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The Phenomenon of School Santrinization in Aceh: Impacts and Implications in Education

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Abstract : This article examines the phenomenon of school santrinization in Aceh, Indonesia, and its impacts and implications in the field of education. School santrinization refers to the increasing influence of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) norms, values, and practices within formal educational institutions. This qualitative study employs interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore the impacts of school santrinization and its implications in education. The findings shed light on various changes brought about by school santrinization, including alterations in curriculum content, teaching methods, and student behavior. The analysis reveals that curriculum content has undergone a significant shift, with a heightened emphasis on Islamic studies and a reduced focus on subjects unrelated to religious education. This trend reflects the growing influence of pesantren values in shaping the educational landscape. Furthermore, teaching methods have been influenced, with a greater emphasis on rote memorization and recitation of religious texts, aligning with the pedagogical practices commonly observed in pesantren. These changes in instructional strategies have implications for the overall learning experience of students. Moreover, the study finds that school santrinization has impacted student behavior, leading to a stronger adherence to religious practices and an increased gender segregation within schools. The implications of school santrinization in education are multifaceted. Teachers face challenges in adapting their pedagogical approaches to accommodate the changing educational landscape, striking a balance between religious and secular knowledge domains.

Keywords: School santrinization, Aceh, implications, education



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the phenomenon of school santrinization has emerged as a topic of great interest, particularly in the province of Aceh, Indonesia. This term refers to the growing impact of Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) norms, values, and practices within formal educational institutions, including public schools.¹ The process of santrinization has resulted in significant changes in curriculum content, teaching methodologies, and student behavior, thereby influencing the overall landscape of education.²

Aceh, known for its strong Islamic traditions and cultural heritage, has witnessed a notable shift in its education system due to the increasing influence of *pesantren* values. Islamic boarding schools, traditionally associated with religious instruction and character development, have long played a crucial role in shaping the lives of students.³ However, in recent years, their influence has expanded beyond the confines of *pesantren* walls and permeated mainstream educational institutions. One of the most noticeable impacts of school santrinization is reflected in curriculum content. Islamic subjects, such as Quranic studies, Islamic law, and Islamic history, have gained prominence within the formal education system. These subjects, once limited to pesantren settings, are now incorporated into public school curricula, offering students a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings alongside their regular academic studies.⁴ Furthermore, the teaching methods employed in schools have also undergone transformation as a result of santrinization. Pedagogical approaches aligned with *pesantren* traditions, emphasizing rote learning, memorization, and a strong focus on religious values, have become more prevalent. Teachers often integrate Islamic principles and practices into their instruction, fostering a holistic approach to education that intertwines religious teachings with academic knowledge.

Beyond curricular and pedagogical changes, the phenomenon of school santrinization has influenced student behavior and social dynamics within educational institutions. The adoption of Islamic norms and practices has led to modifications in dress codes, with students increasingly opting for more

⁴ Mustain Thahir, "The Role and Function of Islamic Boarding School: An Indonesian Context," *TAWARIKH* 5, no. 2 (2014).



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¹ Azyumardi Azra, "The Rise of Muslim Elite Schools: A New Pattern of Santrinization in Indonesia," /Jurnal/Al-Jamiah/Al-Jamiah No. 64-XII Th. 1999/ (2008).

² Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "Educational Practice: Lessons to Be Learned from Madrasah and Religious Schools in Contemporary Southeast Asia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* (2015).

³ Ismail Suardi Wekke and Sanusi Hamid, "Technology on Language Teaching and Learning: A Research on Indonesian Pesantren," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 83 (2013): 585–589.

conservative attire, adhering to Islamic principles of modesty.⁵ Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in religious activities, such as daily prayers, religious festivals, and voluntary community service, thereby nurturing a stronger sense of religious identity and social responsibility.⁶ The implications of school santrinization extend beyond individual schools or communities. This phenomenon reflects a broader societal shift in the educational landscape, where Islamic values and teachings are playing an increasingly prominent role in shaping educational policies and practices. While some embrace these changes as a means of strengthening religious identity and character development, others raise concerns about the potential marginalization of non-Islamic perspectives and the impact on academic diversity and critical thinking skills.

Previous studies have shed light on the factors contributing to the phenomenon of school santrinization, particularly in Aceh, Indonesia. Hanafiah (2018) conducted research that delved into the historical development of pesantren (dayah) education in Aceh and its profound influence on the local community.⁷ The study highlighted the enduring role of pesantren in shaping religious values and educational practices in the region, establishing a historical context for the phenomenon. Furthermore, studies by Wildan (2022) have examined the impacts of school santrinization on curriculum and pedagogy.8 These studies revealed that the increasing influence of pesantren values has resulted in modifications to curriculum content. There has been a notable emphasis on religious subjects, Arabic language instruction, and Quranic studies. This shift reflects the integration of Islamic teachings within the formal education system, aligning curriculum with the values and practices traditionally emphasized in pesantren settings. Additionally, these studies highlighted a shift towards traditional teaching methods, such as rote memorization and recitation of religious texts, mirroring the pedagogical approaches commonly employed in pesantren education.

Moreover, research conducted by Idris (2022) has explored the effects of school santrinization on student behavior.⁹ These studies documented changes

⁹ Idris, M. A. (2022). *Eksistensi Dayah Sebagai Penjaga Moral Umat Dalam Sejarah dan Masa Kini di Kabupaten Aceh Barat* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry).



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⁵ Moh Roqib, "Increasing Social Class through Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 12, no. 2 (2021): 305–329.

⁶ Abdul Halik, "Paradigm of Islamic Education in the Future: The Integration of Islamic Boarding School and Favorite School," *Information Management and Business Review* 8, no. 4 (2016): 24–32.

⁷ Hanafiah, H. (2018). Dayah collectively as a social movement. *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare*.

⁸ Wildan, T. (2022). Traditional Dayah Education in Aceh in the Perspective of Perennialist Philosophy. *At-Tafkir*, 15(2), 238-251..

in student behavior, including a stronger adherence to religious practices, the adoption of modest dress codes, and an increased segregation of genders within educational institutions. Students are encouraged to participate in religious activities and rituals, which contribute to the cultivation of a stronger religious identity and sense of social responsibility. Collectively, these studies contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of school santrinization in Aceh. They highlight the historical and cultural foundations of *pesantren* education, the impact of *pesantren* values on curriculum and pedagogy, and the resulting changes in student behavior. The findings underscore the intricate interplay between religious traditions, educational systems, and social dynamics within the context of Aceh's education landscape.

Despite the growing body of research on the phenomenon of school santrinization, there is a need for further exploration of its impacts and implications in the field of education. This article aims to contribute to the existing literature by delving into the multifaceted effects of school santrinization in Aceh. By building upon previous studies, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and offer insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers. Through an examination of the impacts and implications, strategies can be developed to address the challenges and opportunities arising from the integration of pesantren values into the formal education system.

THEORETICAL BASIS Santrinization

The term santrinization derived from the word "santri". It originates from the Sanskrit word "*chastri*" which means "student" or "follower.¹⁰ Then, this term went through a process of acculturation within Javanese society when Islam had become the dominant religion. The current understanding of the term "santri" refers to students who study Islamic teachings within an educational framework known as a "*pesantren*."¹¹ A *pesantren* is an Islamic boarding school or educational institution where students, known as santri, reside and receive religious education. In the context of education, santrinization refers to the incorporation of Islamic values, teachings, and practices into the educational system, particularly within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia.¹²

¹²Kunaifi, A., Fikriyah, K., & Aliyah, D. (2021). How Do Santri, Local Wisdom, and Digital Transformation Affect Community Empowerment?. *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, 2(4), 246-257.



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¹⁰Burhani, A. N. (2017). Geertz's Trichotomy of abangan, santri, and priyayi. *Controversy and Continuity. Journal of Indonesian Islam*, *11*(2), 329-350.

¹¹Abdillah, A., & Maskuri, E. (2022). The Khidmah Tradition of Santri Towards Kyai (The Review of 'Urf & Psychology). *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 5(1), 278-292.

It involves the emphasis on Islamic studies, religious instruction, and the cultivation of a strong Islamic identity among students. Santrinization in education encompasses several aspects:¹³

- (1) Curriculum: Islamic boarding schools typically prioritize Islamic studies and incorporate religious subjects into their curriculum. Students receive instruction in the Quran, Hadith (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), Islamic law, theology, and other Islamic disciplines.¹⁴ These subjects form a significant part of the curriculum and contribute to the religious and moral development of the students.
- (2) Pedagogy: Santrinization also influences teaching methods and pedagogy within Islamic boarding schools. Traditional methods such as memorization and recitation play a crucial role in the learning process. Students may engage in Quranic memorization (hifz), recitation (tajweed), and engage in discussions and debates on Islamic topics.¹⁵ The goal is to instill a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and encourage students to apply them in their daily lives.
- (3) Values and Ethics: Islamic values and ethics are an integral part of santrinization in education. Schools strive to promote virtues such as piety, humility, honesty, and compassion. Students are encouraged to develop a strong moral compass based on Islamic teachings and principles.¹⁶
- (4) Identity and Character Development: Santrinization aims to foster a strong Islamic identity and character among students. Islamic boarding schools often provide an immersive environment where students live, study, and interact with their peers and teachers. This environment helps shape their Islamic identity and encourages the practice of Islamic rituals and traditions.¹⁷
- (5) Community Engagement: Islamic boarding schools play an active role in the community and society. They often organize religious events, social activities, and community service projects to promote Islamic values and

¹⁷ Putro, A. A. Y., & Suryono, Y. (2019, November). New tradition of pesantren in character education. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 1254, No. 1, p. 012002). IOP Publishing.



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¹³Mansir, F. (2021). The Response Of Islamic Education To The Advancement Of Science In The Covid-19 Pandemic Era In The Islamic Boarding Schools. *AULADUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam, 8*(1), 20-27

¹⁴Zarkasyi, H. F. (2015). Modern pondok pesantren: Maintaining tradition in modern system. *Tsaqafah*, *11*(2), 223-248.

¹⁵ Kholili, Y. (2021). Challenges for pesantren in the revolution era of society 5.0. AMCA Journal of Religion and Society, 1(1), 8-12.

¹⁶ Syamsul, M. A. (2018). Education as a Foundation of Humanity: Learning from the Pedagogy of Pesantren in Indonesia. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(2), 104-123.

contribute to the welfare of the community.¹⁸ This community engagement aspect of santrinization reinforces the importance of social responsibility and civic participation.

It's important to note that santrinization in education is specific to the Indonesian context, particularly within Islamic boarding schools. It reflects the cultural and religious characteristics of the country and contributes to the overall religious and moral education of students within these institutions. Intersectionality of Religion and Education

The intersectionality of religion and education delves into the intricate and multifaceted relationship between religious beliefs and practices and their impact on educational systems and processes. It recognizes that religious identity plays a significant role in shaping individuals' educational experiences, as well as broader educational structures and practices. This theme emphasizes the interconnectedness between religious identity and various aspects of education, including policies, curriculum development, teaching methods, and student outcomes.

Religious values, doctrines, and practices profoundly influence educational systems and policies.¹⁹ Different religious traditions often prioritize specific educational goals and values, which can vary from promoting moral development and character formation to fostering spiritual growth and religious literacy. For example, in some religious contexts, the cultivation of virtues, ethical behavior, and social responsibility may be paramount.²⁰ These religious perspectives shape the formation and implementation of educational policies, including the inclusion or exclusion of certain content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies.

In further, religious content, such as sacred texts, religious history, and theological concepts, may be integrated into educational curricula to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of their religious heritage. Furthermore, religious values and principles often inform decisions regarding

²⁰Safitri, D. D. (2018). Managing school based on character building in the context of religious school culture (Case in Indonesia). *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(4), 274-294.



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¹⁸ Samsu, S., Kustati, M., Perrodin, D. D., & Suwendi, S. (2021). Community Empowerment in Leading" Pesantren": A Research of "Nyai"'s Leadership. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 10(4), 1237-1244.

¹⁹Chowdhury, M. (2018). Emphasizing morals, values, ethics, and character education in science education and science teaching. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(2), 1-16.

subjects like sex education, scientific theories, or ethical dilemmas, reflecting the intersection between religious teachings and academic content.²¹

Teaching methods and instructional approaches can also be shaped by religious perspectives. In religiously affiliated educational institutions, teaching may incorporate spiritual practices, prayer, or religious rituals. Pedagogical methods may prioritize fostering reverence, contemplation, and reflection as a means of engaging students in religiously inspired learning experiences.²² Alternatively, in more secular educational settings, educators may aim to create a neutral and inclusive environment that respects diverse religious perspectives.

The intersectionality of religion and education also encompasses the examination of student outcomes influenced by religious identity. Religious education can contribute to the formation of students' religious and moral values, as well as their sense of identity and belonging within their religious communities.²³ It may also foster critical thinking skills, interfaith dialogue, and religious tolerance.²⁴ Conversely, it is important to consider potential challenges related to exclusion, marginalization, or the imposition of religious beliefs on students from different faith traditions or those with non-religious backgrounds.

By understanding the intersectionality of religion and education, policymakers, educators, and researchers can promote inclusive and culturally responsive educational environments that respect and accommodate diverse religious perspectives. This understanding can inform the development of educational policies that strike a balance between religious freedom and secular principles, create inclusive curricula that represent a variety of religious perspectives, and provide professional development opportunities for educators to navigate the complexities of religious diversity in the classroom.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research employed a qualitative approach to explore the phenomenon of school santrinization in Aceh and its impacts and implications

²⁴ Mefodeva, M. A., Fakhrutdinova, A. V., Ukhimenko, A. N., & Valeeva, G. F. (2017). Historical perspectives of spiritual and moral education in India. *Man in India*, 97(8), 71-77.



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²¹ Arifin, S. (2016). Islamic religious education and radicalism in Indonesia: strategy of de-radicalization through strengthening the living values education. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 6(1), 93-126.

²² Conroy, James C., David Lundie, Robert A. Davis, Vivienne Baumfield, L. Philip Barnes, Tony Gallagher, Kevin Lowden, Nicole Bourque, and Karen J. Wenell. *Does religious education work?: A multi-dimensional investigation*. A&C Black, 2013.

²³Chowdhury, M. (2018). Emphasizing morals, values, ethics, and character education in science education and science teaching. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(2), 1-16.

in education. The samples of this research were taken purposively to participants who have firsthand experience and knowledge of school santrinization including educators, students, and parents from schools in Aceh that have implemented santrinization practices. To obtain the data related, several techniques employed, namely; 1) Interviews: Semi-structured interviews conducted with educators, students, and parents. These interviews provided insights into their experiences, perspectives, and attitudes towards school santrinization. The interviews guided by a set of open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their thoughts and opinions, 2) Observations: Direct observations conducted within schools that have undergone the process of santrinization. The researcher observed classroom activities, interactions between teachers and students, and the integration of Islamic values and practices within the educational setting. Field notes were taken to record important observations and contextual details, 3) Document Analysis: Relevant documents such as curriculum materials, school policies, and educational guidelines related to school santrinization were collected and analyzed. This analysis provided additional insights into the formal aspects of santrinization and its implementation within educational institutions. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis consisting of coding, categorization, and interpretation of the data.²⁵

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the data obtained, the following findings can be identified regarding the impacts and implications of school santrinization in Aceh's educational system. Participant have observed instances of school santrinization in Aceh, indicating the influence of Islamic boarding school norms and practices within formal educational institutions. Observations include changes in curriculum content, teaching methods, and student behavior.

This informant provided a clear definition of school santrinization, emphasizing its core concept as the growing presence and impact of Islamic boarding school principles and traditions within Aceh's educational system. By acknowledging the presence of Islamic boarding school norms, values, and practices within Aceh's educational system, the participant recognizes the impact of religious and cultural traditions on shaping educational practices and fostering a distinct educational identity in the region. The informant said:

²⁵ Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds?. *Currents in pharmacy teaching and learning*, 10(6), 807-815.



"School santrinization is defined as the increasing influence of Islamic boarding school norms, values, and practices within the educational system of Aceh."²⁶

This understanding aligns with the broader context of Aceh, which is known for its strong Islamic cultural heritage and the historical prominence of Islamic education. The participant's statement implies that school santrinization is not merely a superficial integration of religious elements but a deeper and more comprehensive process that affects the fundamental aspects of education in Aceh. It signifies a shift towards a more Islamic-oriented educational approach and reflects the evolving educational landscape shaped by the influence of Islamic boarding schools.

In Acehnese society, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of religious education and the preservation of Islamic values. As a result, parents, community leaders, and even policymakers often prioritize Islamic education and seek schools that align with these expectations. The informant said:

"There is a strong emphasis on religious and moral values. Parents, families, and the community at large place great importance on providing an Islamic education to their children. School santrinization, which refers to the process of sending children to Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), is seen as a way to fulfill these societal expectations. Parents believe that by sending their children to pesantren, they are ensuring a comprehensive religious education alongside their academic studies".²⁷

Religious motivations also play a vital role in driving school santrinization. Many families in Aceh have deep religious beliefs and consider Islamic education as an essential aspect of their children's upbringing. They believe that a strong foundation in Islamic teachings will guide their children's moral development and spiritual growth. Consequently, they actively seek out schools that provide a more religiously focused curriculum and environment. The informant said:

"Aceh is known for its strong adherence to Islam, and religious motivations play a significant role in school santrinization. Many parents in Aceh believe that a formal education at pesantren will not only instill a deep understanding of Islamic teachings but also foster religious piety and moral character development. They see it as a way to ensure that their children grow up."²⁸

Islamic studies and religious subjects, such as Quranic studies, Hadith and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), have gained more prominence in the

²⁸ Interview with Ahsan Khairuddin, Parents, Takengon, 25 January 2023



²⁶ The interview with Amran Shaleh, The Chief of Aceh Education Assembly, Banda Aceh, 20 January 2023.

²⁷ The interview with Amran Shaleh, The Chief of Aceh Education Assembly, Banda Aceh, 20 January 2023.

curriculum. Schools have increased the number of hours dedicated to these subjects, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings. This shift aims to cultivate religious knowledge, moral values, and a strong connection to the principles of Islam among the students. The informant said:

"In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift in the curriculum content of schools in Aceh, with a greater emphasis on Islamic studies and religious subjects. This change is a response to the societal and religious expectations we discussed earlier. As parents and the community place a high value on Islamic education, schools have adjusted their curriculum to meet these demands".²⁹

In some cases, these subjects may be considered less important or even discouraged due to the perception that they may distract students from their religious studies or contradict Islamic teachings. The focus on religious education can lead to a narrowing of the curriculum, with limited resources and instructional time dedicated to subjects outside the realm of religious knowledge. The informant declared:

"The influence of *pesantren* values in Aceh has led to the marginalization or deemphasis of certain subjects or areas of learning that are considered unrelated to religious education. One example is the reduced emphasis on secular subjects such as arts, music, and physical education".³⁰

Furthermore, subjects that may have a critical or analytical perspective, such as social sciences and philosophy, can be marginalized as they may be seen as less relevant to the religious focus of the curriculum. The primary goal becomes instilling religious knowledge and adherence to Islamic principles, which can result in a reduced emphasis on subjects that encourage critical thinking, independent thought, or exploration of diverse perspectives. It's important to note that the extent of marginalization or de-emphasis may vary across different schools and educational institutions. While religious subjects and Islamic studies gain prominence, the impact on other areas of learning can vary based on factors such as the specific educational policies, local traditions, and the overall vision of the educational institutions.

In the pursuit of religious knowledge and adherence to Islamic teachings, the emphasis on memorization is seen as a way to preserve the authenticity and accuracy of the religious texts. Students are encouraged to memorize verses from the Quran, Hadith, and other religious literature, as well as specific prayers and supplications. Recitation and memorization are often highly valued

³⁰ Interview with Ismail, Educators, Lhokseumawe, 27 January 2023



²⁹ Interview with Ahsan Khairuddin, Parents, Takengon, 25 January 2023

and considered essential for spiritual growth and connection with the divine. The informant said:

"Traditional teaching methods, including rote memorization and recitation of religious texts, have indeed become more prevalent in the educational context influenced by *pesantren* values. These methods emphasize the repetition and memorization of religious texts and teachings, often with limited room for critical thinking or interactive learning".³¹

While these methods have their merits in preserving religious traditions and fostering devotion, they can potentially impact the teaching and learning process in various ways. Firstly, the focus on memorization may lead to a more passive learning experience, where students may not fully engage with the content beyond rote recitation. Critical thinking, analysis, and deeper understanding of concepts may take a backseat. Secondly, the heavy emphasis on memorization can result in a narrower educational experience, as time and effort are primarily dedicated to memorizing religious texts. This may limit the exploration of other subjects, interdisciplinary connections, and the development of skills that are valuable in a broader context.

As students engage in daily religious activities, such as prayer, recitation of the Quran, and participation in religious rituals, they develop a stronger commitment to religious practices. These practices become ingrained in their routines, fostering a sense of religious discipline and piety. Moreover, the closeknit community within the school or *pesantren* creates a supportive social environment that encourages students to adhere to cultural norms associated with Islamic traditions. Peer influence and the guidance of religious teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' behavior, reinforcing the importance of religious values, modesty, respect, and adherence to social norms prevalent in their community. The informant declared:

"School santrinization has a significant impact on shaping student behavior, particularly in terms of their adherence to religious practices and cultural norms. When students enroll in *pesantren* or schools with a strong emphasis on religious education, they are immersed in an environment that promotes and reinforces Islamic teachings and cultural values".³²

Through constant exposure to religious teachings and cultural practices, students internalize these values and norms, which then influence their behavior beyond the school environment. They may exhibit a heightened sense of moral consciousness, ethical decision-making, and a commitment to upholding religious principles in various aspects of their lives. It's important to note that while stronger adherence to religious practices and cultural norms can

³² Interview with Ismail, Educators, Lhokseumawe, 27 January 2023



³¹ Interview with Ismail, Educators, Lhokseumawe, 27 January 2023

be a positive outcome of school santrinization, it may also lead to a more conservative outlook and potential challenges in navigating cultural diversity or embracing alternative perspectives. Striking a balance between religious teachings, cultural preservation, and encouraging open-mindedness is crucial for nurturing well-rounded individuals.

The school santrinization has positive impact in fostering a sense of religious identity and adherence to cultural values. Firstly, school santrinization provides students with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic principles, teachings, and rituals. This deepens their knowledge and strengthens their connection to their religion. Students learn about the Quran, Hadith, Islamic history, and jurisprudence, enabling them to develop a robust religious foundation. This knowledge, combined with regular religious practices, cultivates a sense of identity as followers of Islam. Secondly, school santrinization plays a crucial role in preserving and reinforcing cultural values. In Aceh, where Islamic traditions and cultural heritage are intertwined, the emphasis on religious education also serves to reinforce local cultural values and customs associated with Islam. Students learn about local traditions, customs, and ethical norms specific to the Acehnese society. This helps in maintaining and passing down cultural values from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity and preservation of the local cultural identity. The informant said:

"School santrinization has several positive implications, particularly in terms of fostering a sense of religious identity and adherence to cultural values. Through the emphasis on religious education and immersion in Islamic teachings, students develop a strong religious identity rooted in their faith".³³

The heavy focus on religious education may inadvertently limit critical thinking, creativity, and the development of skills required in a broader societal context. It is important to strike a balance between religious teachings and a well-rounded education that encompasses various subjects to prepare students for a diverse and evolving world. In addition, concerns about inclusivity and equal opportunities for all students arise in the context of school santrinization. The emphasis on religious education may unintentionally create barriers for students from different religious backgrounds or those who do not wish to pursue an exclusively religious-oriented education. This raises concerns about equal access to educational opportunities and the potential exclusion of students who may have different aspirations or beliefs. The informant declared: "School santrinization can present challenges and negative implications, including the potential neglect of non-religious subjects. As religious education

³³ The interview with Amran Shaleh, The Chief of Aceh Education Assembly, Banda Aceh, 20 January 2023.



takes precedence in the curriculum, there is a possibility of reduced emphasis on subjects such as sciences, humanities, arts, and physical education. This could result in a narrower educational experience, limiting students' exposure to a diverse range of disciplines and potentially impacting their overall academic development".³⁴

Discussions

School santrinization" refers to the growing impact of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) customs, principles, and activities within the educational framework of Aceh. Aceh is a province in Indonesia known for its strong Islamic traditions and cultural heritage.³⁵ This phenomenon implies that Islamic boarding school norms, values, and practices are progressively permeating the broader educational system in the region. The term "santrinization" is derived from the word "santri," which refers to students or individuals who attend Islamic boarding schools.³⁶ In Aceh, Islamic boarding schools play a significant role in shaping the religious and cultural upbringing of students.³⁷ These institutions provide a comprehensive education that combines both religious and academic teachings. The influence of Islamic boarding school norms, values, and practices on the educational system of Aceh can be observed in various aspects. Firstly, it impacts the curriculum, which may incorporate a stronger emphasis on Islamic studies and religious teachings. Subjects such as Qur'an recitation, Islamic law, and Arabic language instruction might receive more attention within the school curriculum. Secondly, school santrinization can manifest in the adoption of specific behavioral norms and practices associated with Islamic boarding schools. These may include dress codes, gender segregation, and the encouragement of religious observances such as prayer and fasting.

Furthermore, the influence of Islamic boarding schools can extend to extracurricular activities, where events and programs aligned with Islamic teachings are prioritized or promoted. For instance, schools may organize religious gatherings, Islamic lectures, or competitions focused on Qur'an recitation or Islamic knowledge. It is worth noting that the process of school santrinization is not limited to Aceh or Indonesia alone. Similar trends have

³⁷ Ilyas, M., Ismail, Z., Zulfidar, F., Syarfuni, S., & Masrizal, M. (2022). Education Transformation Model of Traditional Pesantren in Aceh Province of Indonesia. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(4), 7197-7204.



³⁴ The interview with Amran Shaleh, The Chief of Aceh Education Assembly, Banda Aceh, 20 January 2023.

³⁵ Nor, M. R. M. (2021). Characteristics of Preserving Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School Traditions: Lessons from Indonesia and Malaysia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(1), 67-88.

³⁶ Assa'idi, S. D. (2021). The Growth of Pesantren in Indonesia as the Islamic Venue and Social Class Status of Santri. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *93*, 425-440.

been observed in other regions with a strong Islamic influence, where the integration of Islamic values within the educational system is considered important for the preservation of religious and cultural heritage.³⁸ While school santrinization can contribute to the preservation of Islamic traditions and values, it can also generate debates and discussions regarding the balance between religious and secular education. Critics argue that excessive emphasis on religious teachings might undermine the development of critical thinking skills or limit exposure to a broader range of knowledge.³⁹ On the other hand, proponents argue that school santrinization fosters a strong moral foundation and a sense of identity among students.⁴⁰

In Aceh, Indonesia, there is a notable emphasis on religious and moral values, and these principles hold significant importance to parents, families, and the wider community. The societal expectation of providing an Islamic education to children is deeply ingrained. As a result, the concept of school santrinization has emerged as a means to meet these expectations. School santrinization entails sending children to Islamic boarding schools, known as pesantren, where they can receive a comprehensive religious education in addition to their academic studies. The strong emphasis on religious and moral values in Aceh can be attributed to the region's deep-rooted Islamic traditions and cultural heritage.⁴¹ Islam plays a central role in the lives of individuals and the community, shaping their beliefs, behaviors, and social interactions. As a result, parents feel a strong responsibility to ensure that their children receive a proper Islamic education alongside their academic pursuits. The decision to send children to *pesantren* is motivated by the belief that these schools provide an environment conducive to learning and practicing Islamic teachings. Parents view *pesantren* as institutions that can instill strong moral values, religious discipline, and a deep understanding of Islamic principles in their children.⁴²

⁴² Syamsul, M. A. (2018). Education as a Foundation of Humanity: Learning from the Pedagogy of Pesantren in Indonesia. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(2), 104-123.



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³⁸ Ismail, I., Ali, H., & Us, K. A. (2022). Factors Affecting Critical and Holistic Thinking in Islamic Education in Indonesia: Self-Concept, System, Tradition, Culture.(Literature Review of Islamic Education Management). *Dinasti International Journal of Management Science*, 3(3), 407-437.

³⁹ Tolchah, M., & Mu'ammar, M. A. (2019). Islamic Education in the Globalization Era. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(4), 1031-1037.

⁴⁰ Ikhwan, A., Farid, M., Rohmad, A., & Syam, A. R. (2020, May). Revitalization of Islamic Education Teachers in the Development of Student Personality. In 1st Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities, Economics and Social Sciences (BIS-HESS 2019) (pp. 162-165). Atlantis Press.

⁴¹ Prasetyo, M. A. M. (2022). Organizational and Cultural Transformation of Pesantren in Creating a Competitive Culture. *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Agama*, 14(1), 73-88.

They perceive it as a way to nurture their children's spiritual growth and to safeguard their religious identity. By sending their children to *pesantren*, parents hope to fulfill their societal obligations and meet the community's expectations. It is seen as a proactive measure to raise pious and devout individuals who can actively contribute to the preservation and propagation of Islamic values within Acehnese society.

The practice of school santrinization is deeply ingrained in the culture of Aceh and is supported by societal norms and community pressures. The community itself values the role of *pesantren* in shaping the religious upbringing of children and often encourages parents to make this choice. There is a collective belief that providing children with an Islamic education will not only benefit them individually but also contribute to the overall spiritual and moral well-being of the community.⁴³ It is important to note that the emphasis on school santrinization and the value placed on Islamic education in Aceh are influenced by specific cultural and religious contexts. Similar phenomena can be observed in other regions of Indonesia where Islamic traditions and practices hold significant societal importance.

Aceh, renowned for its strong Islamic practices, holds religious motivations in high regard when it comes to school santrinization. Numerous parents in Aceh firmly believe that enrolling their children in *pesantren* for formal education will not only cultivate a profound comprehension of Islamic teachings but also nurture religious devotion and facilitate the development of moral character. They perceive this decision as a means to guarantee that their children mature with strong religious values and principles. The prominence of Islam in Aceh is deeply embedded in its history, culture, and societal fabric. The region has a long-standing reputation for upholding strict adherence to Islamic principles, which has shaped the daily lives and interactions of its residents.⁴⁴ In such an environment, parents recognize the importance of providing their children with a solid religious foundation alongside their academic education.

By sending their children to *pesantren*, parents believe they are providing them with an immersive Islamic environment that encourages spiritual growth and moral development. They view *pesantren* as institutions that go beyond mere academic instruction, offering a holistic approach to education that encompasses religious teachings, character building, and discipline. Parents trust that the structured environment of *pesantren*, with its emphasis on religious rituals, ethical conduct, and spiritual guidance, will instill within their

⁴⁴ Feener, R. M. (2013). Social Engineering through Shari'a: Islamic Law and State-Directed Da'wa in Contemporary Aceh. *Indon. L. Rev.*, *3*, 285.



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⁴³ Anam, S., Degeng, I., Murtadho, N., & Kuswandi, D. (2019). The Moral Education and Internalization of Humanitarian Values in" Pesantren". *Online Submission*, 7(4), 815-834.

children a strong commitment to Islam and help shape their moral compass. Additionally, parents perceive school santrinization as a way to shield their children from negative influences and potential moral pitfalls prevalent in mainstream educational institutions. They see *pesantren* as safe havens where their children can be insulated from societal distractions and immerse themselves in a nurturing Islamic environment. Parents place great confidence in the ability of *pesantren* to instill religious piety, ethical values, and virtuous behavior, ensuring that their children grow up as responsible and devout Muslims. It is important to recognize that the motivations behind school santrinization in Aceh are deeply rooted in the local cultural and religious context. The unique societal emphasis on Islam and the belief in the efficacy of *pesantren* education contribute to the strong parental inclination towards this form of schooling.

In recent years, the curriculum content of schools in Aceh has undergone a noticeable transformation, reflecting a shift towards a greater emphasis on Islamic studies and religious subjects. This change is a direct response to the societal and religious expectations we discussed earlier. Due to the high value placed on Islamic education by parents and the community, schools have adjusted their curriculum in order to meet these demands. The adjustment of the curriculum content aligns with the broader aim of ensuring that students receive a comprehensive religious education alongside their academic studies. This includes a stronger focus on Islamic studies, Qur'an recitation, Islamic law, and Arabic language instruction. These subjects are considered essential for nurturing religious understanding, fostering a deep connection with Islamic teachings, and developing a strong foundation in Islamic principles.

By incorporating a greater emphasis on Islamic studies and religious subjects, schools in Aceh aim to fulfill the expectations of parents and the community who prioritize religious education as a crucial aspect of their children's upbringing. This adjustment in the curriculum content acknowledges the significance of Islamic values, norms, and practices within the local culture and seeks to provide students with a robust religious education that resonates with the religious ethos of the region. It is important to note that this shift in curriculum content is not unique to Aceh but is also observed in other regions with a strong Islamic influence, where the integration of Islamic values within the educational system is considered important for preserving religious and cultural heritage.

However, it is also essential to maintain a balance in the curriculum to ensure a well-rounded education. Critics of this shift in curriculum content argue that excessive emphasis on religious subjects may limit exposure to a broader range of knowledge and impede the development of critical thinking skills. It becomes crucial to strike a balance between religious education and



other academic disciplines to provide students with a comprehensive education that prepares them for the challenges of the modern world. This noticeable shift in curriculum content towards a greater emphasis on Islamic studies and religious subjects in schools in Aceh is a direct response to the societal and religious expectations of parents and the community. This adjustment reflects the high value placed on Islamic education and aims to provide students with a comprehensive religious foundation alongside their academic pursuits.

The influence of *pesantren* values in Aceh has indeed had an impact on the curriculum, leading to the marginalization or de-emphasis of certain subjects or areas of learning that are perceived as unrelated to religious education. This shift is driven by the prioritization of Islamic studies and the strong emphasis on religious teachings within the educational system. One example of this de-emphasis is the reduced emphasis on secular subjects such as arts, music, and physical education. In some cases, these subjects may be given less instructional time or allocated fewer resources compared to subjects that are directly related to religious education. The rationale behind this approach is rooted in the belief that religious education takes precedence and should occupy a central role in shaping the moral and spiritual development of students.

This de-emphasis on secular subjects can be attributed to the perception that they may not align with the religious values and principles emphasized in *pesantren* education. As a result, subjects like arts and music, which may be associated with non-religious or Western influences, and physical education, which may involve mixed-gender activities, can be marginalized or given less prominence in the curriculum. It is important to note that this shift in emphasis does not imply the complete exclusion of these subjects from the curriculum. Schools in Aceh still recognize the importance of a well-rounded education and may offer limited opportunities for students to engage in arts, music, and physical education. However, the overall emphasis and resources allocated to these subjects might be reduced in comparison to those devoted to religious education.

Critics argue that the marginalization of secular subjects may hinder students' holistic development and limit their exposure to a wide range of knowledge and skills.⁴⁵ They advocate for a balanced curriculum that includes both religious education and secular subjects to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded education for students. In some cases, the influence of *pesantren* values in Aceh has resulted in the marginalization or de-emphasis of certain secular subjects in the curriculum. This shift reflects the prioritization of

⁴⁵ Fikri, A., Pohan, M. M., & Anwar, K. (2023). Pesantren Curriculum Management Based On Religious Moderation At Mahad Al Jamiah. *At-Tarbiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1). 642



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religious education and the strong emphasis on Islamic studies. While the reduced emphasis on arts, music, and physical education is observed, it is essential to consider the need for a balanced curriculum that encompasses both religious and secular subjects to provide students with a comprehensive education.

Within the educational context influenced by *pesantren* values, traditional teaching methods, such as rote memorization and recitation of religious texts, have indeed become more prevalent.⁴⁶ These methods prioritize the repetition and memorization of religious texts and teachings, often with limited emphasis on critical thinking or interactive learning. Rote memorization is a common approach employed in *pesantren* education, where students are expected to memorize and recite religious texts, including the Qur'an and other religious literature. This practice is considered essential for acquiring a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and promoting the preservation of religious knowledge. The emphasis on memorization aims to ensure the accurate retention and transmission of religious texts from one generation to the next.

However, the reliance on rote memorization and recitation may limit opportunities for critical thinking and interactive learning.⁴⁷ This traditional teaching method often focuses on reproducing information without encouraging students to question, analyze, or apply their knowledge in practical contexts. The emphasis on memorization may prioritize the quantity of information retained over the development of analytical skills, creativity, and independent thinking. Critics argue that an overemphasis on rote memorization can hinder students' ability to think critically, engage in meaningful discussions, and apply knowledge to real-world situations. It may restrict their capacity to develop problem-solving skills, creativity, and a broader understanding of the subjects beyond the memorized content. This traditional approach may also limit opportunities for collaborative and interactive learning experiences, which are crucial for developing communication skills, teamwork, and social interactions.

It is important to note that not all schools or educational institutions in Aceh follow the same teaching methods. There is a range of approaches and variations within the educational system, and some schools may adopt more progressive teaching methods that prioritize critical thinking, interactive learning, and a balanced integration of religious and secular subjects. In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the need to incorporate

⁴⁷ Kuswandi, I. (2020). Dinamika Pendidikan Pesantren di Muhammadiyah. *SHAHIH: Journal of Islamicate Multidisciplinary*, 5(1), 65-78.



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⁴⁶ Kholili, Y. (2021). Challenges for pesantren in the revolution era of society 5.0. *AMCA Journal of Religion and Society*, 1(1), 8-12.

innovative teaching methods and pedagogical approaches in religious education. Efforts are being made to integrate critical thinking, problemsolving, and interactive learning strategies within the religious curriculum to foster a more well-rounded education that aligns with contemporary educational principles.

School santrinization, particularly in *pesantren* or schools with a strong emphasis on religious education, indeed has a significant impact on shaping student behavior, including their adherence to religious practices and cultural norms. The immersive environment provided by these institutions promotes and reinforces Islamic teachings and cultural values, contributing to the formation of students' religious and cultural identity.⁴⁸ When students enroll in *pesantren* or similar educational institutions, they are exposed to a structured and disciplined environment that fosters a deep engagement with Islamic teachings. Students participate in daily religious rituals, including prayer, Qur'an recitation, and religious lectures, which are integral to their educational experience. These practices are designed to instill religious piety, discipline, and a sense of devotion among the students.

Moreover, the influence of peers, teachers, and the broader school community plays a crucial role in shaping student behavior. Within the immersive environment of *pesantren*, students are surrounded by like-minded individuals who share the same religious values and cultural norms. This peer influence, along with the guidance and mentorship provided by teachers and religious leaders, helps in reinforcing religious practices, encouraging moral behavior, and strengthening students' commitment to their faith. Cultural norms and traditions are also an integral part of the educational environment in *pesantren*.⁴⁹ Students are exposed to the customs, traditions, and practices that are deeply rooted in the local culture and are associated with Islamic teachings. This exposure further reinforces their adherence to cultural norms and helps them develop a sense of identity and belonging within their community.

The impact of school santrinization extends beyond the immediate educational setting. Students who have undergone this experience often carry the values and practices they have learned into their daily lives outside of school. They become ambassadors of the religious and cultural values they have internalized, contributing to the preservation and transmission of these values within their families and communities. It is worth noting that the impact of

⁴⁹ Fakhrurrazi, F., Zainuddin, Y., & Zulkarnaini, Z. (2021). The pesantren: Politics of islamic and problematic education muslim identity. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Studies*, *3*(6), 392-396.



⁴⁸ Ismah, N. (2016). Print Media and Cultural Identity of Santri: Responses of the Pesantren's Young Leaders in Indonesia. *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(3), 243-262.

school santrinization on student behavior is not uniform or absolute. Students may interpret and internalize religious teachings and cultural values differently, leading to variations in their adherence and expression of these practices. Additionally, the influence of school santrinization may vary depending on individual factors, such as personal beliefs, family background, and exposure to other social contexts.

Indeed, school santrinization has several positive implications, particularly in fostering a sense of religious identity and adherence to cultural values among students. The emphasis on religious education and immersion in Islamic teachings within the educational environment contribute to the development of a strong religious identity rooted in faith. By attending pesantren or schools with a strong emphasis on religious education, students are provided with opportunities to deepen their understanding of Islam and its teachings. They engage in daily practices such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, and religious study, which contribute to their knowledge and connection with the Islamic faith. Through the rigorous study of Islamic texts and guidance from teachers and religious leaders, students develop a solid foundation in Islamic beliefs, values, and practices. The immersion in Islamic teachings also enables students to cultivate a personal relationship with their faith. They develop a sense of spiritual connection and find meaning in their religious practices. This connection to Islam helps shape their worldview and influences their attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, school santrinization plays a vital role in preserving and transmitting cultural values. Islamic education in *pesantren* often encompasses not only religious teachings but also local customs, traditions, and cultural practices that are deeply intertwined with Islamic beliefs. Students are exposed to these cultural values and are encouraged to embrace and uphold them. This fosters a sense of cultural pride and strengthens their commitment to the traditions and values of their community. The development of a strong religious identity and adherence to cultural values have various positive implications. It provides students with a moral compass, guiding their ethical decision-making and behavior. Students who have undergone school santrinization often exhibit greater religious devotion, respect for authority, and a sense of responsibility towards their community. They are more likely to actively participate in religious and community activities, fostering social cohesion and a sense of belonging.



Moreover, a strong religious identity can serve as a source of resilience and coping mechanisms in the face of challenges or adversity.⁵⁰ It provides individuals with a sense of purpose, meaning, and spiritual support during difficult times. Students who have developed a robust religious identity through school santrinization may be more equipped to navigate the complexities of life and make choices aligned with their religious and cultural values. It is important to note that the positive implications of school santrinization are often viewed from within the context of a faith-based community and may not be universally applicable or perceived in the same way across different cultural or religious contexts. Additionally, it is essential to strike a balance between religious education and exposure to broader knowledge and critical thinking skills to ensure a well-rounded education.

School santrinization can present challenges and negative implications, particularly when it comes to the potential neglect of non-religious subjects. As religious education takes precedence in the curriculum, there is a possibility of reduced emphasis on subjects such as sciences, humanities, arts, and physical education. This narrow focus on religious education could limit students' exposure to a diverse range of disciplines and potentially impact their overall academic development. The strong emphasis on religious education within the context of school santrinization may result in limited time and resources allocated to non-religious subjects. The curriculum may prioritize the study of religious texts, teachings, and practices, leaving less room for the exploration of other academic disciplines. This could lead to a narrower educational experience and a potential imbalance in students' overall knowledge and skills.

Neglecting non-religious subjects such as sciences, humanities, arts, and physical education can have several negative implications. Firstly, it limits students' opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and a wellrounded understanding of the world. These subjects provide avenues for students to explore different perspectives, develop analytical abilities, and nurture their creativity. By reducing emphasis on these areas, students may miss out on opportunities to develop these essential skills. Secondly, neglecting non-religious subjects can hinder students' academic and career prospects. In today's increasingly diverse and interconnected world, a broad-based education that encompasses various disciplines is highly valued. Proficiency in subjects such as science, humanities, arts, and physical education can open doors to a wide range of academic and career opportunities. Neglecting these

⁵⁰ Amri, M., Tahir, S. Z. A. B., & Ahmad, S. (2017). The implementation of Islamic teaching in multiculturalism society: A case study at pesantren schools in Indonesia. *Asian Social Science*, *13*(6), 125.



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subjects may limit students' future choices and competitiveness in various fields.

Furthermore, a balanced education that includes both religious and nonreligious subjects is crucial for promoting tolerance, understanding, and appreciation for diversity. Exposure to different disciplines, ideas, and cultures fosters open-mindedness and helps students develop a broader perspective. It encourages them to engage with different viewpoints, promoting critical thinking and social cohesion. It is important to note that the extent to which non-religious subjects are neglected may vary across different educational institutions and contexts. Some schools and *pesantren* may adopt a more holistic approach, integrating religious education with a well-rounded curriculum that encompasses both religious and non-religious subjects. However, the potential neglect of non-religious subjects remains a concern in contexts where school santrinization predominantly focuses on religious education. Efforts are being made in some educational settings to strike a balance between religious and non-religious subjects. These efforts aim to provide students with a comprehensive education that combines religious teachings with a broad-based curriculum. Recognizing the importance of a diverse range of disciplines, some schools have implemented strategies to incorporate non-religious subjects into their curriculum, ensuring students receive a well-rounded education.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of school santrinization in Aceh has significant impacts and implications on education in the region. This unique cultural and religious practice, deeply rooted in Acehnese society, has both positive and negative consequences that need to be carefully considered. On the positive side, school santrinization promotes religious education and instills a strong sense of faith among students. It allows them to develop a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, fostering moral values, discipline, and spiritual growth. Additionally, the close-knit community of santri schools provides a supportive environment for students, encouraging camaraderie and social cohesion. However, the exclusive focus on religious education in santri schools may lead to a limited exposure to secular subjects, potentially hindering students' academic and professional prospects. The lack of a balanced curriculum that incorporates sciences, humanities, and critical thinking skills might restrict students' ability to compete in a rapidly evolving globalized world. To address these challenges, it is crucial to promote dialogue and collaboration between santri schools and mainstream educational institutions. By fostering partnerships, both systems can benefit from each other's strengths and offer a more comprehensive education that combines religious teachings with a wellrounded curriculum. Furthermore, it is essential to prioritize the professional



development of teachers in santri schools, ensuring they have the necessary skills to deliver a balanced education. Providing training programs that enhance their knowledge in secular subjects can equip them to deliver a broader curriculum while maintaining the core values of religious education.

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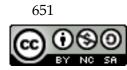
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