

Internalization of multicultural education values in islamic boarding schools

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia internalize the values of multicultural education in their daily educational practices. As institutions that traditionally emphasize Islamic teachings, pesantren have also become important spaces for nurturing tolerance, respect for diversity, and peaceful coexistence. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research identifies how these values are integrated not only through formal education but also through everyday interactions, role modeling by religious leaders (kyai and ustadz), and the communal lifestyle of the students. The findings highlight the pesantren's unique potential in promoting inclusive attitudes and strengthening social cohesion in a culturally diverse society. The study suggests that incorporating multicultural values more explicitly into the pesantren curriculum could further enhance their role in shaping open-minded and socially responsible individuals. From the research results, it is stated that the implementation of multicultural education at Pondok Pesantren Terpadu Ushuluddin is already good. This is evident from the attitude of the pesantren leaders who always guide teachers and students in applying multicultural education. This is evidenced by teachers who do not differentiate between students based on ethnicity, race, culture, social strata, or gender in implementing multicultural education both in the classroom and in the Pondok Pesantren environment. However, there are still some teachers who have not implemented this due to a lack of ability to create educative interactions between students and teachers, as well as difficulty in creating a conducive atmosphere.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial key, serving as an instrument for building human and national civilization. Its existence is believed to still have a significant role in shaping the character of educated individuals, capable of becoming a guiding light for the nation's future generations. This is based on the consideration that one of the functions of education is to enhance the diversity of students with their own religious beliefs, while also providing opportunities for openness to foster tolerance (Samsul Maarif, 2015). Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world. The truth of this statement can be seen in its highly diverse and vast socio-cultural and geographical landscape. Within the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, there are approximately 13,000 large and small islands, and a population of approximately 250 million people, consisting of 300

ethnic groups who speak nearly 200 different languages. In addition, it adheres to diverse religions and beliefs such as Islam, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, as well as various other beliefs.

Multiculturalism, in a simple sense, is understood as a recognition that a country or society is diverse and pluralistic. This is an undeniable natural law. It can also be understood as a "belief" in the normality and acceptance of diversity. This is the starting point and foundation for civilized citizens. However, this diversity makes Indonesia a country vulnerable to conflict (Khoirul Anwar, 2021). Multicultural education becomes very important to understand the "differences" that exist in society as an effort to eliminate the emergence of social conflicts as a result of a lack of understanding of diversity and these differences. In the world of education, it is not uncommon for schools to create a dichotomy among their students. Even elite schools, without realizing it, have engaged in such practices, such as providing more facilities to students from elite backgrounds and separating students from middle to lower economic backgrounds. Furthermore, a dichotomy is also created towards students with different levels of intelligence/ability by establishing "accelerated" or "gifted" classes, where bright students are grouped together and those who are not considered bright are segregated. In fact, according to John Dewey in his book "Experience and Education," the essence of education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself. Education is organized democratically and equitably, and is non-discriminatory, upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and the diversity of the nation (Syamsul Arifin, 2001). Education is a social process. Education is constantly growing. Education is not preparation for life, but life itself. Diversity and difference are God's design (Sunnatullah) that cannot be avoided in the stage of life, as stated in the Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13.

Humans are created differently, and the most noble are those with piety. Nevertheless, the values of plurality and multiculturalism are not sufficiently appreciated by most people. This is evidenced by the large number of individuals who want to eliminate diversity, replacing it with unity and uniformity. Violence, terrorism, and wars in the name of religion and ethnicity are some examples of actions that desire uniformity. Multicultural education is a new phenomenon in human interaction that yearns for equal rights, including the right to receive the same education for everyone. The most important application of strategies and concepts of multicultural education aims not only to make it easier for students to understand the lessons they are learning, but also to increase their awareness to always behave in a humane, pluralistic, and democratic manner.

Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) education plays a role in introducing tolerance, because basically every religion teaches goodness (Raihani, 2012). Fundamentally, pondok pesantren (Islamic boarding school) is an educational institution that does not consider social strata; this institution can be enjoyed by all levels of society, male-female, old-young, poor-rich, they can all

enjoy education in this institution. And one small thing we need to note is that many of this nation's leaders, both those who sit in government and those who do not, formal or informal, large or small, were born from pondok pesantren. With the continuous changes that are rapidly unfolding that we cannot avoid, it inevitably brings casualties. Many people, institutions, ideologies, and even traditions are forced to be sidelined who cannot keep up with the pace of change, which potentially erodes a culture.

Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) remain the sole institution expected to produce qualified Islamic scholars (Kyai), meaning those who deeply understand religious knowledge, possess great morality, and have a strong dedication to social service. Although students from pesantren pursue diverse professions after graduation, the figure of an Islamic scholar (Kyai) is still considered the most ideal, especially amidst the current shortage of such figures. The label of an Islamic scholar (Kyai) cannot be bestowed by the pesantren itself, but by the community after witnessing their knowledge, morality, and service within society. In pesantren life, the Kyai instills the principles of simplicity and independence in their students. This principle aims to ensure that pesantren alumni are grateful in all circumstances and do not prioritize a materialistic worldly life. Education in pesantren implements a principle of self-government, where students manage their lives within the pesantren according to the boundaries of religious teachings taught by the Ustadz (teacher), Kyai, or caretakers of the pesantren. In addition to this, students are also provided with various skills that will be useful in their future lives, in the form of skills, broadmindedness, and multicultural understanding.

2. METHODS

This research is a qualitative study using a case study approach that involves multiple cases with a multiple-case design (H Zuchri Abdussamad and M Si, 2021). Descriptive research is research that describes the content of the existing data; in this case, it is multicultural education at the Ushuluddin integrated Islamic boarding school. This aligns with Meleong's opinion that descriptive research is "a research report that will contain data quotations to provide an overview of the report's presentation" (Lexy.J.Meleong, 2021). Essentially, qualitative research examines humans in their living environment, interacting with them, and striving to understand their language and interpretations of the world around them.

With this qualitative research, it will be possible to discover data that is characterized by in-depth understanding, feelings, norms, values, beliefs, habits, mental attitudes, and culture adopted by an individual or a group of people about everything (Bogdan, Robert C. & Biklen, Sari K. 2017). Thus, to understand the responses and behaviors related to the Implementation of Multicultural Education at the Ushuluddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School in Belambangan, South Lampung, it requires

in-depth observation and appreciation of the phenomena that are the focus of the research (Sugiyono, 2019). Therefore, the presence of the researcher in the research setting and the researcher's involvement in the process of Implementing Multicultural Education at the Islamic Boarding School are requirements to understand it comprehensively. The research data were obtained through a series of in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation from the Head of the Ushuluddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School, totaling 1 person, and educators and staff, totaling 75 people, of which only 10 people were sampled, including teachers, so the primary sources in this study totaled 11 people. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are documentation from the administration office and students.

In this context, the researcher divided interviews into two categories: structured and unstructured. Structured interviews were specifically required for selected informants, namely the heads of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) who possess in-depth knowledge about the implementation of multicultural education. Meanwhile, unstructured interviews were required for selected informants, namely male and female teachers (ustad and ustadzah) who have expertise related to the actualization of the implementation of multicultural education. Observation and documentation were used to observe the management activities of the application of multicultural education at the integrated Ushuluddin Islamic boarding school, the development strategy of the integrated Ushuluddin Islamic boarding school, the work program of the integrated Ushuluddin Islamic boarding school, and the conditions of the students at the integrated Ushuluddin Islamic boarding school. After all the data was collected, the researcher coded the data and analyzed it through a series of stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Theophilus Azungah, 2019). In this regard, the validity of the data obtained must be ensured through data triangulation. The selection of Islamic boarding schools for the research was carried out, considering that Islamic boarding schools are a significant type of Islamic religious education institution in Indonesia today (Abubakar Yakubu, 2021). Ultimately, the findings are presented in a systematic narrative form that refers to the established research objectives, namely, to analyze the internalization of multicultural education values at the Integrated Ushuluddin Islamic Boarding School.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) remain the sole institution expected to produce qualified Islamic scholars (Kyai), meaning those who deeply understand religious knowledge, possess great morality, and have a strong dedication to social service. Although students from pesantren pursue diverse professions after graduation, the figure of an Islamic scholar (Kyai) is still considered the most ideal, especially amidst the current shortage of such figures. The label of an Islamic scholar (Kyai) cannot be bestowed by the pesantren itself, but by the community after witnessing their knowledge, morality, and service within society.

In pesantren life, the Kyai instills the principles of simplicity and independence in their students. This principle aims to ensure that pesantren alumni are grateful in all circumstances and do not prioritize a materialistic worldly life. Education in pesantren implements a principle of self-government, where students manage their lives within the pesantren according to the boundaries of religious teachings taught by the Ustadz (teacher), Kyai, or caretakers of the pesantren. In addition to this, students are also provided with various skills that will be useful in their future lives, in the form of skills, broadmindedness, and multicultural understanding. Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) are seen as Islamic religious educational institutions that, since their inception, have been able to adapt to their environment. Until now, Pesantren remain educational institutions that have survived amidst the currents of modern development. A picture of Pesantren can be seen from various aspects of the educational system within them, which includes: subject matter and teaching methods, educational principles, educational facilities and objectives, the lives of the Kiai (Islamic scholars/teachers) and Santri (students), and the relationship between the two.

3.1 Teaching About Cultural Diversity: A Cultural Assimilation Approach

Planning to develop Multicultural education at the Ushuluddin Islamic Boarding School involves the School Leader and the Teachers. The planning consists of two main stages: first, the School Leader and administrators hold a deliberation to formulate the boarding school's activity programs; and second, the administrators plan the activity programs, which are then consulted with the School Leader before implementation. Based on the interviews conducted, information was obtained regarding the activities that the Ushuluddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School has carried out in the context of implementing multicultural education. According to the School Leader, when fulfilling their role as Leader, they consistently provide reminders to students, teachers, parents/guardians, and supporters of learning activities to not allow the diversity present at the Ushuluddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School to become an obstacle or a source of division within the School environment. Regarding the implementation of multicultural education in learning, each teacher always provides equal opportunities for all students to actively participate in class without differentiating based on ethnic, racial, gender, or religious understanding backgrounds.

"In implementing multicultural education in learning, each teacher always provides equal opportunities for all students to actively participate in class without discriminating based on ethnicity, race, gender, or religion." (MAY, Interview 2025)

According to the students, the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) has been facilitating multicultural education. The school achieves this by treating all students equally, providing a platform for spiritual aspirations in accordance with Islam, offering religious education classes, and ensuring an even distribution of minority student groups across all classes. The students most vividly remember the multicultural education reflected in the Mudir's Five Advices: (1) Make the best use

of your time, (2) Purify your heart, mind, words, and actions, (3) Foster brotherhood, develop your potential, and achieve accomplishments, (4) Act with character, knowledge, sincerity, and consistency, (5) Be patient and grateful, and improve the quality of your faith and piety.

During observations, the researcher noted that class assignments were based on a distribution of students reflecting diversity, including diversity in ethnicity, gender, and religion. This means no class is exclusively composed of a single cultural group or ethnic group. Furthermore, the researcher found data indicating a dedicated schedule for religious learning, specifically routine recitations held on the 1st of each month at the pesantren. This signifies that the pesantren is accommodating the students' rights to receive spiritual guidance, not just physical development. The division of classes based on the students' ethnic backgrounds was evident. This was proven by the presence of students with different ethnic backgrounds – Javanese, Sundanese, Lampungese, and Palembangese – in the same class.

Regarding the pesantren's efforts to facilitate interaction among groups of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds in order to foster an academic culture within the pesantren, the Head of the Integrated Ushuluddin Islamic Boarding School stated that the pesantren has done what it can provide, such as conducting outreach programs (dakwah safari) to villages using local languages and adapting to the customs of the local ethnic communities, as well as having the students wear the traditional clothing of the student's respective ethnic group during the sermons, corresponding to the local language used. Furthermore, there is a dedicated room for language demonstration activities, usually carried out by students in grades 2, 3, and 4 of the pesantren. Several values are upheld at the pesantren.

Equality and justice (al-musawah wa al-'adl). As one of the multicultural values, it is found in the pesantren environment. In practical terms, this value of equality and justice is associated with the rights and obligations of the santri (Islamic boarding school students). In terms of rights, all santri are entitled to the same education and services from the pesantren through the guidance of the kyai (Islamic scholars/teachers) and ustaz (teachers). The santri also have the same right to interact with fellow santri in the pesantren environment. Conversely, in terms of obligations, all santri have the same obligations, regardless of their region of origin or socio-economic status.

Another multicultural value developed by the pesantren is the value of tolerance (at-tasamuh) and mutual respect among the santri. This value of tolerance and mutual respect among the santri is developed by the pesantren through experience and moral education. Through this experience and moral education, the santri are accustomed to understanding and respecting the differences that exist in the pesantren. Differences in interests, personalities, region of origin, intelligence, and socio-economic status of the santri are empirical realities that cannot be avoided. Therefore, the kyai of the

pesantren see the need to develop the habit of understanding and respecting others who are different. At a more practical level, this habit of mutual understanding and respect is measured by practices such as not insulting and not mocking one another among the santri. The attitude of tolerance and mutual respect is a form of social wisdom that is used as a principle in the education system at the pesantren. And, the second reason is that the attitude of tolerance and mutual respect is an important factor for creating a harmonious communal life in the pesantren.

Deliberation (*al-musyawah*). This multicultural value also has the opportunity to flourish within the pesantren environment. It is said to have the opportunity to flourish because pesantren education has historically been perceived as a highly authoritarian educational practice. This perception is certainly not entirely accurate. Upon closer examination, it can be found that the practice of deliberation takes place within the educational system at Pesantren Ushuluddin every Monday night. Brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah*). Togetherness is also a daily experience in pesantren life. The values of brotherhood and togetherness are cultivated within the pesantren environment for three reasons: the students all feel far from their families; the students believe they are all Muslims; they share common interests and goals, namely learning about Islam. For these reasons, life in the pesantren is filled with an atmosphere of togetherness and close brotherhood. Another multicultural value that thrives in pesantren is the value of peace (*as-salam*). This value of peace is socialized in the pesantren through daily ritual activities, especially in congregational prayers and subsequent *dhikr* (remembrance of God). In prayer, there are specific movements and recitations that contain the meaning of prayers for safety. The movement referred to is turning to the right and reciting "*al-salamu alaikum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakatuh*" (peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings) and turning to the left with the same recitation. This implies a habit of mutually offering prayers for safety by those who perform congregational prayers.

3.2 Teaching About Various Approaches in Social Relationship Management

Regarding the specific program created for the implementation of multicultural education, interviews with the leadership of the Ushuluddin integrated Islamic boarding school revealed that no specific program has been created thus far. The implementation of multicultural education at the Ushuluddin integrated Islamic boarding school is already integrated into the daily interactions within the school, thus negating the need for a specific program to implement multicultural education. However, a teacher stated that Civics Education is a specific program prepared by the curriculum to raise awareness about diversity. Civics Education is the first line of defense in multicultural education; although multicultural values are present in all subjects, Civics Education remains the driving force. A similar statement was made by Vidia Lusiana, a student at the Ushuluddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School, that Civics Education is often mentioned as the subject that provides students with an understanding of multicultural education, concerning tolerance, empathy, mutual

respect and appreciation, and refraining from slander and spreading the flaws of one's fellow students.

Multicultural education is not only implemented in the classroom. It can also be carried out outside the classroom, such as helping each other without regard to differences, mutual respect, tolerance, and so on. Activities like community service are routinely done every day, with comprehensive community service carried out every Sunday. Several basic principles in implementing multicultural education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are: (1) Multicultural education is a process that must go through stages. Building multicultural awareness in pesantren is part of the acculturation process, so an understanding of multicultural education must be internalized by all pesantren members and ultimately manifested in the daily behavior of the students (santri). (2) In this case, all members of the pesantren must be involved in multicultural education. The head of the Islamic boarding school as the policy maker, the teachers as educators, and the students as those being educated, as well as other elements of the pesantren community, must work together to carry out the multicultural education process. (3) Providing training and education for staff, teachers, parents, and community leaders is essential in multicultural education. (4) Incorporating it into the stages of multicultural-based learning models or approaches. Approaches that can be used in the multicultural classroom learning process are the Single Group Studies approach and the Multiple Perspectives Approach.

3.3. Teaching to Promote Pluralism Without Distinguishing Social Strata in Society

Regarding discriminatory actions allegedly carried out by the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in relation to diversity and social strata, the students stated that they had never encountered discriminatory actions related to social strata at the Ushuluddin Integrated Pesantren. If there were any, they were merely jokes among students that were mutually understood and did not offend other students. According to the Head of the Pesantren and the teachers, discriminatory actions that invoke differences between students should be eliminated from the pesantren. The Ushuluddin Integrated Pesantren continues to implement a system of "punish and reward," but with prior warnings. According to observations conducted at the Ushuluddin Integrated Pesantren, the research team never encountered discriminatory actions carried out by the pesantren against the students during their research.

Regarding policy-making by the pesantren, the Head of the Ushuluddin Integrated Pesantren explained that, fundamentally, the policy-making carried out by the pesantren has always been based on the conditions of the pesantren, students, and teachers. Regarding the arrangement of student seating during learning activities, interviews with teachers revealed that this is not regulated by the

teachers. Students are given the freedom to arrange their own seating. However, regarding the division of groups in class, teachers usually provide criteria for group division to the students according to the needs of the group, or deliberately create groups that fulfill elements of diversity. According to the teachers, this is done because, in learning, there are usually groups of students who are less social due to feeling that their group is a minority. Students have a tendency to choose only their close friends when forming groups, so criteria must be determined for each group, that each group must accommodate the existing classroom diversity.

3.4. Teaching About Diversity Reflection to Enhance Pluralism and Equality

Achieving a goal requires planning and concrete actions. Generally speaking, Vision and Mission are planning concepts accompanied by actions that align with the plan to reach a desired objective. Establishing a vision and mission that incorporates multicultural education is crucial as it serves as the foundation and framework for implementing multicultural education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This is because the vision and mission contain key pesantren policies that are the absolute basis for implementing multicultural education in the pesantren, applicable to all members of the pesantren community. Eventually, this vision and mission will be translated into the pesantren's goals and objectives. Both are also crucial in realizing multicultural education within the pesantren. Besides the vision and mission, it is important to accommodate multicultural education in pesantren by incorporating it into the elaboration of the pesantren's work programs. A work program is a fundamental design for a specific task, covering implementation guidelines, timelines, division of responsibilities, infrastructure facilities, and all essential aspects encompassing all elements for the program's success.

This work program is comprehensive in nature, encompassing all the benefits of an institution. It will serve as a guide for the organization in carrying out its routine operations. The work program is also used as a means to realize the organization's ideals. In this case, the pesantren program can be adapted to the specific local conditions, including a unified naming convention, as the Ushuluddin Integrated Islamic Boarding School integrates Salafi and Modern approaches in its education. It is also tailored to the regional potential, socio-cultural aspects of the community, the pesantren's potential, and the needs of the students (santri). Establishing a pesantren work program that incorporates multicultural education will make it easier for the pesantren to formulate activities to be carried out in the implementation of multicultural education. This is very important because if activities directed towards multicultural education are accommodated in the pesantren's work program, it will facilitate the school in implementing them within the pesantren's activities.

Furthermore, the implementation of multicultural education will be easily synchronized with other activities and with all units within the Islamic boarding school (pesantren). Conversely, if the

pesantren's work program does not include activities directed towards the development of multicultural education, it is almost certain that there will be no realization of anything leading to multicultural education. In addition, the pesantren must also have a conducive pesantren culture that can provide space and opportunity for the implementation of multicultural education. Fundamentally, the quality of an educational institution can be seen from the extent of its success in improving quality, starting from the organizational or institutional culture. The role of culture in the pesantren will greatly influence changes in attitudes and behaviors of the pesantren community. A positive pesantren culture will create a conducive atmosphere for achieving the pesantren's vision and mission; conversely, a negative culture will create many obstacles to achieving the pesantren's vision and mission.

In this case, multicultural education is used as an approach in learning activities with the Islamic boarding school's programs. Among these flagship programs is the Community Service Program. This community service program is basically a program to strengthen the mental fortitude of students. They are sent to villages around the Islamic boarding school, with 10 students sent to each village for 10 days. According to the head of the Islamic boarding school, the program aims to guide and educate students on how to socialize and adapt in a pluralistic society. He stated that this program is indeed modeled on the Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata - KKN) in universities. The evaluation results show that the activity is very beneficial for those who want to continue to higher education and for socializing in the community. Strengthening the values of multicultural education in Islamic boarding schools involves: 1) The leadership of the boarding school and the teaching staff or those related to multicultural educational values must first serve as good role models for the students; 2) There must be approval from the leadership of the boarding school; 3) Consultations should be conducted; 4) The prepared learning process should serve as a platform for the students to understand multicultural values.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of multicultural education at the Integrated Islamic Boarding School Ushuluddin is already good. This is evident from the actions taken by the Head of the Islamic Boarding School when performing their role as leader. In every opportunity, they always appeal to students, teachers, parents, and other learning activity supporters not to let the diversity within the Integrated Islamic Boarding School Ushuluddin become an obstacle or a source of division within the school environment. The curriculum utilizes a hidden curriculum, planned through deliberation, and multicultural education is made a habit that is consistently applied within the school environment.. For multicultural education learning at the Integrated Islamic Boarding School Ushuluddin Belambangan South Lampung, the learning method employs democracy by implementing three languages (Arabic-English-Indonesian). Regarding diversity, the Civics teacher

always incorporates it during lessons and applies it in extracurricular activities. The goal of multicultural education is community-oriented, considering education as the main means of creating good citizens, especially for a democratic system of government. It is also oriented towards society and the state, encompassing the relationship between education and social change, economic order, politics, and the state in the global-multicultural era. In Indonesia, the goal of multicultural education is projected through the concept of intelligent Indonesians who possess the characteristics of a moral and faithful individual, whose intelligence is not used for corruption, who are inclusive, who do not justify forcing their possessions, aspirations, religion, or political ideology on others. They possess good attitudes and behavior.

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