



## Multicultural Islamic Education Model Based on Salaf Tradition in Islamic Boarding School

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### ABSTRACT

This study describes and analyzes a multicultural Islamic education model based on the Salaf tradition at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School. Using a qualitative ethnographic case study, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving caregivers, clerics, teachers, and santri. Multicultural Islamic education in the pesantren is shaped by seven main components: pesantren values, the spirit of peace, social protection, guidance from kiai and teachers, visionary inclusive leadership, transformative spirit, and educational spirit. These values are internalized through curriculum integration, daily habituation, learning practices, and kiai exemplarity. The Salaf tradition supports tolerance, solidarity, and adaptive character formation, making pesantren a peaceful and inclusive educational environment.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and has played an important role in shaping religious knowledge, moral character, and social life. In contemporary society, pesantren is not only expected to preserve Islamic tradition but also to respond to social changes, cultural diversity, and the need for inclusive education. Pesantren continues to serve as a center of Islamic learning, character formation, and social development while adapting to modern educational challenges (Azizah *et al.*, 2023; Kurniawati and Anshory, 2024; Muslim *et al.*, 2024; Purwanti *et al.*, 2023; Yumnah, 2020).

One important strength of pesantren is its ability to maintain the Salaf tradition while internalizing values relevant to multicultural life. The Salaf tradition is reflected in the study of classical Islamic texts, the use of *sorogan* and *bandongan* learning methods, the moral authority of the *kiai*, and daily religious habituation among *santri*. These practices not only transmit religious knowledge but also shape discipline, humility, obedience, tolerance, and responsibility. In this sense, the pesantren tradition can become a foundation for multicultural Islamic education when it is practiced through inclusive guidance, peaceful interaction, and respect for diversity (Bastomi, 2019; Ikhrum *et al.*, 2023; Kholish and Wafa, 2022).

Multicultural Islamic education is important because Indonesian society is characterized by religious, ethnic, cultural, and social diversity. Islamic education in pesantren needs to strengthen not only religious understanding but also peaceful coexistence, social solidarity, and respect for differences. Previous studies have discussed multicultural Islamic education, tolerance education, and religious moderation in pesantren and Islamic educational institutions (Fajriyah *et al.*, 2021; Maskuri and Mariyono, 2023; Maskuri *et al.*, 2020; Mo'tasim *et al.*, 2022). However, further study is still needed to explain how local pesantren traditions are transformed into daily educational practices that build multicultural awareness.

Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School provides an important context for examining this issue. The pesantren maintains the Salaf tradition while developing educational practices that emphasize peace, protection, guidance, social responsibility, and inclusive leadership. These values are not only taught formally but are also practiced through daily routines, interaction between *kiai*, teachers, and *santri*, collective worship, social activities, and exemplary leadership. Leadership in pesantren plays an important role in connecting tradition with innovation, especially when pesantren must prepare *santri* to live in a plural and changing society (Harsoyo, 2022; Sugiri and Ma'shum, 2022; Thoyib and Fauzan, 2021).

Although studies on pesantren and multicultural education have increased, there remains limited discussion on how the Salaf tradition itself becomes a practical basis for multicultural Islamic education. Many studies focus on curriculum, religious moderation, or tolerance programs, but fewer explain how pesantren values, peaceful culture, social protection, *kiai* guidance, and inclusive leadership operate together as an educational model. This study addresses that gap by examining the multicultural Islamic education model based on the Salaf tradition at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School.

This study aims to describe and analyze how the Salaf tradition is implemented as a foundation for multicultural Islamic education at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School. Specifically, the study examines the main components that shape multicultural education in the pesantren, including pesantren values, the spirit of peace, social protection,

guidance from *kiai* and teachers, inclusive leadership, transformative spirit, and educational spirit. By exploring these components, this study shows how local pesantren tradition can contribute to the development of peaceful, inclusive, and adaptive Islamic education.

## 2. METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with an ethnographic case study design. This design was chosen to examine how the Salaf tradition is practiced in daily pesantren life and how it shapes multicultural Islamic education at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School. The study focused on values, practices, interactions, leadership patterns, and cultural meanings that developed within the pesantren community. The research was conducted at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School from June to July 2024. The researcher was directly involved in the field to observe pesantren activities, understand daily interactions, and document the internalization of multicultural values among *santri*, teachers, caregivers, and pesantren leaders. The research participants were selected purposively because of their knowledge and involvement in pesantren education and multicultural practices. The key informants included pesantren caregivers, school principals, vice principals for curriculum affairs, religious teachers, general subject teachers, and senior *santri*. These participants were considered relevant because they were directly involved in the implementation of the Salaf tradition and the formation of multicultural values in the pesantren environment. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore participants' understanding of pesantren values, peace, protection, guidance, leadership, and multicultural education. Participatory observation was conducted during routine pesantren activities, including religious learning, congregational worship, student interactions, social activities, and character-building practices. Documentation was used to examine institutional profiles, vision and mission statements, organizational structures, learning activities, cultural symbols, and other relevant pesantren records. Data analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. First, the researcher selected and organized data relevant to the focus of the study. Second, the data were presented in thematic narratives based on the main components of multicultural Islamic education in the pesantren. Third, conclusions were drawn by comparing interview results, observations, and documentation. To ensure credibility, the study used source and method triangulation by comparing information from different participants and data collection techniques. Member checking was also conducted by confirming the initial findings with key informants to ensure that the interpretation reflected the actual conditions in the field.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Salaf tradition at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School functions not only as a method of religious transmission but also as a foundation for multicultural Islamic education. Through interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, several components were identified as central to the pesantren's educational model: pesantren values, the spirit of peace, social protection, guidance from *kiai* and teachers, visionary leadership, transformative spirit, and educational spirit. These components are summarized in **Table 1**. Multicultural Islamic education at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School is constructed through the integration of tradition, moral discipline, and social openness. The pesantren maintains classical Islamic practices such as the study of religious texts, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, congregational worship, and daily discipline. However, these practices are not

limited to religious learning. They are used as instruments for building tolerance, responsibility, independence, and social care among *santri*. This finding is consistent with studies showing that pesantren can function as spaces for religious learning, character formation, and social adaptation in response to contemporary educational challenges (Azizah *et al.*, 2023; Kurniawati and Anshory, 2024; Muslim *et al.*, 2024; Yumnah, 2020).

**Table 1.** Components of Salaf tradition and multicultural Islamic education strategies.

COMPONENT	MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION STRATEGY	EDUCATIONAL MEANING
Pesantren values	Internalization of brotherhood, obedience, independence, discipline, and responsibility	Forms <i>santri</i> who are morally grounded and socially responsible
Spirit of peace	Inclusive communication, collective worship, tolerance, and conflict resolution through deliberation	Builds peaceful interaction and social harmony
Social protection	Child-friendly guidance, protection from violence, empathy, and care for vulnerable groups	Creates a safe, inclusive, and supportive pesantren environment
Guidance from <i>kiai</i> and teachers	Personal mentoring, religious guidance, moral supervision, and exemplary behavior	Shapes character through direct modeling and daily interaction
Visionary leadership	Open, adaptive, innovative, and inclusive leadership practices	Connects Salaf tradition with contemporary educational needs
Transformative spirit	Cross-cultural activities, social service, dialogue, and cooperation	Encourages students to become agents of change in a plural society
Educational spirit	Integration of religious learning, discipline, entrepreneurship, literacy, and community service	Develops religious, intellectual, social, and practical competencies

The first component is the internalization of pesantren values. Students are prepared to become agents of change who can apply religious knowledge and moral values in wider society. The values of brotherhood, obedience, independence, discipline, and responsibility are cultivated through daily routines, interaction with teachers, and the example of pesantren leaders. The supporting interview evidence is presented in **Table 2**. The Salaf tradition is not understood merely as preservation of classical religious learning. It is also interpreted as a living educational system that shapes *santri*, leaders, and alumni. The quotations indicate that pesantren values are internalized through discipline, moral example, emotional attachment, alumni participation, and community responsibility. This supports the view that pesantren education can strengthen character and social engagement while remaining rooted in Islamic tradition (Bastomi, 2019; Ikhrum *et al.*, 2023; Muslim *et al.*, 2024).

The second component is the spirit of peace. At Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School, peace is practiced through respectful communication, collective worship, cooperation, and conflict resolution through deliberation. The pesantren's social life brings together *santri* from different backgrounds, making tolerance and mutual respect essential for daily interaction. The values of peace are not taught only as concepts but are habituated through greeting, worship, shared activities, and the example of *kiai* and teachers. This finding is in line with studies emphasizing the role of pesantren and Islamic education in strengthening tolerance, moderation, and social cohesion (Fajriyah *et al.*, 2021; Maskuri *et al.*, 2020; Yumnah, 2020).

**Table 2.** Representative interview excerpts on Salaf tradition and multicultural Islamic education.

THEME	SOURCE	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTATION	INTERPRETATION
Alumni as agents of change	H. Iwan Zunaih / Gus Iwan	“Alumni can become agents of change in society, applying the knowledge and values gained at Islamic boarding schools to improve social and spiritual life in their communities. Thus, the tradition of the salaf pesantren at the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School plays an important role in shaping students, leaders, and alumni, both in terms of knowledge and morals.”	The Salaf tradition is understood as a foundation for intellectual, moral, and social contribution beyond the pesantren.
Supportive educational environment	Ustadz Muhaimin	“They seek to create an environment conducive to spiritual and intellectual growth. The leadership also pays attention to the role of alumni as part of the pesantren's tradition. They encourage alumni to contribute to society and become leaders who can apply the values taught in the pesantren. They emphasized the importance of discipline and independence in the education of students, which are the main values in the Salaf tradition.”	Pesantren leadership supports discipline, independence, alumni contribution, and continuous character development.
Alumni responsibility and openness	Gus Iwan	“Alumni are aware of their responsibility to apply the knowledge and values learned at the pesantren in the community. They often play the role of leaders, educators, or movers in the community, trying to spread the positive values taught in the pesantren. Alumni who are exposed to diverse experiences outside the pesantren often develop an open attitude towards social and technological developments, while still respecting the traditional values taught.”	Alumni are expected to preserve tradition while remaining open to social and technological change.
Emotional attachment to pesantren	Ustadz Muhaimin	“Alumni often feel a strong emotional attachment to the cottage; they consider it a second home. Often they are involved in alumni activities to maintain relationships and support the development of the pesantren. The alumni's understanding of the Salaf tradition reflects a combination of appreciation for the heritage of knowledge, the application of moral values, and a commitment to contribute to society.”	Pesantren is viewed not only as an institution but also as a moral community that shapes lifelong identity.
Educational discipline	Ustadz Taufiq	“Discipline in the boarding school is not only formal, but also instilled through the culture and traditions of Islamic boarding schools that prioritize the values of politeness and order. If there is a violation, the sanctions given are educational. The goal is to educate, not just punish.”	Discipline is practiced as educational guidance rather than punishment.
Character development beyond academics	Gus Iwan	“Character development activities, such as leadership, art, and sports training, are carried out to develop the potential of students beyond the academic aspect. Alumni are often involved in pesantren activities, both as mentors and recitation leaders, as well as in reunion events and other programs. These traditions not only educate students in the aspect of religious knowledge, but also form character and discipline that are expected to be applied in their lives in society.”	Pesantren education develops leadership, creativity, social responsibility, and community involvement.

The third component is social protection. The pesantren creates a safe educational environment through caring relationships, moral supervision, child-friendly guidance, and protection from physical or psychological harm. Students from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds are treated equally and guided to develop empathy, solidarity, and responsibility. This inclusive environment enables *santri* to feel accepted and supported, which strengthens their motivation to learn and participate in pesantren life. In this context, multicultural Islamic education is not only about recognizing diversity but also about creating a protective and just environment where students can grow together.

The fourth component is the guidance of *kiai* and teachers. In the pesantren context, *kiai* and teachers function not only as instructors but also as moral guides, caregivers, and role models. Their example shapes students' understanding of discipline, humility, obedience, tolerance, and responsibility. Through daily mentoring, religious learning, and social supervision, they transmit multicultural values in practical and relational ways. Pesantren leaders and teachers play a central role in shaping tolerance, religious moderation, and student character (Fajriyah *et al.*, 2021; Mo'tasim *et al.*, 2022; Thoyib and Fauzan, 2021).

The fifth component is visionary and inclusive leadership. The leadership of the pesantren maintains the Salaf tradition while allowing adaptation to modern educational needs. This is reflected in the integration of traditional learning with modern media, entrepreneurship, social activities, and contextual learning practices. The pesantren does not reject modernity; rather, it filters and integrates it within Islamic values. Such leadership supports innovation while preserving the moral and spiritual identity of the pesantren. Leadership in Islamic educational institutions is crucial for educational quality, innovation, and transformation (Harsoyo, 2022; Sugiri and Ma'shum, 2022; Thoyib and Fauzan, 2021).

The sixth component is transformative spirit. The pesantren encourages *santri* to develop social awareness through cross-cultural activities, arts, sports, discussions, community service, and cooperation. These activities provide opportunities for students to practice tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect in real situations. Religious commitment does not contradict openness to diversity. Instead, Islamic values become a moral foundation for participating constructively in a multicultural society. Multicultural Islamic education should develop inclusive attitudes, social responsibility, and respect for pluralism (Kholish and Wafa, 2022; Maskuri and Mariyono, 2023; Mo'tasim *et al.*, 2022).

The seventh component is the spirit of education. At Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School, education is carried out through structured religious learning, daily discipline, worship, literacy, organizational activities, entrepreneurship training, and community service. These practices help *santri* develop not only religious knowledge but also leadership, creativity, independence, and social care. The integration of religious learning and practical life skills shows that the pesantren prepares students to become morally strong, intellectually adaptive, and socially responsible individuals. Pesantren can support both local engagement and broader social orientation through Islamic values and adaptive education (Muslim *et al.*, 2024; Purwanti *et al.*, 2023).

The multicultural Islamic education model at Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School is built through the interaction of tradition, leadership, habituation, and social practice. The Salaf tradition serves as the moral foundation, while inclusive leadership and daily educational practices transform that tradition into a multicultural learning environment. Pesantren can preserve classical Islamic heritage while also developing tolerance, peace, social protection, and adaptability in response to contemporary social change.

This study contributes to the discourse of multicultural Islamic education by showing that Salaf pesantren should not be viewed only as traditional or exclusive institutions. In the case of Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School, the Salaf tradition becomes a practical foundation for inclusive education, peaceful social interaction, and character formation. Multicultural Islamic education can be strengthened when religious values, local wisdom, leadership, and daily habituation are integrated into a coherent educational culture. However, this study has limitations. It focuses on one pesantren and uses a qualitative case study design; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Salaf pesantren in Indonesia. The study also relies on interviews, observation, and documentation within a limited period from June to July 2024. Future studies may compare Salaf and modern pesantren, involve more institutions, or use longer ethnographic engagement to examine how multicultural Islamic education is practiced across different pesantren contexts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School develops a multicultural Islamic education model rooted in the Salaf tradition. The model is shaped by pesantren values, the spirit of peace, social protection, guidance from *kiai* and teachers, visionary inclusive leadership, transformative spirit, and educational spirit. These components work together to create an educational environment that is religious, peaceful, inclusive, and responsive to diversity. Multicultural values are not only taught through formal learning but are also internalized through daily pesantren life, including religious study, collective worship, discipline, social interaction, exemplary leadership, and community activities. The Salaf tradition, which is reflected in classical Islamic learning, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and moral habituation, becomes an effective medium for shaping *santri* who are disciplined, tolerant, independent, and socially responsible. The Salaf tradition can serve as a strong foundation for multicultural Islamic education when it is supported by inclusive leadership and adaptive educational practices. The model found in Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School may inspire other pesantren to strengthen character education, tolerance, peace, and social solidarity while maintaining their Islamic identity and local wisdom. Future research may compare Salaf and modern pesantren to develop a broader model of multicultural Islamic education in diverse socio-religious contexts.

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#### 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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