

The Role of Arabic in Promoting Religious Moderation at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School

Naili Zulfa Wafira^{1*}, Muzamil R. Pawi², Mirzahul Andrian³, Syaiful Mustofa⁴

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia; naili.zulfa.wafira.28@gmail.com

² Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia; muzamilrpawi79@gmail.com

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia; mirzahulandrian11@gmail.com

⁴ Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia; saifulmustofa@pba.uin-malang.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The potential for radicalism in educational environments poses a serious challenge to instilling values of diversity and tolerance among religious communities. Educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools, play a strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also possesses inclusive and moderate character traits. This study aims to analyze the role of Arabic language learning in enhancing religious moderation awareness among students at Darun Nun. Using a qualitative case study approach, data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's techniques. The results of the study indicate that Arabic language learning through the study of classical texts, contextual learning, active dialogue, and participation in social activities significantly contributes to strengthening the values of tolerance, balance, appreciation of diversity, and an inclusive attitude in the lives of students. This study makes an important contribution to understanding Arabic language learning that is not only linguistically and communicatively oriented but also transformative in shaping the character of students who are wise, open-minded, and able to live harmoniously in a diverse society. These findings also open up opportunities for further exploration in various pesantren contexts and other educational institutions focused on character development.

Keywords: Arabic Language, Pesantren, Religious Moderation

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is increasingly criticized by various parties because of the many bullying or violent practices that occur due to religious, cultural, ethnic or racial differences (Ambarwati et al., 2025). So that with the value of radicalism that is still very high in school institutions, it is enough to hamper schools in determining and concocting a curriculum that can foster a feeling of diversity without violence (Maharani & Rahmani, 2023). Therefore, moderation is seen as the only right thing as a model of Islam, especially Indonesian Islam, which is not

only relevant to the teachings of Islam but can overshadow the plurality of nations (Yusuf et al., 2024). So that the model of understanding and religious moderation movement is seen as quite effective to provide open space for the growth of ethnicity, religion and race in Indonesia (Abdullah Haidar, Anifatul Kiftiyah, Danur Putut Permadi et al. 2023). Because religious harmony is a very important thing in achieving the benefit of life in this country and being a shield from a cultural revolution that has the potential to destroy the future of humanity due to the development of science and technology (Harahap et al., 2023).

So that exemplary, environmental creation and coaching need to be carried out as a totality of education through tasks and activities. Coaching is a process of improving the planned pattern of life. Moreover, the teachings of education that are organized, neat, effective and successful are the goals of coaching and development. More than that, education is not only limited to developing intellect but developing all aspects of human personality for a perfect life.

In Arabic, moderation is known as *wasath* or *wasathiyah*, which means the best option. The word *wasith* has even been absorbed into the Indonesian language and has three meanings, namely: mediator, separator/peacemaker, and leader in the game (Tantra, 2024). Islamic moderation is seen as the only one that is most appropriate for the model of world Islam, especially Indonesian Islam. Islamic moderation is not only relevant to the teachings of Islam but is also seen as capable of overshadowing the plurality of nations. The Islamic moderation model of understanding and movement is seen as effective in providing an open space for the growth of various ethnicities, religions, and races (Maharani and Rahmaniar 2023). Religious moderation is a moderate perspective on religion, which is to understand and practice religious teachings without extremes, namely being in the middle. (Isyara et al. 2023).

In an effort to build a tolerant, peaceful and safe society. Religious moderation must be applied (Arifandi et al., 2023). *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin* is exemplified by moderation. The behavior and attitude of a Muslim must adhere to the principles of religious moderation, both individually and collectively. (Maulana et al., 2024). In various contexts, especially in the field of education. Instilling religious moderation in students / students, must be done early (Sudirman et al., 2023). They are trained to color people's lives with *fiqh* skills so that they are able to solve problems correctly and wisely. In addition, it is important to examine how religious moderation is practiced so that it has strong evidence that it can function as an educational institution to produce a generation of true moderation.

The goal of this study is to discover how Arabic helps students at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School become more conscious of religious moderation. This study intends to identify learning strategies that can internalize moderation values, such as tolerance, balance, and respect for differences, by using Arabic as the key to access Islamic literature. This will enable santri to understand religion both textually and contextually in plural social life. Research on "The Role of Arabic in Increasing Religious Moderation Awareness Among Islamic Boarding School Students" related to this study has, of course, been conducted by many researchers. Among them is the study on: "The Role of Religious Teachers in Instilling Religious

Moderation,” which emphasizes that religious moderation is crucial in Indonesia's diverse society and must be taught to students so they may grow into harmonious, compassionate, and tolerant individuals. It is essential to cultivate and strengthen the involvement of religious teachers in educating their students about the essence of tawasuth (Rana Farras Irmi, 2024).

Then, Rasyid and Rakhmat's research entitled “The Role of Muhammadiyah Youth in Building Religious Moderation” provides an overview of the understanding and attitudes of Muhammadiyah youth in Tasikmalaya Regency in implementing the values of religious moderation in carrying out organizational and individual behavior (Rasyid & Rakhmat, 2023). Hidayah and Muyassaroh also explain in their research entitled “Arabic Language Learning for Non-Muslims Based on Religious Moderation in Public Schools” the pattern of Arabic language learning for non-Muslims, so that Arabic language learning does not merely end with Islamic studies but can also become an international language used by students of different religions (Hidayah and Muyassaroh 2023).

It has not been discovered using the same objects and participants as this study, according to earlier research. The findings of this study highlight how Arabic helps students at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School become more conscious of religious moderation. By thoroughly examining the connection between language learning strategies and the internalization of religious moderation values, a topic that has never been explicitly brought up in prior research. This study offers a distinctive addition. The setting of Pesantren as an Islamic-based educational institution that plays a strategic role in forming students' moderate religious attitudes is the main subject of this study.

Thus, this study fills this gap by examining how Arabic is used as a tool for internalizing the values of religious moderation at the Darun Nun Islamic boarding school. This study not only highlights Arabic language learning methods but also observes their impact on interfaith social interactions within the boarding school environment. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of Arabic language learning in increasing awareness of religious moderation among students at the Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School, as well as to identify the forms of implementation of these values in their social lives.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (Septiana et al., 2024). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the phenomenon of the role of Arabic in shaping the religious moderation awareness of students at the Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School in the context of real life (Darman, 2024). This research was conducted from January to March 2024 at the Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School, located in Karang Besuki, Sukun District, Malang City. Case studies were used to describe how Arabic plays a role in raising awareness of religious moderation among students at the Darun Nun Islamic boarding school (Salsabillah, 2025). Qualitative research is a type of research that produces findings that cannot be obtained through statistical procedures or other quantitative approaches (Widayanti and Dewi 2024).

Qualitative research in this study involves describing field findings by recording and narrating them in the form of qualitative writing.

Researchers were present at the location during the data collection process (Nurrisaa et al., 2025). The research subjects consisted of students, teachers, and residents living near the pesantren, who were selected purposively. The main informants were three active students, two ustadz/ustadzah who taught Arabic, and two community leaders living near the pesantren. Data was collected using three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Romdona et al., 2024). Observation was used to observe the routine activities of students related to Arabic language learning and social interactions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' perceptions and experiences regarding religious moderation. Documentation included photos of activities, notes on study materials, and relevant internal boarding school archives. The data collection instruments consisted of observation guidelines and interview guidelines developed by the researcher based on the research focus (Waruwu, 2023).

The data analysis technique in this study is the Miles and Huberman analysis technique (Faisol et al., 2023). Researchers conducted data reduction since data collection, after data collection until the results of this study were concluded. Furthermore, this research is presented and concluded by narrowing the results related to the theory of religious moderation related to Arabic language studies, religious studies, and social activities (Hidayah & Muyassaroh, 2023b). To test the validity of the data in this study, researchers used the triangulation method, namely by synchronizing data from interviews, observations and research documentation (Husnullail et al., 2024). so that the research could produce accurate and valid data to be presented and concluded relating to Arabic language studies, religious studies, and social activities.

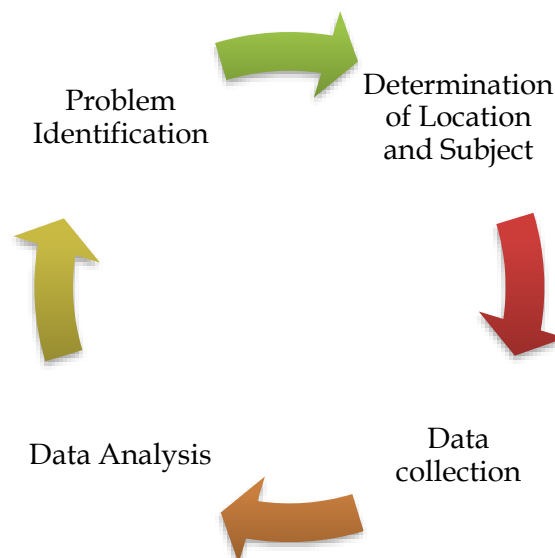


Figure 1. Research Flowchart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic Language Studies

Arabic language activities to increase the value of tolerance at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School are carried out every Saturday night and Wednesday morning which are attended by all students, to find out the extent of the students' understanding of Arabic. Learning Arabic can increase the awareness of students in terms of religious tolerance because they can study Islamic literature. For example, the Qur'an, Hadith, and the works of Islamic scholars so that they can access broader knowledge and can avoid misunderstanding (Muhammad et al., 2023).



Figure 2. Explains the Arabic Language Activities Carried Out on Saturday

The Arabic study methods at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School vary including lectures, discussions, sam'iyah shafawiyah, memorization and games. So that students become enthusiastic about participating in Arabic studies, this is corroborated by R1 who stated:

"I like taking Arabic classes because it doesn't make me bored. In addition to the delivery of material from Ustadz Ustadzah, sometimes there are also Arabic games that sharpen the brain, for example with chain whispers and more." (HS / student)

Based on the results of the interview above, it can be seen that in learning Arabic, of course, the role of ustadz and ustadzah in choosing the method used to convey material greatly determines the understanding of students. This is also corroborated by respondent 2:

"The learning is interesting, the Ustadz is also fun. I don't get sleepy when I learn Arabic, especially if I learn it with games, of course I really like it and also by learning Arabic I can learn other sciences in Arabic. in fact, my knowledge is getting wider" (AH / student)

After studying the Arabic language activities at the boarding school, it was found that there were many positive impacts that could be felt by the students, including religious moderation. Researchers tried to dig deeper into the abstract side related to the religious moderation of Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School students. This was also confirmed by respondent 3:

"Yes, by learning Arabic, Alhamdulillah, it can help children learn other books in Arabic so that they can understand other sciences such as manners in communicating with the community even with non-Muslims and many more." (IM/Ustadz)

The Qur'an also explains the importance of religious tolerance.

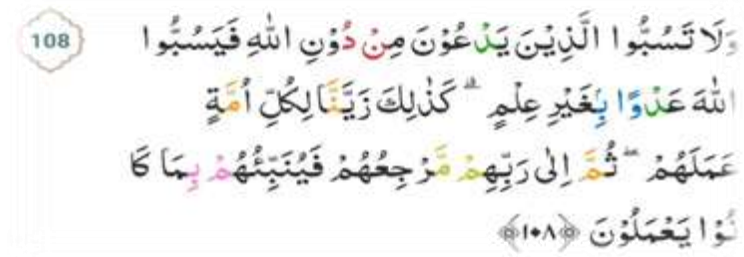


Figure 3. Qs. Al-An'am: 108

Meaning: And do not curse those whom they worship besides Allah, for they will later curse Allah beyond measure without knowledge. Thus have We made every people to consider their works good. Then to their Lord they will return, and He will tell them what they used to do."

Figure 3 explains that freedom of religion is freedom for every individual to practice and believe in their religion (Firdaus, 2024). With this freedom of religion, it can give birth to an attitude of toreny in religious life (Febriyanti & Hidayah, 2024). So that these differences do not make them to disagree but to share feelings and insights so that they can knit togetherness between fellow humans without any conflict in it (Kurniawan et al., 2024). This was corroborated by respondent 4:

"Here, in addition to learning religious knowledge, of course we also live in society. In fact, what is emphasized by our caregivers is not only studying knowledge but also how to behave with neighbors and always smile generously to neighbors even if the neighbors are non-Muslim." (SS/santri)

This is also corroborated by the hadith narrated by Tirmidhi as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ اللُّغَةَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ لِأَنَّهَا مِنَ أَلْسِنَتِ الْجَنَّةِ وَكِتَابِ اللَّهِ

Figure 4. Arabic Language Study Hadith

Meaning: Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Allah loves the Arabic language, for it is one of the languages of Paradise and the language of the Book of Allah" (Tirmidhi no. 2929).

Figure 4 explains the position of the Arabic language in Islam. The Prophet said that Allah loves Arabic because this language has extraordinary features. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims, which is the guide of life for all mankind (Aziba et al., 2025). Allah chose Arabic as the medium to convey His revelation, which shows the richness, depth of meaning, and beauty of this language in expressing divine teachings (Basiran & Gustianti, 2023). In addition, this hadith also mentions that Arabic is one of the languages of heaven, indicating its superiority and glory (Arisnaini, 2024).

Based on the above statement, it is found that the role of Arabic language is very strong in increasing the awareness of religious moderation of Darun Nun Islamic boarding school students. Through Arabic studies at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School, religious moderation and tolerance of santri are increased with

interesting and varied learning methods. Santri understand Islamic literature and interact well with non-Muslim residents, creating social harmony. This result shows the beginning of the formation of a tolerant attitude of santri, due to effective learning and a supportive environment. These positive things happen because of interactive teaching methods, access to Arabic Islamic literature, direct interaction with non-Muslim residents and emphasis on tolerance values in learning.

In contrast to prior research, which has focused exclusively on academic factors, this study stresses the impact of Arabic language learning on tolerance. With these findings, it should incorporate the value of tolerance into the curriculum, establish interfaith collaboration activities, and increase the influence of religious moderation.

Religious Studies

Religious studies to raise awareness of religious moderation at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School are held every Wednesday night, Thursday night. Seen in the picture below.



Figure 5. Religious Studies

Figure 5 explains the religious studies held at the Baiturrahman mosque of Darun Nun Islamic boarding school. This religious study uses the book of Tanbihul Ghafilin. Tanbihul Ghafilin is a book that discusses the warning of negligent people, moral education, and religiosity. This book contains reflections and advice aimed at shaping praiseworthy morals. This was corroborated by respondent 5:

"By studying the book of Tanbihul Ghafilin, my friends and I can learn about how to have good morals, yes, it is related to tolerance, we learn about worship as well as morals, of course we know how to behave." (NQ/santri)

Based on the results of the interview above, it can be seen that this religious study can increase religious moderation because it also learns about moral education, worship and matters related to Islamic teachings.

In line with that, in the Qur'an Al-Imran verse 19 is also mentioned about this religious study.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۚ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعِيًّا ۚ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ لَهُ سَرِيعَ الْحِسَابِ

Figure 6. Qs. Al-Imran: 19

Meaning: "*Verily, the only religion pleasing to Allah is Islam. There is no dispute among those who have been given the Book except after knowledge has come to them, because of envy (that exists) among them. Whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allah, verily Allah is swift in His reckoning.*" (QS. Ali Imran: 19)

Figure 6 explains that Islam is a religion that is blessed by Allah. Islam itself is characterized by moderation because it is based on a balance between spiritual and material aspects, as well as justice in human relationships with God, fellow humans, and the universe. Moderation in Islam requires a Muslim not to be extreme in belief or practice, either in the form of religious fanaticism or disregard for the Shari'ah (Putri et al., 2024).

In addition to the Qur'anic verse above, there is a hadith that conveys the same thing. The hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad and Ath-Thabrani.

مرحباً بطالب العلم، إنَّ طالبَ العلمِ تحفُّهُ الملائكةُ وتظلهُ بأجنحتِها،
ثميركبُ بعضهم بعضاً حتى يبلغوا السماءَ الدنيا من محبتهم لما يطلبُ

Figure 7. Religious Studies Hadith

Meaning: "*Welcome to the seeker of knowledge, verily the seeker of knowledge is surrounded by angels and shaded by them with their wings, and the angels are above each other up to the first heaven because they love what he seeks (which is the knowledge of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).*" (HR. Imam Ahmad and Ath-Thabrani)

Figure 7 explains that Islam emphasizes the importance of knowledge as a foundation in understanding religion correctly. Religious moderation requires a deep understanding of Islamic teachings so that one is not trapped in extremity, either in the form of fanaticism or excessive laxity. A knowledge seeker who understands religion correctly will be able to carry out the teachings of Islam proportionally, in accordance with the principles of justice and balance (Nur & Dzaton, 2024).

The study of *Tanbihul Ghafilin* in Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School improves santri morals, tolerance, and religious moderation through a deep understanding of Islam. This result is the beginning of the formation of religious moderation as a result of book studies and structured moral education.

Classical books build a balanced understanding of religion, supported by relevant teaching methods and a conducive pesantren environment (Zesia et al., 2024). This study is different from modern research, this study emphasizes the role of classical Arabic books in shaping religious moderation. There are several things that need to be done to increase the insight of religious moderation, namely providing training to ustadz/ustadzah on teaching methods of religious moderation, expanding santri access to Islamic books and literature relevant to moderation. As well as holding regular evaluations to see the impact of the study on the tolerance attitude of the students.

Social Activities

Religious moderation can also be seen from one of the activities held at Bukit Cemara Tidar housing estate. This activity is a collaboration between the community and Darun Nun students.



Figure 8. Religious Moderation Activity

Figure 8 explains that the 17 August 2024 activity in Bukit Cemara Tidar housing is a collaboration between santri and the surrounding community. As seen in the picture above, it shows that religious differences do not make each other revile and demean each other, but the differences make the relationship between religions closer (Oktawirawan & Kristiyanti, 2024). This is reinforced by R6:

"If there is an event here, the residents are compact. Every neighborhood association must delegate a performance. Here we don't see differences such as different religions, the important thing is that we are united. We also embrace huts and madrassas to take part with the residents." (S/resident)

Based on the explanation of one of the community leaders above, it can be seen that in the Bukit Cemara Tidar residential area, the residents have different beliefs, but the sense of tolerance between residents is very strong. Especially in the Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School environment, where students and residents intersect every day. So they must have extensive knowledge about the concept of religious moderation so that they can socialize well. The role of community leaders in a community is very much needed as a form of devotion (Faisol et al., 2023). So that the existence of community leaders can coordinate every activity in that place. Al-Qur'an surat al-hujurat verse 13 also explains religious moderation in social activities.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
 لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Figure 9. Qs. Al-Hujurat:13

Meaning: O people, indeed We have created you from a male and a female. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Indeed, Allah is the All-Knowing, the All-Absorbing.

Figure 9 explains the principle of universal equality and justice in Islam. Allah reminds all human beings that they were created from the same origin, a man (Adam) and a woman (Eve) (Wahyu & Fauzi, 2024). This shows that no human being is essentially superior to another based on ethnicity, race or

nationality. God made humans into nations and tribes not to create divisions, but so that they know, understand, and work together in goodness (Ciptadi et al., 2025).

This can be seen from the results of researchers' observations at the Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School located in Bukit Cemara Tidar Housing Karang Besuki Sukun Malang City Block K2/3 which is adjacent to the homes of non-Muslim residents. But until now, both santri and surrounding neighbors still live in harmony and respect each other even though they have different beliefs.



Figure 10. Location of Pesantren and Non-Muslim residents' houses

Figure 10 shows that the position of the Darun Nun Islamic boarding school is side by side with the houses of non-Muslim residents, so that it can foster a high sense of tolerance. Living as neighbors must respect each other and appreciate every difference that exists both from beliefs and customs.

In line with that, there is a hadith that also explains religious moderation.

صحيح البخاري ٣.٩١ حدثنا موسى بن إسماعيل حدثنا عبد الواحد بن زياد حدثنا الأعمش عن أبي صالح عن أبي سعيد قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يجيء نوح وأمه يقول الله تعالى هل بلغت فيقول نعم أي رب فيقول أمته هل بلغكم فيقولون لا ما جاءنا من نبي فيقول لنوح من يشهد لك فيقول محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم وأمه فنشهد قد بلغ وهو قوله جل ذكره (وكذلك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس) والوسط العدل

Figure 11. Hadith on religious moderation

Meaning: Musa ibn Isma'il told us 'Abdul Wahid ibn Ziyad told us Al A'masy from Abu Shalih from Abu Sa'id said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "(On the day of qiyamat) Noah and his people came and Allah said: "Have you delivered?" Noah replied: "I have, O my Lord". Then Allah asked his people: "Is it true that he has conveyed to you?" They replied: "No. No prophet has come to us". Then Allah said to Noah: "Who is your witness?" Noah said: "Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Ummah." So we testified that Noah had delivered the message to his people. This is as Allah Most High said (And thus we have made you a middle ummah to bear witness over the people).

Figure 11 explains religious moderation because it contains several main principles that reflect a wasathiyah (middle) attitude in practicing religion. This Hadith explains the principle of ummatan wasatha, which emphasizes that Muslims are a just, balanced ummah, and do not favor extremism or liberalism in

religion (Yusriyah, 2023). This attitude of moderation is shown by being an objective witness to the truth of the message of the previous prophets.

Based on the above statement, it is known that the role of Arabic is very strong in increasing the awareness of religious moderation of santri. Religious moderation activities in Bukit Cemara Tidar housing, which involve students of Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School and the community, show harmonious collaboration despite religious differences. This confirms that interfaith interaction can increase tolerance and social harmony.

These findings reflect the consequences of applying the values of religious moderation in daily life, especially in a multicultural environment. This activity is also the first step to strengthening interfaith relations. The success of religious moderation in this location can be explained through the role of community leaders who actively coordinate activities, as well as the deep religious understanding among santri. This kind of activity emphasizes the importance of an inclusive and educative approach in building tolerance.

Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on the internal aspects of pesantren, this finding highlights the interaction of pesantren with the wider community as a model of religious moderation. The action that needs to be taken is that similar programs need to be held regularly and supported by moderation training for santri and the community. In addition, documentation of this activity can be used as a best practice model for other groups.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study reveals that Arabic language instruction at Darun Nun Islamic Boarding School serves a vital impact in raising students' knowledge of religious moderation. The findings show that by studying Arabic Islamic writings, traditional book learning, contextual conversations, and social interactions, students can internalize principles such as tolerance, balance, and inclusivity in their daily lives. Arabic is useful not just for academic communication, but also for developing a moderate and open-minded religious character that values variety.

However, during the research process, several challenges arose, such as limited observation time due to the boarding school's busy schedule, limited written documentation of the students' activities, and difficulties in reaching some informants due to differences in their schedules and daily activities. Despite this, the data obtained sufficiently represents the significant role of Arabic in the process of internalizing moderate values.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers develop a more contextual and value-based Arabic language learning model, for example, through direct integration into cross-cultural or religious activities. Further research is recommended using a comparative approach in various boarding schools or other multicultural educational institutions to test the consistency of the role of Arabic in shaping moderate attitudes and to explore in greater depth the social and cultural dynamics that influence the effectiveness of such learning.

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