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**The Role of Pesantren and Its Literacy Culture in Strengthening  
Moderate Islam in Indonesia**

**Ali Muhdi<sup>1</sup>, Fachrizal Halim<sup>2</sup>**

State Islamic University Prof.K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto<sup>1</sup>

Department of Religion and Culture, St. Thomas More College, University of  
Saskatchewan Canada<sup>2</sup>

[alimuhdi77@uinsaizu.ac.id](mailto:alimuhdi77@uinsaizu.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [fah144@usask.ca](mailto:fah144@usask.ca)<sup>2</sup>

\*Correspondence email: [alimuhdi77@uinsaizu.ac.id](mailto:alimuhdi77@uinsaizu.ac.id)

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**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini membahas tentang upaya pesantren dalam menguatkan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama melalui budaya literasi bagi para santrinya. Pesantren adalah tempat belajar para santri yang dalam kesehariannya disibukkan oleh kegiatan membaca, menulis, dan mempelajari berbagai literatur (kitab-kitab) klasik maupun kontemporer dalam bahasa Arab murni (*fusha*) maupun Arab Jawi-melayu (*pegon*). Penelitian ini, ditujukan untuk mengkaji tentang masalah literasi di pesantren terkait dengan motivasi, model pengembangan, upaya yang dilakukan pesantren, dan kontribusi literasi para santri-alumni dalam penguatan moderasi beragama dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode deskriptif. Untuk pengumpulan data, digunakan metode observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi di lokasi Pondok Pesantren Nurul Ummah. Adapun analisis data digunakan reduksi data, display data, pengambilan keputusan dan verifikasi data. Temuan dalam penelitian ini berupa: *Pertama*, motifasi para santri mengembangkan budaya literasi meliputi motif teologis pendalaman agama, pengamalan ajaran dan misi dakwah islamiah, pesan dan keteladanan kyai, kewajiban membuat tugas makalah, presentasi kitab, dan risalah (tugas akhir santri), hobi, minat, dan bakat, serta motif ekonomi. *Kedua*, model pengembangan literasi para santri dilakukan secara kelompok dan individu, dengan metode pembiasaan yang diwujudkan dalam kegiatan rutin, spontan, dan keteladanan. *Ketiga*, kemudian upaya pesantren dalam menggiatkan literasi santri dilakukan dengan secara struktural (formal) dan kultural (budaya). Dengan penerapan dan penguatan budaya literasi ini, para santri mampu mengembangkan wawasan keagamaan luas, yang mendakwahkan nilai-nilai Islam *tasāmuḥ* (toleran) *tawāzun* (seimbang) dan *tawassuṭ* (pertengahan), serta membumikan konsep perdamaian untuk semua (*rahmatan li-l 'ālamīn*). *Keempat*, Kontribusi santri Nurul Ummah dapat dilihat dari karya tulis pemikiran mereka dalam berbagai karya ilmiah berupa buku, artikel, dan tulisan lainnya yang diterbitkan oleh penerbit buku, surat

kar, dan jurnal ilmiah. Tentu saja ada kontribusi para alumni Nurul Ummah telah terjun di masyarakat, mengisi berbagai kajian keagamaan Islam di lembaga pendidikan tempat mengabdikan masing-masing, seperti pesantren, sekolah/ madrasah, kampus, dan majlis taklim, serta kajian keagamaan mereka di channel dan akun media elektronik seperti Facebook, Youtube, Grup WA, Twitter, dan Instagram.

**Kata Kunci:** *Moderasi Beragama, Budaya Literasi, Pesantren.*

### **Abstract**

This research discusses Islamic boarding schools' efforts to strengthen religious moderation values through a culture of literacy among their students. Islamic boarding schools are dedicated to providing an environment where students are immersed in reading, writing, and studying various classic and contemporary literature (books) in pure Arabic (fusha) and Arabic Jawi-Malay (pegon) daily. This research aims to examine literacy issues in Islamic boarding schools related to motivation, development models, efforts made by Islamic boarding schools, and the literacy contribution of *santri*-alumnae in strengthening religious moderation using a qualitative approach and descriptive method. The study employed various data collection methods, including observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis involved several techniques, such as data reduction, display, decision-making, and verification. The findings in this research are: *First*, the motivation for students to develop a culture of literacy includes theological motifs of the deepening religion, teachings, and missions of Islamic da'wah, messages and examples of kyai, the obligation to make presentations of papers and treatises (students' final assignments), hobbies, interests, and talents, as well as economic motives. *Second*, the literacy development model for students is carried out individually and in groups using habituation methods that are realized in routine, spontaneous, and exemplary activities. *Third*, Islamic boarding schools' efforts to increase student literacy are carried out structurally (formally) and culturally (culture). By implementing and strengthening this literacy culture, students can develop broad religious insight, which preaches the Islamic values of tasāmuḥ (tolerant), tawāzun (balanced), and tawassuṭ (middle), as well as grounding the concept of peace for all (raḥmatan li-l 'alamīn). *Fourth*, the contribution of Nurul Ummah students can be seen from their written works of thought in various scientific works in the form of books, articles, and other writings published by book publishers, newspapers, and scientific journals. Of course, there is the contribution of Nurul Ummah alumnae who have been involved in the community, filling in various Islamic religious studies in their respective educational institutions, such as pesantren, schools/madrasahs, campuses, and majlis taklim, as well as their religious studies on channels, media accounts, and electronic devices such as Facebook, Youtube, WA Groups, Twitter, and Instagram.

**Keywords:** *Religious Moderation, Literacy Culture, Pesantren*

## INTRODUCTION

The quality of society can be improved through education, which is closely related to the quality of the people involved in it. Human resources play a crucial role in learning, and their intelligence and knowledge are essential factors in determining the effectiveness of education. Knowledge in the form of information obtained both orally and in writing will increase if society has a high literacy culture condition. It is commonly argued that societies or nations that excel in various fields of culture and civilization have a steady and robust tradition of literacy and thought. Saryono argues that the progress of a society or nation is influenced by advanced literacy culture, which is driven by literary developments (Saryono dkk, 2016). Koentjaraningrat proposed that culture is a whole system of ideas, actions, and human works within the community life framework developed through learning. According to this line of argument, human meets their needs by living according to the habits, traditions, or culture of their predecessors (Koentjaraningrat, 2013, p. 19). According to Bahrul Hayat and Suhendara, who quoted Kens, *literacy* is defined as using text on various meaningful occasions bound by social, historical, and cultural situations. A person is said to have a high level of literacy if they can connect text and context and reflect critically on the relationship (Suhendra, 2015, p. 30). For Elenore Long, literacies organize how people carry out their purposes for going public. As Street would advocate, the framework is also attentive to the ways that oral and written literacies “mix” in the different combinations in different contexts (Long, 2008, p. 22).

An indicator that people are considered to have high intelligence is because they have a reading culture. Reading serves to add information and can improve other skills, especially civic intelligence, national character, and ethics. It is because countries that have a high reading culture, it is proven that their citizens become intelligent people (Nurmalina, 2008, p. 27). Canisius quotes Mialare as saying that reading can also affect personal, moral, and intellectual attitudes. It is also a source of inspiration and entertainment and gives insight into ourselves and others (Canisius, 2012, p. 10).

Rubin suggests that reading comprehension learning is an activity carried out by students to understand reading in line with reading strategies introduced by the

teacher. This learning takes place in three stages, namely, the pre-reading stage, the reading stage, and the post-reading stage (Rubin, 1995).

The trends of globalization, technological advancements, and virtual information have brought about significant changes to the culture of information and communication in Indonesian society. Among many segments of Muslims, there has been an excessive enthusiasm towards this trend, which radical groups and Puritan movements subsequently exploited through various print and electronic media, including social media. There is a correlation between the emergence of radicalism and a weak literacy culture among the people. The community often fails to explore comprehensive references from various books or scriptures, as well as the "real" opinions of scholars in understanding religious teachings as contained in the primary texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as their supporting sciences such as 'Ulu>m al-Qur'a>n, 'Ulu>m al-Hadis|, Us}u>l al-Fiqh, Nahwu and S}araf (Grammar), to make their understanding partial and reduced. The incessant promotion of extreme radical ideology among the public through the internet and social media is coupled with a departure from the way of preaching of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet's teaching was characterized by politeness, peace, and respect for others, even those with different thoughts or opinions. The easy access and convenience of obtaining religious knowledge through instant access to information in the form of writing, images, and videos from electronic platforms such as Google, the Internet, YouTube, and Facebook has become a cause for concern due to the distribution of radical and Puritan Muslim contents therein. The distributed religious material contained a one-sided perspective promoting the understanding of a single truth in Islam. They consider their group's opinion to be the only correct opinion while disregarding those who hold different views as heretical, disbelievers, and polytheists. This group only reads literature from their group without considering the opinions of other scholars, which leads to the spread of hatred, coercion of opinion, and problematic attitudes towards other Islamic and non-Muslim groups. They are known for spreading hoaxes, hate speech, and provocations that can lead to damage, anarchy, and pitting society against each other.

The public's access to mass media technology has made it easy to receive and disseminate information obtained instantly and efficiently, often without an apparent

source. It includes news and videos that have been edited and made to spread hate speech, racial conflicts, slander, and inciting violence against fellow citizens or religious communities. This situation poses a growing danger to the community as it can disrupt the peaceful, safe, and harmonious atmosphere established in Indonesian society. Such harmful news dissemination can create social and political instability and lead to the destruction of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The unfavorable social conditions mentioned above result from the literacy culture in society. The Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture has cited a survey from the Program for International Student Assessment released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019, which states that Indonesia ranks 62nd out of 70 countries, or the bottom 10 of countries with low literacy (Jayadi, 2022). Adequate reinforcement of the cultural conditions of reading and writing about religious understanding is necessary to help the community regain a proportional and comprehensive understanding of religious teachings. The ultimate goal is for people to understand their religious texts based on the desired goals and contexts following the teachings and values that Prophet Muhammad has exemplified.

As a typical Islamic educational institution, Indonesian pesantren is widely recognized for its success in strengthening the culture of religious literacy for its students. It is because pesantren is a place of learning where students read, write, and study various classical and contemporary religious literature (books) written in pure Arabic (*fusha*) and Jawi-Malay Arabic. These books cover various fields of study or branches of Islamic religious science.

The tradition of literacy in the pesantren world has been established through centuries-old teaching methods. In the Indonesian context, significant figures such as Sheikh Nawawi Banten, Sheikh Mahfud Tremas, Sheikh Ihsan Jampes, and many younger contemporary scholars have many works to study in pesantren. To reduce radical ideas and Puritan religious teachings, it is inevitable to strengthen a stable literacy *movement* in pesantren. This research is crucial in exploring and describing the efforts of pesantren to play an essential role in fostering and embodying the values of Islamic religious teachings that are peaceful, *tasamuh* (tolerant), *tawazun* (balanced), and *tawasuth* (middle), as well as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

The map of previous research relevant to this theme is the research of DN Aini, who wrote "The Influence of Literacy Culture in Developing Citizenship Intelligence." She said that a culture of literacy can develop civic intelligence competencies. The dominant aspects include intellectual, emotional, and moral intelligence. So that a reading culture can shape character, manners, and citizenship (Aini, 2018). Esti Swatika and Setiawan P wrote "Literacy Culture among UNY FBS Students," which found that students' reading and writing activities were generally due to course assignments rather than because they were happy or a hobby. The percentage of reading and writing due to coursework demands ranges from 25-42%, and because it is a pleasure or hobby, it is 17-40%. Students do not use it much in their free time for bulletins and newspapers on campus. A few of them have written for short stories, poetry, and essay competitions in the mass media (Setyawan, 2017). Then, Akhmad Tamrin wrote the research "Literacy Management in the Religious Sector at the An-Najah Islamic Boarding School, Cilongok, Banyumas. Tamrin found that literacy management at An Najah Cilongok was going quite well; there was planning, organizing, implementation, and control evaluation. Organizing it involved the collaboration of Islamic boarding school administrators in the Literacy Program section and Madrasah Tsanawaiyah An-Najah Cilongok management. The program is known by the motto "Literacy is the Window of the World." This program is implemented in the evening after completing religious studies in class (learning the yellow book) at 20.30 for approximately 25 minutes. The form of the activity is that the students are given reading books in Indonesian, and then they are asked to write down the contents of the reading as best they can in their notebooks or diaries (Tamrin, 2018).

In the first research, Aini highlighted literacy culture's influence on developing character, manners, and citizenship education. Then, in the second research, Setyawan revealed the condition of literacy culture among students, especially at Yogyakarta State University, which is still limited to the obligation to complete course assignments. Meanwhile, in the third research, Tamrin discussed the literacy learning process from a management perspective and the form of activities. Literacy learning in this Islamic boarding school is still elementary, just providing primary

education to students who are still MTs students to get used to reading and writing at the Islamic boarding school.

The form of novelty and difference between this research and previous research is that this research aims to find and describe the motivation of *santri* in developing a literacy culture, the model used to strengthen *santri* literacy, the role of Islamic boarding school administrators in supporting the strengthening of literacy culture, and the contribution of *santri* in encouraging the strengthening of moderate literacy religion in Indonesia.

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a case study analysis as the type of research for this project. Applying this type of research involves conducting case studies on unique, memorable, and exciting events or phenomena (Wirawan, 2016, p. 246), The research location is Pesantren Nurul Ummah Prenggan Kotagede Yogyakarta, which has implemented a literacy culture in its teaching programs.

This Islamic boarding school is interesting to choose as a research location because, *firstly*, it was found that many of its students and alumnae are very intense in literacy activities, especially in the world of writing in mass media, both print and electronic media. Many students actively write in local and national newspapers and magazines. They are also productive in writing books, both scientific and popular books. *Second*, the students' background, the majority of whom are students, and the environment around the Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School, which is in the student city of Yogyakarta, really support realizing a literacy culture. *Third*, there is support and example from caregivers and administrators to foster a literacy culture for Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School students.

During the design of this study, the authors use a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, describing a unique literacy culture at the Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School Kotagede Yogyakarta. Researchers use data collection techniques, including observing the location to collect data and obtaining an overview of the literacy culture of the pesantren community. Second, interviews were conducted with the board of trustees, administrators, and students familiar with implementing literacy culture in pesantren. *Third*, data were collected from documents derived from

the curriculum of the pesantren or madrasah diniyah, kabat letters, magazines, and books or publications by Nurul Ummah students. Data analysis uses three steps: data reduction, data display, and decision-making or verification (Akbar, 2009, p. 41). Then, the researchers verify the data by triangulating to double-check the correctness of the data from the observation records, interviews, and document evidence.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of literacy culture for students at the Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School has several motivations that can influence their enthusiasm and perseverance in carrying out writing and reading activities. Some of these motivations can be stated as follows;

*First*, the theological motive of deepening religion is practicing the teachings and mission of Islamiyah da'wah, which is rahmatan lil 'alamin. The aim of the preaching of the Nurul Ummah Islamic boarding school is "amar ma'ruf nahi munkar" which means commanding goodness and preventing evil (Tim Revisi, Profile PPNU Documentation, 20 September 2023). Apart from that, there is an aim of Islamic boarding school education which reads "Developing the quality of human resources through religious, educational, cultural and scientific approaches, as well as technology as a form of participation in developing the nation" (Tim Revisi, Profil PPNU Documentation, 20 September 2023).

This literacy culture for Nurul Ummah students is a form of high actualization in da'wah both within the scope of the pesantren world and among people outside the pesantren, as a demand from the practice of knowledge that has been obtained in order to become a person who is *Alim* (knowledgeable) and *Amil* (charitable). For the knowledge gained to be helpful and effectively passed on, it is essential to continue the relay of comprehensive, integral, moderate, peaceful, polite, merciful, and compassionate Islamic teachings. It can be achieved by carrying out the mission of Islamic teaching values oriented towards *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah*.

*Second*, carrying out the message and example of the Kyai. When receiving Sorogan and teaching in front of students, the caregiver of Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School KH. Asyhari Marzuqi always advised students to increase learning and *mutala'ah* (studying) books that have yet to be taught in *madrasah*



*diniyyah* and *pesantren* studies. According to him, *mutala'ah* is very important so that students understand the text/book studied well. *Santri* is encouraged to develop their understanding by enriching reading sources or other relevant contextual references. So Kyai hopes his students' religious understanding of Islam will be more comprehensive.

The Kyai's emphasis on the importance of reading books both in their library, which reaches thousands of titles, and in the higher education library in the city of Yogyakarta is aimed at providing students with a deep understanding of religious science. This understanding enables them to integrate religious science with other social, cultural, economic, political, art, science, and technology fields. Kyai not only gives messages and advice but also sets an example by making written works in books and papers (Anam Muntolib, Ketua Pondok, Interview, 14 Oktober 2023). Some of the books written by Kyai include *Wawasan Islam: Menggapai Kehidupan Qur'ani* (1998), *Risalatul Ummah* (2001), *Targhibul Khatir-Memikat Hati dengan Al-Qur'an* (2002), dan *Pedoman Ummat* (2002) published by Nurma Media, a publication owned by the pesantren itself.

**Third**, carrying out reading books, presenting papers, and Treatises (a final project of Madin students). The learning process involves several stages of learning activities, starting with an opening by the teacher. Students are then asked to read the text material of the book that has been taught before or will be discussed. This approach requires students to prepare themselves to learn and understand the material discussed in each daily lesson. In the next stage, the teacher will provide additional material or explain the material read by the students. In Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Ummah, there is an obligation to make papers for students in several subjects taught, such as Nahwu and Jurisprudence. In addition to reviewing the standard book according to the class schedule and their respective levels, students must also prepare supporting papers that will be presented in front of the class. Furthermore, at the end of the study period, when entering grade 2 at the Ulya level, students must make a *Treatise* (thesis), which will be presented and tested in the *Risalah* (thesis) examination session by kyai and senior ustad (Jauhari, Kepala Madin, Interview, 11 Oktober 2023).

**Fourth**, hobbies, talents, and entertainment. Some students are passionate about literacy and writing careers because they enjoy reading and writing. It is also driven by their curiosity about various things that are new and interesting, which then become fun habits. When students feel bored with the routine of their learning activities in pesantren, schools, and higher education, they find solace in reading or writing anything that interests them (Baihaqi, Interview, 20 September 2023).

**Fifth**, economic motives. Students eventually realize that their written works can earn them wages or recognition as writers when published in magazines or newspapers. Likewise, when writing a scientific or popular book that is best-selling and read by many people, they will get a reasonably good royalty fee from a publisher as a book author (Baihaqi, Interview, 20 September 2023).

From the explanation of several motivations above, several things can be stated; regarding the theological motivation for deepening religion, practicing the teachings and mission of Islamic da'wah, then the development of theological literacy is in line with the opinion of Steven Prothero, who stated that "*Religious literacy refers to the ability to understand use the religious terms, symbols, images, beliefs, practices, scriptures, heroes, themes, and stories that are employed in public life* (Prothero, n.d., p. 11).

Regarding motivation for deepening religion, there is the concept of *Iqra* (read), a command from Allah Almighty to his people to constantly "read." *Reading* is a way or intermediary that can lead humans to the degree of perfect humanity in building civilization. In the next verse, there is the verse "*allazi 'allama bil qalam*," meaning who teaches (man) with the medium of *qalam* (pen and writing). This verse affirms that the existence of Islam strongly encourages humans to always carry out reading and writing activities as a means of the process of transforming knowledge and knowledge (Mursyid, 2014, p. 129).

Regarding the motivation to carry out the messages and examples of the Kyai, the influence of Kyai's example is significant in encouraging the literacy spirit of students. According to Ahmad Ali Azim in his thesis "Tradition of Literasi Pesantren," the process of forming a literacy culture in pesantren educational institutions is not limited to reading and writing alone. It also involves preserving the noble traditions of scholars in the world of literacy and passing them on to their students. The method used is cultivating the spirit and habituation of literature in

pesantren. According to Azim, the literacy tradition of pesantren is strongly influenced by the example of caregiver figures (*kyai*) and routine educational activities in the pesantren (Ahmad Ali Azim, 2019).

Regarding literacy motivation, because the task of making papers, presenting books, and making treatises is then tested in the Minutes session, this makes the students' literacy skills more developed into complete literacy skills as in the meaning of literacy initiated by Yunus Abidin that literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen (Abidin, 2018). The results of this activity will also give rise to student learning, which is not just about learning about religion but for David Ford and Mike Higon it can involve *learning patterns of fruitful interaction-engaged, conversational, and perhaps argumentative. It involves learning how religious communities argue, and how to join in with those arguments in order to explore agreements and disagreements, and the dynamics by which they can change* (Higon, 2015, p. 52). This kind of active and critical religious literacy also involves important religious language (*which again, is, not of course, to imply offering some kind of assent or credence to any particular religious or theological claims*). *It also embodies the capacity to locate particular ideas within their historical, ethical, epistemological, and social context* (Conro, 2015). On the other hand, *religious blindness* is not defined as the absence of the elements that make up religious literacy but is sometimes based on misunderstanding, where partial understanding or explanation tends to misrepresentation and misunderstanding. From the explanation above, it is essential to emphasize that good religious literacy can lead to a comprehensive understanding of religious science and an appreciation for the diverse interpretations of existing religious texts among adherents. Such understanding can be achieved through the mastery of religious literacy, enabling individuals to comprehend religious concepts and differences in interpretation.

Barbara Warnick cites Tyner's opinion that "*Critical literacy has been described as a literacy that encourages a reflective, questioning stance toward the forms and content of print and electronic media. This is an overarching term, and its benefit is to include all the forms, modalities, and devices of communication* (Warnick, 2001, p. 6)

Meanwhile, regarding economic motives as one of the reasons for students' enthusiasm for literacy, this explanation of economic motives is in line with Alhumami's opinion, which states that literacy is a form of *cognitive skills*, logical,

critical, and analytical thinking; developing science and mastering technology; transformation of productive economic activity for well-being (Alhumami, 2018). Olasehinde added that people with low literacy can decrease their quality of life, socially and economically. Another impact of low community literacy is low self-quality because literacy culture can shape a person's ethics and morals. It is evidenced in Olasehinde's research, which explains that; "a student who does not possess good reading skills tends to grow negative attitude towards learning and this can even lead to having self-esteem problems in later life (Olasehinde, 2015).

### **Model of literacy development in Pesantren.**

The students' efforts in developing a literacy culture were observed through various activities, which include two development models, namely the group model and the individual model:

*First*, the model for developing a literacy culture as a group carried out by Nurul Ummah students is to create a unit/institution for regular writing habit activities for students, for example, through publishing Tilawah Magazine, Mading Assibaq (monthly wall magazine), Salaf and Khalaf Book Translation Group, Newspaper Nurma (local Islamic boarding school monthly newspaper). The range of publications for these literacy activities is for local Islamic boarding schools and the general public.

*Second*, the model for developing individual literacy culture for each student includes spontaneous and tentative writing in the form of articles, poetry, news, and translations, which are sent to various social media, both electronic media (Website/internet, Facebook, Instagram) and social media. Print (Newspapers, Magazines, Bulletins). Apart from that, quite a few also create books in various scientific disciplines and translate works through collaboration with publishers and outside pesantren (Anam Muntolib, Interview, 20 September 2023).

The model for strengthening literacy culture carried out by students at the Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School uses the habituation method, which is realized through routine, spontaneous, and exemplary activities. This habit is directed at forming traits and behaviors that are carried out continuously. Theoretically, this habit has three indicators, as mentioned by Maswardi Amin, that something is said to be a habit if it meets the following elements. The first element is

routine, namely getting used to doing something well. The second element is spontaneous; the aim is to be able to do something spontaneously, especially in behavior and manners. Third, the exemplary element aims to provide an example to students or children (Amin, 2015).

### **The Role of Pesantren Management in Strengthening Literacy Culture.**

The development of a literacy culture for students is well supported by the management of Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School. The efforts of the pesantren management in encouraging the strengthening of literacy culture for Nurul Ummah students are carried out structurally (formally) and non-structurally (nonformal).

*First*, structurally or formally, pesantren administrators encourage literacy culture through autonomous institutions or supporting activity units. The autonomous institutions include Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Ummah. In this madrasah diniyah, students study classical books (yellow books) and contemporary books (white books) using *Sorogan*, *Bandongan*, *Syawir* (musyawarah/discussion), presentation of papers and *treatises*, *muhafazah* (memorization), *qira'ah* (reading), *kitabah* (writing) and others. In addition to learning activities at madrasah diniyah, students also study books managed by the management of the pesantren section/department of Curriculum and Student Affairs. The methods used include *Sorogan*, *Bandongan*, and *Muhafazah*. This learning activity in Madin and Pesantren requires students to develop their literacy by reading, writing, and understanding the religious subject matter learned by students.

To further support the development of students' interests and talents, the management of Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School established the field/department of Santri Interest and Talent Education Development (P2MBS). The management of this section is tasked with encouraging students to be talented in writing and foreign languages (Arabic and English). This board also encourages and assigns students to actively write in media owned by pesantren, such as Tilawah Magazine, Facebook, Instagram, and Nurul Ummah Blo/Website.

The pesantren established a section/department board that manages the Az-Ziyadah Library as part of its structure. This library contains scientific and non-scientific books and books, religious and non-religious fields, translated works, thesis research results, theses, and dissertations. This pesantren library is supported by a

private library of books owned by the caretaker KH Asyhari Marzuqi, which all students can read. The number of books of kyai Asyahari reached more than 1000 titles of books that he had studied or bought while studying in Baghdad, Iraq.

To further enhance their literacy studies, the management of Pesantren Nurul Ummah appointed an administrator to oversee the Bahsul Masail Institute (LBM). The management of this institution is tasked with creating a program of study and deliberation for students that discusses actual religious issues (*masail ad-diniyyah al-waqi'iyah*) and thematic religious problems (*masail ad-diniyyah al-maudu'iyah*). It is hoped that LBM activities can provide opportunities for students to express their abilities by arguing on actual and thematic discussion themes raised from everyday community problems. The book deliberations held by the Bahsul Masail Institute provide opportunities for all members or participants to engage actively in learning books, individually or in groups. Students are encouraged to broaden their horizons on various themes that often arise or are questioned by the community. Students are also encouraged to prepare and explore various references to the book of *Muktabar* (recognized by pesantren) to *establish* a law, and this process can strengthen the students' absorption of understanding the book's text. Book deliberation activities in the Bahsul Masa>il Institute at Pesantren Nurul Ummah usually coincide with specific moments, such as during the Haul event, Santri day, while routinely held every 2 or 3 months to trigger students to read the yellow book literature.

Finally, the pesantren facilitates documentation of its students' works to be published in the semi-autonomous body of the Nurmedia publishing institution under the management of the Nurul Ummah Islamic boarding school. Student works can refer to scientific books, popular books, translated works, and others (Anam Muntolib Ketua Pondok, Interview, 20 September 2023).

**Second**, non-structurally (informally), administrators and administrators of the curriculum and student affairs always advise students to muthala'ah (study the book) in their spare time to use time outside the routine activities of pesantren. The book or book that is studied contains material that can be related to books in Madin and Pesantren studies and other development materials. This muthalaah activity can be done individually or in groups so that sometimes independent class groups appear to

study specific books alternately with the participants' reading and presentation methods.

To ensure that students stay updated on current political, economic, social, cultural, artistic, and sports issues, the management of the Nurul Ummah Islamic boarding school provides regular reading subscriptions to the daily newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat* (KR) attached to the wallboard. With this subscription, students can stay updated on current political, economic, social, cultural, artistic, and sports issues. Some rooms in the pesantren complex even have members who hold independent dues for subscribing to the *Jawa Pos*, *Republika*, and *Suara Merdeka* newspapers.

Several administrators of Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School have set an exemplary standard for developing a literacy culture through their passion for reading and writing. The management's writings are also widely published in various local and national magazines and newspapers. Several administrators have also written books published by Nurmamedia (Anam Muntolib, Ketua Pondok, Interview, 20 September 2023).

The management of the Nurul Ummah Islamic boarding school has made efforts to support literacy strengthening by providing facilities such as a library, Islamic boarding school magazines, wall magazines, student bulletins, and daily newspaper subscriptions. Islamic boarding schools also create learning system rules using learning methods and evaluations that can foster and develop the students' literacy skills. Apart from that, the Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School also creates sustainable literacy programs through activities in both the Islamic boarding school curriculum and the *Madrasah Diniyah* curriculum. The Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School also provides the *Nurma Media* publishing institution, which allows students to publish their written works in scientific books and famous works such as essays, dictionaries, and literary works such as poetry and short stories.

From the explanation above, the efforts of the Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School Management in organizing and conditioning the development of literacy culture have met the standard steps or concept of increasing literacy, as stated by Ane Permatasari. She explained ways to improve literacy. *First*, improving the quality and equity of education in order to encourage higher literacy levels. Facilities

and human resources need to be developed to reach remote areas. *Second*, building many libraries in all regions as comfortable places to read by increasing the number of book collections and offering exciting activities. *Third*, creating sustainable programs to introduce books better and encourage interest in reading books to educational institutions and the community. *Fourth*, encouraging book publishers to increase the number of books published, especially quality books from various fields. *Fifth*, supporting society, government, and all parties to build a civilization of reading books (Permatasari, 2015).

### **Santri's Contribution to Strengthening Religious Moderation**

Nurul Ummah Islamic Boarding School has endeavored to deliver its students to be able to explore religion (*tafaqquh fiddin*) by studying and understanding primary texts (Al-Qur'an Hadith), and other supporting texts in the fields of Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Ushul Fiqh, Akidah, Morals, History, Linguistics, and others. The results of their deepening understanding have also decorated and enriched the Islamic hazanah and scientific discourse of the pesantren world in Indonesia. The contribution of Nurul Ummah students can be seen in their written works as follows;

*First*, the students' written works are routinely accommodated in the Tilawah magazine, circulated, and consumed by students throughout Indonesia. The magazine appears in printed and digital versions online, on Facebook, and Internet blogs. The content of this magazine follows its motto, "Distributor of Ummah Aspirations," which channels the aspirations of forming a civil society with the direction of *Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah* by prioritizing the attitude of preaching Islamic values *tasamuh* (tolerant) *tawazun* (balanced) and *tawasuth* (mid), as well as *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (Glory for all creatures).

Some of the student papers published by MP Tiawah contain the theme of Moderation as the following table;

Table 1. Examples of student writings in MP Tilawah edition 19;

NO	Name	Moderation Theme
1	Halim Tri Rejeki	Transformasi Santri dari Zaman Old ke Zaman Now
2	Iqbal H Putra	Santri; Zaman Now Antar Religi dan Teknologi
3	Nuru Azizah	Konsep Dakwah Santri Zaman Now dan Gaya Hidup kekinian
4	Basuki Rahmat	KH. Ahmad Zabidi; Meneladani Kepemimpinan Nabi Ibrahim



NO	Name	Moderation Theme
5	Syifa Hasna Salsabila	Fenomena Ustad “Dadakan” dan Kaum Didikan Media

*Second*, the writings of Nurul Ummah students have graced various local, national, and international mass media. Their writings are published in various print and electronic media. Student writing is usually published in the rubric of student voices (opinions), teacher voices (opinions), opinions (articles), art, culture, sports, and others. Some students have also written works in the form of scientific books and are famous for their single writings or collaborations with fellow students. Most of their books are published by pesantren publishers such as Nurmamedia, Asna Litera, and Laelamajnun Literacy.

Table 2. Examples of written works of Nurul Ummah students

NO	Santri Name	Heading	Publisher/ Year
1	Fathan Anis	Mengasah Empati Anak dengan Permainan Tradisional	Rumah Kita (2019)
2	Ahmad Karim M	Terapi dan Doa Anti Galau	Asna Litera (2009)
		Mata Air Keikhlasan; Biografi KH Asyhari Marzuqi	Nurma Media (2010)
		Nasehat Sang Kyai	Nurma Media (2011)
3	Aziz Anwar F.	Masa Depan Mesir	Kompas (2012)
		Maulid dan Perlawanan Kultural	Media Indonesia (2013)
		Islam dan Nasionalisme	Media Indonesia (2013)
		Ustad dan Pembela Islam	Koran Tempo (2014)
		Jahiliyah Rasisme	Koran tempo (2014)
		Leaders Should not Fan Sectarians tensions	Jakarta Pos (2014)
		Ramadhan and Lesson of Tolerance	Jakarta Pos (2014)

*Third*, the work of Nurul Ummah's alumnae has also been widely scattered in various print and electronic media. Some newspaper media that accommodate alumnae writings include Kedaulatan Rakyat, Republika, Tempo, Jakarta Pos. Some alumnae have become teachers and lecturers in various universities, so they have been involved in education by teaching students and students. As teachers and

lecturers, alumnae are also required to make scientific works, including articles in journals and magazines, textbooks, and other scientific books. So that their written works are read and consumed by students and the general public, Nurul Ummah alumnae have been able to contribute to embedding and spreading ideas by carrying the mission of Islam that is moderate, tolerant, and peaceful in their writings both in the campus community, schools, and the general public. Nurul Ummah alumnae have been involved in the community, filling out various Islamic religious studies as outlined by teachers and kyaidi pesantren in Islamic religious studies in their respective educational institutions such as pesantren, schools/madrasas, campuses, and majlis taklim. Their study of religious books also adorns various channels and electronic media accounts such as Facebook, YouTube, WA Group, Twitter, and Instagram.

*Table 3. Examples of several articles on the theme of religious moderation by alumnae Nurul Ummah that have been published*

No	Name	Publisher/Year
1	Slamet Riyadi	Nurma Media (2019)
2	Rahmat Kamal	Edukasia Islamika (2021)
		Islamic Studies Journal for Social Transformation (2017)
3	Muhammad Muntahibunnafis	El-Harakah (2019)
		Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam (2017)
		Jurnal Antropologi UI Jakarta (2016)
4	Donny Khoirul Aziz	Jurnal Insania (2020)
5	Ahmad Karim Mustofa	Kedaulatan Rakyat (2019)
6	Aziz Anwar Fachrudin	Jakarta Pos (2013-2023)
		Kedaulatan Rakyat (2014-2023)
		Jawa Pos (2012)
		Kompas (2012)
		Media Indonesia (2013-2014)
		Republika (2013-2014)
		Koran Tempo (2014)
		Ircisod (2021)
7	Umar Sidiq	Jurnal Kodifikasiana (2010)
		Jurnal Istawa (2019)
8	Abdurrahman Kasdi	Jurnal Al-Quds (2021)
		Jurnal Ad-Din (2018)
9	Khamami Zada	Paramadina (2001)
		Teraju (2002)
		Lakpesdam NU (2003)
		Nuansa (2006)

No	Name	Publisher/Year
		Gelora Aksara ( 2008 )
		Penamas (2015)
10	Ibnu Burdah	Mitra Pustaka (1997)
		Tiara Wacana (2008)
		Sussex Academic Press (2010)
		Journal of Indonesian Islam (2017)
11	Sigit Purnama	Obsesi (2020)
		Heliyon (2022)

## CONCLUSION

Pesantren is a place of learning where students are engaged in reading, writing, and studying various classical and contemporary literature (books) in pure Arabic (fusha) and Jawi-malay Arabic (pigeon). These books cover a wide range of studies or branches of Islamic scholarship. Nowadays, many pesantren have students who hold the status of both students and teachers. It allows them to participate in scientific activities and contribute to developing world-class literacy in pesantren. Many students and alumnae of pesantren have talents and interests in reading and writing activities. Students are now accustomed to writing articles in mass media (electronic and print) and scientific and popular books. This study concludes that students are motivated to develop a literacy culture for various reasons. These include the theological motive of deepening religion, practicing the teachings and mission of Islamic da'wah, the influence of the kyai's message and example, the obligation to present papers and treatises as part of the final project for madrasah diniyah, the opportunity to pursue hobbies, interests, and talents, and economic motives. The literacy development model of the students is carried out in groups and individually, with habituation methods manifested in routine, spontaneous, and exemplary activities. Then, the efforts of pesantren in intensifying student literacy are carried out in structural (formal) and cultural (cultural) ways. With the application and strengthening of this literacy culture, students who have broad religious insights grow, who preach the Islamic values of *tasamuh* (tolerant) *tawazun* (balanced), and *tawasuth* (middle), as well as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Pesantren Nurul Ummah is committed to encouraging its students to explore religion (*tafaquh fiddin*) by studying and understanding primary texts (Al-Qur'an Hadith) and supporting book texts in the fields of Qur'anic Science, Hadith Science,

Fiqh Science, Ushul Fiqh, Akidah, Morals, History, Linguistics, and others. Their deepening understanding of religion has enriched the Islamic and scientific discourse, promoting a moderate, tolerant, and *rahmatan li-l 'alamīn* approach to Islam. It has nourished a peaceful face of Islam in Indonesia and the common good that potentially benefits all citizens. The contribution of Nurul Ummah students can be seen in their thought papers, which have been published in various scientific works, such as books, articles, and other writings, by book publishers, newspapers, and scientific journals. Nurul Ummah alumnae have made significant contributions to the community by promoting peaceful and compassionate Islamic religious studies as outlined by teachers and kyai in meetings at their respective educational institutions such as pesantren, schools/madrasas, campuses, and majlis taklim. Their study of religious books has also been shared on various electronic media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp Group, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Instagram.

This research implies that, theoretically, a nation's civilization is influenced by the level of literacy of its people, and a high level of community literacy will bring progress to a nation's civilization. Practically, the literacy level of Islamic boarding schools is high. In that case, an advanced, moderate, peaceful, and full of grace Islamic civilization in Indonesia will emerge from the world of pesantren. This research further confirms that pesantren students, alumnae, and kyai have the potential and hope to spread a deep, broad, holistic, and integrative understanding of the Islamic religion to realize the values of Islamic teachings in *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

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