of the *kiai* and his family, and it lasts from generation to generation. Because of the hereditary nature and mode of leadership, it is not uncommon for some people to call *Pesantren* a small kingdom system, where the *kiai* is positioned as its little king. As a little king, it is unsurprising that everything that comes out of him can easily and quickly obtain truth and justification from society, especially the *santri* community. For *santri*, the *kiai* in the *pesantren* is not only a charismatic symbol but also a representation of the presence of self-religion.

The strong feudal system in the *pesantren* world, which is under the control and power of the charismatic figure of the *kiai*, directly shows that traditional values greatly influence the social construction and culture of the world. If observed in depth, the culture of traditionalism is found in the hierarchical system of power and governance and their socio-religious structure. In this regard, the dimension of socio-religious traditionalism in *pesantren* can generally be seen from the thickness of their worship rituals with previous Islamic practices. At the structural level, the strength of their religious traditionalism values can be seen in their institutional affiliations, the majority of which are institutional relations with the Islamic mass organization NU, Indonesia's largest Islamic mass organization.

This socio-religious character is what researchers found in the environment of the Salafiyah Al-Utsmani Islamic Boarding School. At the cultural and structural levels, the socio-religious building in the local *pesantren* also adheres to 'traditional' Islamic beliefs. In this case, it is the understanding of *Ahlusunah wal Jamaah An-Nahdliyyah* as a religious tradition in other *pesantren*. At the structural level, the Islamic values of *Ahlusunah wal Jamaah An-Nahdliyyah* in the socio-religious structure of the Salafiyah Al-Utsmani Islamic Boarding School are reflected in the active participation of local Islamic boarding school leaders in the management of NU in Bondowoso. This proves how the *Pesantren* of Salafiyah Al-Utsmani in Bondowoso has a reasonably close relationship and bond with the NU religious tradition.

3.3 Pesantren and Local Wisdom: A Conceptual Perspective

From a grammatical perspective, *pesantren* is the name for a dormitory-like place where students study the Quran. In many areas of the horseshoe region, local people usually call *pesantren* as *pondhuk*, which means a temporary residence or house, a dormitory in the form of a hut for studying, studying, and so on. If we refer to the general character and typology of *pesantren* in Madura,

pesantren has at least three fundamental elements: *kiai*, *santri*, and *surau*.¹³ *Kiai* represents the leading figure of the leader or caretaker of the Pondok, *santri* are those who live in the *pesantren* and study there. In contrast, the *surau pesantren* is the prominent place where *pesantren* activities take place, either in the form of a prayer room or mosque, or it can also be in the form of a *langgar*.¹⁴

From a grammatical perspective, the concept of local wisdom consists of values, wisdom, and local. Value means containing the meaning of containing characteristics or things that are important, useful, and beneficial for humanity. The word 'wisdom' comes from the basic word *Arif*, which means wise, clever, and knowledgeable, while local means were local; occurs (applies, exists, etc.) in one place only, not evenly distributed. If referring to the understanding of the three words above, it can be concluded that the value of local wisdom is a set of values, creativity, or views that contain elements of wisdom, civilization, and civilization that take place, exist, or apply in one particular place or location. However, the value of local wisdom and something special is difficult to find elsewhere. Thus, understanding the concept of local wisdom of *pesantren* means assuming all Islamic boarding school values that have grown from the creativity of the Islamic boarding school community, both in the form of education, culture, and socio-religious.

Viewed from a sociological perspective, the concept of local wisdom in Islamic boarding schools is very reasonable and logical. This is because, so far, *pesantren* are considered by most Indonesian society, perhaps even the world, as the only traditionalist education system that has survived or survived in Indonesia until now. The term traditionalist here does not mean looking down on them, but rather their social construction that maintains its original dimension. The originality dimension here includes many things, including socio-religious, economic, and cultural, especially in education. In fact, until now, *pesantren*, with the uniqueness and originality of the values contained therein, have proven to be able to answer many problems currently befalling contemporary society. Not to mention religious issues that include the rise of extremism, both extremism in the field of thought and movement.¹⁵

3.4 Strengthening Religious Moderation at Tapal Kuda Islamic Boarding School through Local Wisdom Values

Grammatically, the term "moderates" comes from the word moderate, which means to avoid the extreme behavior, including both extreme right-wing radical fundamentalist groups and extreme left-wing liberal socialist and communist ideologies. Another word for moderate is moderation; in global terminology, moderate always assumes a stance, a reflection of a neutral attitude of self, not lean and take sides with one camp. In religion, the term moderate is usually identified as a way of religion that is neither textual dogmatic nor contextual historical. Moderate is a combination of the two, constantly dialoguing two poles, in this case, between reason and textual. The existence of a dialogue between religious texts and reason is likely to give birth to a religious character or

¹³ *Surau* is a place (house) where Muslims perform their worship (perform prayers, recite the Koran, etc.)

¹⁴ Muwafiq and Samsuri, 'Pesantren Sebagai Situs Kewarganegaraan Dan Pembentukan Budaya Kewargaan Di Madura', *Urnal Civics* 14, no. 2 (Oktober 2017).

¹⁵ A Idhoh Anas, 'Kurikulum dan Metodologi Pembelajaran Pesantren', *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 10, no. 1 (1 June 2012): 29, <https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v10i1.400>.

paradigm that is not rigid or normative and, at the same time, not liberal or secular.¹⁶

In the Islamic discourse itself, there has indeed been a heated and long debate regarding what the concrete form of moderate Islam is. There are many versions of it, but scholars agree that moderate Islam is Islam that internalizes four values simultaneously, the four of which are the value of moderation (*tawasuth*), the value of justice (*al-adalah*), tolerance (*tatsamuh*), and finally the value of balance (*tawazun*). Moderation (*tawasuth*) is not standing out in one of two different camps, not being excessive in acting. This attitude reflects wisdom based on the hadith of the Prophet, "*al-wasthu al-'adlu, ja'alnakum ummatan wasathan*". It means, "*The middle is fair. We made you one nation in the middle (the best)*". (Narrated by Tirmidhi and Ahmad). As for justice (*al-adalah*), it means equal weight, not one-sided or impartial, placing everything in its place while remaining steadfast to the truth and who is right. Being firm in determining what is wrong and what is right. Tolerance (*tatsamuh*) means keeping quiet or allowing. Tolerance also means the limits of permissible addition and subtraction. As for balance (*at-tawazun*), it means balanced and comparable; there is no tendency toward one of them.¹⁷

In the context of the dynamics of Islam in Indonesia, religious moderation is often identified by many people as a religious pattern that is identical to the existence of two local Islamic mass organizations, namely the Muhammadiyah Islamic mass organization and especially Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as the most significant Islamic social organization in Indonesia. The 2019 LSI survey obtained data that the number of NU followers reached 108 million, or 49.5 percent of the Muslim population of Indonesia.¹⁸ Calling NU a representation of religious moderation in Indonesia is very relevant. NU is an original Islamic mass organization in the archipelago with an outstanding commitment to maintaining local Islamic rituals. Even in the development of the latest Islamic issues, when the Muslim community in Indonesia began to be influenced by the presence of transnational Islamic organizations, NU firmly and loudly criticized or even rejected their existence. Islamically, the values of moderation within NU are clearly illustrated by their Islamic paradigm, which has so far based their religious struggle on the four principles above, namely moderation (*tawasuth*), justice (*al-adalah*), tolerance (*tatsamuh*), and balance (*tawazun*).

The big question now is, what is the relationship between NU and the context of this research? So far, there has been a relatively strong emotional relationship or bond between *pesantren* and NU. NU and *pesantren* have the same religious culture, emphasizing the values of *Ahlu sunah waljamaah An-Nahdliyyah*. Philosophically, the relationship and closeness between the two are reflected in the proverbs that have developed in society, especially among *nahdliyyin* (the official term for NU followers), that NU is a large Islamic boarding school, while *pesantren* are small NU. Researchers found this emotional

¹⁶ Abd Hannan, 'Islam moderat dan tradisi populer pesantren: Strategi penguatan Islam moderat di kalangan masyarakat Madura melalui nilai tradisi populer Islam berbasis pesantren', *Jurnal Sosiologi Dialektika* 13, no. 2 (16 May 2020): 152, <https://doi.org/10.20473/jsd.v13i2.2018.152-168>.

¹⁷ Yanwar Pribadi, 'Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies; Vol 51, No 1 (2013)DO - 10.14421/Ajis.2013.511.1-32* 51, no. 1 (15 June 2013), <https://aljamiyah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/151>.

¹⁸ 'Survei LSI Denny JA : NU Sebagai Ormas Terbesar Yang Tak Tertandingi', accessed 22 October 2024, <https://www.suarainvestor.com/survei-lsi-denny-ja-nu-sebagai-ormas-terbesar-yang-tak-terdandingi/>.

relationship or closeness when observing several *pesantren* in *Tapal Kuda*. In this case, it is the *Pesantren* of Panyepen in Pamekasan, *Pesantren* of Al-Mubarak in Jember, and the *Pesantren* of Salafiyah Al-Utsmani in Bondowoso. In general, the emotional relationship between the two is reflected in a number of their religious paradigms, which, on many occasions, have similarities in terms of understanding and religious practice. Related to strengthening religious moderation in *pesantren* in the *Tapal Kuda* region, in this case, the four *pesantren* above, based on field data tracing and the role of the existence of the three forms of local wisdom of the above *pesantren*, there are two forms of methods that have been applied by local *pesantren* in building and strengthening the values of moderation, namely structural methods and cultural methods.

a) *Structural Strengthening*

Structural comes from the word structure, which means arranged in a certain pattern; the way something is built or arranged; arrangement, and building. Structural is identical to hierarchy, placing one individual or group at a certain level, with high-ranking, middle-ranking, and low-ranking groups. With this relationship pattern, the upper group usually has higher power than the lower group, so they have sufficient authority or legality to govern it.¹⁹ The characteristic of structural relationships is the existence of normative rules or regulations. Relationship patterns with this character are often found in institutions, institutions, or organizations. This includes social organizations or institutions and Islamic boarding school educational institutions.

Related to this research, the term structural method in strengthening moderation in the *Tapal Kuda* region in Madura requires two paths: education and organization. In the education path, local *pesantren* strengthen moderation by implementing a policy of mainstreaming moderate values into every learning material given to all female and male students. Especially learning materials that contain religious content. In practice, the religious material in question consists of several religious thoughts of previous Muslim scholars or intellectuals whose thoughts have been proven to contain relevance to the content of religious moderation. In the context of everyday life in the Islamic boarding school world, the concrete form of this religious material is classic books or *Kitab Kuning*. Among *pesantren* in the *Tapal Kuda* region, the learning curriculum in the form of classic yellow books has become an inseparable part. Even at the formal school level, this material is still inserted and included in students' lessons at all levels, especially junior high school, high school, and even college levels.

To maximize the existence and role of education in inserting religious moderation in the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school environment, the Islamic boarding school makes these efforts in two directions: formal education and non-formal education. In formal education, moderation is inserted by integrating moderation content into the teaching system, both in the curriculum or subject matter taught by education to all students (*santri*). The integration process is given to all levels of formal education, from the most basic to the highest level. The concrete form of this insertion is by introducing the understanding or teachings of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah an-jahiliyyah* to all students, from elementary lessons to developmental lessons. As for the direction of non-formal education, the insertion of moderation in the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school environment takes the form of non-class activities. These activities are often carried out outside the official teaching program as extracurricular activities such as student organizations and scouting activities. Apart from that, it is also

¹⁹ Ade Nufus, 'Teori Strukturalisasi: Habitus Dan Kapital Dalam Strategi Kekuasaan', *Jurnal Libria* 11, no. 2 (Desember 2019).

included in the internalization process of moderate values in the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school environment through the implementation of non-formal education, namely routine religious ritual activities among students such as joint *selawatan*, *hadrah*, courses on understanding yellow books, and various traditional or local worship activities. In addition to education, another structural path behind strengthening religious moderation in the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school is organizational. Based on its meaning, an organization is a unity of several parts in a particular association that aims to build cooperation between people to achieve common goals.²⁰

In the context of this research, the term organizational in the process of inserting moderates in the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school environment is intended for the participation or involvement of Islamic boarding school leaders in several religious organizations, in this case, Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). In religious discourse in Indonesia, NU is known by Muslims in Indonesia as an ideal percentage of religious moderation, both in its understanding and practice. Therefore, the involvement of the *kiai* of *pesantren* in the composition of the NU management, both the management at the district, regional, or provincial level and the management at the centre, must be acknowledged to have more or less influenced the religious patterns or paradigms that apply in the related *pesantren*. Simply put, the participation of the *kiai* for *pesantren* in the management of NU will practically strengthen or solidify the basic building blocks of moderation in local *pesantren*, including in the *Pesantren* of Panyepen, *Pesantren* of Al-Mubarak in Jember, and *Pesantren* of Salafiyah Al-Utsmani in Bondowoso.

Related to this research, based on the findings of field data, several Islamic boarding school leaders are known to be actively involved in managing the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic organization, one of whom is KH. Mudatsir Badruddin is the leader of the Panyepen Islamic Boarding School in Pamekasan. Beluai is a senior NU *kiai* in Madura; since long ago, he has been known to be active in NU management, starting from the district or branch level, provincial or regional level, and even now under the leadership of KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf for the 2022-2027 period, KH. Mudatsir was appointed as one of the *Rais* *Syriah* PBNU—a very honourable, high, and influential position in the composition of the organization's management. In addition to PBNU, he was previously listed as the *Mustasyar* of the Nahdhatul Ulama Regional Management (PWNU) of East Java Province.

b) Cultural Strengthening

In addition to structural channels, strengthening religious moderation among *Tapal Kuda* Islamic Boarding schools is also carried out through cultural channels. In terminology, cultural means are related to culture, which means customs, everything that has become a habit and is difficult to change. Thus, referring to this understanding, strengthening moderation through cultural channels means utilizing and using various social systems and structures that have long existed and developed during community life, whether in the form of thoughts, customs, traditions, or other creativity that reflects daily life activities.

The meaning of the term cultural in strengthening religious moderation in the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school environment consists of several things. However, researchers generally divide it into two large groups: religious understanding and religious rituals. As mentioned in the previous sub-discussions, the religious paradigm of *pesantren* in the *Tapal Kuda* area adheres

²⁰ Wahed, wawancara Bersama Kepala Sekolah SMP tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama di Pesantren Al-Mubarak Jember.

to the understanding of *the sunnah wal jamaah an-Nahdliyyah*. Namely, an Islamic understanding makes *the sunnah* of the prophet and his companions a religious guideline, both in belief and monotheism. This understanding is an additional form of Islamic understanding, such as *Khawarij*, *Murji'ah*, *Qadariyah*, *Jabariyah*, and *Shi'ah*. From an Islamic understanding, *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah an-Nahdliyyah* has specific and clear religious guidelines. For example, in the study of belief or monotheism, the term *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* is attributed to the understanding promoted by Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. In contrast, in the study of fiqh, the term *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* is attributed to the Sunni understanding, namely referring to the fiqh of 4 (four) schools of thought, the Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi'i, and Hanbali schools. As for the field of Sufism, it is guided by the thoughts of Imam al-Junaidi al-Bagdadi (d. 297 H/ 910 M) and Imam al-Ghazali at-Thusi (d. 505 H/1111 M).²¹

In the context of this study, the religious understanding of *Ahlusunah wal Jawaah an-anhdliyyah*, as stated in the explanation above, can be traced to the daily social activities of *pesantren*, starting from socio-religious activities, especially in the social aspect. Apart from that, the insertion of moderation among the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding schools through religious understanding is also emphasized by the fact that there is an institutional affiliation between the Islamic boarding school and the NU organization. This is depicted in the name of the Islamic boarding school, the majority of which are written with the name '*Miftahul Ulum*,' which is, in fact, a name or special designation for educational institutions that institutionally have a relationship with NU, both culturally and structurally.

Finally, the process of insertion or strengthening of moderation among the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school through cultural channels, in addition to being in the form of religious understanding, is also in the form of rituals. In its general meaning, ritual has a meaning related to rites or procedures in religious ceremonies (worship). In the context of this study, the terminology of rites is intended to describe the strong values of traditionalism in the worship activities of the Islamic boarding school community. Various religious activities with a classical feel, such as most practices or rituals of worship among the Javanese people, are also easily found in *pesantren*. Some religious rites include *selawatan*, *hadrah*, *tahlilan*, grave pilgrimage, and various other *selamatan* rituals. Sociologically, this all proves how the practice of worship rituals that have been in effect in *pesantren* so far, in many situations, have similarities or similarities with the Islamic traditions of Indonesian Muslims, which followers of the teachings of *ahlusunnah wal jamaah an-anhdliyyah* organizationally dominate.

4. Conclusion

After conducting data description and theoretical analysis of field data obtained during observation activities, several central points are this study's conclusions: *First*, religious education based on local wisdom in the *pesantren* of *Tapal Kuda* means all unique, special, and special educational activities. It was born and grew and developed from and/or in its environment so that it later became a characteristic and identity of the world of Islamic boarding school education. *Second*, the reality of religious education based on local wisdom in *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding schools is quite complex and complete. It is complex because, based on field findings, *pesantren* have a variety of local creativity in their respective environments, which makes it possible to use them as instruments or mediums for strengthening religious moderation among the

²¹ Pribadi, 'Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture'.

Tapal Kuda community. The variety of creativity includes the system or organization of education, material, or curriculum of learning materials, which have been known to have relatively strong relevance to the local community's learning traditions and religious typologies. *Third*, the concept of local wisdom education at the *Tapal Kuda* Islamic boarding school, at the practical level, requires three elements: the existence of *kiai*, *santri*, and para-alumni, along with their social networks. These three elements are inseparable from Islamic boarding school life in educational activities and preaching. In strengthening moderation, all three play central and strategic roles and functions. They generally carry out these roles and functions in two approaches at once. 1) The structural approach, which they carry out through strengthening moderation at the institutional level, which in this case is education and implementing teaching activities. In addition, there is another structural approach in the form of organization, where each leader of the Islamic boarding school is known to be actively involved in the management of the Islamic mass organization NU, which is known as an organization that is thick with the values of religious moderation. 2) The cultural approach strengthens moderation among the *pesantren* in *Tapal Kuda* through cultural methods. The cultural method in question includes two things: religious understanding, where the majority of the religious paradigm among *pesantren* in the *Tapal Kuda* area adheres to the knowledge of the *sunnah wal jamaah an-Nahdliyyah*, namely, religious understanding (Islam) and religious worship rituals in daily life.

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