

Characteristics of Preserving Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School Traditions: Lessons from Indonesia and Malaysia

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the characteristics of preserving traditional values of salafiyah Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia and Malaysia. The research method is ethnographic-phenomenological with data collection techniques through observation, documentation, and interviews. This study found that the tradition of salafiyah Islamic boarding school is still preserved in the Islamic boarding school education system, even though they are geographically in different locations and countries. The system they maintain is the charismatic Kyai Kitab as a leadership model, the yellow book as the core curriculum, syawir (muzakarah) as a learning method, and giving oral diplomas as a form of scientific recognition. This study contributes to a deep understanding that traditional Islamic boarding schools (salafiyah) are the original Islamic education of Indonesia and Malaysia which are still the center of classical Islamic tradition preservation.

Keywords: Preservation, Tradition, Islamic Boarding School, Salafiyah, Indonesia, Malaysia

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami karakteristik pelestarian nilai-nilai tradisi pesantren salafiyah di Indonesia dan Malaysia. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah etnografis-fenomenologis dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, dokumentasi dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan bahwa tradisi pesantren salafiyah tetap dipertahan di dalam sistem pendidikan pesantren, walaupun secara geografis berbeda lokasi bahkan berbeda negara. Sistem yang tetap dipertahankannya

adalah kyai kitab yang kharismatik sebagai model kepemimpinan, kitab kuning sebagai kurikulum inti, syawir (muzakarah) sebagai metode pembelajaran dan pemberian ijazah oral sebagai bentuk pengakuan keilmuan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pemahaman yang mendalam bahwa pesantren tradisional (salafiyah) merupakan pendidikan Islam asli Indonesia dan Malaysia yang hingga saat ini masih menjadi pusat pelestarian tradisi Islam klasik.

Kata Kunci: Pelestarian, Tradisi, Pesantren, Salafiyah, Indonesia, Malaysia

Introduction

Islamic boarding school education (*pesantren*) is a “traditional” form of Islamic education in Indonesia. This *pesantren* system can be traced back to the 18th century or beyond.¹ Tradition in the view of Islam is a *sunnah*. In addition, tradition is also seen as *tamaddun*, which is dynamic and influences shaping the identity of a nation.² As a *sunnah*, the *pesantren* tradition is seen as a noble effort to create something that can arouse the passion of a community’s life in order to live a better life and have positive values and contain divine elements and can be used as an essential aspect in building multicultural life and efforts to deradicalize religion.³ As a *tamaddun*, the *pesantren* tradition is seen as an effort to revive the teachings and noble values of Islam, and at the same time, maintain the continuity of local wisdom as a legacy of the ulama.⁴

If viewed from a sociological perspective, preserving the *pesantren* tradition is a process of cultural movement toward realizing a particular form.⁵

¹ Eka Srimulyani, “Muslim Women and Education in Indonesia: The Pondok Pesantren Experience,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 85–99, doi:10.1080/02188790601145564.

² Saeful Tohmat and Bambang Syaeful Had, “Tradisi dalam Pembentukan Identitas Bangsa Indonesia di Era Modern,” *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (2004), <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v1i1.4865>.

³ Marzuki Marzuki, Miftahuddin Miftahuddin, and Mukhamad Murdiono, “Multicultural Education in Salaf Pesantren And Prevention of Religious Radicalism in Indonesia,” *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 39, no. 1 (February 2, 2020): 12–25, <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v39i1.22900>.

⁴ Renny Oktafia and Imron Mawardi, “Islamic Values in The Tradition of Samin Community at East Java,” *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 5, no. 1 (February 3, 2017): 97–114, doi:10.21043/qijis.v5i1.2027.

⁵ Ali Mas’ud, Ah Zakki Fuad, and Achmad Zaini, “Evolution and Orientation of Islamic Education in Indonesia And Malaysia,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, no. 1 (June 3, 2019): 21–49, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2019.13.1.21-49>.

In general, preserving *pesantren* traditions, including *salafiyah pesantren*, involves various elements of society, culture, and belief systems. Therefore, every individual, community group, or social community in a *salafiyah pesantren* has certain motives and goals that can be well understood by the person concerned. Furthermore, *Pesantren* is a miniature of the Indonesian Islamic community.⁶

These goals and motives are usually realized through adaptation, assimilation, or acculturation of the original culture (great tradition) with the local culture of the local community.⁷ To understand the culture or traditions of the *salafiyah pesantren* at *Pesantren Subulussalam Sriwangi*, South Sumatra, Indonesia and *Pesantren Rahmaniayah Lubuk Tapah Kelantan Malaysia*, a good understanding of their parent traditions is required. The Malay community based on the *santri* tradition will have a different tradition from other communities who are not from the *santri* tradition background or vice versa.

Anthropologically, every society has figures who are considered leaders and maintainers of their traditions.⁸ This figure then plays an essential role in moving the dynamics of the community to achieve common goals. Someone who is made as a figure usually has creativity and sensitivity to the direction and movement of their culture, so that they will try to control or develop it in a specific direction according to their beliefs and abilities. In Malay society, *pesantren* and the traditional values of *santri* is a value system that is believed to be a truth and become the community's identity.⁹ Therefore, in this kind of Malay society, establishing a center for maintaining the *santri* tradition becomes a necessity and their sacred mission, such as establishing a langgar, mosque, and *pesantren*.

⁶ Syamsun Ni'am, "Pesantren: The Miniature of Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, no. 1 (June 1, 2015): 111-34, doi:10.18326/ijims.v5i1.111-134.

⁷ Fuad Fachruddin and Sirojuddin Abbas, "Al-Ma'had al-Turāthī Wa Tajdid al-Niẓām al-Ta'limī Bi Indūnīsiyā," *Studia Islamika* 7, no. 1 (2000), doi:10.15408/sdi.v7i1.719.

⁸ Yanwar Pribadi, "Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 51, no. 1 (June 15, 2013): 1-32, doi:10.14421/ajis.2013.51i1-32.

⁹ Munir, "Ma'had Al-Jami'ah Urgency as a Character Education Center of," *Elementary Education Online* 19, no. 4 (2020): 974-77.

Based on the importance of preserving the tradition of *salafiyah pesantren* and the gaps in previous studies, this study analyzes how the Islamic boarding schools built by the Malay community in South Sumatra, Indonesia, and the Malay community of Kelantan, Malaysia, carry out the preservation of their culture and traditions, so that they still exist and even survive until now. For this reason, analyzing the *pesantren* education system is a fundamental step. In this context, the system elements, such as kyai, book recitation, learning methods, scientific recognition systems, become the main focus of research.

For the above needs, the ethnographic-phenomenological approach becomes very relevant.¹⁰ Meanwhile, participatory observations were made to obtain valid data, interviews and documentation were also carried out. All data were analyzed qualitatively with inductive reasoning. For the participatory observations, the researcher lived in the *pesantren* for some time and in different situations while conducting interviews with kyai, ustadz, and several *santri*.

This study is expected to contribute in-depth knowledge about the characteristics of preserving the *santri* tradition amid the Malay community in both countries. It is essential to explain that *pesantren* is an educational institution and a cultural process that contains a value system of beliefs, noble traditions, and other sacred missions.

Preservation of *Salafiyah Pesantren* in Indonesia and Malaysia

To understand the characteristics of preserving the traditional values of *salafiyah pesantren* in these two countries, i.e., *pesantren* Subulussalam Sriwangi, South Sumatra, Indonesia, and *pesantren* Rahmaniayah Lubuk Tapah Kelantan Malaysia, the authors describe them based on the main elements of the *Salafiyah pesantren*. They are the kyai as the leader, the community santrization as the orientation of the *pesantren*'s goals, the yellow book as the core curriculum, syawir (muzakarah) as a learning method, and an oral diploma as a form of scientific recognition.

¹⁰ Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life* (London: Heinemann, 1979).

***Kyai Kitab* as Characteristics of Pesantren's Structural and Cultural Leaders**

“*Kyai Kitab*” is the author’s term to describe the characteristic phenomenon of several *salafiyah pesantren* leaders in Indonesia and Malaysia. “*Kyai Kitab*” is written using quotation marks to indicate a still interpretive term for the general reader. However, what is meant by “*Kyai Kitab*” in the context of this study is to refer to the leadership of the *pesantren* who has the main activity of providing recitation of classical Islamic books, especially the yellow book in *pesantren*¹¹ that they lead. “*Kyai Kitab*” is one of the prominent characteristics of Indonesian¹² and Malaysian *pesantren*.¹³

“*Kyai Kitab*,” the leader of a traditional Islamic boarding school (*salafiyah*), from the beginning, has only concentrated on reciting books at the *pesantren* they led, especially the big books that became the scientific standard of the *pesantren*, such as nurturing the recitation of the book *Ihya’ ‘Ulum ad-Din*,¹⁴ *Sahih al-Bukhari* book,¹⁵ the book of *Fath al-Wahhab*,¹⁶ *al-Salikin siyar* book,¹⁷ and its kind. Until the end of their leadership, traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*) never had direct access to the government. “*Kyai Kitab*” focuses on taking care of students than on establishing relationships with agencies or the

¹¹ Lalu Muhammad Syakur, “Kepemimpinan Kharismatik Kyai Di Pondok Pesantren (Studi Kasus Di Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum Pallangga Kabupaten Gowa)” (Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2015).

¹² Munir Munir, “The Continuity and Change of Pesantren Tradition: Study Network Main Pesantren and Alumni Pesantren in Kabupaten OKU Timur, South Sumatra,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2016): 347–64.

¹³ Observation and documentation at Pesantren Ar-Rahmaniyah Pasir Mas and Pesantren al-Bakriyah Pasir Tumbuh Klantan Malaysia in 2019

¹⁴ Brian M. Hauglid, “Al-Ghazali, a Muslim Seeker of Truth,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2001): 7.

¹⁵ Muhammad Misbah, “Tradisi Keilmuan Pesantren Salafi,” *IBDA’* 12, no. 2 (2014): 241–58.

¹⁶ Faridah Hanum, “Mengukuhkan Pesantren Sebagai Basis Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning: PP. Salafiyah Al Falah Ploso Kediri Jawa Timur,” *Al-Qalam* 19, no. 1 (2016): 97–106.

¹⁷ Dokumentasi Pesantren ar-Rahmaniyah dan Pesantren al-Bakriyah Klantan Malaysia tahun 2019

government.¹⁸ “Kyai Kitab” seems to concentrate more on fixing and fostering elements within the *pesantren* than outside the *pesantren*.¹⁹

“Kyai Kitab” places more of their position as a role model for the students and educators in the *pesantren* they foster.²⁰ Therefore, they are always directly involved in several *pesantren* activities, especially matters related to the *pesantren* tradition, such as being a prayer leader at the *pesantren* mosque, reciting books, delivering *tausiyah*, and the like. As one of the efforts to instill the developed *pesantren* tradition, they always appear to look like a *pesantren* kyai; they always wear a sarong or robe and skullcap wherever they are,²¹ including in activities such as going to the market or the fields.²² Likewise, the head of the *Pesantren* ar-Rahmaniyah Pasir Mas always wears robes and robes.²³

In addition, “kyai Kitab” has sharpness in seeing the potential of students. They understand the character of students who have the talent to become *kyai*. If they find this character in a student, they will usually pay special attention, such as making them a member of the inner family or other tasks that allow for more intense interaction.²⁴ Some of the *santri* who have now established *pesantren* are all due to the regeneration carried out by the *kyai* where they previously studied.

“Kyai Kitab” understands very well how they must build the spirit of “*minna*” or an inseparable part between the *santri* and the *pesantren* and the teachers and kyai who have taught and educated them.²⁵ Thus, it seems evident that the “in-group” awareness has been well and firmly built by the “kyai

¹⁸ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren* (PT LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 2001).

¹⁹ Eko Wahyu Jamaluddin, Suprayogi Suprayogi, and Aris Munandar, “Pembinaan Nilai Toleransi Beragama Di Pondok Pesantren Annuriyyah Soko Tunggal Semarang,” *Unnes Civic Education Journal* 1, no. 1 (2015).

²⁰ M. Syaifuddin Zuhriy, “Budaya Pesantren Dan Pendidikan Karakter Pada Pondok Pesantren Salaf,” *Walisono: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 19, no. 2 (2011): 287–310.

²¹ Suhermanto Ja’far, *Pasang Surut Politik Kaum Sarungan* (Kanisius, 2013).

²² Interview with Hadirin (one of the senior *ustadz* and has long become an inner family member of K.H. Muhammad Abu Mansyur), on 2 Oktober 2019.

²³ Observation and interview with ust.Faizal (an administrator or *pentadbir* at *pesantren* ar-Rahmaniyah Pasir Mas), Klantan 2019

²⁴ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (LP3ES, 2011).

²⁵ Interview with ust. Haji Hamdan (head of *pesantren* Tanah Mas), Klantan Malaysia 2019

kitab.”²⁶ The “in-group” awareness that is firmly entrenched in the soul of a *santri* makes them always feel it is bound to be an essential part of the great tradition of the *pesantren* in developing the tradition of the *pesantren* they lead.²⁷ Thus, a *santri*, who has completed their education in a *pesantren* and has succeeded in establishing a new *pesantren*, is an agent of maintaining the traditions of the previous *pesantren* tradition.²⁸

In the context of *pesantren*, being an agent of the continuity and maintenance of tradition is a student’s respect for the teacher. This respect is considered necessary because they know and believe in the concept of blessing.²⁹ Therefore, there has been a patron-client relationship between the main *pesantren* kyai (the great tradition) and the alumni *pesantren* kyai (the local tradition).³⁰ The concept of “barokah” for the *santri* is a value system considered sacred and has transcendent power in the success of an activity or cultural mission.³¹ This belief will arise in a kyai if the kyai displays charismatic values in front of their followers.

“Kyai Kitab” seems to understand this and makes an effort to keep it up so that the built traditions can continue to exist and remain sustainable. This effort was made because building a *pesantren* tradition is a good deed (worship). For the kyai, teaching and whatever activities in managing the *pesantren* are considered good deeds to Allah. This belief influences the value system taught by Imam Ghazali, especially in the book *Ihya’ Ulum al-Din*.³²

²⁶ John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Syracuse University Press, 1994).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, “Post-Traditional Societies and the Continuity and Reconstruction of Tradition,” *Daedalus*, 1973, 1–27.

²⁹ Nur Fatoni, “Kultur Pesantren: Relasi Kiai, Santri, Dan Kitab Kuning,” *IBDA’ 9*, no. 2 (2011): 165–77.

³⁰ Eko Setiawan, “Eksistensi Budaya Patron Klien Dalam Pesantren: Studi Hubungan Antara Kyai Dan Santri,” *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam*, 2013.

³¹ Loubna Zakiah and M. A. Faturochman, “Kepercayaan Santri Pada Kiai,” *Buletin Psikologi* 12, no. 1 (n.d.).

³² Mohammad Muchlis Solichin, “Belajar Dan Mengajar Dalam Pandangan Al-Ghazali,” *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2006).

Community Santrinization as an Orientation for *Pesantren* Goal Orientation

Community santrinization is a term used by the author to describe the characteristics of the goal orientation of traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*). The purpose of Islamic boarding school education that is oriented to “community santrinization” will lead to an outcome in the form of a movement that involves the active participation of the community.³³ “Community Santrinization” is a process that requires the existence of a figure who can mobilize a particular community so that the community group or society becomes a society that has “*santri*” values. It means that “community santrinization” is a process of inculcating the traditional values of *santri* or *pesantren* in society.³⁴

Pesantren, which has the goal orientation of “community santrinization,” requires the birth of alumni who can become community leaders who develop the tradition of *santri* in the community in which they live. Thus, *pesantren* that have a goal orientation of “community santrinization” must be able to forge students to become solid and steadfast people and who have social capital,³⁵ in addition to the well-established *pesantren* tradition. For this reason, Islamic boarding schools with a goal orientation on “community santrinization” always associate social reality with established religious concepts based on transcendent values.³⁶ In the context of traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*), the purpose of *pesantren* education which is oriented to “community santrinization,” is clear.³⁷

“Community santrinization” is the process of forming students so that later they become *kyai* or community leaders who always have the awareness

³³ Imam Munadjat, “Peranan *Pesantren* Dalam Pembangunan Pedesaan,” 1991.

³⁴ Ahidul Asror, “Rekonstruksi Keberagamaan *Santri* Jawa,” *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 7, no. 1 (2014): 1–23.

³⁵ Dian Diniyati, Eva Fauziyah, and Budiman Achmad, “Potensi Dan Peran *Pesantren* Sebagai Lembaga Pelaksana Kegiatan Rehabilitasi Hutan Dan Lahan (RHL),” *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Dan Ekonomi Kehutanan* 7, no. 1 (2010).

³⁶ Jimly Asshiddiqie, “Peranan Adat Melayu Dalam Membangun Identitas Budaya Dan Dalam Upaya Pembinaan Karakter Bangsa,” *Pekanbaru. Musyawarah Besar IV Lembaga Adat Melayu Riau*, 2012, http://www.jimly.com/makalah/namafile/112/ADAT_MELAYU.pdf.

³⁷ Christopher Furlow, *Malaysian Modernities: Cultural Politics and the Construction of Muslim Technoscientific Identities*, vol. 82, 2009, doi:10.1353/anq.0.0056.

to foster the community's religious life.³⁸ "Community santrization" takes the form of establishing study groups, revitalizing the function of places of worship, and establishing new *pesantren*. The alumni of traditional *pesantren* place the construction of a study center as an agent of spreading the *santri* tradition.³⁹

The alumni believe that they feel obliged to develop the *pesantren* tradition amid society.⁴⁰ As an activity of worship, they rely upon the activity of Allah. Therefore, in general, they do not charge fees to the community who want to participate as *santri* or followers of the recitation held except for organizing the educational process and providing learning facilities—not profit-oriented.⁴¹ However, in general, the community will be moved to participate in helping to fund or procuring educational facilities needed by the kyai or the religious education institution he founded.⁴²

On one occasion, "Kyai Kitab" gave tausiyah to the students that traditional *pesantren* was established to revive the Islamic religion (*tafaqquh fiad-din*).⁴³ This *pesantren* can stand because it is solely for the pleasure of Allah. Therefore, studying at this *pesantren* must be to hope for the pleasure of Allah. One of the ways to get Allah's pleasure is to recite the yellow book, increase worship, practice doing good with good manners like the scholars and kyai of the past who were *zuhud* and *wara'*.⁴⁴ Studying in a boarding school is like the practice of the afterlife, so everyone must purify themselves from the influence of worldly interests and stay away from immoral acts and religious

³⁸ Mukhibat Mukhibat, "Meneguhkan Kembali Budaya Pesantren Dalam Merajut Lokalitas, Nasionalitas, Dan Globalitas," *KARSA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman* 23, no. 2 (2015): 177-92.

³⁹ Mahmudin Sudin, "Pesantren, Transformasi Sosial Dan Kebangkitan Intelektualisme Islam," *Misykat Al-Anwar* 1, no. 1 (2016): 95-107.

⁴⁰ Sri Haningsih, "Peran Strategis Pesantren, Madrasah Dan Sekolah Islam Di Indonesia," *EL TARBAWI* 1, no. 1 (2008): 27-39.

⁴¹ Rusmini Rusmini, "Gaya Kepemimpinan Kyai Lukman Al-Karim Dalam Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam (Studi Kasus Di Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Maghfiroh Malang)," *ANALISIS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 15, no. 2 (2017): 497-518.

⁴² Uci Sanusi, "Pendidikan Kemandirian Di Pondok Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam-Ta'lim* 10, no. 2 (2012): 123-39.

⁴³ Mohammad Muchlis Solichin, "Rekonstruksi Pendidikan Pesantren Sebagai Character Building Menghadapi Tantangan Kehidupan Modern," *KARSA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman* 20, no. 1 (2012): 58-74.

⁴⁴ Moh Sakir, "Pesantren Sebagai Basis Pendidikan Spritual Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Jati Diri Manusia," *Cendekia: Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 13, no. 2 (2016): 171-88.

prohibitions. When they have returned to their respective hometowns, a *santri* must be able to become a role model for the community, surrounding neighbors and teach the children the Qur'an without expecting material rewards.⁴⁵ Thus, it is clear that "community santrization" is the primary orientation of the educational goals of traditional *pesantren* in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Classical Islamic Books (Turats) as the Core Curriculum of *Pesantren*

Classical Islamic books (turats) are essential and substantial elements in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*salafiyah*) in Indonesia and Malaysia.⁴⁶ As essential and substantial objects, classical Islamic books (turats) must always exist and become a core element in an education system.⁴⁷ In the context of traditional *pesantren*, the essentialization of classical Islamic books (turats) shows the meaning that a *pesantren* cannot leave classical Islamic books (turats) from the content of the *pesantren* education curriculum. Therefore, in the context of traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*), classical Islamic books (turats) are virtual objects, so they should be preserved.⁴⁸

"Essentialization of the yellow book" can also be seen in traditional *pesantren* and *pesantren* alumni. The traditional Islamic boarding school curriculum contents are classical Islamic books (turats), both for the primary and high levels. Even the grade levels are often identified with the names of the books being taught, for example, the *Jurumiyyah* class, *Imriti* class, *Kawakib* class, *Mutammimah* class, and *Alfiyah* class.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ngainun Naim, "Mengembalikan Misi Pendidikan Sosial Dan Kebudayaan Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 27, no. 3 (2016): 449–62.

⁴⁶ Amrizal Amrizal, "Eksistensi Tradisi Kajian Kitab Kuning Dalam Lingkup Perubahan Sosial (Studi Kasus Di Pesantren Darun Nahdhah, Darel Hikmah, Dan Babussalam)," *Sosial Budaya* 13, no. 1 (2017): 73–88.

⁴⁷ H. Mundir, "Dinamika Kurikulum Pesantren," *AL-ITTIHAD* 1, no. 1 (2016).

⁴⁸ Martin Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning; Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 146, no. 2 (1990): 226–69.

⁴⁹ Munjahid Munjahid, "Sekularisasi Pesantren (Studi Analisis Atas Dinamika Kurikulum Pesantren)," *Cendekia: Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 9, no. 1 (2011): 13–26.

Classical Islamic books (turats) are arguably the spirit of *salafiyah pesantren* in Indonesia and Malaysia. No *salafiyah pesantren* in Indonesia and Malaysia do not teach classical Islamic books (turats). Classical Islamic books (turats) are sources of tradition developed in *salafiyah pesantren*. These books explain the meaning of truth, honesty, obedience, sincerity, and others that guide humans to survive in this world and the hereafter.⁵⁰ Classical Islamic books (turats) and jawi books in Indonesian and Malaysian *salafiyah pesantren* are sources of Islamic teachings that are understood from the Qur'an and Hadith,⁵¹ so there is no reason not to preserve the books. As the source of the scientific tradition of *salafiyah pesantren* in Indonesia and Malaysia.”⁵²

Pesantren salafiyah in Indonesia and Malaysia have not separated themselves from classical Islamic books (turats). Moreover, the majority of the Muslim population of Indonesia and Malaysia are Malays who, from the beginning, have been familiar with classical Islamic books (turats). Therefore, it seems that the classical Islamic books (turats) are some of the attractions of the *Salafiyah pesantren*. In Malaysia, especially the *Pesantren Rahmaniyyah Pasirmas* and *Pesantren Bakriyyah Pasir Tumbuh Kelantan Malaysia*, many higher-degree students take intensive classical Islamic learning programs (turats), especially during school and higher education holidays.⁵³ Many of them are old enough to register as students in the *pesantren* to participate in classical Islamic studies (turats).

There is a belief that the teachings in classical Islamic books (turats) can shape the soul of students who are obedient to worship, have a polite personality, and uphold morality. In addition, it is precisely the classical Islamic books (turats) that are the difference between religious schools in general and Islamic boarding schools. It means that if the community wants their children to know religion, then it is enough to enter a madrasa, but if they

⁵⁰ Rosnani Hashim, Saheed Ahmad Rufai, and Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, “Traditional Islamic Education in Asia and Africa: A Comparative Study of Malaysia’s Pondok, Indonesia’s Pesantren and Nigeria’s Traditional Madrasah,” *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization* 1, no. 2 (2011): 94–107.

⁵¹ Faudzinainim Hj Badaruddin, “Peranan Kitab Jawi Tasawuf Sebagai Medium Transmisi Ilmu Islam Kepada Masyarakat Melayu Nusantara,” *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 1 (2012): 19.

⁵² Interview with K.H. Muhammad Solhan (pimpinan Pesantren Sriwangi), on 15 April 2019.

⁵³ Interview with K.H. Muhammad Solhan (Head of Pesantren Subulussalam Sriwangi-Pesantren Jawa-Sumatera-in Sumatera Selatan).

want their children to have good religious morality, obey worship, behave politely, be independent, and so on, the *Salafiyah pesantren* is their primary choice.”⁵⁴ Classical Islamic books (turats) are artistic works that have been handed down by kyai, *tuan guru*, and scholars since hundreds of years ago. The teachings contained in classical Islamic books (turats) are considered very relevant to the mission of the *pesantren*⁵⁵ that wants to form religious people, have a noble character, and develop religious knowledge to the community so that they are safe in this world and the hereafter.⁵⁶

Salafiyah pesantren in Indonesia still maintains classical Islamic books (turats) as sources of *pesantren* tradition. There are already several *pesantren* alumni who have succeeded in establishing several formal educational institutions within the *pesantren* environment. However, they still maintain classical Islamic books (turats) as the most critical part of the curriculum content of the *pesantren*.⁵⁷ The preservation of the tradition of classical Islamic books (turats) cannot be separated from the soul of the *santri*, who consider *tabarukan* as a life principle value that must be maintained.⁵⁸

“The essentialization of classical Islamic books (turats)” can be seen clearly in the activities of *Bahtsul masa’il*.⁵⁹ It is because of debates in *Bahtsul masa’il*. The arguments used as the basis of thought in opinion always refer to classical Islamic books (turats). In the *Bahtsul masa’il* activity, each participant must understand well the contents of the teachings of classical Islamic books (turats), and the results will be an essential argument in solving religious problems that arise in society.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Interview with K.H. Nur Fuadi (pimpinan Pesantren Darul Falah Rejosari), Pesantren Jawa-Sumatera-in Sumatera Selatan.

⁵⁵ Mastuhu, *Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren: Suatu Kajian Tentang Unsur Dan Nilai Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren* (INIS, 1994).

⁵⁶ Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren...*

⁵⁷ Munir, “The Continuity and Change of Pesantren Tradition.”

⁵⁸ Agus Muharom, “Pembentukan Akhlakulkarimah Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Huda Nurul Iman (El-Madani) Desa Banjarparakan Kecamatan RawaloKabupaten Banyumas” (IAIN Purwokerto, 2016).

⁵⁹ Achmad Kemal Riza, “Continuity and Change in Islamic Law in Indonesia: The Case of Nahdlatul Ulama Bahtsul Masail in East Java,” 2011.

⁶⁰ Ahmad Munjin Nasih, “Bahtsul Masail Dan Problematikanya Di Kalangan Masyarakat Muslim Tradisional,” *Al-Qanun: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pembaharuan Hukum Islam* 12, no. 1 (2016): 106–29.

Syawir (Muzakarah) as a Form of “Dynamization” of Learning Strategies

It should be reiterated that since the beginning, Indonesian and Malaysian *salafiyah* Islamic boarding schools have implemented the classical system in learning classical Islamic books (turats). Classroom learning is carried out with various methods, ranging from lecture, memorization, and question and answer. Meanwhile, learning outside the classroom, especially in learning managed by student discussion groups, each class is called *syawir (muzakarah)*. In *syawir (muzakarah)*, every student is actively involved in discussions and debates about all learning materials that the ustadz has delivered, and even materials that have not been delivered but are still related to the studied materials.⁶¹

In this *syawir (muzakarah)* activity, every student must have good scientific competence, rhetoric, and group dynamics. The development of reasoning and critical, logical, and systematic thinking is through this *syawir (muzakarah)* strategy.⁶² Meanwhile, individual (private) learning strategies are still maintained in the form of *sorogan*. The strategy that involves the public is also maintained in the form of *halaqah*. Thus, it is clear that the dynamics of learning strategies in *salafiyah pesantren* in Indonesia and Malaysia have been maintained until now.⁶³

Syawir (muzakarah) is one of the practical approaches in generating students' motivation to learn because each student will have a turn as a resource in these activities.⁶⁴ Every student who gets a turn for a presentation usually prepares the material optimally by studying the books that have been studied seriously. Usually, they first discussed or asked to be tested by their

⁶¹ Rani Rakhmawati, “Syawir (Studi Kasus Mengenai Pendidikan Di Pondok Pesantren Manbaul Hikam Desa Putat, Kecamatan Tanggulangin, Kabupaten Sidoarjo)” (Universitas Airlangga, 2015).

⁶² Mukodi Mukodi, Sodiq A. Kuntoro, and Sutrisno Sutrisno, “Adaptasi Dan Respon Pondok Tremas Terhadap Arus Globalisasi,” *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi Dan Aplikasi* 3, no. 2 (2016): 184–97.

⁶³ Hashim, Rufai, and Nor, “Traditional Islamic Education in Asia and Africa.”

⁶⁴ Nur Kholis, “Implementasi Pendidikan Nahwu Sharaf Di Pondok Pesantren Miftaahul ‘Uluum Lampung,” *Arabia* 9, No. 1 (2017).

roommates before they appeared in the moment of *syawir* (*muzakarah*) and *bahtsul masa'il*.⁶⁵

Bahtsul masa'il is a vital learning strategy typical of *Salafiyah pesantren*. *Bahtsul masa'il* is a learning strategy that requires the active participation of all discussion participants. For this reason, each participant in the discussion in *Bahtsul masa'il* prepares themselves optimally in order to participate optimally. In *Bahtsul masa'il*, each participant will compete to explain the mindset, logic, and systematic thinking used in making an Islamic legal decision.⁶⁶ *Bahtsul masa'il* is one of the intellectual dynamics in discussing the developing social reality from the perspective of Islamic law or Islamic studies in general.

Traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*) in Indonesia and Malaysia apply *Bahtsul masa'il* only for students already at the *alimah* level.⁶⁷ Those who are at this level have all followed the study of standard *pesantren* books such as the *Fath al-Wahhab* book, *al-Mahalli*, *i'annah al-talibin*, and the like. Therefore, it is hoped that those at this level have sufficient competence to debate in solving a religious problem.

Oral Diploma as a Form of Scientific Recognition

“Oral diploma” is a term that the author uses to describe the prominent characteristics of scientific recognition in several *salafiyah* Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and Malaysia. “Oral certificate” is an oral scientific acknowledgment. An “oral diploma” is a form of acknowledgment of the ability, knowledge, and skills of a *santri* given by a *kyai* because they are deemed worthy of it. A student who gets the diploma usually begins with the careful observation by a *kyai* of the competence and behavior possessed by a *santri* as long as they devote themselves to studying or helping the *kyai* in the *pesantren* concerned. The certificate is given not only because a student has completed their studies in the last level at the *pesantren*, but rather on the

⁶⁵ M. Ag Munir, “Kultur Madrasah Pesantren Di South Sumatera,” accessed August 28, 2017, http://www.academia.edu/download/50777068/artikel-KULTUR_MADRASAH_PESANTREN-2016.pdf.

⁶⁶ Abdul Wasik, “Optimalisasi Nalar Kritis Santri Dalam Sistem Bahtsul Masa'il Fiqhiyah NU,” *Lisan Al-Hal: Jurnal Pengembangan Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan* 6, no. 2 (2014): 207–30.

⁶⁷ Munir, *Kesinambungan dan Perubahan Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren :Studi Perbandingan Pesantren Seribandung dan Pesantren Seriwangi Sumatera Selatan*, Disertasi, Yogyakarta : UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2011, hal. 198

personal subjective assessment aspect of the kyai. However, this does not mean that the kyai acts arbitrarily in using their authority as the only diploma giver in a *pesantren*. A kyai is usually very careful in giving diplomas to their students. It is because they have a far-sighted view related to the continuity of the developed scientific tradition.

Traditional *pesantren (salafiyah)* provides several types of diplomas to their students. There are at least two types of “oral diplomas,” i.e., “book diplomas” and “practice certificates.”⁶⁸ A “book certificate” is a diploma given by a kyai/tuan guru to a student who is deemed to have been able to read and understand the contents of a book well, so they are deemed appropriate to teach the book to students or the general public.

The “book certificate” given to the *santri* is related to the types of standard *pesantren* books such as the *Ihya ‘Ulum ad-Din* book, the *Sahih al-Bukhari* book, the *Fath al-Wahhab* book, the *Siyar al-salikin* book, the *I’anatu al-Talibin* book, and the like, which are classified as big books.⁶⁹ In general, a “book certificate” is given to students when they have completed the study of the books in their entirety. For example, the *Ihya ‘Ulum ad-Din* certificate will be given if the student has completed four chapters in total. Four chapters are a requirement because not all students participate in studying the book from chapter one. Sometimes some students take part in the study of the book directly from chapter two or chapter three. When this happens, a *santri* with full awareness will usually repeat their recitation from the left books. After completing all parts of the books, usually, a new student dares to ask for a diploma from the kyai/tuan guru. Students who have obtained a diploma for big books are automatically allowed to teach smaller books.

The “certificate of practice” is a type of “oral diploma” given by a kyai to students related to certain practices that are believed to have unique properties and meaning for those who practice them.⁷⁰ The practice certified by the kyai/tuan guru to the students takes various forms, and not all students get the

⁶⁸ Interview with K.H.M. Solhan, pimpinan Pesantren Subulussalam Sriwangi, tanggal 23 Agustus 2019

⁶⁹ Munir, “Kurikulum Pendidikan Pesantren: Studi Kasus Di Pondok Pesantren Subulussalam Sriwangi OKU Sumatera Selatan,” 1999, hal. 97.

⁷⁰ Munir, “Kesenambungan Dan Perubahan Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren: Studi Perbandingan Pesantren Nurul Islam Seribandung,” Disertasi, Yogyakarta : UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2011, hal. 201

same or uniformed practice certificate. Before giving a diploma to someone, the kyai usually first asks for instructions from Allah through certain rituals, such as the *istikhara* prayer, the *hajat* prayer, and not infrequently, they fast first.

Salafiyah pesantren give certificates of unique *zikir* practices to students at the final level, or *ustadz* in the form of various kinds of *zikir*, which are believed to have been practiced by saints, Sufis, and pious people in the form of various *hizib wirid*. This tradition is a continuation of the tradition of the main *pesantren* when the kyai/tuan guru of this *pesantren* previously established their *pesantren*.⁷¹ This kind of practice is also common in some *salafiyah pesantren* in Indonesia, Malaysia, and other parts of the archipelago.⁷² *Wirid hizib* is named after its first author and practitioner. For example, *hizib Nawawi* is believed to be a *wirid* practice of Imam Nawawi al-Bantani, *hizib Jailani* is believed to be a *wirid* created and practiced by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani, and so on.⁷³ Some students are given practice certificates collectively. For example, a group of students is called by the kyai to prepare themselves to participate in the recitation of the *Dala'il al-Khairat* book, which contains various types of *hizib* and unique practices.⁷⁴ During the book study, the students are usually required to fast until the recitation is completed, and then they are guided to practice the *wirid* practices.⁷⁵

This unique *zikir* and *wirid* are believed to have special properties that can later be used to help family members and others, significantly developing the psychology of people who generally still believe in the suggestions of these *zikir* or *wirid* readings. However, it is essential to emphasize that studies on the practice of *zikir* and special *wirid* obtained by students must go through the

⁷¹ Fahmi Irfani, "Pesantren Dan Budaya Kekerasan Potret Pendidikan Di Banten," *FIKRAH* 6, no. 2 (2015), <http://www.uika-bogor.ac.id/apps/ejournal.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/FIKRAH/article/view/123/o>.

⁷² Nikmatu Sa'diyah, "Makna Tradisi Tirakat Di Pondok Pesantren Pacul Gowang Kec. Diwek Kab. Jombang" (Universitas Airlangga, 2015).

⁷³ Ayatullah Humaeni, "The Local Tradition of Magical Practices in Banten Society," *El-Harakah (Terakreditasi)*, 2012.

⁷⁴ Mukhamad Rikza, "Ilmu Kanuragan At Rohmatul Ummah Assalafy Pesantren Of Jekulo Kudus," *Al-Albab* 2, no. 2 (2013).

⁷⁵ Abdul Jalil, "Organisasi Sosial Dala'il Khairat (Studi Pengamal Dala'il Khairat KH Ahmad Basyir Kudus)," *INFERENSI* 5, no. 1 (2016): 81-100.

process of awarding diplomas⁷⁶ by the kyai, and every student is strictly prohibited from practising the *zikir* or special wirid without a diploma from the kyai/tuan guru.⁷⁷

Conclusion

Traditional *pesantren* (*salafiyah*) is the original Islamic education of Indonesia and Malaysia which these two countries are still the center of preservation of classical Islamic traditions. It can be seen from several aspects, i.e., first, the kyai or *mudir* remains the center of the figure, the center of management, the primary source of the *pesantren* value system, and even becomes the principal teacher the study of books. Second, the orientation of *pesantren* education goals focuses on community santrization, i.e., preparing a cadre of religious leaders amid society. Third, classical Islamic books, whether in the form of jawi-language books or Arabic-language books, are oriented to the basic teachings of Islam about *fiqh*, *tasawuf*, *akhlak*, and some Arabic grammar. Fourth, the *pesantren* still maintains the method of memorization, *halaqah*, tutorial, and *muzakarah* in learning the book. Fifth, they still maintain an oral diploma as a form of scientific recognition.

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⁷⁶ Muhammad Abdullah, "Fungsi Wirid Dan Hizib Dalam Sastra Lisan Pesantren (Studi Kasus Wirid Asma'ul Husna Dan Hizib Lathif Di Brangsong Kendal)(The Function of Hizib and Wirid in Oral Literature of Pesantren [Case Study in Wirid Asma'ul Husna and Hizib Latif in Brangsong Kendal])," *METASASTRA: Jurnal Penelitian Sastra* 4, no. 1 (2016): 38-44.

⁷⁷ Abdurrahman Wahid, "Dinamisasi Pendidikan Pesantren," n.d.

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