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Formation of Moderate Character in *Pesantren*: A Methodological Offer for Islamic Moderation in Indonesia

Soni Amrullah

Institut Agama Islam Faqih Asy'ari Kediri, Indonesia

E-mail: amrullahnatanegara@gmail.com

Ahmad Wahyudi

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Ma'arif Kendal Ngawi, Indonesia

E-mail: jayayudi91@gmail.com

Abstract

Education is an effort made by an educator to his students so that students get optimal development. Educating children properly and optimally is the duty and responsibility of parents and educators at the same time. Pesantren as a sub-culture is faced with the demand to develop noble life values not only for Islamic religious affairs. Furthermore, the role taken is not only an effort to instill science to the students, but also the cultivation of moderate character values and noble morals. This article with a theoretical approach seeks to analyze the efforts that have been made by pesantren so far in instilling moderate character values in their students as a methodological offer to instill moderate character values in a wider and more diverse scope. This research is a library research. In this study, the author used text sources both primary and secondary related to Pesantren in an effort to instill moderate character education for students and analyze and examine important factors that can be used as a spur in instilling the value of religious moderation. The results obtained in the study are that there are four important factors in an effort to instill a moderate attitude in religion. First, the sufistic paradigm that pesantren have, Second, the ethics and culture developed by pesantren, Third, curricular activities in the form of a moderate-minded yellow book study, Fourth, the vital role of kyai in pesantren can be a catalyst for the cultivation of moderate values

Keywords: Character building; moderate boarding schools

Introduction

Children are the next generation as well as the continuation of the relay struggle in the family, religion and nation. Therefore, children need to get guidance, education and optimal protection from parents or educators so that they can develop into individuals who have a tough personalities and a variety of abilities and useful skills. Therefore, parents are fully responsible for providing children with various examples and good guidance so that they can create future generations who are tough and Noble in character.

Educating children properly and optimally is the duty and responsibility of parents and educators at the same time. The task is a challenge that is not easy for parents and educators because psychologically, children and adolescents have a character that is unstable, selfish, and prioritize pleasure over rational, productive, and positive actions causing the escalation of children's aggressiveness to continue to rise from time to time, especially in large urban environments.

Data from the Center for Social Disorder control DKI Jakarta shows quite alarming data that in 2009 there were 0.08% or 1,318 of 1,647,835 elementary, junior high, and high school students in DKI Jakarta involved brawls and this figure increased from previous years. Further Data shows that in the world of education there is still a phenomenon of moral decadence committed by students such as lying, violence in solving problems, low respect for others, and often issuing disrespectful words in communication.

The data presented above shows us, especially parents and educators, that an important task in educating a child is not only a consideration of academic intelligence but also a consideration of the moral development and character of a child because the future of children will not only be determined by their academic intelligence in formal schools, more than that, determined also from how good their character in the surrounding environment. Ron Kurtus, a founder of the educational website "School of Champions", as quoted by Yuyun Yunarti, argues that character is a behaviour or behaviour of a person so that from his behaviour others will know him "what he is like". According to him, a character will determine a person's ability to achieve their goals effectively. More than that, a person's character is formed from the process of imitation, namely through the process of seeing, hearing, and following. So the real character is something that can be taught and revealed intentionally. Therefore, a child can have a good character or bad depending on the source he learned or the source that taught him.

The above description provides insight to us that the process of guidance and education is good and optimal by parents and educators to children can provide a stimulus for the formation of the character of children when adults and thus also determine their future in the future.

Since the beginning of life, children are constantly faced with a variety of environments around them. The family is the first environment that requires children to be able to adjust well in line with their age and maturity. In the home, children live side by side with parents and other family members, so the task of education and guidance of a child's earliest is the family. Then over time, children begin to be faced with life situations outside the family environment that certainly have a plurality in various aspects of life ranging from nature to behaviour. Therefore, every child should get guidance, teaching, and nurturing from parents and educators by the needs so that children understand the importance of good character in real life.

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the necessary skills for themselves and the community. Education can also be interpreted as a human way of fostering his personality by the norms and culture contained in the community. So education is an effort made by an educator to his students so that students get optimal development.

One of the important institutions that become an important foundation of education, especially Islamic education in Indonesia is *pesantren*. *Pesantren* is the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia which was allegedly founded first by early Islamic preachers in the archipelago which in the context of Java is the *walisanga*. *Pesantren* is a subculture in Islamic education with distinctive and sticky characteristics in society even today. The role that is trying to be taken by the boarding school is the intelligence of the nation from generation to generation endlessly. Furthermore, the role taken was not only an effort to instil knowledge in the students but also the cultivation of moderate character values and noble morals.

Pesantren as a sub-culture is faced with the demand to develop noble life values not only for Islamic Religious Affairs but also as a “crater Candra upfront” human formation plenary. The students (students in the *pesantren*) after studying at the *pesantren* are expected to be able to become agents of change for the community not only in religious matters but also in social values in the community including religious moderation.

This article with a theoretical approach seeks to analyze the efforts that have been made among the *pesantren* so far in instilling the values of moderate character

to its students as a methodological offer to instil the values of moderate character in a wider and diverse scope.

Method

This research is library research. Library research is research conducted using literature, either in the form of books, notes, or research reports from previous research. The data source of this study is a document or document study. Document studies are looking for data on things or variables in the form of notes or transcripts, books, research reports, newspapers, magazines, scientific journals, inscriptions, minutes of meetings, leggers, agendas and so on so that conclusions or research results are obtained from them to be published. In this study, the authors used both primary and secondary text sources related to boarding schools to instil moderate character education for students and analyze and examine the important factors that can be used as a runway in instilling the value of religious moderation.

Results and Discussion

The research findings that will be discussed below will explain the genealogy and values run by the boarding school in instilling moderate character values to its students that can be adapted in a variety of situations outside the *pesantren* starting from the paradigmatic view of the *pesantren* that tends to be Sufistic to enable the creation of a moderate and tolerant attitude among, next, the culture and ethics of *pesantren* contain undeniable moderate values that are always exemplified by *kyiai* and taught to students through the study of moderate Islamic texts.

History of Pesantren from time to time: genealogy of Pesantren and its contribution to the Indonesian nation

Denys Lombard, a prominent historian and Indonesians from France mentioned several community phenomena that according to him were able to change the order of society, politics, and economic systems in Majapahit era Java. One phenomenon that according to Lombard was unusual and that had not previously occurred in Javanese palaces was the removal of the religionists from the palace circle. Here's an excerpt from Lombard's statement:

"Judging from the list of changes-which includes: the religious moving away from the king, and continuing the politics of land clearing on their own, the *bhre* buyers who want to regain autonomy like the *raka* of old, the growing role of traders and money traffic, the emergence of "clients" or *kawula* who are part of interpersonal

networks, and finally, the emergence of landowners who escape the social system that prevails in *wanua*-it is clear that the changes are profound. And these things can shake the order of the kingdom.....”

These changes occurred before the Islamization process took place in Java and became a turning point in changing the social system that previously the religionists and regional leaders were so centralized with the palace now starting to establish autonomous areas outside the palace area using *babad alas*. The religionists began to establish mandalas (*kadewaguruan*) which are intended as a place of independent religious education and are no longer tied to the kingdom.

Ahmad Baso further analyzed that the removal of the religionists from the palace area was what inspired the scholars of Java to establish an independent region as a base for Islamic education for the community. Baso considered that mandalas or *kadewaguruan* that were independent, independent, and free from intervention were the forerunners of *pesantren* in the future. The Guardians of the spread of Islam in Java built *pesantren*-some of which are former mandalas– not only as a vehicle for planting Islamic values but also built with a high spirit of independence. The sources of independence are built from economic independence, political independence, and cultural and religious.

Pesantren became an important part of the process of community castration a la *walisanga*. This is evidenced by the strategy of the Guardians of the spread of Islam in the archipelago that has begun in the 13th century AD starting by opening the land, moving and reviving the economy, agriculture, and trade, then continued by stabilizing the social and political order to create a prosperous society, adequate, and independent based on Islamic values in boarding schools.

Continuing to the era of Dutch colonialism, when the Dutch colonialists stuck their nails in the archipelago, it was the religionists, Muslim leaders, and Islamic scholars who worked for hand in hand to hold a great resistance to the very detrimental colonialism system. The *Pesantren* at that time became a strategic place to form militants who would join forces against colonialism in many battles. Thus it can be said that the earliest resistance to Dutch colonialism at that time was shown by the students in *pesantren* although with a variety of different approaches. There are *kyai* and *pesantren* who fight based on disagreement over the practice of colonialism that so afflicts the people, there are also those who fight for reasons of cultural and religious differences with the colonialists who with 3G ideology (Gold, Glory, Gospel) are trying to spread the teachings of Christianity. Regardless of the approach, they had to fight the Colonials, all of them still led to one goal, namely to expel the Dutch colonialists from this country.

In the contemporary era, *pesantren* is no longer a place to form combat militants to fight the invaders, but as a seedbed of Islamic and humanitarian values including religious moderation.

The Sufistic paradigm of Pesantren as the basis of religious moderation

Sufism is a spiritual path in navigating a better and noble life for Muslims and efforts to distance themselves from the attitude inclined to the life of the world (*Al-hubb al-dunya*) compared to the love of Muslims towards the hereafter. In the course of its history Sufism is indeed intended to improve the morality and character of some Muslims after the Prophet Muhammad who tends to have a destructive attitude. The scholars at that time were worried about the behaviour of the Muslim community that no longer reflected the moral values taught by the Prophet Muhammad. Unhealthy political attitudes in the body of the Abbasid dynasty, the practice of mutual scuttling and scuttling were already in full swing, and materialistic and hedonic attitudes toward life became increasingly widespread. So it is considered necessary to have a spiritual orientation as an effort to distance people from excessive worldly attitudes that tend to have destructive properties.

In the context of Indonesian Islam, Ricklefs said that the spread of Islam in the archipelago is one of the most important but at the same time the most obscure processes. It is estimated that Islam has existed since the 7th century (seven) or has existed since the early days of Islamic formation in the Arabian Peninsula as the archipelago grew as a bustling international trade route. However, Islam became massively embraced by the people of the archipelago only in the mid-13th century when the spreaders of Islam in the archipelago were dominated by Sufi nomads who spread Islam with a strong Sufistic pattern. The wandering Sufis who then taught Sufism mixed with the teachings that are widely known by the people of Indonesia. With the teachings of Sufism, the "form" of Islam that is taught to the indigenous population is felt to be more flexible and adaptive and has similarities with the minds of people who previously adhered to Hinduism, Buddhism, or the original ancestral religion of the archipelago. Sufism-oriented Islamic teachings become very easily absorbed by the people of the archipelago because it is easily intertwined with the old teachings of the people who have been rooted for a long time. Sufistic Islam has become an important social capital for the Islamization of the archipelago because of its empathic teachings and tolerance for a variety of local traditions that are relatively new to Islam itself.

The mindset of Sufism which has a moderate character, tolerant and open to various forms of local wisdom and religious diversity in the archipelago in turn became an important factor in the acceptance of Islam by the people of the archipelago so that the Sufistic teachings were then adopted and adapted by the *pesantren* and taught to students from teacher to teacher even today. Zulkifli in his research stated that since the beginning of the spread of Islam in the archipelago, it cannot be denied that the Guardians of the spread of Islam, especially in Java, are followers of the Sufi order and follow the teachings of Sufism Al-Ghazali. Furthermore, Zulkifli saw that Hajj activities in the 19th-20th centuries AD were an important link in the spread of Islam which breathed Sufism were many students who went on Hajj studied Islam with scholars in Mecca and Medina and upon their return to the archipelago, they established *pesantren* and taught Islam in the archipelago which breathed Sufism.

Over time, the style of Sufism thought formed the pattern of Islam Nusantara adaptive, moderate, tolerant, peace-loving, and loving with fellow human beings. This moderate Nusantara Islamic Model is considered capable of becoming the capital of civilization in the future. Moderate Islam will not be anti-difference, let alone new things that are positive for the people. Sufistic Islam will be able to perceive a variety of new cultures, practices and values and constructive Science for the development of Islamic Civilization now and in the future.

Culture and ethics of religious moderation in Pesantren: an Indonesian Islamic methodological offer

Pesantren is not only a system of education and teaching of Islamic sciences only. *Pesantren* is considered as a sub-culture of society that is able to develop values and life bases that are typical of *pesantren* including ethical issues and life values. The following authors present some models of ethics and values developed in boarding schools that can be a pioneer in the cultivation of moderate character:

a. Friendly to differences: the foundation of religious moderation in *pesantren*

The long journey of the history of *pesantren* in *nusantara* is full of tolerance and respect for differences. Tolerance is a manifestation of the teachings of Islam which also values diversity and the implementation of sufistic values that also continue to be maintained in *pesantren*. Tolerance is very essential and important to always be fostered and preserved, because with mutual tolerance between people in this life will create peace and harmony, without any hostility and mutual suspicion.

One example of a boarding school that is so concerned about developing tolerance values is the *ngalah* boarding school in East Java. Boarding school is maintained by K.H Sholeh Bahrudin shows how important the values of tolerance in order to knit our national weaving. One of the forms of religious tolerance activities carried out at the *ngalah pesantren* is that *Kiai* Sholeh accepts anyone who enters his house, whether the person is praying or not, Muslim or non-Muslim, ranging from exchanging scientific insights, complaints of problems in households, offices and others. In addition to K.H. M. Sholeh Bahrudin provides a wide opportunity not only to Inter-boarding but non-Muslim religious leaders both individually and in groups to examine Pondok Pesantren Ngalah. This is like what happened in 2008 Pondok Pesantren Ngalah received a visit from a Christian group from Tulungagung, in 2009 received the Australian Embassy who stayed at the Pesantren Ngalah for 3 days to find out the activities of the *pesantren* and the interesting is the statement *Kiai* Sholeh who repeatedly advised the students who showed how strong the spirit of multiculturalism in *Kiai* Sholeh namely “*Awas nek sampek takon masalah agomo nang poro tamu, nek kepingin takon nang aku wae, duduhno nang poro tamu Pondok Pesantren Ngalah iku duduk sarang teroris, seng gawe kuwatir poro penganut agomo liyo.*”

Aguk Irawan M.N in his dissertation on the historical roots of *pesantren* Ethics also mentioned that one of the practices of *pesantren* ethics that continues to be preserved and stores teachings about the practice of religious moderation is the practice of *selamatan*. *Selamatan* activity is a cultural product derived from the pre-Islamic tradition, but when Islam penetrated into the soul of the people of the archipelago, especially Java, the pre-Islamic tradition is maintained even today.

The example above shows how *pesantren* with its distinctive characteristics as a religious educational institution, also has a strong sensitivity and commitment to moderation and respect for diversity in Indonesia that continues to be instilled in its students.

b. Dormitory system as the basis for planting multicultural values

Still in his study, Aguk Irawan said that the dormitory or cottage system is an inculturation of the teaching system derived from the Indian Hindu tradition called *Nalanda*. In the dormitory, the students are educated and trained in order to deepen the knowledge of religion and general knowledge and live a life full of concerns –such as *tirakat* in *pesantren*.

In the dormitory environment, the students who come from diverse backgrounds blend into one in the same location. This allows the students to understand each other and learn about the diversity that exists around them, thus creating an empathetic attitude among the students. In turn, this empathetic attitude is the forerunner of a moderate attitude in addressing life in the wider community later.

c. *Syawir* tradition (deliberation) in *Pesantren*

In the process of Education, *pesantren* has its own system ranging from teaching systems such as *sorogan* and *bandongan*, as well as social systems such as *sowan*, *boyongan* and high compliance with *kyai*. One of the important traditions in the scientific system in *pesantren* is the tradition of deliberation (*syawir*). *Syawir* activity is usually done to resolve a variety of issues between the students ranging from scientific issues in boarding schools that discuss and review the studies that have been done with the *kyai* to efforts to resolve social issues in boarding schools between students.

Syawir method or discussion in *pesantren* is generally held between the students themselves and not between students and clerics. *Kyai* in this case acts as a supervisor and the last reference when everything becomes a dead end. So in this discussion activity, if there is a debate, the debate only occurs between students and other students and not with *kyai*.

This deliberation activity is usually carried out by students in solving scientific problems after learning by *kyai* with *sorogan* and *bandongan* methods. With this deliberation activity (*syawir*) the students will be trained to solve problems and appreciate differences of opinion among fellow students. Respecting these differing opinions of others is one of the important pillars of religious moderation in Indonesia.

Examples of scientific authority and moderate-minded text Studies in Pesantren as an effort to develop the value of religious moderation

a. *Kyai* as an exemplary source

Kyai is the most essential element of the existence of a boarding school. Often he is the founder of the boarding school itself. Zamakhsyari Dhofier in his study stated that a boarding school can be likened to a small kingdom where the *kyai* is an absolute source of power and authority in the life and environment of the boarding school.

Kyai who live together with the students in a complex of boarding schools have a lot of time to interact, guide and control the behavior of the students

towards the desired behavior *kyai* in accordance with the initial vision of the establishment of boarding schools. Thus, *kyai* is the main catalyst in an effort to inculcate values and behavior to the students.

The important position of a *kyai* in *pesantren* as Dhofier's study mentioned above becomes an important bargaining point for the role of *kyai* in seeding religious moderation attitudes ranging from the *pesantren* environment to the wider community. In other words, if you want the students to have a moderate attitude from an early age, then the moderate attitude must first be owned by the clerics, practiced and then taught to the students.

b. Assessment of moderate Islamic texts in *Pesantren*

The yellow book is an important factor that characterizes the boarding school which is a means of production of the boarding school subculture. Aside from being a guide for religious procedures, the yellow book is also functioned by the *pesantren* as a universal reference (*maraji*) in addressing all the challenges of life. The role of the yellow book in the *pesantren* environment that tends to *fiqh*-sufistik is very strategic. This is because without the existence of the Yellow Book, Islamic intellectual tradition in Indonesia will be stuck on the model of Sufi-extreme and *fiqh*-extreme.

What *kyai* Ihsan Jampes achieved through his work *Siraj Al-Thalibin* and *Manahijul Imdad* are examples of intellectual achievements that rely on the Yellow Book. This also proves the ability of scholars in boarding schools to combine the ability to explore the science of religion completely and Sufism completely.

Thus, the yellow book that has been written and maintained continuously in *pesantren* can be a runway in understanding and reformulating Islamic thought in responding to progress. *Pesantren* who are familiar with the treasures of classical Islam in turn will give birth to a moderate and tolerant attitude that is far from extreme attitudes.

Conclusion

There are four important factors in the effort to instill moderation in religion. First, the sufistic paradigm owned by the *pesantren* and the historical background of the *pesantren* who are familiar with diversity make the *pesantren* can easily instill the

value of religious moderation because the initial foundation has been owned, namely readiness to face diversity. Second, the ethics and culture developed by *pesantren* can be an effective medium in an effort to instill moderate values to the students. Third, curricular activities in the form of a moderate study of the Yellow Book become the main “motor” of planting moderate values to the students. Fourth, the vital role of *kyai* in *pesantren* can be a catalyst for the cultivation of moderate values through his daily advice and example in front of the students who live together in one *pesantren* complex.

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