



**REFRAMING PESANTREN: SPIRITUAL VALUES AND THE CHALLENGE OF
MEDIA REPRESENTATION IN INDONESIA
(A FIELD RESEARCH AT PONDOK PESANTREN DARUSALAM LIRBOYO)**

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the integration of Islamic values into inclusive and environmentally conscious education through a constructive alignment approach, using Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo as a case study. The study was motivated by growing public misconceptions about pesantren institutions, often shaped by media portrayals that overlook the spiritual essence of pesantren life the formation of knowledgeable, ethical, and spiritually balanced individuals. By revisiting this perception, the research highlights how pesantren serve as both centers of learning and moral ecology, nurturing human and environmental harmony.

Employing a qualitative field research design through observation and interviews, the findings show that Darusalam Lirboyo exemplifies a model of eco-spiritual education. Simplicity, humility, and sincerity are practiced daily as expressions of environmental ethics and spiritual sustainability. The pesantren cultivates an ecological consciousness by teaching that caring for the heart (qalbun salim) and caring for nature are deeply interconnected. Discipline among the santri emerges not from strict enforcement but from inner awareness, sustained by the prayers of their teachers and parents.

In response to the #BlokirTrans7 controversy, the pesantren demonstrated patience and ethical restraint, choosing dialogue over confrontation. This attitude reflects Islamic values of adab, wisdom, and moderation reaffirming pesantren's role as moral anchors amid media narratives. The research thus contributes to the discourse on Islamic education, media ethics, and environmental sustainability. It calls for continued collaboration between pesantren, academia, and media to promote a narrative of Islam as a source of peace, inclusivity, and ecological balance consistent with the vision of rahmatan lil 'alamin.

Keywords: Islamic values, inclusive education, constructive alignment, pesantren, eco-spiritual education, sustainability, media ethics

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, public debates surrounding Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia have intensified, particularly after the viral social movement marked by the hashtag #BlokirTrans7 in Oct 2025. This incident, which arose as a response to the perceived negative framing of pesantren life in a national television program, revealed a deeper issue the persistence of public and media misconceptions toward pesantren culture.

Following the controversy, Trans7 officially apologized to the pesantren community, especially to Pondok Pesantren Darusalam Lirboyo, and admitted negligence in editorial control (Detik News, 2025). Trans7's Production Director, Andi Chairil, publicly acknowledged the error and promised institutional reflection to prevent future incidents (The Jakarta Post, 2025). The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization expressed disappointment and called for greater media responsibility in representing Islamic educational institutions fairly (INP Polri, 2025). The hashtag #BlokirTrans7 trended for several days, with hundreds of thousands of posts across X (Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok, showing an outpouring of defense for pesantren values. Netizens highlighted pesantren as centers of moral integrity, humility, and community service, describing the show as disrespectful and misleading. Analysts from Universitas Padjadjaran observed that the controversy exposed a media literacy gap between urban visual culture and religious ethics (Fikom Unpad, 2025).

According to data from Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag, 2024), there are over 36,000 registered pesantren with more than 5 million students (santri) across the country, reflecting their significant contribution to education, moral development, and social transformation. Yet, despite this, pesantren are often misrepresented as outdated or exclusive institutions, overshadowing their genuine spiritual and educational missions.

Scholars such as Azra (2023) and Bruinessen (2022) emphasize that pesantren play a crucial role in shaping *insān rabbānī* individuals who integrate intellect ('aql), ethics (akhlaq), and spiritual awareness (iman). These institutions not only preserve Islamic tradition but also adapt to modern challenges through inclusive and community-based learning. However, contemporary media coverage frequently simplifies pesantren identity into stereotypical imagery, leading to socio-cultural misunderstandings. This research thus seeks to "reframe" pesantren by rediscovering their spiritual values, humanistic pedagogy, and communicative ethics, with a special focus on Pondok Pesantren Darusalam Lirboyo, a moderate and humble pesantren known for its deep intellectual and spiritual discipline. By providing an academic perspective grounded in field research and supported by comparative insights from other pesantren, this study aims to construct a fair and empathetic narrative that bridges the gap between religious institutions and public perception.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative field research approach, aiming to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and values embedded in the educational life of Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo, Kediri, East Java. The pesantren is officially registered under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) with the Pesantren Statistical Number (NSP) 510235710057, established by Yayasan Darusalam Lirboyo based on the Decree of the Director-General of Islamic Education, No. 035016, dated 9 August 2024.

The subjects of this study consisted of key stakeholders within the pesantren ecosystem, including kiai, teachers (ustadz/ustadzah), student representatives (santri), pesantren administrators, and members of the surrounding community. These informants were selected purposively to ensure a comprehensive understanding of both internal and external perspectives on pesantren identity and its public perception.

Data were collected through four complementary techniques: participant observation of educational and spiritual activities at the pesantren, semi-structured interviews with kiai, teachers, and students, document analysis of pesantren archives and digital media publications, and social-media content analysis related to the viral hashtag #BlokirTrans7.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles & Huberman (2014): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (cross-checking information among kiai, teachers, and santri) and methodological triangulation (comparing field observation with online data and public responses). Throughout the process, the researcher adhered to strict ethical standards, including obtaining formal permission from pesantren authorities, ensuring participant anonymity, and maintaining cultural and spiritual respect consistent with Islamic research ethics.

The selection of Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo as the primary research site was made through careful consideration of academic relevance and accessibility. This pesantren was chosen not to compare or distinguish it from other Lirboyo-based institutions, but because of its representative characteristics that reflect the broader spiritual and educational ethos of the Lirboyo pesantren network as a whole. The pesantren's open yet disciplined academic environment, its emphasis on adab (Islamic ethics), and its consistent engagement with both traditional and contemporary learning practices make it an ideal site for exploring the intersection between spirituality, education, and media representation. Additionally, the pesantren's leadership and community have shown strong cooperation and openness to research activities, which ensured ethical access and meaningful participation. Thus, this selection is grounded not in comparison but in

contextual suitability, representing a respectful effort to understand pesantren culture from within, and to contribute constructively to the public and academic discourse on pesantren values.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Before presenting the empirical findings, it is essential to provide a contextual overview that situates the data within the lived realities of Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo. The data collected through field observation, interviews, and document analysis were interpreted not merely as descriptive facts but as reflections of the pesantren's inner values, traditions, and spiritual ecology. The analysis emphasizes that each activity in the pesantren from prayer routines to social interactions represents a holistic educational process shaped by adab (ethics), discipline, and the continuous guidance of the masyayikh. The observations and testimonies presented in the following sections illustrate how spiritual practices are deeply intertwined with moral education, community life, and environmental awareness. Thus, the findings that follow should be understood not only as empirical descriptions but also as interpretive insights into how pesantren life harmonizes faith, intellect, and ecology through daily living and leadership examples.

To provide empirical depth and contextual grounding to the analysis, this section presents excerpts and summaries from the field data collected during observation and interviews at Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo. The data include the voices of teachers (asatidz), students (santri), and community members, reflecting the lived experiences and moral dynamics that shape the pesantren's daily life. Each piece of evidence was selected not only for its descriptive value but also for its relevance in illustrating the spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions of pesantren education. Through these narratives, the researcher aims to portray how humility, discipline, and faith-based awareness manifest in daily practices from early morning prayers to communal learning and service. The field data also provide a human perspective on how pesantren leaders, such as Mbah Yai, embody ethical wisdom in responding to social and media challenges, reinforcing the pesantren's role as both a spiritual home and a center of moral resilience.

The following are conclusions based on the field data we have obtained:

1. The Daily Life of Santri: Spiritual Discipline and Inner Awareness.

The field observation revealed that the daily life of the santri (students) at Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo follows a deeply spiritual and disciplined rhythm. Before dawn, around 3:00 a.m., santri wake up for night prayers (tahajjud), reciting wirid and supplications to seek Allah's guidance. They then join the congregational Fajr prayer, followed by Qur'an recitation, breakfast, and preparation for school or college. After Dhuhr prayer, they resume activities until Asr, followed by Qur'an study sessions, Maghrib

prayer, evening dhikr, and night classes that last until around 10:00 p.m. This disciplined lifestyle, as observed, is not enforced by external compulsion but rather grows from within nurtured by the prayers of their teachers and parents.

2. Leadership and Humility: The Character of Mbah Yai and the Pesantren Family.

The kyai (leader) of Darusalam Lirboyo embodies deep humility and respect. The researcher observed that Mbah Yai treated every santri like his own child and every guest with gentle hospitality. Despite his respected position, he lives simply, sometimes fasting or eating leftover meals from the previous day. This humility serves as a living model of spiritual leadership, where teaching is conveyed more through example than words.

3. Spiritual and Humanistic Values.

The pesantren emphasizes both intellectual and moral excellence. Mbah Yai's recurring advice "piyik dadi doro, ati resik dadi mulyo" (a clear heart brings honor) captures the essence of pesantren education. This phrase, often conveyed personally by Mbah Yai to his santri, represents the moral compass that guides their character formation. Beyond academic learning, students are encouraged to cultivate sincerity, respect, harmony, and peace among one another. Key traditions include nightly mujahadah (collective prayers), the study of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), musyawarah (collective reasoning), wiridan (group remembrance), and community service (khidmah). These practices form an ecosystem of adab (ethics), knowledge, and devotion.

4. Response to Media and Public Perception

During moments of controversy, such as the #BlokirTrans7 issue, Mbah Yai and the pesantren demonstrated remarkable patience. Rather than reacting emotionally, they chose silence and self-reflection, entrusting formal responses to appointed representatives. Several cases revealed that his calmness and moral consistency eventually led critics to acknowledge his wisdom. This approach aligns with Islamic ethics, emphasizing dialogue over confrontation and sincerity over self-defense.

5. Community and Netizen Response.

The local community displayed diverse opinions some initially misinterpreted pesantren values, while others staunchly defended them. On social media, the #BlokirTrans7 debate generated a dual narrative: some criticized the media's portrayal, while many others praised pesantren for their humility and moral clarity. Thousands of supportive comments highlighted pesantren as moral anchors of society, urging media institutions to adopt more objective and empathetic perspectives.

6. Interpretation: The Moral and Media Harmony Model.

The findings suggest that Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo represents a reflective and moderate pesantren model capable of harmonizing faith, intellect, and public engagement. Its leaders' composure and sincerity transformed potential tension into an opportunity for collective learning. This research concludes that pesantren serve not only as educational institutions but also as living moral laboratories where media, society, and spirituality meet in harmony.

DISCUSSION

This discussion synthesizes the field findings from Pondok Pesantren Putri Darusalam Lirboyo with wider public discourse on pesantren and recent media coverage. Moving beyond description, it interprets how spiritual practices, moral pedagogy, and eco-spiritual awareness interact with contemporary narratives about Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

1. From Lived Practice to Public Narrative

The findings portray a daily rhythm grounded in humility, discipline, adab, and servicean ecosystem in which learning is inseparable from character formation and spiritual ecology. Yet, public narratives often miss this inner grammar of pesantren life, especially when viral clips or headlines compress complex realities into simplistic categories. The present analysis therefore bridges the micro-ethnographic evidence (prayer life, study circles, musyawarah, khidmah) with the macro-narratives that circulate in mass and social media.

2. Misunderstanding of 'Feudalism' and Media Coverage

The controversy that arose in 2025 revolved around the use of the term 'feudalism' to describe the relationship between kyai (Islamic teachers) and santri (students) in pesantren. This term became the trigger of debate as it was perceived to simplify a deeply moral and spiritual relationship into a mere structure of power. In pesantren tradition, a santri's respect and obedience to the kyai is not a form of subjugation, but rather an expression of adab (ethics) and khidmah (devotional service) a spiritual discipline that cultivates humility and purifies the soul (tazkiyatun nafs). Media institutions played a major role in shaping and amplifying this discourse. Following a Trans7 television program that was deemed to have insulted the pesantren community, a wave of public criticism and clarification emerged. Major national outlets such as Detik (14 October 2025), CNN Indonesia (14–16–23 October 2025), and The Jakarta Post (17 October 2025) reported an official apology from Trans7 to the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Lirboyo. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) also reaffirmed its supervisory role after receiving numerous public complaints (Media Indonesia, 14 October 2025). Public

reactions on digital platforms displayed two contrasting poles. Some internet users lacking contextual understanding of pesantren culture interpreted the santri's obedience as a manifestation of feudalism. Others, particularly pesantren alumni and the broader santri community, firmly rejected that view. An article from *Kumparan* (19 October 2025) titled 'When Devotion Is Mistaken for Feudalism' emphasized that such misperceptions stem from a lack of comprehension of the spiritual and ethical essence of pesantren. *Radar Bogor* (21 October 2025) and *Mediasi.co* (19 October 2025) similarly argued that the term 'feudalism' has often been used without analytical grounding, distorting the kyai santri relationship, which in reality is founded upon love, prayer, and moral integrity. This phenomenon reveals that the root issue lies not within pesantren traditions themselves, but within the gap between modern, rational-instrumental thinking and pesantren's spiritual ethical culture oriented toward character formation. Hence, the media is expected to function as a bridge of understanding not as a source of polarization so that the noble values of pesantren can be comprehended holistically and objectively.

3. Clarification from the Perspective of Islamic Educational Scholarship

Islamic education scholars in Indonesia have long emphasized that the governance and ethos of pesantren are spiritual and ethical in nature not feudal. Within this moral system, *adab* functions as a guiding norm linking knowledge, humility, and responsibility. *Khidmah* (service) cultivates social awareness among santri, while leadership is manifested through simplicity and self-control.

Field findings at Darussalam Lirboyo reinforce this interpretation, highlighting purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*), moderation, and exospiritual consciousness as core messages of the institution. As noted by Prof. Azyumardi Azra (*Kompas*, 2022), the kyai santri relationship represents a spiritual relation grounded in *barakah* (blessing), not a political hierarchy of power.

4. Comparative Lens: Gontor, Tebuireng, and Darussalam Lirboyo

A comparison between Darussalam Lirboyo and other major pesantren reveals complementary strengths. The Modern Islamic Boarding School Gontor is recognized for its global intellectual orientation and institutional discipline. Recent studies (Risaldy, 2025) also highlight Gontor's ability to establish proactive public communication networks. Meanwhile, Tebuireng Pesantren, with its rich historical legacy, continues to play an active role in social transformation and national religious discourse.

Darussalam Lirboyo, by contrast, offers a distinctive eco-spiritual and humility-based education model, where learning, moral guidance, and community service are integrated into daily routines. Together, these pesantren demonstrate the diversity and adaptability of Indonesia's Islamic educational ecosystem.

5. Media Framing, Mutual Correction, and Civic Ethics

The case illustrates classic features of media framing: conflict-laden cues travel faster than context, while later corrections tend to draw less attention. A constructive path forward requires mutual self-correction. Pesantren can continue strengthening transparency and public literacy about their pedagogical ethos; media organizations can deepen accuracy, balance, and empathy when covering religious life; and society including the santri community can welcome fair criticism without abandoning adab and civic manners. Such reciprocity aligns with pesantren's mission to harmonize faith, intellect, society, and the environment.

6. Academic and Student Responses

In the academic sphere, the debate around 'pesantren feudalism' has drawn responses from prominent scholars. Prof. Nadirsyah Hosen argued that the media coverage which offended the dignity of pesantren was not merely a technical mistake but an ethical failure in journalism. He emphasized that pesantren are not anti-modern; rather, modernity without moral values can be misleading. His statements were shared through his personal social media accounts and cited in several national news outlets. Meanwhile, Prof. Ismail Fajrie Alatas (New York University) highlighted that the kyai santri relationship cannot be reduced to a dominance–subordination model. He explained that religious authority operates within a 'moral grammar' of community life, as elaborated in his work “What Is Religious Authority?” (2021) and other popular essays. University communities and student forums have also engaged in open discussions on the issue, promoting media literacy and contextual understanding of pesantren traditions such as adab and khidmah. Overall, academics and students urge all parties to avoid generalization, improve media framing, and open dialogue grounded in data without abandoning adab as civic ethics.

7. Influencer and Muslim Figures on Social Media

In addition to academics, Muslim influencers and social figures have also contributed to this conversation online. Lora Ismael Al-Kholilie, in his article on PCNU Tuban (2025) titled “Aswaja: The Path of Peace Amid Differences”, emphasized that pesantren represent a path of peace and cannot be equated with feudal systems, because in pesantren, love and respect toward teachers (kyai) are forms of devotion, not subjugation. Similarly, Khilma Anis, a writer and pesantren literacy activist, through her article on Tebuireng (2023) titled “7 Important Messages from Ning Khilma Anis to Preserve Pesantren Literacy”, urged santri to preserve traditions of literacy, tawasul, and respect for teachers as part of a noble Islamic civilization. On her Facebook post, she wrote, 'I am not an alumna of Lirboyo, but I cannot accept seeing our kyai insulted,' a message that gained wide public support. These examples show how social media figures play a vital role in

shaping fairer public perceptions and expanding the moral discourse of pesantren in digital spaces.

8. Reactions and Reflections on National Santri Day 2025

The commemoration of National Santri Day 2025 also became an important moment to gauge public perception of pesantren. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (October 3, 2025) emphasized that santri are the 'heart of civilization' and guardians of national values in modern times. An article from Humas Indonesia (October 23, 2025) described Santri Day 2025 as 'a momentum to improve public communication for pesantren and preachers,' highlighting the importance of adapting pesantren communication to the digital era. Meanwhile, NU Online (October 25, 2025) noted the enthusiasm of the public and netizens for the Santri Day theme, while also observing that stereotypes about pesantren remain persistent, limiting their association with environmental and technological progress. Overall, the 2025 Santri Day reflections illustrated a renewed commitment to strengthening pesantren's role as a moderate, ethical, and adaptive force for social transformation in contemporary Indonesia.

The controversy over what has been labeled as “pesantren feudalism” in public discourse actually reflects a deeper socio-cultural tension between traditional Islamic education and the expectations of a modern egalitarian society. This misunderstanding often arises because the relational ethics within pesantren particularly *adab* (etiquette) and *ta'dzim* (reverence) shown by santri toward their *kyai* are interpreted through a secular lens that equates hierarchy with oppression. In reality, such respect is spiritual rather than political, rooted in the moral awareness that knowledge must always be accompanied by humility.

When compared with other pesantren in Indonesia, such as Tebuireng, Gontor, and Sidogiri, it becomes evident that each institution develops its own pedagogical balance between discipline and autonomy. Modern pesantren tend to emphasize managerial systems and academic competitiveness, while traditional pesantren like Darussalam Lirboyo focus on moral cultivation, inner discipline, and spiritual depth. This diversity indicates that pesantren education is not monolithic but dynamically adaptive to its social and historical contexts.

Furthermore, the digital era has amplified these differences. Social media platforms enable selective narratives to dominate public perception, often detached from contextual understanding. As noted by Muslim intellectuals such as Prof. Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Prof. Nadhir Syahhosen the real issue is not hierarchy itself but the misunderstanding of the ethics of knowledge. The pesantren tradition with its long-standing history of producing scholars, moral leaders, and reformers continues to serve as a living institution of *adab* and intellectual humility.

Recent public responses from Muslim intellectuals and influencers such as Prof. Ismail Fajrie Alatas, Ismail Elkhoolili, Khilma Anis, and Ustadz Rumail Abbas demonstrate growing concern over how pesantren culture is represented in digital spaces. Many of them emphasize that what outsiders perceive as “feudalism” is, in fact, adab: a moral framework of respect, humility, and service that underlies traditional Islamic learning.

These voices also warn against the oversimplification of media narratives. When complex moral relationships are reduced to viral clips or sensational headlines, the essence of spiritual pedagogy is lost. Influencers such as Khilma Anis and Elkhoolili call for empathy and contextual understanding, while scholars like Fajrie Alatas and Muhammad Zulfa urge academics and journalists to rebuild narrative bridges between pesantren values and modern civic ethics.

The convergence of these perspectives reveals a shared aspiration to preserve the spiritual soul of pesantren education while engaging critically with the realities of contemporary society. The emergence of such dialogues through social media, though initially reactive, has become a valuable arena for reaffirming Islamic moral literacy and contextual understanding in the digital age.

Therefore, this discussion affirms that pesantren should not be judged merely by external appearances or isolated cases but should be understood as a holistic ecosystem of learning, spiritual training, and social formation that integrates the heart, intellect, and communal responsibility.

At the same time, the author recognizes that public criticism should not be dismissed entirely. There are indeed individual cases within pesantren communities that require internal reflection and ethical improvement. The essence of pesantren values lies in self-correction (*islah*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and moral accountability (*amanah*). Therefore, constructive feedback from society should be welcomed as part of an ongoing dialogue toward moral renewal, provided it is expressed with adab and a genuine intention for improvement. Such self-awareness will ensure that pesantren continue to grow as trustworthy moral institutions grounded in both humility and social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The overall discourse surrounding the #BoikotTrans7 controversy and its aftermath reveals not merely a social media reaction but a moral awakening within Indonesia’s Islamic educational ecosystem. Prominent figures academics, anthropologists, cultural observers, and santri influencers have articulated a collective defense of pesantren values as living traditions of humility, sincerity, and service.

Anthropologist Ismail Fajrie Alatas of New York University emphasized that labeling pesantren culture as “feudal” oversimplifies its deeply spiritual logic of adab and

mutual respect. Similarly, public intellectuals such as Rumail Abbas and Muhammad Zulfa clarified that the viral controversy arose from contextual misunderstanding and misrepresentation in media framing.

Muslim content creators like Khilma Anis and Ismael El-Kholili voiced emotional and spiritual testimony about their teachers' humility kyai who fast silently, share meals with students, and continue praying for them in private. Their narratives reaffirm that pesantren leadership is sustained not by power but by prayer and patience.

These accounts demonstrate that public voices and media audiences alike are learning to re-engage pesantren beyond stereotypes recognizing it as a moral ecosystem that integrates knowledge, compassion, and ecological consciousness. In this light, Darussalam Lirboyo stands as an example of how moderation (*wasathiyah*) and environmental humility can coexist within the Indonesian pesantren model.

Ultimately, this study concludes that contemporary debates on pesantren identity require renewed ethical literacy from all sides:

- ❖ From media, accuracy and empathy in framing religious communities;
- ❖ From pesantren, transparency and readiness for constructive dialogue;
- ❖ From society, discernment and respect toward religious traditions that have long cultivated Indonesia's moral foundation.

The Darussalam Lirboyo experience thus reminds us that the strength of pesantren lies not in grandeur, but in grace the quiet discipline that shapes generations with sincerity, intellect, and spiritual ecology.

It must also be acknowledged that within the pesantren community, there are indeed cases where public criticism is valid instances where ethical lapses or misconduct have occurred and demand sincere correction. However, these should not lead to sweeping generalizations. To judge all pesantren as the same would be a grave oversimplification. Alongside these isolated weaknesses, there remain countless kyai, teachers, and santri who uphold sincerity (*ikhlas*), humility, and integrity in ways that deeply touch the hearts of those who encounter them. Their quiet dedication and moral steadfastness continue to embody the true spirit of Islamic education one rooted in compassion, service, and spiritual refinement.

Therefore, it is essential to establish stronger bridges of dialogue among all parties religious leaders, educators, media practitioners, and the wider public to prevent future misunderstandings. Mutual communication and empathy are needed so that differences in interpretation will no longer lead to conflict or prejudice. Through continuous dialogue and sincerity of intention, society can better appreciate the pesantren's moral mission while pesantren themselves can remain open to constructive reflection and renewal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before offering recommendations for other stakeholders, the author acknowledges that this research still contains several limitations. Despite the depth of field observation and contextual analysis, this study represents only an initial step in understanding the complexity of pesantren culture, social dynamics, and public perception.

Further research is highly encouraged to explore pesantren life using broader methodological perspectives—such as ethnographic participation, digital media analysis, or longitudinal studies—in order to enrich understanding and minimize bias. Future studies may also involve multiple pesantren from different regions to provide comparative insights and strengthen the academic contribution to Islamic education and social transformation.

1. For Media and Journalists

Media practitioners are encouraged to strengthen their religious literacy and cultural sensitivity when reporting on pesantren life. Every coverage related to Islamic traditions and values should adopt an empathetic and balanced approach. Journalists are advised to communicate directly with pesantren authorities before publishing any potentially sensitive content to prevent public misunderstanding.

2. For Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)

Pesantren are recommended to enhance their public communication strategies grounded in moderate Islamic values. Institutions can develop internal digital platforms such as websites, YouTube channels, or academic bulletins to present educational, social, and spiritual aspects more transparently. This effort can build public literacy regarding the meaning of *adab* (ethics), *barakah* (divine blessing), and *khidmah* (service) in santri life.

3. For the Government and the Ministry of Religious Affairs

The government, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is encouraged to expand its support for pesantren that consistently promote moderation, environmental sustainability, and inclusive education. Collaborative programs such as training in Islamic public communication, pesantren-based research, and community empowerment can strengthen pesantren's role as the moral backbone of the nation.

4. For Academics and Researchers

Academics are urged to bridge the gap between pesantren and modern scholarship through collaborative research and publication. Interdisciplinary forums involving pesantren leaders and universities should be encouraged to establish pesantren as both subjects and partners of academic inquiry in Islamic and socio-cultural studies.

5. For Future Research

Future studies may broaden the scope by comparing traditional and modern pesantren in the context of educational digitalization, eco-pedagogy, and community engagement. Mixed-methods and participatory ethnographic approaches are recommended to explore deeply the spiritual and social practices of pesantren in responding to global challenges such as environmental issues, gender inclusivity, and Islamic media transformation.

6. For the Public and Santri Alumni

The public is expected to continue supporting pesantren with objective understanding and respect for their spiritual and social values. Santri alumni play a vital role as cultural ambassadors who bridge pesantren and society through community service, digital literacy, and social initiatives that embody pesantren values.

7. For Indonesian Society in General

Indonesian citizens should cultivate critical and digital literacy to avoid being easily misled or provoked by sensational issues or political agendas. In the current era of rapid and shallow media narratives, the habit of reflective reading, verifying information sources, and practicing tabayyun (careful clarification before judgment) must be strengthened. Literacy should not only mean reading ability but also the capacity to understand, analyze, and uphold truth within ethical and humanitarian contexts.

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