



The Implementation of Pesantren Values and Traditions in Shaping The Social Dynamics of Students at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School, Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School, Kesugihan, Cilacap, Indonesia

Masruri¹, Mulyoto², A. Dardiri Hasim³
Nahdlatul Ulama Surakarta University, Surakarta, Indonesia¹²³,
¹masruri@unugha.ac.id, ²mulyoto@unu.ac.id, ³adardirihayim@gmail.com

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*Correspondence Address:

masruri@unugha.ac.id

Abstract:

This study examines the implementation of pesantren values and traditions and their contribution to the social dynamics of students at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School within Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School, Kesugihan, Cilacap, Indonesia, in 2025. The research aims to explore how Islamic boarding school values are internalized through daily traditions and how these practices influence students' social interactions, discipline, cooperation, leadership, and moral character. A qualitative case study approach was employed using observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The collected data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing following the interactive model. The findings reveal that the integration of pesantren values and traditions significantly strengthens students' social cohesion, religious commitment, responsibility, and adaptive behavior within the school environment. The study contributes to the discourse on Islamic education by demonstrating that pesantren-based cultural practices serve as an effective model for fostering positive social dynamics and character development in vocational education.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have long been recognized as one of Indonesia's most influential educational institutions in shaping students' religious understanding, moral integrity, and social character. Unlike formal educational institutions that primarily emphasize academic achievement, pesantren integrate religious values, discipline, communal living, and local traditions into the educational process, creating a holistic learning environment that nurtures both intellectual and spiritual development (Dhofier, 2011). The integration of these values has become increasingly relevant in responding to the challenges

of globalization, moral degradation, and the weakening of social solidarity among young generations (Azra, 2012).

Social dynamics within educational institutions reflect the patterns of interaction, adaptation, cooperation, conflict resolution, and social integration experienced by students. In the context of pesantren-based vocational schools, these dynamics are strongly influenced by the internalization of pesantren values through various religious and cultural traditions such as congregational prayers, recitation of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), *mujadah*, *tahlil*, *istighasah*, mutual cooperation (*kerigan*), and respect for teachers (*ta'dzim*) (Geertz, 1960; Wahid, 2001). These traditions function not merely as religious rituals but also as mechanisms for developing students' discipline, responsibility, leadership, and social cohesion.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that pesantren education contributes significantly to character formation. Research by (Muhaimin, 2015) found that Islamic educational values strengthen students' moral awareness and religious commitment. Similarly, (Nata, 2020) argued that pesantren traditions provide an effective medium for transmitting Islamic values across generations while maintaining social harmony. More recently, (Isbah, 2020) emphasized that pesantren have transformed into adaptive educational institutions capable of balancing religious identity with contemporary educational demands. These findings indicate that pesantren continue to play a strategic role in developing students' social competence in modern educational settings.

Several international studies have also highlighted the importance of value-based education in promoting students' social development. Research by (Lickona, 1991) emphasized that character education fosters responsible citizenship through the cultivation of ethical values and positive social behavior. Likewise, (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014) demonstrated that school cultures grounded in shared moral values positively influence students' interpersonal relationships and civic engagement. Recent educational studies further suggest that integrating cultural values into formal education strengthens students' resilience, collaboration, and social adaptation in multicultural societies (OECD, 2021).

Despite the growing body of literature, previous research has predominantly focused on character education, curriculum implementation, religious learning, or institutional management within pesantren (Muhaimin, 2015; Isbah, 2020; Nata, 2020). Limited attention has been given to examining how the implementation of pesantren values and daily traditions specifically shapes the social dynamics of students in pesantren-based vocational schools. Moreover, empirical studies investigating the interaction between religious traditions and students' social behavior in vocational education remain relatively scarce. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by exploring the implementation of pesantren values and traditions and their influence on students' social dynamics at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School, Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School, Kesugihan, Cilacap.

This research complements previous studies by extending the discussion from character education to the broader perspective of social dynamics within a pesantren-based vocational educational environment. While previous research primarily examined moral development and educational management, this study investigates how religious traditions are translated into everyday social interactions, cooperation, discipline, leadership, and collective identity among students. Consequently, the study contributes both theoretically to the sociology of Islamic education and practically to the development of value-based educational models capable of strengthening students' social competence in contemporary vocational schools.



Method (منهج)

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of pesantren values and traditions and their influence on the social dynamics of students at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School, Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School, Kesugihan, Cilacap, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural context and facilitates the exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions.

The research was conducted during the 2025 academic year. The research participants consisted of the principal, vice principal for student affairs, Islamic education teachers, boarding school caregivers (kyai and ustadz), and students of Al Mu'allim Vocational High School. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in implementing and experiencing pesantren values and traditions. To maintain confidentiality, all participants were identified using initials throughout the study.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation focused on students' daily activities, including congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, kitab kuning learning, mutual cooperation (kerigan), religious gatherings, and other pesantren traditions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding participants' perceptions of the implementation of pesantren values and their influence on students' social interactions. Supporting documents, including school regulations, curriculum documents, activity schedules, institutional reports, and photographs, were also examined to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of four interrelated stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The credibility of the findings was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking. These procedures enhanced the trustworthiness and validity of the research by comparing information obtained from multiple participants and

different data collection techniques?

Result (نتائج)

Data collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, documentation, and field observations consistently indicate that the implementation of pesantren values and traditions at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School significantly shapes students' social dynamics.

First, pesantren values such as discipline, sincerity, responsibility, respect, cooperation, and Islamic brotherhood are effectively internalized through daily religious and educational activities, fostering positive attitudes and self-discipline. Second, pesantren traditions including congregational prayers, communal activities, *khidmah*, and Islamic celebrations strengthen social cohesion, empathy, and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds. Third, these values contribute to improved communication, mutual respect, conflict resolution, and teamwork, creating a more harmonious school environment.

Unlike previous studies that mainly emphasize character education outcomes, this study demonstrates that pesantren values and traditions function as an institutional social system that continuously shapes students' social interactions within a vocational education setting. The integration of vocational education and pesantren culture also strengthens students' moral, social, and professional competencies simultaneously.



Discussion (مناقشة)

1. Analysis of The Implementation of Pesantren Values in Strengthening Students' Social Dynamics

The findings indicate that the implementation of pesantren values at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School is systematically integrated into both formal learning activities and the daily life of students within Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School. The internalization process is carried out through religious habituation, character education, exemplary leadership (*uswah hasanah*), and continuous mentoring by the *kyai* and *ustadz*. These educational practices have created a learning environment that encourages students to develop religious commitment, social responsibility, discipline, humility, and mutual respect.

Field observations reveal that students routinely participate in congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, *kitab kuning* studies, *halaqah*, *muhadharah*, communal service (*khidmah*), and mutual cooperation (*kerigan*). These activities serve not only as religious obligations but also as social learning processes that strengthen interpersonal relationships and collective responsibility among students. The continuous practice of these traditions has transformed pesantren values into students' daily behavioral patterns, creating a positive social climate characterized by solidarity, cooperation, and respect for diversity. These findings support Dhofier's argument that the pesantren system emphasizes character formation through habituation and exemplary practice rather than merely transmitting religious knowledge (Dhofier, 2011, p. 59).

The implementation of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) emerged as one of the most influential values shaping students' social interactions. Students consistently demonstrated cooperative attitudes during communal worship, dormitory activities, and school programs. Such practices encouraged empathy, mutual assistance, and peaceful conflict resolution among students. This finding is consistent with Azra's view that pesantren traditions function as social institutions that cultivate harmonious relationships through Islamic ethical values (Azra, 2012, p. 87). Likewise, Zarkasyi emphasized that collective activities within pesantren strengthen solidarity through intensive interaction and shared spiritual experiences (Zarkasyi, 2010, p. 123).

Another significant finding concerns the implementation of *ta'dzim* (respect for teachers), which has become an essential element of students' daily behavior. Students communicate politely with teachers, greet them respectfully, kiss their hands upon meeting, and carefully observe ethical norms during classroom interactions. These practices contribute to creating a respectful academic atmosphere and minimizing disciplinary violations. According to Dhofier, respect for teachers represents one of the central educational traditions that distinguishes pesantren from other educational institutions because it integrates moral education with intellectual development (Dhofier, 2011, p. 59). Similarly, Al-Zarnuji argued that knowledge becomes beneficial only when learners demonstrate sincere respect toward their teachers (Al-Zarnuji, 1992, p. 12).

The study also found that the value of *tawadhu'* (humility) significantly contributes to students' social adaptation. Humility is cultivated through communal service, collective learning, *halaqah*, and daily interactions between senior and junior students. Students become accustomed to serving others voluntarily, appreciating different opinions, and avoiding individualistic behavior. These findings correspond with Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's assertion that humility is effectively developed through continuous moral education supported by exemplary conduct (Ulwan, 2003, p. 89). Moreover, Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains that individuals acquire social behavior through observation, imitation, and repeated interaction within their environment (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). The pesantren environment therefore functions as a living laboratory where desirable social behaviors are continuously modeled and reinforced.

Discipline also emerged as a dominant value influencing students' social dynamics. Daily schedules beginning before dawn, compulsory congregational prayers, academic activities, and extracurricular religious programs require students to develop responsibility, punctuality, and self-control. Such disciplined routines positively affect collaborative learning, organizational participation, and interpersonal communication. Zamroni argued that discipline within educational institutions represents a process of internalizing values rather than merely enforcing regulations (Zamroni, 2011, p. 45). Similarly, Samani and Hariyanto explained that disciplined students tend to exhibit greater responsibility and healthier social interactions (Samani & Hariyanto, 2012, p. 68).

Another important finding concerns the implementation of *tasamuh* (tolerance), which enables students from different regional, cultural, and family backgrounds to coexist

harmoniously within the boarding school environment. Students are encouraged to respect differing opinions during classroom discussions, religious forums, and organizational meetings. This inclusive culture minimizes interpersonal conflicts while strengthening social cohesion. Mastuhu argued that pesantren education naturally cultivates tolerance through communal living and collective responsibility among students (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 90).

The findings further demonstrate that *khidmah* (service) functions as an effective instrument for developing empathy, leadership, and social responsibility. Students voluntarily participate in cleaning activities, assisting school events, mentoring junior students, and supporting various pesantren programs. These experiences strengthen their ability to cooperate, communicate effectively, and solve practical problems collectively. Nata emphasized that Islamic education should integrate spiritual devotion with social responsibility so that learners become intellectually capable and socially committed individuals (Nata, 2013, p. 78).

Compared with previous studies that primarily focused on character education or pesantren management, this research offers a broader understanding by demonstrating how pesantren values simultaneously shape students' social dynamics within a vocational school context. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of religious values, pesantren traditions, and students' social interactions as interconnected dimensions of Islamic education. This finding extends previous scholarship by showing that pesantren traditions are not merely religious rituals but constitute an educational ecosystem capable of fostering social cohesion, adaptive behavior, collaborative learning, and sustainable character development among vocational school students.

2. Analysis of The Implementation of Pesantren Traditions and Their Contribution to Students' Social Dynamics

The findings demonstrate that pesantren traditions at Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School function as an educational culture that strengthens students' social competence through continuous participation in religious, intellectual, and communal activities. Unlike formal classroom instruction, pesantren traditions provide experiential learning in which students internalize Islamic values through repeated social interaction. The traditions observed in this study include *ngaji kitab kuning* (classical Islamic text studies), *halaqah*, *bahtsul masail*, *muhadharah*, *istighasah*, *tahlil*, communal prayers, and *khidmah*. These traditions collectively cultivate responsibility, cooperation, leadership, tolerance, and social solidarity among students.

One of the most influential traditions identified during the research is the study of *kitab kuning*. Students participate in regular sessions guided by *kyai* and *ustadz*, where classical Islamic texts concerning theology, jurisprudence, ethics, and spirituality are discussed. Beyond transmitting religious knowledge, this tradition develops intellectual discipline, critical thinking, and ethical awareness. Students reported that learning classical Islamic texts helped them understand not only religious principles but also appropriate social behavior, respect for knowledge, and responsibility toward society. These findings

support Dhofier's argument that kitab kuning serves as the intellectual foundation of pesantren culture while simultaneously shaping students' worldview and social ethics (Dhofier, 2011, p. 45). Likewise, Al-Zarnuji emphasized that the pursuit of knowledge should always be accompanied by moral discipline and humility toward teachers and fellow learners (Al-Zarnuji, 1992, p. 17).

The tradition of halaqah and bahtsul masail also emerged as an essential mechanism for developing students' communication skills and collaborative learning. During these activities, students actively discuss contemporary social issues from Islamic perspectives while learning to appreciate different opinions and construct arguments based on evidence. Such dialogical learning encourages democratic participation without neglecting Islamic ethics. Nata explained that halaqah represents a participatory educational model capable of fostering critical thinking alongside moral responsibility (Nata, 2011, p. 87). Similarly, Azra argued that contemporary pesantren should preserve classical traditions while adapting educational practices to modern social realities (Azra, 2012, p. 132).

Field observations further indicate that communal religious activities, including congregational prayers, istighasah, tahlil, mujadah, and Qur'anic recitation, significantly strengthen students' emotional attachment to the pesantren community. Regular participation in these activities creates strong interpersonal bonds, reduces social conflicts, and increases students' willingness to help one another. Berger and Luckmann explained that repeated collective practices gradually become institutionalized realities that shape individual behavior and social identity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 72). In this context, pesantren traditions function as mechanisms of social construction through which Islamic values become embedded in students' everyday interactions.

Another important finding concerns the tradition of khidmah (service), which encourages students to participate voluntarily in maintaining the boarding school environment, organizing religious events, assisting teachers, and mentoring younger students. These service-oriented activities develop leadership skills, empathy, and collective responsibility while reducing individualistic attitudes. According to Nata, khidmah represents an educational process that integrates spiritual devotion with practical social engagement, enabling students to develop both moral integrity and social competence (Nata, 2013, p. 78). This finding also supports Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which states that behavioral change occurs through observation, imitation, and repeated participation in meaningful social environments (Bandura, 1977, p. 22).

The implementation of pesantren traditions also contributes significantly to conflict management among students. The traditions of musyawarah (deliberation), mutual cooperation, and collective responsibility encourage students to resolve disagreements peacefully through dialogue rather than confrontation. Consequently, social harmony becomes a shared cultural value rather than merely an institutional regulation. Geertz argued that religious traditions serve as cultural systems that organize patterns of social interaction and provide shared meanings within communities (Geertz, 1960, p. 171). The

present findings reinforce this perspective by demonstrating that pesantren traditions function simultaneously as religious practices and social institutions.

From the perspective of educational sociology, the interaction between pesantren traditions and students' social dynamics reflects an ongoing process of socialization. Students gradually internalize institutional norms through continuous participation in religious and communal activities, eventually transforming those norms into personal values and habitual behavior. This process corresponds with Berger and Luckmann's theory of the social construction of reality, which explains that institutional values become objective social realities through habitual interaction before finally being internalized by individuals (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 61).

Comparison with previous studies indicates both continuity and originality. Previous research by Mastuhu emphasized that pesantren traditions establish a distinctive religious subculture characterized by discipline, solidarity, and moral commitment (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 58). Likewise, Isbah argued that contemporary pesantren have successfully adapted to modernization while preserving their traditional educational identity (Isbah, 2020, p. 78). However, these studies focused primarily on institutional transformation and character education. In contrast, the present study demonstrates empirically that pesantren traditions directly influence students' social dynamics through the development of collaborative behavior, leadership capacity, conflict resolution, social adaptation, and collective identity within a vocational school environment.

The novelty of this research therefore lies in its integrated explanation of how pesantren traditions function as interconnected educational mechanisms that simultaneously strengthen religious commitment and social competence. Rather than viewing pesantren traditions solely as cultural heritage or religious rituals, this study positions them as dynamic educational instruments capable of fostering positive social interactions, strengthening institutional culture, and preparing vocational school students to participate constructively in contemporary society. This integrated perspective contributes to the development of Islamic educational sociology and expands current discussions concerning the role of pesantren in responding to twenty-first-century educational challenges.

3. Analysis of the Necessity of Implementing Pesantren Values and Pesantren Traditions for Students at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of pesantren values and traditions is not merely an institutional characteristic of Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School but constitutes an educational necessity for developing students' intellectual, moral, and social competencies. The integration of vocational education with pesantren culture enables students to acquire technical knowledge while simultaneously developing ethical awareness, religious commitment, and social responsibility. This dual educational orientation addresses contemporary educational challenges in which cognitive achievement alone is insufficient to prepare students for complex social realities.

Field observations reveal that students who consistently participate in pesantren traditions exhibit stronger discipline, greater respect for teachers and peers, higher levels of cooperation, and better emotional self-regulation than those who participate less intensively. Daily activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, kitab kuning studies, halaqah, khidmah, muhadharah, and communal service provide repeated opportunities for students to practice Islamic ethical principles within authentic social contexts. Consequently, moral values become embedded in students' daily behavior rather than remaining abstract religious concepts. This finding supports Dhofier's argument that pesantren education emphasizes the continuous internalization of values through habituation and exemplary practice (Dhofier, 2011, p. 54).

The necessity of implementing pesantren values also becomes evident in addressing the moral and social challenges associated with globalization and digital transformation. Contemporary adolescents increasingly encounter individualism, consumerism, digital dependency, and declining interpersonal interaction. These conditions require educational institutions to provide systematic character formation alongside academic instruction. The pesantren model responds to these challenges by creating a structured educational environment where religious values regulate both individual conduct and collective social life. Azra argued that the survival of pesantren throughout social transformation is closely related to its ability to preserve Islamic traditions while adapting to changing educational contexts (Azra, 2012, p. 132).

Another significant finding concerns the role of pesantren traditions in strengthening students' social resilience. Living collectively in a boarding school environment requires students to negotiate differences in cultural background, personality, and socioeconomic conditions. Through traditions such as musyawarah, ukhuwah Islamiyah, ta'awun, and khidmah, students develop communication skills, empathy, conflict resolution abilities, and collaborative leadership. These competencies represent essential twenty-first-century social skills that cannot be developed solely through classroom instruction. According to Putnam, communities characterized by strong social capital produce individuals with higher levels of cooperation, trust, and civic participation (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). The present study confirms that pesantren traditions effectively cultivate these dimensions of social capital within the educational environment.

The research further indicates that the implementation of pesantren values contributes significantly to the formation of students' moral identity. Respect (ta'dzim), humility (tawadhu'), discipline, sincerity (ikhlas), and tolerance (tasamuh) gradually become integrated into students' personal identities through repeated interaction with teachers, kyai, and fellow students. Bandura explained that moral behavior develops through continuous observation and imitation of credible role models within meaningful social environments (Bandura, 1977, p. 26). The pesantren environment therefore functions as a comprehensive learning community where educational success is measured not only by academic performance but also by observable behavioral transformation.

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, the implementation of pesantren values fulfills the fundamental objective of education, namely the holistic development of human beings (*insan kamil*). Islamic education seeks to integrate intellectual excellence, spiritual maturity, ethical conduct, and social responsibility into a unified educational process. Nata emphasized that educational institutions should balance cognitive development with the cultivation of moral and spiritual values to produce graduates capable of contributing positively to society (Nata, 2013, p. 159). The findings of this study demonstrate that Al Mu'allim Vocational High School successfully operationalizes this philosophy through the systematic integration of formal education and pesantren traditions.

Comparison with previous studies reveals both continuity and innovation. Earlier research generally emphasized the importance of pesantren in preserving Islamic values and strengthening students' character (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 90; Isbah, 2020, p. 78). However, relatively few studies have examined why the implementation of pesantren values is educationally necessary within vocational schools facing rapid technological and social transformation. The present research extends existing scholarship by demonstrating that pesantren traditions are not merely complementary religious activities but constitute essential educational mechanisms for strengthening students' social competence, ethical reasoning, emotional resilience, and adaptive capacity.

The principal novelty of this study lies in proposing that pesantren values and traditions should be understood as strategic educational resources for vocational education rather than exclusively as components of religious instruction. The integration of vocational competence with pesantren culture creates a holistic educational model capable of producing graduates who are professionally skilled, morally responsible, socially adaptive, and spiritually grounded. This integrated perspective offers an important contribution to the development of Islamic education and provides an alternative framework for strengthening character education within contemporary vocational schools.

Overall, the findings affirm that the implementation of pesantren values and traditions is indispensable for fostering sustainable character formation and healthy social dynamics among vocational school students. The educational practices observed at Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School demonstrate that religious values, when systematically integrated into institutional culture and students' daily experiences, become powerful instruments for developing responsible citizens capable of responding constructively to the demands of modern society.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that the implementation of pesantren values and traditions at Al Mu'allim Vocational High School, Al-Fiel Islamic Boarding School, Kesugihan, Cilacap, plays a fundamental role in shaping students' social dynamics. The internalization of values such as *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *ta'dzim* (respect), *tawadhu'* (humility), discipline, tolerance (*tasamuh*), and *khidmah* (service), together with the continuous practice of pesantren

traditions including *kitab kuning* studies, *halaqah*, *muhadharah*, congregational prayers, and communal activities, has significantly strengthened students' social cohesion, responsibility, leadership, cooperation, and moral character. These educational practices create a positive institutional culture in which religious values are transformed into everyday social behavior.

The findings further demonstrate that pesantren traditions function not only as religious and cultural practices but also as effective educational mechanisms for developing students' social competence and character. The integration of vocational education with the pesantren system enables students to achieve a balance between academic competence, spiritual maturity, and social responsibility. Consequently, the pesantren-based educational environment provides an effective model for preparing students to face contemporary social challenges while maintaining strong Islamic values and ethical principles.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of an integrated perspective that explains the relationship between pesantren values, pesantren traditions, and students' social dynamics within a vocational school setting. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on character education or pesantren management, this research demonstrates that the interaction between institutional culture, religious traditions, and daily social practices forms a holistic educational ecosystem that promotes sustainable character formation and positive social behavior.

Practically, the findings suggest that educational institutions, particularly vocational schools, may adopt selected pesantren values and traditions as contextual approaches to strengthening character education and students' social competence. Future research is recommended to examine the long-term influence of pesantren culture on students' academic achievement, professional readiness, and community engagement by employing mixed-method or longitudinal research designs across different educational institutions.

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