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## **Strengthening Counter-Terrorism Religious Moderation through Traditional Islamic Education based on Kitab Kuning Literacy at Pesantren Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi**

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### **Abstract**

Religious literacy held by high level Islamic boarding school (pesantren), or so-called Ma'had Aly, is a scientific tradition and a means of religious learning specifically places santri and pesantren as the main pioneers of strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia. The aim of this research is to understand and get an overview of religious literacy activities (ngaji kitab) of Ma'had Aly students in South Sulawesi in contributing and playing a positive role on strengthening religious moderation. The research problem is emphasized what is the model and application of religious literacy in Ma'had Aly so that it can have an educational effect on mahasantri in the formation of moderate attitudes, as well as their rejection of terrorist behavior in the name of religion. This research is descriptive research with a phenomenological approach, using qualitative analysis of observation and interview data to the caregivers, teachers and students of Ma'had Aly. Theoretically, the reality of a person's attitudes and tendencies of understanding is largely determined by his ability and reach of literacy in religious texts. Text may not sound anything, but text readers can create sounds according to their literacy. The research found that Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi applied the literacy model by studying, analyzing and reading complete the Kitab Kuning. Apart from the Sorogan and Bandongan method, also uses the method of deliberation, jalsa (participatory discussion) and *halaqoh* (seminar). In addition, Mahasantri at Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang and Mangkoso understood Kitab Kuning and translated religious values are aimed at socializing and



developing a moderate mindset (wasathiyah) and balance (tawazun) to mahasantri in literacy and conveying religious knowledge.

**Keywords:** Counter-terrorism; Religious Moderation; Kitab kuning Literation; Traditional Islamic Education

### الملخص

محو الأمية الدينية التي تنظمها المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية رفيعة المستوى، أو تسمى ماهاد علي، هي تقليد علمي ووسيلة للتعليم الديني تضع على وجه التحديد مدارس سان تري والمدارس الداخلية الإسلامية باعتبارها الرواد الرئيسيين في تعزيز الاعتدال الديني في إندونيسيا. الهدف من هذا البحث هو فهم والحصول على لمحة عامة عن أنشطة محو الأمية الدينية (تلاوة القرآن) لطلاب معهد علي في جنوب سولاويزي في تقديم مساهمة إيجابية ودور في تعزيز الاعتدال الديني. تتمحور مشكلة البحث حول كيفية نمذجة وتطبيق الثقافة الدينية في معهد علي بحيث يكون لها تأثير تربوي على الطلاب (المهاسن تري) في تكوين اتجاهات معتدلة، وكذلك رفضهم للسلوك الإرهابي باسم الدين. هذا البحث هو بحث وصفي ذو منهج ظاهري، باستخدام التحليل النوعي لبيانات الملاحظة والمقابلة مع مقدمي الرعاية والمعلمين وطلاب المعهد. ومن الناحية النظرية فإن حقيقة اتجاهات الشخص واتجاهاته في الفهم تتحدد إلى حد كبير بقدرته ومدى إلمامه بالنصوص الدينية. قد لا يصدر النص أي صوت، لكن يمكن لقراء النص إنشاء أصوات وفقاً لمعرفتهم بالقراءة والكتابة. وجد الباحثون أن معهد علي في جنوب سولاويزي طبق نموذجاً لمحو الأمية من خلال دراسة ودراسة وقراءة الكتب الصفراء بدقة. وبصرف النظر عن طريقة سوروجان وطريقة باندونجان، فإنها تستخدم أيضاً أساليب المداولة والجلسة (المناقشة) Ma'had Aly As'adiyah في Mahasantri. التشاركية (والحلقة) الندوة) يفهمان الكتاب الأصفر ويترجمان القيم الدينية، DDI Mangkoso و Sengkang التي تهدف إلى التنشئة الاجتماعية وتطوير العقلية المعتدلة (الوسطية) والتوازن (التوازن) للمهاسن تري في محو الأمية ونقل المعرفة الدينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مكافحة الإرهاب، الاعتدال الديني، معرفة الكتاب الأصفر،  
التربية الإسلامية التقليدية

**Abstrak**

Literasi keagamaan yang diselenggarakan pesantren tingkat tinggi, atau disebut Ma'had Aly, merupakan tradisi keilmuan dan sarana pembelajaran agama yang secara khusus menempatkan santri dan pesantren sebagai pionir utama penguatan moderasi beragama di Indonesia. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah memahami dan mendapatkan gambaran tentang aktivitas literasi keagamaan (*ngaji kitab*) santri Ma'had Aly di Sulawesi Selatan dalam memberikan kontribusi dan peran positif pada penguatan moderasi beragama. Masalah penelitian ditekankan kepada bagaimana model dan penerapan literasi keagamaan di Ma'had Aly sehingga dapat memberikan efek edukatif kepada santri (mahasantri) pada pembentukan sikap moderat, serta penolakan mereka pada perilaku terorisme atas nama agama. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis, menggunakan analisis kualitatif terhadap data-data observasi dan wawancara kepada para pengasuh, guru dan mahasantri Ma'had Aly. Secara teoretis, realitas sikap dan kecenderungan pemahaman seseorang sebagian besar ditentukan oleh kemampuan dan jangkauan literasinya terhadap teks-teks keagamaan. Teks mungkin tidak berbunyi apapun, tetapi pembaca teks dapat menciptakan suara sesuai dengan literasinya. Peneliti menemukan bahwa Ma'had Aly di Sulawesi Selatan menerapkan model literasi dengan mengkaji, menelaah dan membaca tuntas kitab-kitab kuning. Selain metode sorogan dan metode bandongan, juga menggunakan metode *musyawarah*, *jalsah* (diskusi partisipatoris) dan *halaqoh* (seminar). Mahasantri di Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang dan DDI Mangkoso, memahami kitab kuning dan menerjemahkan nilai-nilai keberagaman ditujukan untuk mensosialisasikan dan mengembangkan pola pikir moderat (*wasathiyah*) dan keseimbangan (*tawazun*) kepada para mahasantri dalam berliterasi dan menyampaikan ilmu-ilmu agama.

**Kata Kunci:** Penanggulangan Terorisme; Moderasi Beragama; Literasi Kitab kuning; Pendidikan Islam Tradisional

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**A. Introduction**

Islam is built on normative sacred texts held by Muslims as the main source in religiousness. The sacred text in questions is God's revelation and explanation from



the Prophet Muhammad in the form of Hadits. The scholars have relevant the meaning and the value of sacred religious text in the book. Their writings are studied from generation to generation. Interpretation and analysis develop hand in hand religious needs and dialogue with contemporary conditions. This thing which is used by pesantren as a tradition of studying the Kitab Kuning applied in pesantren learning system.

Indonesia is one of the countries that has a high level of diversity, it can even be called the highest compared to other countries on earth. The variety of ethnicity and languages that reach thousands, including various religious, community and political organizations, is a social plurality that enriches the Indonesian national treasure, but if not managed properly will be the cause of the destruction of the national joints themselves. Especially with the diversity of religions and beliefs, it is very vulnerable to be used by certain parties to create disintegration and destructive social conflicts, in addition to political interests to undermine the unity of the nation.

From the phenomena and realities that occur, it turns out that the perpetrators of rejection of the values of moderation, tolerance and rationalism. The acts of radical extremism are carried out by groups of people who appear to be religiously educated, or in other words Islamist groups. It is very clear from their displays and slogans calling for jihad, the establishment of the caliphate and vile accusations against the government base on tyranny and possibility.<sup>1</sup> Their followers and supporters were not small, and certainly threatened the peace and unity of the nation.

Revitalizing moderate attitudes and thinking patterns as neutralizers or deterrents of extreme ideology is considered very urgent. In addition, the understanding of religious moderation must be understood comprehensively, not only textually but much more importantly contextually.

In the context of Nusantara, a distinctive educational and teaching institution with a deepening of Islamic religion is pesantren. This institution is known as an educational institution that stands and plays a role in transmitting Islamic religious sciences through the deepening and mastery of the kitab kuning<sup>2</sup>. The mention of pesantren is more synonymous with an entity that cannot be separated from Islam Nusantara. Almost all researchers conclude that the preservation of the tradition of Islamic intellectualism in the archipelago is due to the preservation and preservation of the existence of pesantren institutions with each style owned<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Establishment of Khilafah, Rigeo, <http://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/id/eprint/18289>

<sup>2</sup> Marzuki Wahid et al., *Pesantren Masa Depan: Wacana Pemberdayaan Dan Transformasi Pesantren* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Kadir Ahmad, "Partisipasi Ulama Dalam Pendidikan Islam Dan Pandangannya Tentang Penyelenggaraan Madrasah Di Indonesia Dewasa Ini," *Al-Qalam: Jurnal Penelitian Agama*

Moreover, the style of Islamic education in pesantren prioritizes mastery and deepening of the kitab kunings by Islamic scholars. Thus, it seems that pesantren and the kitab kuning are two inseparable elements. Therefore, the pesantren tradition seems to position the kitab kuning as the number one reference in terms of reference for law-making, alongside the Qur'an and Sunnah as the main sources.

Islamic boarding school educational institutions or pesantren, since hundreds of years ago, have proven their partiality to wasathiyah (moderate) values, counter-radicalism and play a major role in instilling love for peace and religious pluralism in the country. Pesantren, kiai and santri have participated in spreading the methodology of understanding religious texts and narratives that support religious moderation, both in classrooms, pulpits and mainstream social media. An interesting phenomenon in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, traditional pesantren students display what seems paradoxical, but instead provide reinforcement that pesantren, starting from the elementary level (*ibtidaiy*) to the tertiary level (*ma'had aly*) is an institution that can create, as well as internalize, the harmonious relationship between religion and humanity, between Islam and nationalism and between sharia and sharia and National morality in the realm of universal brotherhood. The students learn religion with the medium of the kitab kuning (al-kutub al-shafra'/kutub al-turats) which all use Arabic language or writing, ranging from the basic level (*ula*) to the high level (*ulya*), but they do not become 'Arabs' at all, either from appearance or culture. The santri remain in their Indonesian and wasathiyah, wearing sarongs, sandals and skullcaps, even though they struggle daily with Arabic literacy books.

In the context of the millennial generation and radical interpretations of religious texts, pesantren and Ma'had Aly, as an Islamic education unit seems to be an educational model that intensely fosters the morality of an open, egalitarian, and inclusive generation of the nation, far from the tendency of radicalism and fundamentalism which is proven to be more mudlaratit's rather than its benefit. The learning pattern held by Ma'had Aly, especially in South Sulawesi, is based on a critical and in-depth study of the kitab kunings which are full of diversity of opinions and perspectives of classical scholars. This learning model in turn is expected to form a moderate religious literacy paradigm and narrative, which in turn is able to distance the involvement of students and scholars in the circle of terrorism in the name of religion.

From the background description above, the focus of this research problem is how religious literacy in Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi can strengthen religious moderation in the context of preventing terrorism through the study of the kitab kuning. This research is limited to two main concepts, namely: First, religious literacy, Second, religious moderation counter-terrorism.

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*dan Sosial Budaya* 12, no. 1 (2006), accessed July 7, 2023, <http://jurnalalqalam.or.id/index.php/Alqalam/article/view/576>.

Research on the role of pesantren that fosters Ma'had Aly in an effort to strengthen student nationalism and its involvement in anticipating the spread of religious radicalism is very necessary. It is hoped that from this research the negative stigma of pesantren as extreme educational institutions and bases of terrorism can be dismissed, as well as find an ideal religious education model to form moderate Muslim intellectuals and anti-radicalism.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **1. Related Research**

The literature that according to researchers is quite relevant in the discourse on religious moderation is an article published in the journal *Intizar* entitled "Religious Moderation in Indonesia" by Muhammad Fahri and Ahmad Zainuri. This study is a literature study that aims to describe religious moderation in Indonesia. The author concludes that radicalism in the name of religion can be anticipated and eliminated through moderate and inclusive Islamic education<sup>4</sup>. This study is still normative and idealistic, not touching on a more specific realm of how pesantren and their kitab kuning learning can internalize the noble values of wasathiyah and create religious moderation in Indonesia, as the main starting point in eradicating religious radicalism.

Agus Akhmadi, in his article published in the *Journal of Religious Training*, entitled "Religious Moderation in Indonesian Diversity", stated the results of his research that in a multicultural society such as Indonesia, there are often tensions and conflicts between cultural and religious groups, which have an impact on disharmonizing people's lives. Therefore, multi-cultural understanding and awareness that respects differences and willingness to interact with anyone fairly is needed<sup>5</sup>. The author here does not examine the role of santri and pesantren who actually have deep religious competence and literacy in an effort to create religious moderation and peace.

The discourse on the relationship between pesantren and the issue of terrorism and rejection of religious moderation was critically examined by Muhammad Murtadho in his article, "Reproduction of Religious Understanding and Response to Accusations of Radicalism" in the *Al-Qalam Journal*. The object of his research is Pesantren Ngruki Sukoharjo, which has been highlighted and suspected as an educational institution that teaches radicalism and terrorism. The author does not deny

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<sup>4</sup> Agus Akhmadi, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Keragaman Indonesia," *Inovasi: Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* 13, no. 2 (April 23, 2019): 45–55.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Asfar, *Islam Lunak, Islam Radikal: Pesantren, Terorisme, Dan Bom Bali* (Surabaya: Pusat Studi Demokrasi dan HAM (PuSDeHAM) dan JP Press, 2003).

the existence of radical stigma to pesantren institutions related to their social context and history<sup>6</sup>.

The results of a 2010 study written by Nurrohman, "Pesantren as an Antidote to Radicalism and Terrorism (Study of the views of Islamic Boarding School Leaders in Bandung on Jihad, Violence and Power, and How to Counteract the Emergence of Radicalism and Terrorism)". Nurrohman, in his research findings wrote that there are still many conservative and fundamentalistic views among pesantren about jihad, violence in the name of religion and power built base on a radical paradigm of unification of religion and politics<sup>7</sup>. This study is also normative and does not examine at the applicative level how the role of pesantren, with its traditional curriculum, reduces conservative and radical ideas that develop in society.

Concerning the research on kitab kuning learning in pesantren, there are two references that researchers put forward here, namely first, a book entitled Dynamics of Kitab kuning Studies in Pesantren written by M. Masyhuri Mochtar and published by Lirboyo Press<sup>8</sup>. This book explains in detail the concept and implementation of learning the kitab kuning in traditional pesantrens, especially in Java, either as an educational unit curriculum or as a pesantrenan tradition. Second, the book Pergulatan Dunia Pesantren Building from Below by M. Dawam Rahardjo (editor) contains a study of the characteristics, potentials and problems and opportunities that pesantren have.

Based on the literature review and and previous research it can be ascertained that the study of the role of Islamic boarding schools in religious education and social moderation have been carried out, but specifically research about how students discover the value of religious moderation in in-depth literacy in kitab kuning in pesantren has not been expressed by previous researchers. This research will reveal the phenomenon kitab kuning literacy and its contribution in forming positive attitudes santri in strengthening religious moderation in South Sulawesi.

## 2. Religious Literacy and Religious Moderation

In addressing one issue, moderation seeks a compromise approach and is in the middle. In addressing differences, both religious and madhab differences, religious moderation (*al-wasathiyah*) promotes tolerance, mutual respect, while still

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren Dan Tarekat* (Yogyakarta: Gading Publishing, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Darlis Dawing, "Mengusung Moderasi Islam Di Tengah Masyarakat Multikultural," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Ilmu Studi Ushuluddin dan Filsafat* 13, no. 2 (2017): 225–255.

<sup>8</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011).

believing in the truth of the beliefs of each religion and madhab, so that all can accept decisions with a cool head, without having to engage in anarchist action<sup>9</sup>.

In the Indonesian context, religious moderation ensures balance in religion and religion based on *nash* with contextual application. Consideration of context in religion departs from the principle of *maqashid* or the general purpose of Islamic sharia.

Islamic moderation itself becomes an Islamic religious understanding that embodies the deepest essence of Islamic teachings. Teachings that are not only related to *hablun min Allah*, but also *equally important is maintaining* *hablun min al-nas* or relationships with fellow humans. Not only to brothers and sisters, but also to brothers of different religions<sup>10</sup>.

The current understanding of religious texts (*nash*) tends to be polarized in two poles, which are equally extreme. The first extreme pole is too rigid and deifies the text, regardless of the function and involvement of reason (reason) in finding a correct understanding of the content of the text. *Nash* is understood textually and then practiced without understanding the context that surrounds it. This way of understanding is often called conservatism. The second pole, which is also extreme, on the contrary, is often called liberalism, so much that it ignores the text and the value of its substance. Liberal understanding is as dangerous as conservative understanding<sup>11</sup>.

It is understood that the reality of a person's attitudes and tendencies of understanding is largely determined by his ability and reach of literacy in religious texts. Text may not sound anything, but text readers can create sounds according to their literacy.

### 3. Religious Moderation, the Kitab kuning and the Existence of Pesantren

In relation to religious literacy, the only educational institution that has proven to be qualified and trusted in studying sacred texts and their epistemological interpretations is pesantren. In its nature as a boarding school, Pesantren is considered very potential for the sustainability of activities, not only transfer of knowledge, but also transfer of values. In such a nature, pesantren coaches are very easy to carry out intense pedagogical interactions with students.

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<sup>9</sup> Mohamad Fahri and Ahmad Zainuri, "Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia," *Intizar* 25, no. 2 (2019): 95–100.

<sup>10</sup> Hamam Faizin et al., *Pesantren Dan Demokrasi : Jejak Demokrasi Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Titian Pena, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Lailatul Fitriyah, Marlina Marlina, and Suryani Suryani, "Pendidikan Literasi Pada Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning Di Pondok Pesantren Nurul Huda Sukaraja," *Titian Ilmu: Jurnal Ilmiah Multi Sciences* 11, no. 1 (January 24, 2019): 20–30.

In the Indonesian context, pesantren as traditional Islamic educational institutions have distinctive characteristics that are different from other institutions. The essential characteristics are the existence of kiai who teach and educate and become role models, students who study at kiai, mosques as places for organizing education and congregational prayers, dormitories where students live, and the kitab kuning as a source of knowledge in the scientific tradition of pesantren. Of these five elements, it later became the main characteristic of pesantren.

Pesantren is considered the only education system in Indonesia that adheres to a traditional (conservative) system. Even Ulil Abshar Abdalla, stated that pesantren are the only Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that inherit the Islamic intellectual tradition in Indonesia<sup>12</sup>. While Mochtar Buchari, defines Pesantren is an integral part of the internal structure of Islamic education in Indonesia which is held traditionally which has made Islam a way of life<sup>13</sup>.

Meanwhile, according to Bryan Turner, pesantren have an important social role to pay attention to. The socio-cultural function of pesantren has traditionally been given much attention to social aspects. The student community is a representative of social life itself. Pesantren management has traditionally emphasized social approaches, and even this seems to stand out. Here, Durkheim's theory reminds of the basic function of religion as a means of social glue. In Durkheimian's perspective, pesantren plays a strong social bonding role by embracing students who come from different social and ethnic strata. Pesantren can be educational institutions that have a function to strengthen fraternal sentiments; which emphasizes togetherness, or aspects of life together<sup>14</sup>

In terms of attitude towards tradition, pesantren are divided into Salafi and Khalafi pesantren. The Salafi type is a type of pesantren that retains the teaching of classical Islamic scriptures as its core education. In this pesantren, general knowledge teaching is not widely given, sometimes even not given at all. The traditions of the past are very noticeable. The use of the madrasah system is only to facilitate the sorogan system as is done in old form teaching institutions. In general, this form of pesantren uses the sorogan and wetonan system<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Amin Haedari HM and Abdullah Hanif, *Masa Depan Pesantren: Dalam Tantangan Modernitas Dan Tantangan Kompleksitas Global* (Jakarta: IRD Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Andi Muhammad Irawan et al., "Arguing against Political and Religious Discriminations: Critical Discourse Analysis of Indonesian Ahmadiyah," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 19, no. 1 (September 1, 2022): 53–76.

<sup>14</sup> Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, "Naskah Akademik Penyuluh Keagamaan Pusat Penelitian Kehidupan Beragama" (Kementerian Agama, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Ibadullah Malawi, Dewi Tryanasari, and Apri Kartikasari HS, *Pembelajaran Literasi Berbasis Sastra Lokal* (Jawa Timur: AE Media Grafika, 2017).

A striking difference in the intellectual tradition of pesantren with other educational institutions is the tradition of religious literacy through the medium of learning the kitab kuning. That is, the kitab kuning is positioned as a runway among pesantren in responding to all life problems and also becomes a characteristic of the pesantren itself. This includes Ma'had Aly as one of the units of higher education units managed by pesantren.

The definition of the kitab kuning itself is classical Islamic books, namely books written by previous scholars. These books contain Islamic teachings written in Arabic. Another definition says, the kitab kuning is all written in Arabic that is recorded other than the Qur'an. Whatever material is written, including the books that collect hadiths is called the Kitab kuning. This type of Islamic religious reference uses Arabic, and often the kitab kuning is also referred to as the "bald book" because the character of the writing mostly does not use harakat or syakl.

In addition, in relation to religious literacy in pesantren, mastery and deepening of the kitab kunings (*turats*) for a santri or mahasantri in Ma'had Aly is a parameter of santri identity. Because the level of understanding and mastery of the kitab kuning indicates the level of quality of a student<sup>16</sup>. From the students' understanding of the content of the kitab kuning, which also contains the methodology of the scholars' thoughts, this will significantly influence and shape the character of their attitudes and intellects, especially towards religious issues that spread in society. The moderate or radical attitude of students is determined by their perspective in studying the contents of the kitab kuning.

#### **4. Ma'had Aly and Counter-Radicalism-Terrorism Efforts in the Name of Religion**

Pesantren and Ma'had Aly as one of its educational units, with the study of the kitab kuning that accommodates plurality and a sense of national ukhuwah, as well as the teaching provided by the kiai pembina, in turn plays a positive role in preventing the latent danger of religious radicalism, and at the same time dismissing accusations and restoring the image of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions and social units that are democratic, egalitarian and tolerant.<sup>17</sup> Ma'had Aly is a religious university that organizes academic education in the field of mastery of Islamic religious knowledge (*tafaquh fi al-ddin*) based on the kitab kuning held by Islamic boarding schools. While the kitab kuning is an Islamic book in Arabic which is a reference to Islamic scientific traditions in pesantren (Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 248). The kitab kuning, which is an

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<sup>16</sup> M. Masyhuri Mochtar, *Dinamika Kajian Kitab Kuning Di Pesantren* (Pasuruan: Pustaka Sidogiri, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Pesantren Resilience: The Path to Prevent Radicalism and Violent Extremism, *Studia Islamika*, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.16766>

Islamic treasure product of ulama al-salaf al-salih, is used as a guide by kiai and students to understand the substance of the teachings contained in the Qur'an and hadith.

The government views Ma'had Aly's position as a model of Islamic education in Indonesia and a focus in efforts to regenerate scholars and educate Islamic life as well as an alternative to the education model which is seen as dichotomous between the pesantren model and higher education, in the language of ulama Pondok Pesantren is an ideal educational model, because it can carry out the continuity of the world and the hereafter<sup>18</sup>.

Ma'had Aly, with its study of the kitab kuning that accommodates the value of flexibility (al-murunah) and pluralism of religious understanding, plays a positive role in preventing the emergence of religious radicalism among students, and at the same time dismisses accusations and restores the image of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions and social units that are democratic, egalitarian and uphold the value of al-wasathiyah.

### C. Research Method

This type of research is descriptive (*descriptive research*) conducted with qualitative methods and taken through a phenomenological approach with reference to pedagogical analysis. The phenomenological pedagogic approach in this study is intended as a study that seeks to explain the pattern of relationships and phenomena of interpersonal relations or religious institutions that develop in socio-educational interactions of kitab kuning learning activities in Ma'had Aly.

The research location focused on two locations, namely Ma'had Aly Pondok Pesantren As'adiyah in Wajo Regency and Ma'had Aly Pondok Pesantren DDI Mangkoso in Barru Regency. By using a purposive sampling method, informants were taken from elements of leaders, coaches and students in the two Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi. In this case, researchers took data from four leaders and coaches and five students from each Ma'had Aly. In addition to interviews, this study also used observation and triangulation to obtain data validity. Observation were made on the learning system, curriculum and the materials studied in kitab kuning as the main references in lectures.

Data collection in this research was performed in three ways, including library research, in-depth interviews, and observation. In accordance with the type of research above, researchers used the Miles and Huberman three-stage models to analyze the research data.<sup>19</sup> The main instrument in this study was the researchers

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<sup>18</sup> Mochtar, *Dinamika Kajian Kitab Kuning Di Pesantren*.

<sup>19</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*, Cet. Ke-9 (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), hlm. 337.



themselves using interview guidelines and field notes. At the first step, field data was reduced (data reduction) by summarizing, selecting and focusing data on points that were in accordance with the research objectives. Furthermore, data was displayed (data display) in the form of interview notes, field notes and documentation notes. The final step was conclusion drawing / verification, that was formulation of conclusions supported by valid evidence at the data collection stage.

#### **D. Results and Discussion**

##### **1. Ma'had Aly and the Literacy of the Kitab kuning in Islamic Boarding Schools**

Literacy education is applied and can be found in almost all fields of education, including education in Islamic boarding schools. Education in Islamic boarding schools whose teaching materials and learning resources are kitab kunings is very thick with literacy traditions<sup>20</sup>.

Ma'had Aly at the university level that brings forth young scholars or kiai, is also "constructed" to have a reliable ability to respond to the challenges and demands of life in the context of space and time, and the national and international realm. In the words of Martin Van Bruinessen, the main reason for the emergence of pesantren as organizers of Islamic religious teaching is to transmit traditional Islam as contained in the classic books written centuries ago (kitab kuning)<sup>21</sup>.

This is reinforced by the explanation of Umar Mansur, the supervisor of Ma'had Aly PP DDI Mangkoso, that Ma'had Aly is a high-level pesantren which is a continuation of the traditional Islamic boarding school class at the previous secondary level. Umar Mansur explained: "Ma'had Aly is an Islamic educational institution that seeks to restore the spirit of the traditional pesantren pioneered and founded by the Anre Gurutta (kiai caretakers). Seeing the need for a cadre of scholars and the ability of several students of STAI DDI Mangkoso, Anre Gurutta Faried Wajedy was moved to restore the spirit of study and learning of the kitab kuning in the form of takhassus."

As a higher education institution, Ma'had Aly is not much different from other universities. The learning process held is the same as universities in general. It's just that, Ma'had Aly As'adiyah and DDI Mangkoso have their own specifications that distinguish them from other universities.

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<sup>20</sup> Andik Wahyun Muqoyyidin, "Kitab Kuning Dan Tradisi Riset Pesantren Di Nusantara," *IBDA` : Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2014): 119–136.

<sup>21</sup> Muhamad Murtadlo, "Reproduksi Paham Keagamaan Dan Respon Terhadap Tuduhan Radikal (Studi Kasus Pesantren Ngruki Pasca Bom Bali 2002)," *Harmoni* 16, no. 1 (June 30, 2017): 75–93.

More clearly, Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi has the following objectives: 1) Organizing education and teaching to prepare educators who have noble personalities, able to manage change and provide religious understanding based on the values of moderation (*wasathiyah*) and balance, 2) Equip and develop the expertise of students in the field of language, namely Arabic and sciences related to kitab kuning literacy, and 3) Develop scientific thinking methodology tools for students to sharpen analysis and rhetoric in developing and communicating the knowledge they already have.

Religious literacy in pesantren and Ma'had Aly is not just the ability to read and write Arabic texts, but is intended as a serious effort to increase knowledge, skills and abilities that can make a santri or student have the ability to think critically, contextually, able to communicate effectively and able to develop potential and actively participate in community life<sup>22</sup>. Researchers found that students in Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang and DDI Mangkoso had relatively literal character and competence in understanding the kitab kuning and translating religious values in daily applications, both in their attitudes and da'wah activities.

Muhyiddin Tahir, Head of Ma'had Aly PP As'adiyah Sengkang, when confirming about the learning pattern and curriculum of the kitab kuning applied, said: "Ma'had Aly students continue to continue their learning patterns in Islamic boarding schools, namely by using the *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods. Both are used. The kitab kuning learning model here is read from the beginning of the book to the end of the book, or in other words studied until *khatam*. So the learning model is complete, the book is read out. After the new *khatam* moved to another book according to the instructions of his lecturer."

In general, the methods of learning the kitab kuning in pesantren and Ma'had Aly are as follows Maknani (translation), Sorogan, Wetonan (Bandongan), Musyawarah (discussion) and Muhafadzah (memorization)<sup>23</sup>. All methods are neatly integrated into maturing the literacy skills of students in pesantren.

In particular, both in Ma'had Aly PP As'adiyah and PP DDI Mangkoso, there are two methods that develop in the pesantren environment related to how to study the kitab kuning, namely the sorogan method and the bandongan method, both at the middle level pesantren (PDF program and Salafiyah Education) and at the Ma'had Aly level. In addition to these two methods, there are also developed methods of deliberation, jalsa (participatory discussion) and halaqoh (seminar).

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<sup>22</sup> Abuddin Nata, *Sejarah Pertumbuhan Dan Perkembangan Lembaga-Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia (Grasindo), 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Nurrohman Syarif, *Pesantren sebagai Penangkal Radikalisme dan Terorisme (Studi Terhadap Pandangan Pimpinan Pesantren di Bandung tentang Jihad, Kekerasan dan Kekuasaan, serta Cara Menangkal Munculnya Radikalisme dan Terorisme)*, Penelitian Kompetitif Individual (Bandung: Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, 2010), accessed October 8, 2023, <https://etheses.uinsgd.ac.id/4156/>.

With the specialization and concentration of each Ma'had Aly's field of study, the supervisors and lecturers play a very important role in guiding students to gain a comprehensive, complete and objective understanding, so that the potential for radical and extreme interpretations can be avoided.

## **2. Literacy of the Kitab Kuning and Strengthening Religious Moderation Counter Terrorism**

In interviews and observations at two research locations, Ma'had Aly PP As'adiyah Sengkang and Ma'had Aly PP DDI Mangkoso, researchers found that there is correlation between the kitab kuning literacy activities of Ma'had Aly students and internalization and awareness of religious moderation as an effort to anticipate terrorism in the name of religion.

There is a tendency of students and students to use the kitab kuning as a scientific reference, both in completing academic tasks and in carrying out da'wah activities in the community. The efforts of the students in making the kitab kuning as a reference are certainly closely related to the ability of the students to capture the various contents contained in the kitab kuning. In the end, the study of the kitab kuning had an influence on the students.

Various changes in attitude and behavior are seen in students in everyday life. The main goal put forward by the Ma'had Aly coach in South Sulawesi is to socialize and develop a moderate mindset (*wasathiyah*) and balance (*tawazun*) to students in literacy and conveying religious knowledge taken from the source of the kitab kuning to the wider community.

Five Informants from Ma'had Aly PP As'adiyah Sengkang students agreed with the view that religious moderation should be maintained and become the mainstream of religious life in Indonesia and in the global world at large. Moderation in the understanding and practice of religious values in Indonesia is a necessity and all pesantren must support and play an active role in strengthening the moderation paradigm in their students.

The literacy of the kitab kuning ala Ma'had Aly is to study and thoroughly discuss the books written by Salaf scholars, both Middle Eastern scholars and Nusantara scholars, written in Arabic, not Indonesian. However, according to informants, this model of learning religious knowledge does not have the potential to include extreme and radical thoughts, unless guided by teachers or kiai who are indeed extreme. Kitab kuning literacy activities are carried out without any background of fanaticism or hatred for different beliefs.

Abd. Halim Mubarak admitted that the literacy tradition in Ma'had Aly, although it tends to be not easy and needs to be supported by mastery of Arabic and other tools, gives students a better, more comprehensive, complete and rational understanding, ultimately building an attitude of openness to differences. Especially

in the sorogan and deliberative methods, students are fostered in responding to plurality and diversity of opinions affirmatively.

When confirmed about the possibility of the kitab kuning literacy learning method being able to strengthen the value of religious moderation to students, the Chairman of Ma'had Aly PP As'adiyah Sengkang, Muhyiddin Tahir, and the same thing was also expressed by Umar Mansur, Supervisor of Ma'had Aly PP DDI Mangkoso, explained that religious moderation was built from literacy activities and learning the kitab kuning in Ma'had Aly, as well as Islamic boarding schools with Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah ideology. It relies on three pillars, namely tawassuth (moderate not extreme), tasamuh (tolerant acceptance of differences) and tawazun (balanced in establishing truth).

### 3. Religious Moderation in Ma'had Aly as Counter Terrorism

Adherents of radical Islamic movements are generally driven by their narrow understanding of the concept of jihad, *rigid* and literal. Jihad is defined as war against non-Muslims. The implementation of the concept of jihad is more widely understood as holy war. Jihad is understood as the obligation to establish Allah's word on earth through force and war. As a result, many Muslims are willing as martyrs to wage war in the name of religion<sup>24</sup>.

The contribution of pesantren in counter-radicalism-terrorism is carried out in three integrated efforts in the pesantren system, namely deepening religious knowledge through the study and study of the kitab kuning, providing an understanding of jihad that is far from radical, rigid and extreme contexts, and instilling moral values that are nuanced inclusive, rahmah and tolerant. If we look closely, it is found that Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi has a clear attitude about the phenomenon of religious radicalism, or rather radicalism in the name of religion, which leads to a distortion of the understanding of the concept of jihad. Both high-level Islamic boarding institutions agree on the conclusion that violence of any kind, perpetrated in the name of religion or base on the subjectivity of truth of a particular religious group, is contrary to Islam. For them, jihad is not synonymous with violence and anarchism, but rather a conception of how to do everything possible to create benefits for the Ummah.

The students agreed that radicalism in any form is strongly opposed by Muslims, especially pesantren residents. Radicalism, which is the main trigger for acts of terrorism in various parts of the world, is not jihad. Harsh attitudes, over-militanism, rigid thinking and rejecting plurality in religion are not in line with the spirit of Islam itself. Regarding the violent behavior carried out by radical Islamic

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<sup>24</sup> Kementerian Agama Indonesia, *Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 71 Tahun 2015 Tentang Ma'had Aly, 1761*, vol. 71, 2015, accessed June 8, 2023, <http://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/130899/peraturan-menag-no-71-tahun-2015>.

groups, Muhammad Ishaq categorically stated that the behavior was contrary to the ways and principles of the Prophet. Islam permits violence only against those who manifestly and overtly declare hostility and harm Muslims. But for those who want to live side by side with Muslims peacefully, then they are given guarantees to live freely and carry out the teachings of their religion. Pesantren do not teach violence, coercion of will or such radical opinions and behaviors."Ma'had Aly has socialized the conception of moderate jihad and anti-radicalism to the pesantren community in particular. Although it does not rule out the possibility of some individuals from among students involved in radical religious movements, it is not a representation of the pattern and system of pesantrenan education in South Sulawesi that promotes a moderate, pluralist and inclusive attitude. and courteous.

One method in constructing understanding and good values, especially religious understanding and values, is to do literacy on sources and references that are legacy. In relation to religious literacy, the only educational institution that has proven to be qualified and trusted in studying sacred texts and their epistemological interpretations is pesantren.<sup>25</sup>

Pesantren, and Ma'had Aly as a higher education institution guidance of pesantren provide guidance to students on how to practice it as a guide to daily life or called *tafaqquh fi al-dīn*, by emphasizing the importance of al karīmah morals in national and community life.<sup>26</sup> Pesantren has always positioned itself as the vanguard in fostering the mentality of the Muslim generation who, not only have broad and deep religious knowledge, but are also able to be tasamuh (tolerant) and tawassuth (moderate) in responding to diversity and socio-religious problems in this country. A striking difference in the intellectual tradition of pesantren with other educational institutions is the tradition of religious literacy through the medium of learning the kitab kuning. Without excluding the Qur'an and Sunnah from their position as primary sources, the pesantren world has always favored the kitab kuning with the traditional form of verifying all issues according to the validity of the truth in the kitab kuning. However, the kitab kuning is the seeds of thought written by past Islamic intellectuals from the results of understanding guided by the two pillars above, the Qur'an and the Sunnah<sup>27</sup>.

That is, the kitab kuning is positioned as a runway among pesantren in addressing all life problems and also becomes a characteristic of the pesantren itself, including Ma'had Aly as one of the units of higher education units managed by

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<sup>25</sup> Study on The Pesantren Education, AZJAF, <https://doi.org/10.51377/azjaf.vol1no2.28>

<sup>26</sup> Islamic Education Paradigm, Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v26i2.3803>

<sup>27</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R & D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014).

pesantren<sup>28</sup>. The method of teaching the kitab kuning in the lecture process and extra-curricular activities in ma'had Aly which pivots on reading, translating, listening, analyzing and discussing activities (applied in the methods of maknani, sorogan, wetonan / bandongan and musyawarah) is a representation of the religious literacy tradition of pesantren and it is proven to provide more moderate and more inclusive understanding, even though in practice the students Studying the books of classical scholars written hundreds of years ago. Herein lies the superiority of literacy in ma'had Aly which can correlate the meanings of the kitab kuning text and the context of social dynamics outside the text. In essence, there are two philosophical paradigmatic things that Ma'had Aly did in realizing the goal of preventing radicalism and terrorism in the name of religion among students and Muslim communities, namely Carrying out intensive religious teaching with pluralism-based approaches and materials, and Practicing a pluralistic mindset and building moderate (*tawassuth*) and tolerant attitudes (*tasamuh*) in literacy and socializing in the pesantren environment.

Therefore, Ma'had Aly and pesantren in general play an important role in presenting a more peaceful and cool face of Islam. The construct of religious moderation is built integrally starting from the literacy ability of the kitab kuning at the secondary education level and further improved at the tertiary level. Furthermore, it forms a comprehensive, universal and rational thinking paradigm as well as a pattern of polite, egalitarian and moderate attitudes. And in turn gave birth to scholars, young kiai and preachers who played a role in strengthening and socializing religious moderation in the life of the nation and state.

### **E. Conclusion**

From the description and findings as well as the analysis of research data previously stated, researchers can draw the following conclusions.

Religious literacy in pesantren and Ma'had Aly is a serious effort to increase knowledge, skills and abilities that can make a santri or student have the ability to think critically, contextually, be able to communicate effectively and be able to develop potential and actively participate in community life. Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi focuses his lectures on studying, studying and reading the kitab kunings. In other words, learning up to khatam by applying the sorogan and the bandongan method, *musyawarah*, *jalsah* (participatory discussion) and *halaqoh* (seminar). Students in Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang and DDI Mangkoso have relatively literal character and competence in understanding the kitab kuning and translating religious values based on moderation (*wasathiyyah*) and balance (*tawazun*). Ma'had Aly in South Sulawesi plays a positive role in counter-terrorism with three integrated

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<sup>28</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Teori Agama Dan Sosial: Pola Pikir Sosiologis Dalam Membaca Keberadaan Tuhan Di Tengah Deru Ideologi Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: IRCISod, 2003).

efforts in the pesantren system, namely deepening religious knowledge through the study and study of the kitab kuning, providing an understanding of jihad that is far from radical, rigid and extreme contexts, and instilling moral values that are nuanced inclusive, rahmah and tolerant.

The involvement of pesantren and Ma'had Aly in contributing to creating religious harmonization and moderation in the Republic of Indonesia is very necessary and is a necessity. This research is expected to have a positive impact on government programs related to structuring religious life, in this case the mainstreaming of Religious Moderation as the best model for national peace

This research provides an overview of the uniqueness and excellence of the pesantren education system, where pesantren, especially Ma'had Aly, carry out deep and serious literacy on Islamic religious resources. Thus, the study of the kitab kuning and religious literacy in Ma'had Aly can be a role model for Islamic deepening activities at the university level.

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### Example in footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), h. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: One World Publications, 1991), h. 190.

<sup>3</sup>Syeikh Ja’far Subhānī, *Mafāhim Al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-’Arabī, 2010), Juz 5, h. 231.

<sup>4</sup>Syeikh Ja'far Subhānī, *Maḥāhim Al-Qur'ān*, h. 8-9.

#### Example in bibliography:

Subhānī, Syeikh Ja'far. *Maḥāhim Al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Mu'assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-'Arabī, 2010.

Eliade, Mircea (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

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#### Detail informations of the footnotes:

##### 1. Holy book

Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah/2: 185.

Perjanjian Baru, Mrk. 2: 18.

##### 2. Qur'anic translation

<sup>1</sup>Departemen Agama RI, *al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Darus Sunnah, 2005), h. 55.

##### 3. Book

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad 'Ajjaj al-Khaṭīb, *Uṣl al-Ḥadīth: 'Ulumuh wa Muṣṭalahuh* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1989), h. 57.

##### 4. Translation Books

<sup>1</sup>Toshihiko Izutsu, *Relasi Tuhan dan Manusia: Pendekatan Semantik terhadap al-Qur'an*, terj. Agus Fahri Husein dkk (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2003), h. 14.

##### 5. Voluminous book

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr b. 'Ashur, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, Vol. 25 (Tunisia: Dār al-Suḥūn, 2009), h. 76.

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukharī, *al-Jam' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1999), h. 77.

##### 6. Article in book

<sup>1</sup>Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Metode Intratekstualitas Muhammad Shahrur dalam Penafsiran al-Qur'an" dalam Abdul Mustaqim dan Sahiron Syamsuddin (eds.), *Studi al-Qur'an Kontemporer: Wacana Baru Berbagai Metodologi Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002), h. 139.

##### 7. Article in encyclopaedia

<sup>1</sup>M. Th. Houtsma, "Kufr" dalam A. J. Wensinck, at al. (ed.), *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. 6 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), h. 244.

##### 8. Article in journal

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Adlin Sila, "The Festivity of *Maulid Nabi* in Cikoang, South Sulawesi: Between Remembering and Exaggerating the Spirit of Prophet", *Studia Islamika* 8, no. 3 (2001): h. 9.

##### 9. Article in mass media

<sup>1</sup>Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Hubungan Agama dan Negara", *Kompas*, 7 Agustus 2002.

10. Article in Internet

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Shaḥrūr, “Reading the Religious Teks: a New Approach” dalam <http://www.shahrou.org/25> Februari 2010/diakses 5 Juni 2010.

11. Thesis or dissertation

<sup>1</sup>Syahrudin Usman, “*Kinerja* Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam pada SMAN dan SMKN Kota Makassar”, *Disertasi* (Makassar: PPs UIN Alauddin, 2010), h. 200.

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