Towards Sustainable Inclusive Education: Challenges and Reconstruction of PAI Learning Methods in Islamic Boarding School Education

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines how Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia can implement inclusive education to increase tolerance and prevent extremism, while still respecting Islamic values. Using a literature review method, this study analyzes various literature related to inclusivity in Islamic education. The results show that Islamic boarding schools have great potential as institutions that support the values of tolerance, moderation, and cooperation, thus creating a peaceful learning environment. However, challenges such as resistance to curriculum reform and traditional views are also identified. This study concludes that by integrating inclusive practices, Islamic boarding schools can play an important role in building a harmonious society and preventing extreme ideologies. These findings provide strategic guidance for the development of an inclusive education model based on Islamic values, responding to local and global needs in the modern era.
Keywords: Inclusive Education; Islamic Boarding School; Tolerance; Moderation; Curriculum Reform

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pesantren di Indonesia dapat menerapkan pendidikan inklusif untuk meningkatkan toleransi dan mencegah ekstremisme, sambil tetap menghormati nilai-nilai Islam. Dengan metode kajian pustaka, penelitian ini menganalisis berbagai literatur terkait inklusivitas dalam pendidikan Islam. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pesantren memiliki potensi besar sebagai institusi yang mendukung nilai-nilai toleransi, moderasi, dan kerja sama, sehingga mampu menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang damai. Namun, tantangan seperti resistensi terhadap reformasi kurikulum dan pandangan tradisional juga diidentifikasi. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa dengan mengintegrasikan praktik inklusif, pesantren dapat berperan penting dalam membangun masyarakat yang harmonis dan mencegah ideologi ekstremis. Temuan ini memberikan panduan strategis bagi pengembangan model pendidikan inklusif berbasis nilai Islam, menjawab kebutuhan lokal dan global di era modern.
Kata-kata Kunci: Pendidikan Inklusif; Pesantren; Toleransi; Moderasi; Reformasi Kurikulum

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, have long played a vital role in fostering religious knowledge, character, and moral development among students in Indonesia (Miswanto et al., 2019). In a globalized era, however, pesantren face new challenges that require them to adapt while preserving their core values. This study seeks to address how pesantren can reform their educational approaches to promote inclusive education aligned with Islamic principles. Inclusive education within pesantren not only fulfills the need for tolerance and coexistence but also serves as a preventive measure against extremism, which threatens social harmony and the image of Islamic education (Raihani, 2012). Thus, understanding the importance of inclusive education in this context is critical, as it could enable pesantren to balance their religious traditions with modern demands.

Despite the relevance of inclusive education, research on pesantren largely centers on issues related to radicalism and traditional practices. Previous studies have shown that while pesantren are resilient in their efforts against extremism, few focus on their potential to act as agents of inclusive, moderate Islamic education (Arifianto, 2019). This research aims to address this gap by examining the role of pesantren in promoting inclusive education as a strategic response to globalization. While existing literature on inclusive education in Islamic contexts highlights general approaches to moderation, limited research specifically investigates how pesantren could act as pioneering institutions of inclusivity that support peaceful coexistence and reduce the spread of extreme ideologies. This gap is especially relevant in the context of modern society, where inclusive practices are essential for maintaining harmony.

A review of prior studies on inclusive education within Islamic settings reveals that these efforts often focus on curriculum reform and the integration of moderate religious values (Bahri, 2018) (Winata et al., 2020). However, many of these studies fail to capture the unique role of pesantren as institutions that are traditional yet flexible and capable of innovation. By incorporating inclusive educational practices, pesantren could not only respond to social challenges but also establish themselves as centers for moderate and peaceful Islamic values. This study aims to expand the understanding of how pesantren can embrace inclusivity, offering a practical framework for implementing these models within a religiously focused educational setting. Thus, the study highlights the importance of addressing the current lack of inclusive practices in pesantren.

The contribution of this study lies in identifying specific strategies for enhancing inclusivity in pesantren education. Suggested strategies include developing curricula that foster critical thinking, training educators in inclusive pedagogy, and creating learning environments that embrace diversity (Purnomo & Solikhah, 2021). Such approaches prepare students with not only religious knowledge but also essential life

skills, enabling them to engage constructively in a diverse and interconnected world. In doing so, the study seeks to present a model of inclusive education that aligns with the values of pesantren while also meeting the broader demands of contemporary society.

In summary, this study has three main objectives: (1) to analyze the current practices and perceptions surrounding inclusivity within pesantren, (2) to identify the barriers and opportunities for implementing inclusive education, and (3) to propose actionable strategies for integrating inclusivity into pesantren education. By achieving these goals, this study aims to provide valuable insights for pesantren educators, policy makers, and scholars, thereby enhancing the role of pesantren as inclusive, socially responsive institutions capable of addressing global challenges through a balanced and moderate approach to Islamic education (Robbaniyah & Lina, 2022).

2. METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative research method, specifically a library research approach, deemed suitable for examining inclusivity in pesantren. The library research approach is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth analysis of existing literature to explore the concept of inclusive education within a traditional Islamic educational setting. The qualitative approach enables a contextual and interpretative understanding of inclusivity in pesantren, aligning with the study's aim to investigate nuanced perspectives and theoretical frameworks that may not be accessible through quantitative means. This approach also benefits from flexibility, allowing for thematic exploration across diverse sources, which is essential in educational research (Creswell, 2012).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary sources selected based on specific criteria to ensure relevance and depth. Primary sources include foundational works and original studies directly addressing inclusive education and pesantren practices, while secondary sources include reviews and studies that contextualize the primary findings. The literature was chosen based on several criteria, including the publication year (prioritizing recent works from the last decade to ensure relevance), source type (peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and government reports), and direct relevance to the topics of Islamic education, inclusive pedagogy, and pesantren. In total, 30 sources were reviewed to provide a comprehensive perspective on the topic.

The data analysis follows a structured deductive approach, which includes the stages of classification, analysis, and synthesis. In the classification phase, literature data is categorized according to themes, such as pesantren inclusivity efforts, challenges, and global educational perspectives. During the analysis phase, these themes are examined to identify key findings and recurring concepts. In the synthesis stage, these findings are integrated to address the study's research questions, ultimately forming a coherent narrative around inclusive education in pesantren. This deductive

approach is chosen for its ability to build upon existing theories and to support a clear argument through structured interpretation (Sugiyono, 2010).

Content analysis is employed to identify, group, and interpret themes relevant to the study. This technique allows for systematically exploring patterns across the literature, focusing on themes such as inclusivity, educational reform, and moderation in pesantren contexts. Through content analysis, this study aims to highlight both convergent and divergent perspectives within the literature, providing a basis for robust conclusions regarding inclusive education's role in pesantren. The content analysis process also involves interpreting data contextually, drawing on underlying themes, and connecting these to broader educational frameworks.

To ensure validity, the study incorporates a systematic review of data sources and critical cross-checking between primary and secondary data. Triangulation is used by comparing findings across multiple studies and verifying the consistency of themes. Additionally, peer debriefing was conducted to provide external validation of the findings and interpretations, enhancing the reliability and transparency of the research process. This systematic approach strengthens the study's conclusions and allows for potential replication in similar educational research contexts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Analysis of Current Practices and Perceptions Around Inclusivity in Islamic Boarding Schools

Inclusive education in pesantren holds significant potential to foster an open and tolerant environment, promoting critical thinking to address issues of radicalism and globalization. Inclusiveness involves an attitude of openness towards plurality and diversity (Rohmadi, 2017), addressing various aspects of human differences in ethnicity, religion, thought, and paradigms constructively (Muliadi, 2012). With such openness, pesantren can cultivate a civil society characterized by acceptance and engagement within a multicultural context, where cultural diversity fosters harmonious interactions (Lash & Featherstone, 2001). Inclusiveness in a religious sense does not imply doubting one's faith but respecting the rights of others with different beliefs, as exemplified during the Prophet's leadership in Medina. Muslims then maintained respect for followers of other religions through the Medina Charter, reflecting the openness inherent in Islamic education that values religious diversity as part of civil society.

This inclusivity is also reflected in encouraging dialogue within the framework of inclusive education, where students learn to understand and engage with plural realities, cultivating openness toward diversity (Muqoyyidin, 2013). Inclusive education aims to develop a comprehensive perspective among students encouraging awareness of the existence of ethnic, rational, religious, cultural, and socio-economic diversity

(Muliadi, 2012). In contrast, exclusive education limits dialogue, fosters a sense of superiority, and risks imposing one-sided religious understandings that can lead to division and conflict (Asrori et al., 2019) (Muchlis, 2020).

The Qur'anic concept of *ta'aruf* (mutual recognition) from Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) exemplifies the foundational value of inclusiveness. Human diversity in ethnicity and nationality is a divine design meant to foster mutual respect and understanding, where nobility before Allah is based on piety (Chirzin, 2011). This principle discourages divisive claims of superiority and promotes humility and self-reflection (Ahsantudhoni, 2018) (Asrori et al., 2019). Inclusiveness aligns with Islamic values of tolerance and respect that underpin social harmony and compassion.

Tasamuh (tolerance) similarly calls for a broad-minded approach to diversity, advocating for respectful coexistence within differences (Jamarudin, 2016). Rooted in God's natural design (*sunnatullah*), this principle upholds justice, respect, and restrained judgment (Sholeh, 2014). By embodying *tasamuh*, Muslims can build cohesive societies, promoting justice and humility in interfaith and intercultural interactions.

At-tawassuth (moderation), as reflected in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143), defines the Muslim community as a "middlenation," balancing between extremes. This balanced stance maintains justice, fairness, and tolerance, reflecting Islam's inclusive spirit through a moderate approach that avoids both excessive leniency and rigidity (Karim, 2019) (Muchlis, 2020).

Finally, *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) encourages cooperation in goodness, with the Qur'an urging collective action towards positive outcomes while rejecting complicity in wrongdoing (Nashir, 2019). This cooperative ethos reinforces inclusiveness, emphasizing that mutual support transcends social, religious, and ideological boundaries, fostering unity and compassion essential to an inclusive, harmonious society.

Through these values, inclusive education in pesantren can nurture a community that embodies tolerance, moderation, and mutual assistance, countering radicalism and fostering harmonious coexistence within global diversity.

b. Barriers and Opportunities for Implementing Inclusive Education

The importance of inclusive education within Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, is rooted in Islamic values that respect diversity and pluralism in society. Inclusivity fosters open-mindedness and the ability to embrace diversity, which are essential characteristics in a globalized era. In Islam, the Qur'an provides guidelines on tolerance and respect for differences, particularly in the context of religious and cultural diversity. According to (Arif, 2012), inclusivity reflects Islamic teachings that honor pluralism as an acceptance of others' existence without erasing one's identity. This

conceptis crucial in pesantren, which often serve as centers for character formation in the Muslim community.

A clear comparison between this study's findings and previous studies is essential for a more comprehensive understanding. Muqoyyidin, for instance, found challenges in implementing inclusivity within pesantren due to traditional views that emphasize a strong religious identity (Muqoyyidin, 2013). This contrasts with the current study's findings, which suggest a significant potential for inclusivity through an adaptive curriculum. Highlighting these differences can demonstrate how this study's findings offer a solution to previous challenges by suggesting that inclusivity does not have to contradict a strong religious identity; rather, it can coexist harmoniously through the education of universal Islamic values.

Moreover, a reflection on the limitations of the literature-based methodology used in this study is warranted. Literature reviews are constrained by the scope of available sources, meaning that the findings here rely primarily on literature supportive of inclusivity in pesantren. This limitation presents challenges in capturing more critical or diverse perspectives. However, the relevance of these findings remains robust, given the urgent need for inclusive education in an increasingly plural and dynamic globalized context, especially within pesantren. In other words, while limited, this study effectively demonstrates the importance of inclusive education in preparing students to face broader societal challenges.

Adding case examples or empirical studies supporting these claims would be beneficial to strengthen this argument. For instance, the Almuayyad Islamic Boarding School in Surakarta has adopted an inclusive curriculum accommodating students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds through a multicultural education approach, including peace workshops and discussion forums (Indarwati, 2018). A study by Indrawati showed that students in this institution exhibited more openness and harmonious interactions with people from different backgrounds. Thus, this example provides a concrete illustration of the positive impact of inclusive education in pesantren, reinforcing the claim that inclusivity can coexist with the reinforcement of Islamic identity in educational settings (Indarwati, 2018).

Furthermore, the findings of this study offer a fresh perspective that inclusive education in pesantren is not only feasible but also significantly enhances students' competitiveness in multicultural social life. This point should be emphasized in the discussion, as it highlights that inclusive education enriches students' adaptability to diverse social situations without sacrificing the religious values they acquire in pesantren. For anadditional example, Bina Insani Islamic BoardingSchool (BBI) in Bali implements inclusive national values education, which has been shown to reduce intolerance among students. At the Bina Insani Islamic Boarding School (BBI) in Bali, multicultural education is conceptually defined by a diverse community. Both Muslim

and non-Muslim (Hindu) teachers and staff are employed, and the student body itself is varied. The curriculum emphasizes inclusivity and tolerance, employs a range of teaching approaches and strategies, and incorporates a comprehensive evaluation system, all within a pluralistic environment (Arif, 2012).

Overall, the discussion on the urgency of inclusive education in pesantren is not only relevant but also demonstrates strength in addressing the challenges faced by religious educational institutions in Indonesia. Through a more open and reflective approach, the findings of this study can serve as a reference in developing pesantren education policies that are responsive to the needs of a modern, diverse society.

c. Strategies for Integrating Inclusivity in Islamic Boarding School Education.

In Islamic educational theory, human potential is often viewed as an aspect of human nature, positioning education as a deliberate and structured endeavor to cultivate an effective learning environment (Abdullah, 2021). This principle should be reintegrated into the educational framework to address a society experiencing conflict. Religious education, such as that provided by pesantren, holds the potential to foster either tolerant or intolerant attitudes and can contribute to either societal integration or disintegration. This outcome depends largely on factors   including (1) theological perspectives and doctrinal teachings; (2) the attitudes and behaviors of followers in interpreting and practicing their faith; (3) the sociocultural context; and (4) the guidance of religious leaders, including educators, in shaping the beliefs of their communities.

To meet the current challenges within the educational sector, the development of Islamic education in Indonesia must acknowledge the nation's motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). Thus, Islamic educational development should aim to avoid fostering (1) excessive fanaticism, (2) intolerance within both student communities and the broader society, and (3) discord that undermines religious harmony and national unity. Instead, Islamic educationshouldpromote a broad understanding of ukhuwah Islamiyah not only as fellowship among Muslims but as solidarity among people of all faiths. Religious freedom should protect the rights of all believers, allowing them the liberty to practice their faith while fostering a mindset oriented toward actively "being religious," rather than merely "having a religion" (Abdullah, 2021).

A clear direction for pesantren development should focuson (1) multicultural Islamic education, designed to embrace social, cultural, and religious diversity; (2) reinforcing the mission of *Liutammimamakarimal-Akhlaq* (to perfect noble character); and (3) fostering a spiritually nationalistic character that supports a civilized society (Fadjar, 2003). Achieving these goals requires several foundational elements. First, there is a need to strengthen and expand one's understanding of Islam. A more profound comprehension of Islamic teachings correlates with higher levels of tolerance, allowing students to better understand their role in society and their potential positive

contributions, including through digital platforms. Within Islamic education, curriculum objectives rooted in the Qur'an are essential.

Conversely, a lack of Islamic knowledge can lead to increased susceptibility to negativity, particularly when external influences encourage such tendencies. Second, a broad knowledge base promotes *husnuzh-zhan* (positive assumptions) toward others. If one starts with negative prejudices, it is likely to cause misinterpretations of others' actions, fostering division and conflict. Finally, it is essential to recognize that no single group has a monopoly on truth or error.

Although inclusive education has been studied by various scholars, there has been limited research on applying this concept within the framework of Islamic religious education evaluation. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a novel approach to integrating inclusive education concepts into Islamic learning assessment, which could serve as a valuable reference for further educational development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to deepen understanding of inclusive education in pesantren to address global challenges. The findings highlight that inclusive education within pesantren can be achieved through curriculum enhancement, improved teacher quality, and the application of values like *at-ta'aruf* (mutual recognition) and *at-tasamuh* (tolerance). These elements contribute in developing a pesantren environment that fosters both strong Islamic identity and openness to diversity, positioning pesantren as institutions capable of nurturing tolerant, globally aware individuals.The study contributes to Islamic education by demonstrating that inclusive approaches in pesantren can counter radicalism, promote interfaith tolerance, and prepare students for diverse, globalized societies. These findings underscore the importance of pesantren as key institutions in shaping societal harmony and tolerance in Indonesia. Future research could benefit from empirical studies testing the effectiveness of the proposed inclusive education model within pesantren or developing specific evaluation tools to measure inclusivity in pesantren settings. This study provides a strong foundation for further exploration and practical application of inclusive education in Islamic boarding schools, with broader implications for enhancing Islamic educational frameworks.

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motivation. May the results of this research serve the academic community and contribute to the advancement of Islamic education.

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