

The Role of Pesantren in Guarding The Islamic Moderation (A Case Study at *Pesantren* Al Ittihad Poncol, Semarang Regency)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to answer the research questions on how *pesantren* Al Ittihad guards the Islamic moderation inherited from the previous generation in this globalization era, what aspects of moderation are carried out and how to implement them. To answer these two research questions, the researcher used technique of data collection through interview, documentation and observation. Based on the results of documentation and interview with *kyai*, alumni and administrator of *pesantren*, it produced comprehensive information. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzes by steps, namely data reduction, data display, data verification and conclusions. There are two conclusions in this study. *First*, there are four types of programs run by *pesantren* Al Ittihad in guarding the Islamic moderation in Indonesia. *First*, the teaching of a classical book as a medium for the transformation of Islamic sciences. *Second*, the implementation of extra-educational activities and *pesantren* teaching in the form of speech, negotiation, *ziarah kubur*, *yasinan*, *mujabadah*, *Al Barjanji*, *manaqib*, and *tablil*. *Third*, establishing formal school in the *pesantren* for santri and the community around it. *Fourth*, inviting government and community leaders who have moderate Islamic understanding. *Second*, the moderation carried out by *pesantren* Al Ittihad covers the fields of religious thought, education, Islamic rites, tolerance, politics, economics and tradition and culture.

Keywords: role of *pesantren*, guarding, Islamic moderation

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Introduction

The existence of *pesantren* for Indonesian is a necessity, both during the colonial and independence era. According to Siraj (1999: 202), the existence of *pesantren* is important for two main reasons. *First*, to respond to situation and condition of society faced with moral degradation and social change. *Second*, to spread the universality of Islam to all over the archipelago. For Muslims, the demand and spirit of Islam are important factors for *pesantren*. By spreading the universality of Islam, it is expected that Islamization in Indonesia continuously develops. Qomar (2007: 6-7) said that the purpose of the *pesantren* is to build Muslim personality of the citizens by Islamic teaching and instill a sense of religion in various aspects of life.

As one of the oldest *pesantren* in Central Java, the age of this *pesantren* can be known through the change of five generations from its founder. The evidence shows that in Central Java there are several *pesantren* which still connected to the generation of *Kyai* Misbah, the founder of *pesantren* Al Ittihad or decent of *Kyai* Hasan Asy'ari, the second generation of *pesantren* Al Ittihad. The founder of *pesantren* Al Itqan Bugen, Semarang still has family bond with Al Ittihad. It is known that KH Shodaqah is the son of KH Hasan Asy'ari, the second generation of *pesantren* Al Ittihad. KH Shodaqah is an older brother of KH Ahmad Asy'ari, the third generation of *pesantren* Al Ittihad. Also, there are *pesantren* in Kendal and Purwokerto areas that still have family bond with Al Ittihad. It shows that *pesantren* Al Ittihad is one of the oldest salaf *pesantren* in Central Java, especially in Semarang regency.

Salaf *pesantren* in the globalization era faced various challenges. In this era of globalization, salaf *pesantren* faced challenges in the form of trans- national Islamic understanding entering Indonesian territory. Trans-national Islamic ideologies entering Indonesia established educational institutions as the basis of doctrine and cadres. With the increasingly incessant transnational Islamic ideas in Indonesia and the establishment of educational institutions affiliated with transnational Islam, it is a threat for the existence of moderate *salaf pesantren*. It is necessary to conduct research to find out the efforts carried out by salaf *pesantren* in

guarding the Islamic moderation in Indonesia. The writer conducted research in *Pesantren Al Ittihad* since it is the oldest *salaf pesantren* in Central Jawa, and this pesanteren provided materials that might lead to Islamic moderation. The basic question in this research is what efforts are carried out by *pesantren Al Ittihad* Poncol, Beringin, Semarang regency in guarding Islamic moderation in Indonesia? To answer this question, the writer conducted research to big families of *pesantren Al Ittihad*.

Literature Review

Salaf Pesantren

Pondok Pesantren, commonly known as Islamic boarding school in English, is a familiar phrase in Indonesia. This phrase is a combination of two terms, namely “pondok” which comes from Arabic meaning hostel, similar to a hostel (Warson, 1997: 1662), and “*pesantren*” which comes from the Tamil language meaning teacher of Qur’an and *kitab kuning*, or in Indian language, it means people who know the holy book (Dhofier, 2011: 41).

According to Dhofier (2011: 41) the term “*pesantren*” comes from the word “santri”, added the prefix *pe* and suffix *an*, becomes “*pesantrian*” or “*pesantren*” which means the place where the students live. Mulkhan (1994: 1) and Mastuki (2010: 16) have similar definition of *pesantren* to that of Dhofier, namely a place where the students learn. Another definition is stated by Geerts (1960: 178) that pondok or *pesantren* is the center for the traditional Islamic education system. Geertz described the pondok or *pesantren* as a hostel for *santri*, when studying Islam through the *kitab kuning* under the guidance of the *kyai*. Dhofier interprets *pondok pesantren* as a center for traditional Islamic education where the students stay temporarily to explore about Islam by studying the *kitab kuning*. As a temporary residence, Steenbrink and Dhofier describe *pesantren* as a simple building made of bamboo or wood and equipped with a kitchen and a place for ablution (Dhofier, 2011: 41).

Mastuhu asserts *pesantren* is a traditional Islamic educational institution that studies, understands, deepens, appreciates, and practices Islamic teaching by emphasizing on the importance of religious moral as guidelines for daily life (Mastuhu, 1994: 55).

Pesantren as an institution is supported by the main elements. According to Geertz (1960: 179) and Steenbrink (1974: 15-16) the elements of *pesantren* as an institution consist of *kyai*, a person who has performed the haj, *santri*, a building for *santri* to learn including a *kyai*'s house, a mosque and a boarding house where the *santri* live. Dhofier (2011: 41) explains in more detailed that the elements of *pesantren*, are *kyai*, *santri*, mosque, *pondok* and classical book. *Kyai* is the most basic element in the *pesantren* because he is considered as the founder of the *pesantren* itself. *Kyai* is a pious person and has strengths.

Kyai has a very crucial role. He is considered as a reference, a consultant for the community, a person to solve various problems (problem-solving), and a person to whom people might ask for advice (Nata, 2001: 34, Noer, 1982: 18). Meanwhile, the *santri* is *pesantren* cadre who study Islamic science as the successor to the *pesantren*'s mission in spreading the Islamic teaching. *Kyai* and *santri* are considered as two elements that share the same vision and mission, both of which form a religious community called *pesantren*.

Based on the main elements of the *pesantren*, several figures and observers explain that there are five characteristics of the salaf *pesantren*. First, classical book as the main curriculum. According to Geertz, classical book is the foundation of learning at the salaf *pesantren* (1960: 179). Steenbrink (1974: 12) also explains that the teaching of *kitab kuning* in the *pesantren* is the continuation of the Qur'an. Additionally, Bruinessen (1994: 17) states that Islamic teachings taken from the *kitab kuning* are those that will be transmitted to the students.

Thus, salaf *pesantren* is a *pesantren* whose teaching rests on the *kitab kuning* as explained by Dhofier (2011: 76, Zuhry, 2011: 291, Maksum, 2015: 86, Muhakamurrohman, 2014: 113, Wahid, 2001: 55). The *kitab kuning* taught usually discusses the interpretation of the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh and ushul fiqh, morals, Islamic history, faraid (Islamic inheritance), the science of falak, the science of hisab, and others. All learning material at the *pesantren* comes from Arabic books called *kitab kuning*, *kitab gundul*, and classical book

(Nurkholis, 2017: 161).

Kitab kuning is a scientific system in the Islamic history especially in Indonesia. Bruinessen (1994: 20) describes the aspects of the scientific tradition and scientific transmission as a link in the scientific system connected to the Messenger of Allah, through the mediation of friends and *tabiin* as well as *tabiit tabiin*, especially in three aspects of the scientific tradition, *tarekat*, hadith, and the *kitab kuning*. According to Ma'arif, relying on the hostel and *kitab kuning*, salaf *pesantren* emphasizes the morality and indigenous Javanese local culture and seeks to transmit the inclusive Islam and spread peace on earth, *rahmat lil al-'alamin*. Maksum emphasized that salaf *pesantren* is oriented towards preserving tradition with a traditional education system. Thus, the salaf *pesantren* has advantages in aspects of its scientific tradition called a great tradition, and the system of transmission and internalization of the morality of Muslims (Royani, 2018: 378).

Second, *kyai* is the founder and caretaker of the *salaf pesantren*. Geertz (1960: 179) explains that *kyai* is a person to whom the students depend. *Kyai* has a big role. Bruinessen (1994: 18) explains that the main elements in the traditional Islam are *pesantren* and *kyai* with their charismatic attribute. The charisma of a *kyai* increases by respecting his students (Bruinessen, 1994: 18). Meanwhile, Steenbrink (1974: 12) says that the presence of *kyai* in the learning system in salaf *pesantren* is important, both individual and group methods.

According to Dhofier (2011: 42), the ideal Islamic teachings are manifested in a *kyai*. Madjid (1997: 23) also describes the life of the *pesantren* world as an ideal life, the relationship between students and *kyai* by paying respect. *Kyai* is seen as a teacher that should be respected and considered to have supernatural power that might bring good, luck (blessing) or bad luck (*malati, mudlarat*).

All the experts above confess the existence of *kyai* as an element of the salaf *pesantren*, even as the founder of the *pesantren*. *Kyai* is a man who guarantees the life of the students, a teacher who needs to be respected, and a figure who is able to be a role model for his students. *Kyai* is recognized as pious leader who always

serves the community, so he deserves the title of *kyai*.

Third, the independence of salaf *pesantren*. The independence here means the independence in managing the *pesantren*. According to Geertz (1960: 179) the learning process in *pesantren* does not cost much. The operational costs of the *pesantren* are sourced from funds originating from the community in the form of zakat and alms. According to Steenbrink (1986: 19), *pesantren* gets regular income from their status as a *waqaf* area. The operational cost of *pesantren* comes from public charity as the additional income of *pesantren*. It is obtained from the registration fee of new students, the harvest period or the end of the fast. The income of *pesantren* still exists, but there is adaptation in term of operational costs for *pesantren* education. In addition, Steenbrink (1986: 19) explains that students are not charged for their learning since religious knowledge is not for sale. Steenbrink (1986: 18) explains that students are trained to be independent; they manage their finance matter to meet their daily needs

The phenomenon above shows that education in *pesantren* is cheaper as compared to that at school. This still lasted until the middle of 20th century. Feillard (1999: 356) said the more classic *pesantren* buildings, the cheaper the education costs. In another word, Feillard explains that the schools in the *pesantren* could survive from land cultivation and donation from the society, not from the school fees of the *santri* (Feillard, 1999: 4).

According to Ismail (2020: 34) *pesantren* is the basis of resistance against the invaders, *kyai* defend their lives independently, mutual assistance on the basis of their own abilities. Thus, one of the characteristics of salaf *pesantren* is independent in managing and supporting itself (Ismail, 2020: 40). Based on the explanation above, *pesantren* observers agree that independence is one of the characteristics of salaf *pesantren*. Initially, the *pesantren*'s operational costs were taken care by the management and internal elements with self-financing from the *pesantren*'s stakeholders.

Fourth, the eminence of morality. Steenbrink (1986: 14) explains that to inculcate the Islamic spirit, *kyai* prioritizes *pesantren* as a residence and a place to study that allows students to apply

religious values. According to Bruinessen (1994: 20) the eminence of student's morality can be achieved through the tradition of Sufism and *ubudiyah*. All obligatory worship is accompanied by sunnah practices, obligatory prayers are accompanied by sunnah prayers and *zikir*, *wirid*, and *ratib*. Dhofier (2011: 212-213), explains the implementation of Sufi teachings in the world of *pesantren* better known as tarekat, which is practical and ethical. Tarekat in *pesantren* is defined as strict adherence to the rules of Islamic sharia and practice the best of both ritual and social by performing the practice of *wira'i*, sunnah practices before or after the five daily prayers, and performing *riyadlah*. Ismail (2020: 41) also explains that the specific characteristic of Salaf *pesantrenis* the life of Sufistic nuances, emphasizing Sufistic life, so that it becomes a medium to implement Sufistic values.

The Sufistic tradition performed by students in *pesantren* triggers other positive values. According to Mas'ud (2002: 14), Rafiq (2005: 19-20), M Sulton and Khusnuridlo (2006: 4) that salaf *pesantren* has the following advantages. *First*, the relationship between *kyai* and students, *second*, students' obedience to *kyai*, *third*, simple lifestyle, *fourth*, independence, *fifth*, helping one another in a brotherly atmosphere, *sixth*, discipline, *seventh*, dare to suffer to achieve glory and *eighth*, awarding of degrees.

This eminence of morality emerged due to the Salaf *pesantren* system which placed *kyai* and *kitab kuning* as the main elements in the *pesantren* education system and supported by its Sufi nuances.

Fifth, affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama organization. Before NU was founded, traditional Islamic groups existed and centered on *pesantren*. Therefore, Salaf *pesantren* had a close relationship with NU organization. According to Bruinessen (1994: 19), the content of traditional Islamic intellectual focuses on the teaching of the belief of *Asb'ariyah*, *fiqh Syafi'iyah*, and the teaching of moral and mysticism of Imam Al Ghazali and the grammar of traditional Arabic. This understanding is the core of the *ablussunnah wal jama'ah* teaching, the article of association on NU. According to Madjid (1997: 31) alumni of Gontor Islamic boarding school, states that the value system of salaf *pesantren* is a teaching of Islam that

focuses on the value system called *ablus sunnah wal jama'ah*. Dhofier (2011: 4) asserts that the teachings of Imam Syafi'i, Al Asy'ari-Maturidi, and Imam Junaid are suitable for the character of Indonesian because it teaches *tawassuth* (middle path), *tasamub* (tolerance), and *tawazun* (balance).

According to Tan (2011: 92-93) referring to Burhanudin and Jamhari's research, most traditional *pesantren* is affiliated with *Nabdlatul Ulama*, a moderate religious organization. Yasmadi, the man who criticized the writing of Madjid (1991: 91) emphasized that *ablussunnah wal jama'ah* value system focuses on three aspects, the aspect of Ashari theology, *fiqh madzhab*, and practical *tasawuf*. According to Neny (2019: 36) that on the basis of *kitab kuning*, salaf *pesantren* tend to be affiliated with NU and highlight Islam and Indonesians. In line with Neny, Nurkholis (2017: 170) explains that based on his study on *kitab kuning* of the salaf *pesantren* culture, it is affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama as a moderate organization.

Islamic Moderation

Etymologically, moderation is English word which means in the middle, neither right nor left extreme (Sadzily and Echols, 2008: 245). Moderation in the Indonesian dictionary means a condition in the middle between two excessive sides (Purwodarminta, 2008: 355). In Arabic, moderation is similar to wasathiyah, from the word wasath. Wasath means between two sides (*baina al tarfaini*) (Ma'luf, 1986: 900), or is interpreted in the middle (Al Munawir, 1984: 1662). According to Ibn Mandhur, wasath is a middle thing or a position between two ends, something between the two sides which is most important and best. According to Abadi, wasath is the place where something is the middle, as a court, which has the best lineage, the highest.

In the Qur'an, the term wasath and its derivatives are mentioned five times which epistemologically has the same meaning as elaborated above. The study of wasatiyyah in the Al Qur'an has been carried out by the Qur'an interpreters. The word wasath in Surah Al Baqarah verse 143, according to At Tobar and Al Qurtubi, is defined as goodness, justice and balance (Ushama, 2014: 187). With this interpretations, several meanings that are the same as the

above meanings such as convenience, wisdom, istiqamah and being between two extreme sides emerge (Ash Shallabi, 2020: 81-218) Ushama, 2014: 190-195). Thus, the word “wasath” which means the middle (Al Munawir, 1994: 1662) denotes a good and praiseworthy meaning, as the antonym of “*tharf*” which means the end of everything (Al Munawir, 1994: 908) denotes an extreme meaning and tends to be negative. Islam is a moderate religion, placing itself between two extreme sides, an extreme side with an excessive nature of divine nature and an extreme side of human nature.

In the reality of life, an individual will not be able to avoid two things that are always contradictory. Therefore, Islam (*al-Wasathiyah Islamiyyah*) teaches a position between two opposing and contradicting sides between the elements of *rabbaniyyah* (divinity) and *insaniyyah* (humanity), between *maddiyyah* (materialism) and *rubbiyyah* (spiritualism), between revelation and reason, between *maslahah ammah* (community) and *maslahah fardi* (individual). Moderate Islam places the two sides without harming the other elements (al-Qardhawi, 2001: 13, Al Madani, 2014: 9-10). Two extreme sides are the colors of human life in religion, the divine and humanistic sides, the material and spiritual sides, the reason and the existence of revelation, the individual and community sides. So, wasathiyah is a straight and consistent attitude in finding a middle way in compromising the differences (Al Qardhawi, 2010: 38).

The kindness of moderation on all sides leads to the value of goodness and benefit. Muslims are warned to put themselves on the moderate side. Previous scholars have warned about the importance of a moderate position, for example, Imam Al-Hasan said, “The religion of Islam is lost due to the behaviour of people who are extreme and permissive in religion (Al Qardhawi, 2010: 38). Zuhaili defines Islamic moderation as a balance in attitudes, belief, behaviour, rule, relationship, and morality. Islam is a moderate religion. It is not excessive in all matters and business, including religion, not extreme in belief, far from being arrogant or behaving gently (al-Zuhaili, 2011: 5). Islam is a guide for all nature, *rahmatan lil alamin*, for all creatures. Islam as a moderate religion, its teaching and value cover not only aspect of life but also aspect of belief or

moral.

Based on the above definition, it is known that Islamic moderation is a balance in belief, trait, attitude, behavior and associations and always keeps away from all kind of things that tend to be extreme, excessive, and reprehensible.

Methods

This is a qualitative research type. Referring to Denzin and Lincoln in Moeleong (2005: 5), qualitative research is defined as research that uses a natural setting, with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving various research methods. The methods used in this research are interviews, observation and documentation. Interviews are conducted as an effort to collect the data on *pesantren* Al Ittihad. Interviews are carried out with 3 caregivers, 4 teachers, 4 boards, 5 students and 5 alumni of *pesantren* Al Ittihad. Observation is held by looking at the various activities carried out by at the *pesantren*. The researcher also used documentation to collect the related data.

The sources of the data in this study are words, actions and documents related to the role of *pesantren* Al Ittihad in guarding the Islamic moderation in Indonesia. According to Moleong (2005: 157), data sources can be in the form of words, actions and documents. Data of the research on the role of *pesantren* Al Ittihad in guarding the Islamic moderation are in the form of words, actions and documents related to the *pesantren*. The words referred to here are the words of *pesantren* caretakers which are documented in the form of books, documents or recordings. The words of the caregiver are usually the guide for *pesantren* in running the organization. The intended action can be in the form of actions taken by caregivers, students or *pesantren* as an institution. Meanwhile the documents are *pesantren* documents, research documents at *pesantren* Al Ittihad Poncol, Popongan, Bringin, Central Java. Having the data been collected through data collection technique, then it is analysed. Technique of analyzing the data uses three stages, namely data reduction, data display and verification, and conclusions (Wiyono, 2007: 93).

Results and Discussion

Strengthening Islamic Moderation at Pesantren Al Ittihad

Pesantren Al-Ittihad was founded in 1893 AD or 1310 BC by a qualified and pious scholar, named KH Misbah. He still has family bond with Sunan Kalijaga's lineage. He is the pioneer and founder of *pesantren* Al Ittihad located in Poncol Popongan, Beringin, Semarang Regency. After the *pesantren* was founded, the son of the founder, Hasan Asy'ari continued to develop the *pesantren*. After KH. Hasan Asy'ari passed away; the leadership and management of the *pesantren* were continued by his son named Ahmad Afifuddin (KH. Ahmad Asy'ari) and his brothers K. Djunaid, K. Marzuki, K. Sajid, K. Yazid, K. Thohir, KH. Fadlil Asy'ari. After the death of the elder of *pesantren* Al Ittihad, the leadership and management were continued by his sons, namely K. Chabib Ahmad, KH. Makmun Ahmad, KH. Mustain Ahmad and others. The caretaker of *Pesantren* Al-Ittihad, the generation of KH. Misbah became the pioneer of *pesantren* which is now KH. Sahli Bidayah, KH. Nurcholis Thohir, KH. Fathurrohman Thohir and others.

The hostels at *pesantren* Al Ittihad are attached to the homes of the caregivers, or close to the homes of their caregivers. The hostel at the residence of KH Nur Kholis Tohir, KH Fatkhurramhan Tohir, KH Fadil Ahmad, KH Mustain Ahmad, and KH Muhammad Fatih. There are totally eleven hostels occupied by the students namely F hostel, Bani Misbah B hostel, Hasan Asy'ari hostel, PI Al Ittihadiyah hostel, Darussalamah hostel, al Fadhil hostel, Asy'ariyah hostel, al Thohiriyah hostel, al Fadhil PA hostel, al Habib hostel, Syamsul Mukhana hostel, Ma'hadus Sibyan hostel (*pesantren* document 2018). It is also equipped with the hostel for caretakers and teachers. All hostels of *pesantren* Al Ittihad is located around the Misbahur Rohman mosque. The role of *pesantren* is so important that it has become the embryo of the emergence of educational institutions in Indonesia and even in Malaysia (Mas'ud et al, 2019: 45). Thus, Islamic boarding schools have a long history as well as an important role in the development of education in Indonesia. *Pesantren* continues to experience development due to internal or external demands (Isbah, 2020: 99). The most influential internal element is the presence of the *kyai*, while one of the external elements of the

pesantren is government policy (Yusuf and Taufiq, 2020: 26).

There are four kinds of programs carried out by *pesantren* Al Ittihad in strengthening the Islamic moderation. *First*, the teaching of *kitab kuning*, as a medium for the transformation of Islamic sciences. *Kitab kuning* is the core curriculum in salaf *pesantren*. It contains Islamic teachings directly sourced from the Qur'an and applicative hadith. All *kitab kunings* is related to aqidah, fiqh, morality, and Sufism. In particular, *pesantren* Al Ittihad teaches about the understanding of *ahlusunnah wal jamaah* through the book titled "*bujah ablussunnah wal jamaah*". *Kitab kuning* is one of the basic elements of *pesantren*, as the transmission of Islamic science. The scientific chain from the previous generation to the next generation is carried out through this book. *Kitab kuning* in the world of *pesantren* covers various fields such qur'anic interpretation, hadith, fiqh, aqidah, morality, tasawuf, and Arabic. KH Nurkholis Tohir in his interview said:

"Some efforts to protect Islam ahlusunnah are carried out through the teaching of *kitab kuning*. There are no special efforts, nor special programs directly related to *aswaja*, or Islamic moderation. All *kitab kuning* covering aqidah, worship, morality, and Sufism teach about moderate Islam, those are easily accepted and practiced in everyday life."

Kitab kuning in its scientific variants has different gradation and level. From the basic level to high level which is more detailed, complex, even deeper and broader. For example fiqh book, it is from the book of *Safinatun Najab*, *Fatkhul Qarib*, *Fatkhul Muin*, *al Umm*, and *Bidayatul Mujtahid*. *Safinatun Najab* is a *fiqh* book that discusses about basic themes. Another example is Arabic grammar book (*nabwu*), from *al Jurumiyah*, *Umritbi*, *Alfiyah Ibn Malik*, and so on. The students at *Pesantren* Al Ittihad should pass the book gradations from beginner to high level. Students need a long time to master all kind of book mentioned above. In *Madrasah Diniyah Manbaus Sunnah*, *pesantren* Al Ittihad takes a minimum of eight years to complete the standard books mentioned above. Learning material based on this book may affect the way students think. Sufistic

thinking can also affect the thinking patterns of students (Yani et al, 2020: 283). The ideology of the *santri* can be strengthened through the role of the *kyai* in learning the classical book as in Zainal Arifin's research at the Mlangi Islamic boarding school (Arifin, 2015: 370).

Second, the implementation of extra activities of teaching and learning held at *pesantren* Al Ittihad are in the form of speech, negotiation, *ziarah kubur*, *mujahadah*, *reciting surah yasin*, *al barjanji*, *manaqib*, and *tablilan*. *Pesantren* is a miniature of the community with its variants. A very broad description of society can be seen at the *pesantren* community. In Muslim society, there are several developing activities performed by the community. *Pesantren* Al Ittihad Poncol tries to carry out religious activities students. Therefore, *pesantren* Al Ittihad prepares its students with skills and activities performed by the Muslim community affiliated with NU, the *nabdliyyin* community. As said by Yusron as *pesantren* manager:

“Many extra activities are performed by the board of *pesantren* Al Ittihad, Poncol, Popongan, Beringin Semarang Regency. The activities held are speech, *ziarah maqbaroh*, *mujahadah*, *yasinan*, *manaqib*, and *tablilan*. These activities are expected to be students' additional skill when they have completed their studies at the *pesantren*, and then come back to their hometown.”

Yusron's statement above was corrected by Luqman, another *pesantren* manager.

“Extra activities carried out at *pesantren* Al Ittihad are diverse, ranging from speech training until *ziarah kubur*. Everything is conducted to give students skills to live in their community. Upon coming home from *pesantren*, they have ability to serve the society in accordance with their skill.”

Extra activities at *pesantren* Al Ittihad are quite varied. Those are the skills students need as they return to their community. The extra activities of pondok Al Ittihad show a very close relation

between two cultures, Islamic culture and Javanese culture. The Islamic values merge at *pesantren* culture. The relation between Islamic culture and local Javanese culture is the embryo of Islamic moderation in the field of socio-culture. The culture in this context is the socio-cultural change caused by globalization. *Pesantren* will accept the change as long as it is not contrary to Islamic values and is useful. Appreciation of local traditions is part of moderate thinking. One can accept local traditions as long as they do not conflict with Islamic teachings (Suciati and Erzard, 2018: 53). This is a form of Indonesian Islamic society that has experienced improvement through acculturation and depth of religious understanding (Hilmy, 2018: 67, Burhan i, 2017: 347). Understanding theology that is applicable in the life of Islamic society is the main need, as well as criticism of classical theology (Qomar, 2015: 223). Local traditions, especially Javanese tradition, can survive and exist on the one hand and Islam as a religion can be well accepted by the community (Maftukhin, 2016: 389).

Third, establishing formal schools at *pesantren* Al Ittihad environment for the students and community around it. Formal schools were established in the form of RA Al Ittihad, SMK Al Ittihad, junior high school, and senior high school and the like. In the interview, KH Nurkholis Tohir explained about the efforts of *pesantren* Al Ittihad in providing students with formal education.

“*Pesantren* Al Ittihad has established RA Al Ittihad and SMK Al Ittihad within the *pesantren*. The aim of establishing RA Al Ittihad is to provide an opportunity for the family of the Bani Misbah to send their children to RA Al Ittihad. It not not necessary to come out from the *pesantren*. Meanwhile, the establishment of SMK Al Ittihad aims to provide opportunities for Al Ittihad students who will enrol the formal education.”

In addition, KH Nurkholis Tohir also gave more detailed explanation as follows.

Pesantren Al Ittihad has several branches like in Purwokerto, Semarang, Kendal and Bali. One of the branches is in Kadirejo, Pabelan. *Pesantren* Darussalam

established SMP IT Al Ahqaf. This school merges with *pesantren* Darussalam, most of its students are from *pesantren* itself. They were taken care by KH Fatkhurrahman Tahir's son.

The establishment of schools organized by *Pesantren* Al Ittihad with the label of integrated Islamic schools is a response to the development of Islamic education. Nowadays, Islamic education experienced a drastic change, with the emergence of Islamic schools labeled full-day school a few years ago. Then the last decade there were some Islamic school labeled integrated school, SDIT and SMPIT. Integrated schools try to integrate the school system with *pesantren* system. This school implements a learning model with a public school curriculum and basic science of Islam. Some integrated schools combine the formal school learning model with the learning model implemented at *pesantren*. The *pesantren* learning system was taken in integrated schools such as the existence of hostel, memorization of the Qur'an, Islamic religious education, and Arabic. Then the formal public school they attended was like elementary school that added Quranic material, Islamic religious education, and Arabic language in the curriculum.

The integrated school model uses a hostel system for its students. The students in integrated schools stay at the hostel after enrolling the formal education in the morning. Then after studying in formal school, they were given Islamic material in hostel, just like in *pesantren*. Integrated Islamic schools are not an independent phenomenon, without the social setting of the community. Some integrated Islamic schools have a certain background. In the beginning, many integrated Islamic schools are founded by Islamic foundations, or Islamic-based party like Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). This integrated Islamic school received a positive response and warm welcome from Muslim communities in some places.

The majority of Muslim communities affiliated with *Nabdlatul Ulama* (NU) also send their children to these integrated schools. This phenomenon encouraged the boards of *Nabdlatul Ulama* (NU), as well as the boarding school caretakers to establish an integrated school based on *pesantren* that understands the teaching

of *ablussunnab wal jamaab*. The alumni of this formal school are expected to have a strong commitment to the understanding of *ablussunnab wal jamaab*. They become agents of *ablussunnab wal jamaab* doctrine in the midst of society.

One of the branches of *pesantren* Al Ittihad in Sempon, Kadirejo, which is managed by Gus Alam, the son-in-law of KH Fatkhurrahman Tohir, has officially established an integrated Islamic school, SMPIT, which is based on the *pesantren* system. According to Gus Alam, the parents' interest to send their children to the integrated Islamic schools is quite high. This is proven by the willingness and request of the parents for the *pesantren Darussalam*, Sempon village, Kadirejo to immediately establish SMAIT education, to response the request of the alumni of SMPIT and their parents at *pesantren Darussalam*.

Fourth, inviting government and mass organization figures who have moderate Islamic ideology. Some figures invited are Imam Nahrawi, as the minister of sport as well as the alumni of *pesantren*, KH Hasyim Muzadi, ex-deputy of PBNU, Prof. Dr. Said Agiel Siraj, the chairman of the PBNU.

The presence of *kyai* in *pesantren* or other Islamic educational institutions is very important since it has a significant influence in shaping the mindset of students as a teacher in education (Yani et al, 2020: 283, Mukaffa, 2017: 197, Niam, 2015: 131). Furthermore, *pesantren* as educational institutions become important media in promoting moderate Islam and minimizing radicalism, as Hidayatullah and Fitri Nurhidayati's research on the role of campus mosques (2015: 325). As evidence of the influence of educational institutions on the religious thinking of students, in some areas, the level of moderation of students is still quite high as stated in research (Ali, 2020: 19).

KH Hasyim Muzadi was invited to *pesantren* Al Ittihad in the context of regular recitation after completely finishing Bukhari and Sakhiih Muslim books on April 30, 2014. In summary, he explained about how to struggle to achieve the goal in various possible ways. The struggle to improve the implementation of Islamic law can be achieved in various ways. It can be done through the political

constellation by joining as a member of the council and struggling outside the government, including in *pesantren*. Struggling by teaching the students, giving recitation at the *pesantren* is part of the struggle to uphold and ground Islamic values in Indonesia.

In more detail, he explained the importance of exemplary figures in KH Misbah as the founder of *pesantren* Al Ittihad Poncol. Located far from the city center of Semarang Regency or Salatiga City, he can bring the name of *pesantren* Al Ittihad to various parts especially in Central Java. In his speech, he motivated the students to prepare themselves with various skills and abilities that would become provisions for their lives in the future. The alumni of salaf *pesantren*, especially Al Ittihad, should not feel inferior to other graduates, whether college graduates or graduates from other *pesantren*.

Prof. Dr. KH Agiel Siraj attended *pesantren* Al Ittihad for socializing the sport in the community on April 6, 2016. He explained that we should be proud as santri (student) and be able to imitate what KH Misbah had done in spreading a friendly Islam. Thanks to him for his persistence and high knowledge even though he lives in the middle of a hamlet, far from the center of government and crowd, he was able to inherit *pesantren* he has founded to the next generation. He is a portrait of role model for the Muslim community in Indonesia. Indonesian scholars have a special character compared to others. The special character of Indonesian Muslim scholar has a special character. Indonesian Muslim scholar spread Islam and built civilization with local culture, Indonesian culture.

According to KH Nurcholish Tohir, *pesantren* Al Ittihad invites national figures to *pesantren* intending to provide national insight to the students.

“The attendance of national figures who understand *pesantren* is very important to provide national insight to the students so that they are not only literate in religion and the *kitab kuning* but also understand some national and state issues.”

These were some of the government officials and community

leaders who were invited to *pesantren* Al Ittihad Poncol. The purpose of inviting them is to motivate the students in order to deepen their religious knowledge in *pesantren*, and be able to provide enlightenment for students to be literate about national and social issues in Indonesia. Besides, it is also expected to provide insight into Islamic moderation for the society around the *pesantren*.

Conclusion

There are four types of programs organized at *pesantren* Al Ittihad in strengthening Islamic moderation in Indonesia. *First*, the teaching of *kitab kuning*, as a medium for the transformation of Islamic science. The followers and companions of Prophet Muhammad saw are portrayed in the *kitab kuning*. *Pesantren* Al Ittihad teaches the understanding of *ablus sunnah wal jamaah* through the book titled “*ablus sunnah wal jamaah*.” *Second*, the implementation of extra-curricular activities and *pesantren* teaching is in the form of speech, negotiation, *ziarah kubur*, *mujahadah*, *yasinan*, *Al Barjanji*, *manaqib*, and *tablilan*. *Third*, establishing formal schools at the *pesantren* environment for students and the community around it. Formal schools were established in the form of RA Al Ittihad, SMP Al Ittihad, SMK Al Ittihad, and SMA Al Ittihad. *Fourth*, inviting the government officials and organization leaders that have a moderate understanding of Islam. Inviting some figures such as Imam Nahrawi, as the minister of sport as well as the alumni of *pesantren*, KH. Hasyim Muzadi, former general chairman of PBNU, Prof. Dr. Said Agiel Siraj, general chairman of PBNU.

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