

Strengthening the Multicultural Perspective of Islamic Boarding School Teachers in Fostering a Moderate Attitude

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ABSTRACT. The limited integration of multicultural educational values into teaching practices at Islamic boarding schools has resulted in the suboptimal development of moderate attitudes within the educational process, which generally remains one-sided and lacks an emphasis on reflective and participatory approaches. This Community Service Programme aims to enhance the multicultural awareness of religious teachers in order to foster moderate attitudes. The activities were conducted using a workshop-based approach combined with reflective mentoring over a two-day period. A total of 17 ustadz participated in this programme. The methods employed included interactive lectures, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), case studies, learning simulations, and pedagogical reflection. The evaluation was conducted using a pre-test and post-test design, participatory observation, and participant reflection sheets to measure changes in knowledge, pedagogical skills, and moderate attitudinal tendencies in teaching practice. The results showed an average increase in scores from 62.4 to 84.7, representing a 35.7% rise. Furthermore, 72% of participants were able to develop multicultural value-based teaching strategies during the simulation. Observational findings revealed a trend towards the strengthening of moderate attitudes, characterised by increased awareness of the values of tolerance, openness, and respect for differences within the educational process. The implications of this activity highlight the need for sustained reinforcement through the integration of training, mentoring, and institutional supervision to ensure that multicultural values are consistently internalised within the pesantren educational ecosystem.

Keyword: Strengthening Multicultural Insight, Moderate Attitude

Abstrak. Masih terbatasnya integrasi nilai pendidikan multikultural dalam praktik pembelajaran pesantren berdampak pada belum optimalnya pembentukan sikap moderat dalam proses pendidikan, yang umumnya masih bersifat satu arah dan kurang menekankan pendekatan reflektif serta partisipatif. PkM ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan wawasan multikultural ustaz dalam rangka membangun sikap moderat melalui. Kegiatan dilaksanakan dengan pendekatan workshop yang dipadukan dengan pendampingan reflektif selama dua hari. Sebanyak 17 ustaz terlibat dalam program ini. Metode yang digunakan meliputi ceramah interaktif, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), studi kasus, simulasi pembelajaran, dan refleksi pedagogis. Evaluasi dilakukan menggunakan desain pre-test dan post-test, observasi partisipatif, serta lembar refleksi peserta untuk mengukur perubahan pengetahuan, keterampilan pedagogis, dan kecenderungan sikap moderat dalam praktik pembelajaran. Hasil menunjukkan peningkatan rata-rata skor dari 62,4 menjadi 84,7 atau sebesar 35,7%. Selain itu, 72% peserta mampu mengembangkan strategi pembelajaran berbasis nilai multikultural dalam simulasi. Temuan observasi terlihat adanya kecenderungan penguatan sikap

moderat, yang ditandai dengan meningkatnya kesadaran terhadap nilai toleransi, keterbukaan, dan penghargaan terhadap perbedaan dalam proses Pendidikan. Implikasi kegiatan ini menunjukkan perlunya penguatan berkelanjutan melalui integrasi pelatihan, pendampingan, dan supervisi kelembagaan agar nilai-nilai multikultural dapat terinternalisasi secara konsisten dalam ekosistem pendidikan pesantren.

Kata Kunci: *Penguatan Wawasan Multikultural, Sikap Moderat*

Introduction

Pesantren are Islamic educational institutions that play a vital role in shaping the character, morals and religious understanding of Indonesian society (Solechan dkk., 2024; Sunardi, 2025). As well as serving as centres for the study of religious knowledge, pesantren also function as social spaces that bring together students from diverse cultural, linguistic, regional and social backgrounds. This diversity makes the pesantren a strategic environment for instilling the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and a moderate attitude in religious and social life.

In the context of Indonesia's multicultural society, strengthening multicultural awareness is a vital requirement in the field of Islamic education (Mikraj dkk., 2025). Multicultural education is understood as an educational process that instils an awareness of the need to respect diversity in culture, religion, ethnicity and social perspectives in order to create a harmonious and democratic society (Nasution & Albina, 2024). According to (Arikarani dkk., 2025), multicultural education is not only oriented towards the recognition of diversity, but also towards building an inclusive, tolerant, and anti-discriminatory attitude in social life. Therefore, multicultural values need to be systematically internalised within the pesantren environment through the role of the ustaz as the primary educator.

The promotion of multicultural awareness is closely linked to efforts to foster religious moderation within Islamic educational settings. Religious moderation refers to a worldview, attitude, and religious practice that emphasises the principles of balance, justice, and tolerance, whilst avoiding extremist behaviour in social life (Hasan, Mujahidin, dkk., 2024; Hidana dkk., 2026). A moderate attitude is essential in addressing the challenges of modern societal development, characterised by the increasing flow of digital information, social polarisation, and the spread of exclusive and intolerant religious interpretations. In such circumstances, Islamic boarding schools bear a strategic responsibility to reinforce the Islamic value of 'rahmatan lil 'alamin' (a blessing for all creation) through peaceful and inclusive educational processes.

According to (Heriyudanta, 2023; Purnamasari, 2026), Islamic boarding schools have long been recognised as a bastion of moderate Islam in Indonesia, as they prioritise the principles of tawassuth (moderation), tasamuh (tolerance) and tawazun (balance) in religious education. However, the challenges of globalisation and the development of social media have led to the

emergence of various religious messages that do not always align with the values of moderation. This situation can influence the mindset of students if it is not counterbalanced by a reinforcement of understanding regarding religious moderation from the ustadz, as the primary mentors in the pesantren.

Based on the results of initial observations and discussions with the management of the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, it was found that the teachers are committed to nurturing the character of the students, but some still require further guidance regarding the implementation of multicultural education and religious moderation in both the teaching and the daily guidance of the students. From the results of initial interviews with several teachers, it was found that specific training activities related to multicultural awareness remain very limited. Furthermore, some participants stated that their understanding of religious moderation remains largely conceptual and has not yet been fully applied in practice within the boarding school's educational process.

Previous studies have largely focused on promoting religious moderation among Islamic boarding school students and pupils in general. A study conducted by (Asrori & Sunarto, 2024; Hasan, Solechan, dkk., 2024) shows that education in religious moderation has an impact on increasing tolerance among students in Islamic boarding schools. Meanwhile, research (Anam, 2023) emphasises that multicultural education is capable of fostering an inclusive character in students within their social lives. However, capacity-building for pesantren teachers as key actors in fostering a culture of moderation has not yet received sufficient attention in community service activities. Yet, these teachers play a central role in shaping the mindset, attitudes and social behaviour of students through the learning process and by setting an example in their daily lives.

Given these circumstances, community engagement activities are required that focus on strengthening the multicultural understanding of pesantren teachers as a means of fostering a moderate attitude within the pesantren environment. These activities are carried out through a participatory approach comprising awareness-raising sessions, training, interactive discussions and reflective learning. The material covered includes the concept of multicultural education, religious moderation, inclusive learning strategies, and the promotion of tolerance within pesantren life.

This community service initiative aims to enhance the understanding and capabilities of the teachers at the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Jombang in implementing multicultural values and religious moderation within the boarding school's educational process. It is hoped that this initiative will make a practical contribution to strengthening a harmonious, inclusive and tolerant boarding school culture, whilst also serving as a preventative measure against the rise of intolerance and religious exclusivism within Islamic educational settings.

Method

This community service activity was carried out at the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Jombang. The activity took place over two days and was delivered through a combination of workshops and mentoring. This approach was adopted as it places participants at the centre of the capacity-building process, enabling the activity to proceed in a dialogue-based and context-sensitive manner. In the initial phase, the community engagement team carried out observations, preliminary interviews and documentation to identify participants' needs regarding understanding multicultural education and religious moderation within the boarding school environment.

The preparatory phase involved developing training materials and evaluation tools based on the results of the field needs assessment. The programme content focused on the concepts of multicultural education, religious moderation, inclusive learning strategies, fostering tolerance, and the implementation of moderate values within the pesantren environment. The activities were carried out using several methods, namely lectures, focus group discussions (FGDs), case studies, learning simulations, and experience sharing among participants. In addition, the community service team also prepared evaluation tools in the form of simple pre-tests and post-tests, participant reflection sheets, and participation observation sheets to assess the development of participants' understanding during the course of the activities.

During the implementation phase, participants were given the opportunity to discuss various socio-religious issues emerging in society, such as intolerance, excessive fanaticism, the spread of unverified religious information, and the challenges facing pesantren education in the digital age. The discussions were conducted in a dialogical manner to enable participants to understand the importance of applying the values of tolerance, respect for diversity, and an inclusive attitude in the learning process and the mentoring of students. In addition to the presentation of materials, the activity also included simulations of learning strategies based on religious moderation and multicultural education to help participants understand the implementation of moderate values within the pesantren environment.

The final stage of the activity involved a joint evaluation and reflection session to assess the effectiveness of the community engagement programme. The evaluation was conducted by comparing pre-test and post-test results, observing participant engagement, and analysing participants' feedback throughout the activity. The evaluation results were analysed descriptively to determine the participants' level of understanding of the concepts of multicultural education and religious moderation. Indicators of the activity's success were demonstrated by an increase in participants' understanding of the values of moderation, their ability to identify inclusive learning strategies, and a growing awareness of the importance of a tolerant attitude within the pesantren

environment. As a follow-up, the community service team, together with the pesantren, is committed to promoting the sustainable implementation of the values of religious moderation in the learning process and the guidance of students.

Results and Discussion

Results

The community service activity at the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Jombang was attended by 17 teachers over two days and comprised workshops, focus group discussions, learning simulations and interactive discussions. The data collection instruments included pre-tests and post-tests (20 multiple-choice questions), participation observation sheets and participant reflection sheets. The results of the observations showed that the participants' level of participation was high, characterised by active involvement in discussions, asking questions, and engagement in learning simulations. Participants also showed a positive response to the material presented, particularly during the case study session regarding the challenges of religious moderation within the pesantren environment.



Figure 1. Presentation of material on moderation and multicultural awareness to religious

The pre-test results showed that participants' average comprehension score was 62.4. In general, participants were familiar with the basic concepts of religious moderation, but were not yet able to link them systematically to a multicultural educational approach in pesantren learning. Following the activity, the post-test results showed an average score of 84.7. This increase of 22.3 points, or approximately 35.7%, indicates an improvement in participants' understanding after

taking part in the activity. Based on the assessment categories used, participants' understanding shifted from the 'moderate' category to the 'high' category.

The results of the structured observation showed that 72% of participants were able to identify multicultural values-based learning strategies during the simulation session. Participants began to be able to design learning activities that incorporated the values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity. Some participants stated that previous learning approaches tended to be one-way, as expressed by one participant: "Up until now, we have focused more on delivering content and have not yet linked it much to the values of diversity present in society."

In terms of outcomes, the initiative produced a preliminary draft of a multicultural education-based learning strategy that incorporates the integration of religious moderation into learning activities and the mentoring of students. Furthermore, participants agreed to apply the value of tolerance more systematically in day-to-day learning activities at the pesantren. These results indicate that the activity not only enhanced cognitive understanding but also fostered changes in attitudes and learning practices, as evidenced by the participants' engagement in developing and adapting more inclusive learning strategies.

Discussion

The 35.7% improvement in participants' scores following the training indicates a shift in the quality of understanding from the conceptual realm towards the ability to apply knowledge in teaching practice at the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic boarding school in Jombang. This finding suggests that the process of strengthening multicultural awareness not only yields theoretical understanding but also begins to shape more practical pedagogical competencies. In this context, the role of the ustaz as a key actor in the educational process at the pesantren is a determining factor in the quality of the internalisation of values among the santri (Arifin dkk., 2023). When linked to theories of educational quality improvement, this achievement can be understood as an indication of consistent improvements within the learning system, although these are not yet fully stable at the level of long-term implementation (Sallis, 2014). However, upon more critical examination, it remains to be seen whether this improvement is consistent or merely a short-term effect of the training.

From a pedagogical perspective, the fact that 72% of ustadz were able to develop inclusive, values-based lesson plans indicates a shift in orientation from teacher-centred learning towards a more dialogical approach. This change indicates that the learning process is no longer solely focused on the transfer of knowledge, but is beginning to shift towards the construction of understanding that involves the participation of students. Nevertheless, when compared with several studies on the implementation of values education in other pesantren settings, such patterns

of change generally require a longer period to achieve full consistency, particularly regarding the evaluation of attitudes (Anam, 2023). This achievement can be positioned as an initial phase of pedagogical transformation, not a final, established outcome. It also reaffirms that the theory of quality improvement in education based on improvement (Sallis, 2014) remains relevant, but needs to be enriched with the specific context of Islamic boarding schools, which possess a strong structure of scholarly authority.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the position of the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Islamic Boarding School in Jombang provides an important context for interpreting the results of this study. The boarding school environment, comprising students from diverse regional, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, makes it a complex and heterogeneous social space. In this context, the application of the value of moderation functions not only as a pedagogical strategy but also as a social mechanism to maintain cohesion and stability in interactions between individuals within the boarding school. When compared with other research on multicultural education in religious institutions, this context of heterogeneity actually becomes a factor that accelerates the need for the adaptation of values, although this is not always accompanied by methodological readiness in teaching (Sipuan dkk., 2022). Therefore, there is an inseparable reciprocal relationship between the social context and pedagogical needs.

Nevertheless, several structural limitations continue to affect the programme's effectiveness. The short duration of the training is insufficient to ensure the consistent internalisation of values in daily teaching practice, meaning there is a potential gap between understanding and implementation. Furthermore, difficulties in developing assessment tools for tolerance indicate a lack of affective assessment literacy among participants. Upon closer analysis, this situation relates not only to technical aspects but also to an evaluation culture that has traditionally emphasised cognitive aspects over affective ones (Febriana, 2021). This highlights the need for training interventions to be accompanied by the strengthening of a more comprehensive and contextual evaluation system.

As an initial outcome, the drafting of the learning plan indicates the early stages of the institutionalisation of multicultural values within the pesantren's learning system. However, at this stage, implementation remains heavily dependent on the individual commitment of the ustaz and structural support from the pesantren's leadership. From the perspective of educational change management, the success of innovation is largely determined by the consistency of supervision and the institution's internal control mechanisms (Mariatza, 2021). Without such mechanisms, innovation risks remaining merely on paper. Therefore, a model of continuous mentoring is required to reinforce implementation.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that strengthening ustadz's multicultural awareness not only enhances their understanding but also begins to bring about changes in the pedagogical approaches and academic culture of the pesantren. However, its effectiveness is still influenced by the limited duration of the intervention, the readiness of the assessment process, and the consistency of institutional implementation. A more appropriate model of strengthening is not merely short-term training, but a model of continuous development that integrates training, mentoring, and systematic supervision so that the values of tawassuth, tasamuh, and tawazun can be internalised more stably within the pesantren's educational ecosystem.

Conclusion

This community engagement initiative demonstrates that strengthening the multicultural awareness of pesantren teachers has a tangible impact on improving their pedagogical competence and fostering a more moderate approach to teaching. The 35.7% increase in participants' scores reflects a shift from conceptual understanding towards the application of values in teaching practice. Meanwhile, the achievement of 72% of teachers in developing inclusive, values-based lesson plans indicates the beginning of a shift in pedagogical approach from a one-way teaching model towards a more dialogic and participatory model.

These findings confirm that the training not only led to an increase in knowledge but also began to bring about changes in teaching practices within the pesantren environment. These changes demonstrate a mutually reinforcing relationship between the capacity building of ustadz, improvements in instructional design, and the creation of an educational climate that is more open to diversity. This initiative can be understood as an initial model for strengthening moderation in education based on the capacity building of educators in pesantren.

Nevertheless, the programme's effectiveness is still hampered by several limitations, particularly the short duration of the training and the challenges in developing assessment tools for the students' attitudes towards tolerance. This situation indicates that the technical aspects of implementation and evaluation remain weak points that need to be strengthened in the next phase. Therefore, strengthening efforts should not be limited to training alone, but must be followed by structured mentoring that includes classroom practice, regular reflection, and systematic supervision by the boarding school management.

This initiative underscores that strengthening teachers' multicultural awareness contributes to building a more inclusive, adaptive and moderate educational ecosystem within Islamic boarding schools. To ensure the sustainability of these outcomes, a sustainable development model is required that integrates training, mentoring, and multi-tiered evaluation so that the values of

tawassuth, tasamuh, and tawazun can be consistently internalised within pesantren educational practice

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