



Reconfiguring Pesantren Education: The Dialectic between Tradition, Modernity, and Transnational Islam

Jemmy Harto¹, Dede Setiawan^{2✉}, Asep Saepuddin³, Hudalloh⁴,
Muhammad Asyraf⁵

^{1,3,4}Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten,

²Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia,

⁵Al-Zuhri Institute of Higher Learning Singapore

^{2✉}dewa@unusia.ac.id

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Abstract

The pesantren, as Indonesia's oldest Islamic educational institution, has long been central to shaping the religious and socio-cultural identity of Muslim communities. In Banten, pesantren represent deep traditional roots linked to the intellectual legacy of prominent scholars such as Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani. Yet, the pressures of globalization and the influence of Islamic reform movements have positioned pesantren at the intersection of competing discourses—traditionalist, modernist, and transnational. This study explores the dialectical challenges encountered by pesantren in Banten as they negotiate among these currents. Using a qualitative approach that combines literature review and selected case studies, the research reveals the dynamic strategies employed by traditionalist pesantren to preserve classical Islamic learning while accommodating modern educational demands. Modernist pesantren, in turn, advocate for rationalism, curricular innovation, and the integration of secular sciences, though not without resistance from traditionalists. Meanwhile, transnational Islamic movements such as Salafism, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and Tablighi Jamaat introduce alternative notions of orthodoxy and authority. The study concludes that pesantren in Banten are undergoing a continuous process of negotiation that redefines their identity, demonstrating both resilience and adaptability in a rapidly globalizing Islamic context.

Abstrak

Pesantren sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam tertua di Indonesia telah memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk identitas religius dan sosio-kultural masyarakat Muslim. Di Banten, pesantren secara historis merepresentasikan akar tradisional yang kuat yang terhubung dengan warisan keilmuan ulama terkemuka seperti Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani. Namun, dinamika globalisasi dan meningkatnya pengaruh gerakan reformasi Islam telah menempatkan pesantren pada persimpangan wacana yang saling bersaing: tradisionalis, modernis, dan transnasional. Penelitian ini mengkaji tantangan dialektis yang dihadapi pesantren di Banten dalam menegosiasikan ketiga arus tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi Pustaka (*Library research*) dan studi kasus terpilih, penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana pesantren tradisionalis berjuang mempertahankan pembelajaran klasik Islam sekaligus beradaptasi dengan tuntutan pendidikan modern. Sementara itu, pesantren modernis mendorong rasionalisme, inovasi kurikulum, dan integrasi ilmu-ilmu sekuler, namun sering menghadapi resistensi dari kalangan tradisionalis. Gerakan transnasional (khususnya Salafi, Hizbut Tahrir, dan Jamaah Tabligh) lebih lanjut mempersulit lanskap keislaman dengan menghadirkan visi ortodoksi dan otoritas alternatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pesantren di Banten mengalami proses negosiasi berkelanjutan yang sekaligus menantang dan memperkaya identitas mereka. Proses dialektika

ini menegaskan ketahanan dan kemampuan adaptasi pesantren, sekaligus memunculkan pertanyaan kritis tentang arah masa depan pesantren di dunia Islam yang semakin terglobalisasi.

INTRODUCTION

The Pesantren are one of the oldest and most enduring Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Their existence serves not only as a centre for religious learning, but also as a vehicle for cultural transmission, social leadership, and the formation of religious authority (Dhofier, 2011). In Banten Province, pesantren occupy a very special position due to their connection with the scholarly legacy of great scholars such as Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani. He is known as one of the most influential Southeast Asian scholars of the 19th century, whose works are widely studied in the Islamic world, particularly in Mecca and Egypt (Azra, 2013). For centuries, Pesantrens in this region have maintained a curriculum based on classical Islamic texts with a focus on fiqh, tasawuf, and the transmission of knowledge through sanad (Bruinessen, 2018).

Nawawi al-Bantani played a strategic role in this context. For example, Hidayat & Fasa (2023) found that Sheikh Nawawi's thinking contained a vision of Islamic education that emphasised noble character, freedom from ignorance, and the cultivation of classical scholarly traditions that remain relevant in the modern era. Furthermore, research by Usis Fadhlulloh (2023) confirms that Nawawi al-Bantani's influence on the development of Islam in the archipelago was not only religious-theoretical, but also cultural and socio-political - where Pesantrens in Banten played a role as centres for the training of scholars and agents of change in local communities. Recent studies show that Nawawi al-Bantani's thinking emphasises the formation of noble character, the multidimensionality of the curriculum, and the relevance of traditional educational practices to contemporary challenges (Zhafiri et al., 2023).

In the realm of pesantren practice, Munawiroh's (2021) study of the Madarijul Ulum Pelamunan Banten Pesantren shows that the study of classical Islamic texts remains the main foundation, with the sorogan and wetonan methods still being used while making some innovations in the teaching system. Thus, the classical scholarly tradition inherited from Nawawi al-Bantani appears to remain alive in the routines of Pesantrens in Banten - despite facing challenges of renewal and adaptation- ensuring that these institutions remain relevant in the context of modern social-religious and educational contexts.

However, in recent decades, Pesantrens in Banten have faced socio-religious dynamics that challenge their traditional role. The emergence of modernist Islamic movements emphasising rationalism, scripturalism, and educational reform has introduced new pedagogical paradigms. These movements often claim religious authority that differs from local traditions and present new definitions of Islamic orthodoxy (Hefner, 2009). As a result, Pesantrens in Banten are now at the crossroads of three dialectical forces: traditionalist preservation, modernist reform, and transnational influence.

The dialectical encounter between these three currents is not only theoretical but also has practical consequences for the development of pesantren identity. Traditionalist pesantren affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, for example, seek to maintain continuity with the classical scholarly heritage while gradually adopting general subjects, foreign languages, and technological literacy (Wildan, 2018). Modern Islamic boarding schools in the context of local Islamic education are also inseparable from the transformation of management and pedagogical methods, as discussed in research on management innovation in Islamic educational institutions (Pramono & Rahman, 2024). On the other hand, transnational Islamic currents add complexity by promoting stricter orthodoxy and challenging local religious practices such as tahlilan, maulid, and ziyarah kubur (Fealy & White, 2008). This diversity demonstrates both the richness and tensions within pesantren education.

From an academic perspective, studies of pesantren in Banten offer a valuable lens for understanding the broader debate on Islam in Indonesia. A number of classic works, such as Dhofier (2011) and Bruinessen (2018), have documented the resilience of pesantren, while Azra (2013) emphasises the role of pesantren in the transmission of Islamic intellectual traditions in the Malay-Indonesian world. However, most studies still focus on the traditionalist-modernist dichotomy, while the involvement of pesantren with transnational Islam -especially in Banten- has not received much attention. This gap indicates the need for further research on how pesantren negotiate dual identities simultaneously, both through resistance and adaptation.

Furthermore, Banten's importance as a research location lies in its historical role as a gateway for the transmission of Islam in the archipelago. As noted by Azra (2013), 'the Islamic intellectual tradition in Banten became a bridge between the Middle East and the Malay-Indonesian world'. Pesantren in Banten not only preserve local identity, but also interact with global Islamic trends through alumni networks, digital media, and the mobility of santri and teachers. The transnationalisation of Islamic thought has been accelerated by the digital age, allowing global discourse to enter the local context very quickly (Mandaville, 2007). This situation raises an important question: to what extent are Pesantrens in Banten able to preserve their traditional heritage amid the tide of globalisation?

How do they respond to the demands of modernisation while facing transnational criticism of local religious practices? What are the implications of this dialectic for the future of Islamic education in Indonesia?

This study attempts to answer these questions by analysing the dialectical challenges faced by Pesantrens in Banten in the interaction between traditionalism, modernism, and transnationalism. Using a qualitative approach based on literature review and case studies, this study asserts that Pesantrens are not passive recipients of change, but rather dynamic actors who actively negotiate various religious discourses. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to position Pesantrens as institutions that are constantly engaged in a process of continuous dialectics, rather than merely static guardians of tradition. By placing Pesantrens at the intersection of local heritage and global trends, this article contributes to

contemporary debates on Islamic education, the sociology of religion, and transnational Islamic studies.

Finally, this study argues that the dialectical challenges faced by pesantren in Banten reflect a broader tension between continuity and change in contemporary Islam. These challenges actually affirm the capacity of pesantren to adapt and renew themselves (Hefner, 2009). However, the future direction of pesantren will be largely determined by the ability of their leaders to balance tradition with innovation, local authority with global influence, and authenticity with relevance. Thus, pesantren in Banten are not only a microcosm of Islamic pluralism in Indonesia, but also an important case study for understanding the direction of Islamic education in the 21st century (Bahri et al., 2024).

Within this historical context, this study takes Pesantrens in Banten as a rich arena of dialectics between local traditions, educational reform, and global influences. Thus, this study does not only view Pesantrens as classical educational institutions, but as dynamic entities that negotiate with modernity and transnationalism.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to position Pesantrens in Banten as an arena of dialectics between traditionalism, modernism, and Islamic transnationalism in the context of religious globalisation. Unlike previous studies that tended to view pesantren dichotomously (traditional–modern), this study views pesantren as social actors that actively negotiate religious authority, identity, and relevance amid global trends. Thus, this study provides a new perspective in the study of Islamic education and contemporary religious sociology in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative design with a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach was chosen because it is capable of exploring the complex dynamics faced by Pesantrens in Banten in negotiating traditionalist, modernist, and transnational currents. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand social phenomena in depth by focusing on the meanings and experiences of participants. Thus, this study does not aim to generalise through numbers but to reveal the dialectical processes taking place within Pesantrens.

The research design combines library research with limited field data. Library research was conducted to obtain a theoretical and historical foundation through the analysis of literature, books, journal articles, and official documents related to Pesantrens and the Islamic movement. This approach allowed the researcher to examine existing conceptual ideas and identify research gaps.

To supplement the library data, this study also conducted field observations and semi-structured interviews with several clerics and students at Pesantrens in Banten. These two data sources were combined to produce a comprehensive picture of the dialectical challenges facing Pesantrens.

The study focused on Pesantrens in Banten Province, an area with strong Islamic historical roots. Several major Pesantrens were selected as study locations, including the An-Nawawi Tanara Pesantren, which is closely associated with the legacy of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani; the Caringin Pesantren, which is known for its traditionalist orientation; and several other Pesantrens that demonstrate openness to modernist reforms and transnational influences. The selection of these locations used purposive sampling, which is the selection of research subjects based on historical relevance and active involvement in contemporary religious discourse.

Three main techniques were used in this study:

1. Document Analysis; Analysis was conducted on scientific papers, Pesantren curricula, and organisational documents to map intellectual trends (Bowen, 2009).
2. Semi-Structured Interviews; Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions so that respondents were free to explain their views, but remained within the framework of the study. This format provides flexibility and consistency.
3. Participatory Observation; Direct observation of learning activities, teacher-student interactions, and ritual practices was used to understand the actual context of the Pesantren.

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages:

1. Data Reduction: selecting, focusing, and simplifying data relevant to the research theme.
2. Data Presentation: organising data into thematic categories, such as traditionalist continuity, modernist reform, and transnational influence.
3. Drawing Conclusions/Verification: interpreting findings and relating them to theoretical frameworks and previous research.

The validation technique for this study employed triangulation, which is the use of various data sources (literature, interviews, observations) to verify findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings of this study concern pesantren education in Banten, analysing it within the dialectical framework of traditionalist, modernist and transnational orientations. The findings are divided into four major themes: (1) the continuity of traditionalist pesantren identity, (2) adaptation to modernist educational reforms, (3) contestation with transnational Islamic movements, and (4) the dialectical process and resilience of pesantren.

Continuity of Traditionalist Pesantren Identity

Most Pesantrens in Banten still maintain their traditional character based on the teaching of classical Islamic texts and the transmission of scientific sanad (Dhofier, 2011; Bruinessen, 2020). The An-Nawawi Tanara Pesantren is a clear example of the continuity

of this tradition, where classical texts are taught with a spiritual approach that emphasises the blessings of knowledge through the relationship between students and teachers. Pesantren are ‘repositories of classical Islamic knowledge where the teaching and learning process is mediated by the authority of scientific sanad’. It is this authority of sanad that gives legitimacy to pesantren graduates and strengthens the authority of the kyai.

The An-Nawawi Tanara Pesantren is an important example of the continuity of this tradition. The legacy of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani lives on through teaching methods and religious rituals. The kyai emphasise the importance of barakah (blessings) that students receive from their closeness to their teachers. One student said:

‘Here, students not only study texts, but also inherit barakah and moral discipline from their teachers. This is what distinguishes pesantren from modern schools.’ (Interview, Tanara, 2025)

Munawiroh's (2021) research shows that the practice of studying the Qur'an in Banten pesantren, such as the Madarijul Ulum Pelamunan Pesantren, still maintains the sorogan and wetonan methods with moderate innovations, such as the use of digital media in fiqh studies. This shows how pesantren are able to preserve tradition while adapting to the needs of the new era. Akhmad (2023), through a systematic literature review, highlights that the resilience of pesantren traditions arises precisely because of their ability to selectively absorb modernity-maintaining the value of tafaqquh fi al-din while accepting technological innovations in learning.

According to Wildan (2018), traditional Pesantrens demonstrate institutional flexibility by introducing additional curricula without sacrificing their spiritual identity. Thus, the continuity of traditional Pesantrens is not resistance to modernity, but rather an adaptive strategy to maintain the relevance of Islamic education amid social change. This shows that traditional Pesantrens continue to maintain the core of their teachings, while making limited adaptations to meet the demands of the times.

Adaptation to Modernist Educational Reform

Modernist Pesantrens generally integrate general subjects, emphasise a rational approach to understanding Islamic texts, and seek formal recognition from the government.

In addition to preserving traditional roots, a number of Pesantrens in Banten are now pursuing a path of renewal by developing an integrated curriculum combining religious and general knowledge. Pesantren Darul Falah and Al-Mubarak, for example, have introduced a modern education system based on science and technology literacy, while still adhering to Islamic values. As found by Hasan (2015), pesantren innovation not only covers the curriculum aspect, but also the development of the affective and psychomotor domains, for example through character building and leadership training for santri.

These findings are in line with Musaddad (2022), who emphasises that the transformation of Pesantrens is part of an adaptive strategy to face the globalisation of education. Pesantrens have become centres of multidisciplinary learning, not just religious learning,

to prepare students to be empowered social agents in modern society. Wahid (2023) underlines KH. Imam Zarkasyi's idea of modernising Pesantrens as an effort to strengthen the Islamic education system without sacrificing its moral and spiritual values. Thus, modernist adaptation in Banten can be understood as a process of strengthening institutional structures without abandoning the roots of Islamic scholarship.

This effort is in line with the national trend that encourages Pesantrens to be more relevant to the needs of modern society (Steenbrink, 1994). However, the modernisation process does not always run smoothly. Some traditionalists believe that an excessive emphasis on secular knowledge can obscure the spiritual mission of Pesantrens. Modernist Pesantrens face a dilemma between the spirit of reform and the expectations of a society that is still very attached to tradition?

Thus, adaptation to modernist reforms has created a new dialectic: Pesantrens strive to maintain their religious identity while meeting the demands of modern society, which emphasises academic and professional competence. Thus, Pesantrens in Banten can be understood as institutions that have succeeded in combining two orientations at once - spirituality and professionalism- both of which are important in shaping a modern Muslim generation with character.

Contestation with Transnational Islamic Movements

The increasing influence of transnational Islamic movements such as Salafi, Hizbut Tahrir, and Jamaah Tabligh has become a major challenge for Pesantrens in Banten. These movements bring a puritanical and scripturalist paradigm that often conflicts with local traditions.

The most dynamic and controversial development in the Banten pesantren landscape is the increasing influence of transnational Islamic movements. Groups such as Salafi, Hizbut Tahrir, and Jamaah Tabligh present religious discourses that often clash with local pesantren practices.

The Salafis, for example, reject local religious traditions such as tahlilan and ziyarah kubur, on the grounds that these practices constitute bid'ah. Such criticism directly challenges the authority of traditional Pesantrens, which have long justified and preserved these rituals.

Meanwhile, before being disbanded by the Indonesian government, Hizbut Tahrir was actively recruiting students and teachers from Pesantrens in Banten. The global caliphate ideology they offered attracted the sympathy of some young people, although it was rejected by pesantren leaders who preferred gradual reform within the framework of the nation state (Fealy & White, 2008). The Jamaah Tabligh, on the other hand, emphasises individual piety without a political agenda, so that its teachings tend to be accepted by some pesantren alumni as a form of spiritual strengthening.

This phenomenon shows that Pesantrens are not immune to transnational ideological currents. Mandaville (2007) asserts that 'the global circulation of Islamic ideas has weakened the local monopoly on religious authority'. In Banten, Pesantrens now face a

new challenge: maintaining local authority while interacting with global ideologies that are increasingly accessible through digital media.

The phenomenon of Pesantrens' involvement in transnational Islamic dynamics is not only occurring in Banten, but is also part of a national trend in Islamic education in Indonesia. Saifullah (2023) asserts that the transnational Islamic movement has changed the orientation of Islamic education from one rooted in local tradition to one that is more ideological and scriptural. This shift has given rise to epistemological tensions between the pattern of education based on scientific sanad and the ideological model of education that emphasises the purification of teachings. In the context of Banten, this influence is evident in the increasing interest of some santri in Salafi and caliphate discourse transmitted through digital media and overseas alumni networks. However, traditional pesantren in Banten have demonstrated their adaptive capacity by strengthening their contextualised *aqidah* and *fiqh* curricula without abandoning their local scholarly traditions. Thus, as stated by Saifullah (2023), Islamic education in Indonesia -including Pesantrens- is undergoing a dialectical process between preserving classical scientific values and filtering out ideological global influences.

Furthermore, Darmadji (2021) emphasises that Pesantrens play an important role in the deradicalisation of Islam by instilling moderation and religious nationalism through education and local culture. This shows that Pesantrens not only maintain orthodoxy but also act as agents of social and religious reconciliation amid ideological plurality. Hadi et al. (2024) reinforce these findings by emphasising the role of Pesantrens in instilling values of religious moderation amid the penetration of transnational ideologies.

Thus, Pesantrens in Banten not only face global ideological currents but also undertake epistemological repositioning to affirm a contextual and peaceful Islam.

Dialectical Process: Negotiation and Resilience

The interaction between traditionalism, modernism, and transnationalism in Banten can be understood as an ongoing dialectical process. This dialectic does not produce a single winner, but rather negotiation and selective integration.

Negotiation with Modernity: Traditionalist Pesantrens adopt some elements of the modernist curriculum, such as general knowledge and foreign languages, without abandoning the core teachings of the classical texts.

Resistance to Transnationalism: Pesantrens accept some elements of transnational piety (e.g. the use of the *syar'i* headscarf or an emphasis on *aqidah*), but reject the full adoption of transnational ideologies that threaten local practices.

The dialectical process between traditionalism, modernism, and transnationalism forms a unique pattern of adaptation in Banten. Pesantrens appear as hybrid institutions, capable of combining traditional authority with modern educational innovation.

As explained by Mustofa, et. al. (2023), the concept of hybrid Pesantrens reflects Islamic educational institutions that integrate classical teaching systems with digital technology without changing their traditional spirit. This model is now being adopted by a number of Pesantrens in Banten through online classes, virtual recitation forums, and the use of social media for Islamic preaching and literacy.

Pesantrens play a role in community development based on spiritual values and social empowerment, while digital innovation in Pesantrens expands the scope of preaching and learning, forming a new, more open pattern. (Budiwiranto, 2022; Ansori et al.; 2023). In addition, Mulyadi (2022) emphasises that the transformation of Islamic educational values in Pesantrens occurs through the internalisation of character values, not merely the adoption of technology.

Hefner (2009) refers to Pesantrens as ‘a paradox of modernity, where they act as guardians of tradition and agents of change.’ The findings of this study confirm this paradox: Pesantrens in Banten continue to maintain their traditional roots, but at the same time adopt modern innovations and respond to transnational challenges.

As a regional comparison, a study in Gorontalo found a pattern of transformation in Islamic educational institutions similar to that occurring in Banten. In the study ‘Navigating Tradition and Modernity: The Impact of Transnational Islam in Gorontalo, Indonesia’, Pomalingo et al. (2024) explain that Pesantrens in Gorontalo have adopted elements of digitalisation, modern curriculum integration and contextual selection of traditional values. There is an adaptation process that shows that even though transnational currents bring new ideas, local institutions are able to negotiate their traditional origins, forming hybrid institutions that remain rooted in their communities (Pomalingo et al., 2024). These findings reinforce how Pesantrens in Banten -despite being located in different geographical and historical contexts- experience similar dynamics in facing modernity and globalisation.

Thus, Pesantrens in Banten and other regions are not merely ‘victims’ of global trends, but active agents that creatively shape the identity, authority, and practice of Islamic education in the local context. And Its can be seen as a microcosm of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia, which is transforming from a conventional system to a digital-participatory learning model. This dialectic demonstrates the ability of Pesantrens to adapt culturally and epistemologically without losing their Islamic identity.

Implications for Islamic Education in Indonesia

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for Islamic education in Indonesia:

1. Resilience through Adaptation: Pesantrens are able to survive not by rejecting change, but by making selective adaptations that strengthen tradition without sacrificing relevance.

2. Pluralisation of Religious Authority; The influx of transnational Islam has increased the sources of religious legitimacy, requiring Pesantrens to strengthen their theological arguments and social engagement.
3. Educational Innovation; Hybrid models that integrate religious and general knowledge have the potential to become a middle ground for Pesantrens to remain relevant both locally and globally.
4. Future Challenges; In the digital age, pesantren must be more active in filling the online da'wah space, as this space is largely dominated by transnational actors who aggressively spread their religious discourse (Kersten, 2015).

The dialectical challenges faced by Pesantrens in Banten reveal institutions that are constantly negotiating with their environment. Rather than being static, Pesantrens demonstrate a high capacity for adaptation, combining tradition with modernity, while facing pressure from transnational currents. These findings indicate that the future of Pesantrens is not determined by a choice between traditionalism, modernism, or transnationalism, but rather by the ability to negotiate all three simultaneously.

Thus, Pesantrens in Banten can be seen as a microcosm of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. They demonstrate that local institutions are able to survive amid global transformation, while providing valuable insights into the future of Islamic education in the 21st century.

This study confirms that Pesantrens in Banten face complex dialectical challenges in negotiating their identity amid three major Islamic currents: traditionalist, modernist, and transnational. The findings show that Pesantrens are not passive institutions, but rather dynamic actors capable of responding to change in creative, adaptive, and selective ways.

First, the continuity of traditionalist identity remains the main pillar of Pesantrens in Banten. Rooted in the scholarly heritage of great scholars such as Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, Pesantrens maintain the tradition of teaching classical Islamic texts, Sufi practices, and the transmission of sanad. These practices strengthen the authority of the kyai and maintain the spiritual integrity of Pesantrens (Dhofier, 2011; Bruinessen, 2020).

Second, modernisation has brought significant transformations to pesantren. The integration of general subjects, the use of foreign languages, and formal accreditation have become strategies to respond to the demands of modern society. Hybrid pesantren that combine religious and secular knowledge are now increasingly developing in Banten. However, this process continues to present tensions between innovation and the preservation of tradition.

Third, the influx of transnational Islam adds complexity to pesantren. The Salafi movement, Hizbut Tahrir, and Jamaah Tabligh present alternative orthodox visions that often clash with local practices. This challenges pesantren to strengthen their theological arguments while maintaining social legitimacy. This phenomenon also signals the pluralisation of religious authority in Indonesia.

Fourth, pesantren in Banten demonstrate a pattern of dialectical negotiation that produces a hybrid identity. They accept some modernist innovations, reject the full dominance of transnationalism, and continue to preserve tradition as the core of education. This dialectical process proves the resilience of pesantren as institutions capable of surviving amid global change (Hefner, 2009).

The implications of these findings are important for the future of Islamic education in Indonesia. Pesantren have proven capable of maintaining their role as centres of scholarship and engines of social transformation. However, to remain relevant, pesantren need to: (1) strengthen santri competencies in facing global challenges, (2) develop curriculum innovations without losing the spirit of tradition, and (3) be more active in filling the digital da'wah space, which is now largely dominated by transnational actors (Kersten, 2015).

Thus, this study contributes to the academic discourse on contemporary Islam in Indonesia. Pesantrens in Banten can be seen as a microcosm of Islamic pluralism in the archipelago—an institution that not only preserves local heritage but is also capable of responding to the challenges of modernity and globalisation.

Finally, the main conclusion of this study is that the future of pesantren does not depend on a dichotomous choice between traditionalism, modernism, or transnationalism. Instead, the sustainability of pesantren will be determined by their ability to negotiate all three simultaneously, producing a form of Indonesian Islam that is both authentic and cosmopolitan.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Pesantrens in Banten are at the crossroads of three major currents: traditionalism, modernism, and transnationalism. Pesantren are no longer understood merely as guardians of classical religious traditions, but as institutions that continue to negotiate with social and global changes. The scholarly legacy of great scholars such as Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani remains the spiritual and epistemological foundation of pesantren, which maintain the continuity of the chain of knowledge and scholarly ethics in facing the challenges of the times.

On the other hand, the modernisation of education has brought about significant changes in the structure and orientation of pesantren. Many institutions have begun to integrate general knowledge, digital technology, and professional institutional management, while maintaining their religious identity. This transformation demonstrates the pesantren's ability to adapt to the demands of modern society without losing its Islamic identity. However, amid this trend, tensions have arisen between innovation and conservatism, which characterise the pesantren's dialectic in maintaining a balance between tradition and renewal.

Meanwhile, the influence of transnational Islamic movements presents ideological challenges that encourage Pesantrens to strengthen moderation and religious nationalism.

In this context, Pesantrens act as active social agents that filter global values to align them with local culture. The ongoing negotiation process shows that Pesantrens in Banten are highly resilient and play an important role in maintaining a contextual, peaceful Islam that is adaptive to modernity. Thus, Pesantrens have become a model of Islamic education that is able to combine traditional authenticity with global relevance in the 21st century.

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