INTEGRATING QUR'ANIC VALUES AGAINST RADICALISM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY AT A BOARDING SCHOOL

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Abstract

This research examines the integration of Qur'anic values in the curriculum of Darul Amin Salafi islamic boarding school as an effort to build contextual and inclusive anti-radicalism education. The background of the research is based on the increasing challenges of radicalism due to textual and literal religious understanding. The purpose of the research is to understand how Qur'anic values are integrated in the curriculum, the role of exemplary teachers as Living Qur'an, critical dialog space, and the relationship between pesantren and local wisdom in shaping the tolerant and anti-radicalism character of santri. This research uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies conducted over a three-month period. The results showed that Darul Amin developed a thematic tafsir-based curriculum with the value of rahmatan lil 'alamin as the main framework, as well as providing historical and social contexts for sensitive verses such as jihad. Teachers as Living Qur'an figures encourage dialogic and tolerant character learning, while open discussion spaces strengthen student's critical and inclusive attitudes. The integration of Islamic values with Dayak local wisdom has proven effective in creating social harmony and facilitating multicultural education. The implication of this research confirms the importance of pesantren as strategic institutions for deradicalization through contextual curriculum, character building, and inclusive social dialogue.

Keywords: Anti-radicalism curriculum; living qur'an; moderation integration; salafi islamic boarding school.

Introduction

Religious radicalism today can no longer be understood simply as an extreme religious expression, but as a complex phenomenon rooted in various factors, ranging from narrow theological understanding, social inequality, to identity alienation identity (Smith, 1991; Arnold, 2022). In Indonesia, this phenomenon has undergone a transformation from mere ideological rhetoric to concrete acts of violence, intolerance and even terrorism (Sukabdi, 2023; Gazali et al., 2023). Radicalism and terrorism are conflicts and tensions between human beings in various ethnicities, religions, and others (Anwar et al., 2023). Cases of radicalism involving religious groups, including those from religious education, have raised public concerns about the potential misuse of religious teachings for violent political interests (De Graaf & Van den Bos, 2021). So far, the government's

efforts to deal with the threat of radicalism have relied on a security-based approach that is oriented towards tracking networks, arresting perpetrators, and dissolving organizations (Sawyer & Zinigrad, 2021). However, this approach tends to be reactive and does not touch the root causes of radicalism, namely misunderstandings in understanding religious texts, the absence of a healthy dialogue space, and the weak education of human values in the religious learning process.

In this context, religious education, especially Islamic education, has an important and strategic role as the frontline in building peaceful and constructive alternative narratives (Amit & Kafy, 2022; Hatim et al., 2025). Islamic boarding school (Pesantren) as Islamic educational institutions that have been deeply rooted in Indonesian society have social and cultural capital to transmit moderate and contextual Islamic values (Husaeni, 2023; Rois et al., 2023; Gama et al., 2024). Islamic boarding school not only educate cognitive and spiritual aspects, but also shape the character and social ethics of santri (student) within the framework of Indonesian diversity. However, in public and academic discourse, Salafi Islamic boarding school are often simplified as monolithic and hardline. Salafism itself is a broad theological spectrum, ranging from peaceful da'wah-oriented to potentially radical. While some Salafi Islamic boarding schools are trapped in the purification of rigid Islamic teachings, not a few also show the ability to adapt to the social context and challenges of the times. Generalizing all Salafi Islamic boarding school as hotbeds of radicalism risks closing the possibility of dialogue and learning from the positive practices that emerge in them (Jahroni, 2015; Sirry, 2024).

In this context, the study of Darul Amin Salafi Islamic boarding school in Palangka Raya is very significant. This Islamic boarding school displays an educational model that not only adheres to the principle of purification of Salafi-style Islamic teachings, but also actively internalizes the values of peace, tolerance, and openness through the Living Qur'an approach. This approach positions the Qur'an not merely as a sacred text that must be memorized or understood literally, but as a guide to life that must be lived and reflected in social behavior that is relevant to contemporary challenges (Zulkarnaini, 2022; Jamil, 2024). The implementation of Living Qur'an in Darul Amin reflects a form of religious praxis that emphasizes the importance of Qur'anic ethics in everyday life. Values such as justice, compassion *(rahmah)*, tolerance *(tasamuh)*, and deliberation *(shura)* become an integral part of the learning process in this Islamic boarding school. In the midst of the strong current of scriptural conservatism in some Salafi circles, the application of the Living Qur'an approach is a meeting point between loyalty to tradition and openness to the dynamics of the times (Alfatta, 2019; Ibrahim, 2022). This also shows that contextual religious understanding does not have to mean a compromise on the authenticity of Islamic teachings, but rather a form of actualization of Islamic values in a complex social reality.

Furthermore, the Living Qur'an approach applied at Darul Amin acts as a counter-narrative strategy to the discourse of violence in the name of religion. The students are not only taught to memorize and understand the verses of the Qur'an, but also encouraged to reflect them in real actions - such as maintaining inter-religious harmony, respecting local culture, and being active in community social activities. Thus, the religious education carried out does not stop at the normative-doctrinal aspect, but develops into a social transformation process that shapes the character of student to become agents of peace. From a broader perspective, these findings underline the importance of seeing Islamic boarding school -including those affiliated with Salafi-as dynamic entities, which are able to contribute positively to the prevention of radicalism through education based on living Qur'anic values. This approach clearly refutes the monolithic view that identifies all Salafi Islamic boarding school with exclusivism and radical potential. On the contrary, this study shows that there

is an open internal space for the reconstruction of a peaceful, adaptive, and inclusive understanding of Islam (Afifuddin et al., 2023; Falah et al., 2024).

This research presents novelty by raising the practice of anti-radicalism education from within the Salafi Islamic boarding school environment-a realm that has been relatively rarely touched in academic studies. Most of the previous literature has mostly highlighted Islamic boarding school affiliated with moderate groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama, while the representation of Salafi Islamic boarding school is often seen as uniform and closed. Therefore, by making Darul Amin Salafi Islamic boarding school as the research locus, this study not only presents a fresh perspective, but also challenges the dominant narrative of ideological uniformity in Salafi circles. The uniqueness and main attraction of this study lies in the pedagogical approach used. Living Qur'an becomes a bridge between textual teachings and social praxis that touches everyday life (El Shakry, 2019; Barlas, 2019). In the context of Salafi Islamic boarding school that are often assumed to be rigid and textual, the application of this approach shows the capacity of reinterpreting teachings that are more progressive and humanistic. This approach opens a new space for understanding Islam that not only emphasizes ritual piety, but also commitment to universal human values (Ibrahim, 2022).

This research has importance not only in its contribution to the theoretical discourse of the study of Islam, pesantren, and radicalism, but also in its practical implications for designing Islamic education models based on Qur'anic values in a contextual and applicable manner. The research findings are expected to expand the understanding of the community, academics, and policy makers that effective deradicalization efforts do not always have to come from outside the community, but can grow and develop authentically from within the community itself. In other words, the most powerful anti-radicalization approach is one deeply rooted in Islam, specifically by utilizing the Qur'an as a source of ethical, moral, and social inspiration that fosters a peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant character (Afwadzi et al., 2024). The central question guiding this research is: How can the integration of Qur'anic values within the curriculum and educational practices at the pesantren shape the character of santri to be tolerant, critical, and resistant to radicalism through the roles of exemplary teachers, the creation of dialogical spaces, and the reinforcement of local wisdom?

Literature Review

This literature review examines the integration of Qur'anic values in Islamic boarding school (pesantren) education as a strategy to counter radicalism. It highlights three key areas: the presence of radicalism in educational settings, the formative role of pesantren in shaping student character, and the need for contextual religious education. Rather than stemming solely from religious content, radicalism is shaped by how knowledge is delivered, curriculum design, and social context. This review frames the study within current scholarly debates on fostering inclusive, tolerant learning environments, laying the groundwork for analyzing the Darul Amin case.

Education and radicalism in the islamic boarding school context

Radicalism in education is a complex phenomenon that is not only determined by the content of the teachings, but also by the methods, curriculum structure, and social environment where education takes place (Delahunty & Kimbell, 2021). In the context of Islamic boarding school, as traditional Islamic educational institutions that are deeply rooted in Indonesian local culture, the role of Islamic boarding school is very strategic in shaping the religious orientation of the younger

generation of Muslims. However, when the education system in Islamic boarding school is closed, doctrinal, and lacks space for dialog, the potential for intolerant and exclusive attitudes to grow is greater. The concept of structural violence, which refers to forms of oppression or injustice that are institutionalized in the social system, including the education system (Paulson & Tikly, 2023). In the context of Islamic boarding school education, structural violence can appear in the form of perpetuating a binary way of thinking, where truth is only monopolized by one interpretation, and differences are considered a threat. Education like this creates a narrow space for critical reasoning and makes student more vulnerable to radical ideologies that claim "single truth".

Furthermore, Azra (2017) states that resistance to pluralism and open-mindedness often comes from a curriculum that is not adaptive to social dynamics. Islamic boarding school that still practice a rote learning system (rote memorization without understanding) tend to lead student to a shallow textual understanding, especially if it is not accompanied by an analysis of the context or history of the verse's revelation *(asbabun nuzul)*. Amzat (2022) also added that when student is not given the space to question, dialogue, or relate religious teachings to social reality, they tend to look for alternative ideological handles that seem "certain", one of which is radical or extreme religious understanding. In this regard, radicalism is not only a matter of teaching content (what is taught), but also methods and approaches (how the teachings are delivered). Education that builds exclusive attitudes often arises from an environment that disconnects the relationship between religious texts and the realities of life. When the Qur'an is only understood as a collection of legal propositions without its ethical, moral and social dimensions, there is a tendency to instrumentalize religious verses to justify discriminatory and even violent actions.

Living Qur'an approach

The Living Qur'an approach is one of the paradigms of contemporary interpretation that emphasizes the importance of interaction between the sacred text and the reality of Muslim life (Muttaqin, 2021). Different from the classical textual approach which tends to prioritize the legal-formal aspects of the Qur'an, the Living Qur'an invites people to see verses not only as a source of law, but as ethical guidelines that are alive and dynamic in the social, cultural, and historical context of humanity. According to Abdullah, this approach sees the Qur'an as a text that is not finished being interpreted in academic or legal spaces alone, but is constantly interpreted in the daily practice of Muslim life (Muhyin, 2023). In other words, the Living Qur'an places the ummah as an active subject of interpretation in interpreting, internalizing, and translating Qur'anic values into concrete actions. This is rooted in the praxis hermeneutic approach developed by Fazlur Rahman (1982), in which the meaning of the Qur'an is understood through a double movement-that is, moving from the social context in which the verse was revealed to universal moral principles, and back again to the social context of today's people (Üstün Külük, 2023). The ability to weigh thoughts by putting religion in a personal space personal space stimulates the emergence of religious awareness to be kind to others (Surawan et al., 2024).

This approach becomes very relevant in the context of anti-radicalism education, because it is able to present contextual, inclusive, and dialogical interpretations of the Qur'an (Rajaminsah et al., 2024). In the midst of the rise of religious interpretations that are literal and close the space for differences, Living Qur'an encourages the internalization of universal values such as: *Tasamuh* (tolerance); *'Adl* (justice); *Rahmah* (compassion); *Insaniyyah* (humanity). This approach also challenges the indoctrinate model of religious education, by encouraging the process of social and spiritual

reflection on the reality of injustice, violence, and intolerance which are often wrapped in religious pretexts. When student is invited to experience the Qur'an alive-through critical discussion, social experience, and praxis reflection-they will be more likely to form a context-aware, non-violent, and socially just religious attitude. More than just a method of interpretation, Living Qur'an can function as a pedagogical approach, where Qur'anic values are not only taught, but lived out in the lives of student, teachers, and the Islamic boarding school community. In the context of Salafi Islamic boarding school, which generally adhere to textual traditions, the application of this approach can open a new space for a paradigm shift towards a more transformative and contribute religion to social peace (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). Thus, the Living Qur'an approach not only broadens the horizon of interpretation, but also contributes greatly to building a friendly, open and contextual Islamic narrative as part of an anti-radicalism education strategy.

Critical and emancipatory islamic education

Critical and emancipatory Islamic education departs from the assumption that religious education should not stop at the transfer of normative knowledge, but must be able to raise the critical awareness of students so that they can read reality, understand social inequality, and internalize religious values as a liberating force. This theory leans heavily on the thinking of Paulo Freire, especially in his critique of the conventional education system which he calls the "banking model of education" (Bogle, 2021). In the banking model of education, students are considered as "empty accounts" that must be filled by the teacher. This process creates a vertical and repressive power relationship, where students have no room to ask questions, interpret, or relate lessons to their lives. In the context of Islamic boarding school, this model can be reflected in learning practices that are doctrinal, centred on rote learning, and lack critical participation from student. As a result, the Qur'anic values taught tend to become dogma, not a living and liberating consciousness.

Freire (1970) offers an alternative approach through critical pedagogy, which aims to create education as a dialogic and transformational process (Morrow & Torres, 2002). In this approach, the teacher is no longer the sole source of authority, but rather a facilitator who helps students build self- and social awareness *(conscientização)*. This process allows learners to understand religious texts contextually, reflectively, and apply them in real life (Nugraha et al., 2024). Critically framed religious education will encourage learners to ask: "Why does injustice occur? How can the value of justice in the Qur'an be applied in my context today?". In the context of Islamic education, Freire's thinking is in line with the concept of ijtihad, which is a critical and reflective effort in understanding religious teachings (Jusniati et al., 2023). Emancipatory Islamic education does not deny tradition, but revives it in a dialectical space between text and reality. This means that student is invited not only to accept teachings, but also to interrogate their meaning, reinterpret according to the context of the times, and act based on the values of justice, mercy, and humanity. Thus, the application of critical pedagogy in Islamic boarding school is not an effort to negate tradition, but instead to revive the spirit of Islamic education which from the beginning prioritized wisdom, freedom of thought, and social justice. This kind of education is expected to produce student who are not only ritually pious, but also critical, socially concerned, and able to become agents of change in society, and keep them away from the trap of radicalism.

Methodology

Research design and approach of the study

This study employed a qualitative approach with an ethnographic method, which was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the social, cultural, and religious dynamics within Salafi Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School, Palangka Raya. Ethnography is particularly appropriate for this context because it allows the researcher to explore not only the formal curriculum structure but also the everyday lived experiences, symbolic expressions, and social interactions that shape the internalization of religious values and anti-radicalism education (Jamali, 2018). By immersing in the boarding school environment, the researcher were able to capture how religious moderation and Living Qur'an practices are enacted both in structured learning and informal settings, such as communal worship, social gatherings, and student discussions. This holistic understanding is essential for revealing how values are transmitted beyond textual instruction.

Research site and participants

The research was conducted at Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School, a Salafi-oriented Islamic boarding school located in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan. The site was purposively selected due to its relevance to the study's focus on Islamic education and anti-radicalism within a traditional but ideologically distinct educational institution. Participants included a diverse group of boarding school actors, comprising:

- *Kiai* (Islamic boarding school leaders or caregivers)
- Teachers *(ustadz* and *ustadzah)*
- Senior students *(santri)*
- Alumni, who have graduated and can reflect retrospectively on their educational experiences.

Participants in this study were purposively selected based on criteria designed to ensure a rich and comprehensive understanding of the integration of Qur'anic values in the pesantren curriculum and its role in anti-radicalism education. The selection criteria included: (1) experience, i.e., participants who have significant involvement in educational activities in pesantren, such as teachers, caregivers, and senior students who have been actively following the curriculum for a sufficient period of time; (2) level of involvement, i.e., priority was given to individuals who directly participated in curriculum development, teaching processes, or student mentoring so as to provide in-depth and relevant perspectives; and (3) ability to articulate insights, i.e., participants who were able to reflect and communicate their experiences, values, and perceptions regarding educational approaches and character building in pesantren. This purposive sampling approach was chosen to capture various points of view in depth and produce a multifaceted understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected using three main methods: participatory observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted over three months, involving participation in formal and informal activities at Darul Amin Islamic boarding school, such

as classroom learning, evening recitations, student discussions, and religious social events, to directly observe the practice of Qur'anic values and moderation. Interviews with key informants—kiai, teachers, senior students, and alumni—explored their experiences and understanding of how anti-radicalism values are internalized both formally and informally. Document analysis covered curriculum, teaching materials, school regulations, and archives related to character education and religious moderation (Supriadi et al., 2023).

Data analysis in this study was conducted simultaneously with data collection through three stages: data reduction, thematic categorization, and contextual interpretation (Rutakumwa et al., 2020). Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were selected to highlight key aspects such as the integration of Qur'anic values, the exemplary role of teachers, and the character building of santri. Significant quotes were then coded and grouped into themes such as "living Qur'an," "contextual interpretation," and "critical dialog as anti-radicalism." The final stage of contextual interpretation was carried out by considering the cultural and social background of the pesantren, so that researchers can understand how Qur'anic values are applied contextually to form tolerant characters and prevent radicalism. This process is reflective and iterative to ensure the depth of analysis and cohesiveness of findings.

Validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing with experts (Wang et al., 2018). The peer debriefing process involved three academic experts in the fields of Islamic education, curriculum development, and counter-radicalism studies. These experts included two senior lecturers from Islamic universities with extensive publications on pesantren education and one practitioner with experience in curriculum integration in pesantren-based anti-radicalism programs. Their role was to critically examine the research process, interpretation of data, and emerging themes to ensure analytical rigor and minimize researcher bias. This comprehensive methodology enabled a deep and credible understanding of how Islamic moderation values are taught and practiced in an Islamic boarding school traditionally focused on classical texts.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study based on the main research objective: to explore how Qur'anic values are integrated into the educational curriculum and practices of the Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School as a contextual and inclusive strategy for anti-radicalism education. In line with this, the study specifically addresses how the Islamic boarding school: (1) implements moderation values within its curriculum, (2) positions teachers as moral exemplars or Living Qur'an, (3) facilitates critical and dialogic learning spaces, and (4) incorporates local wisdom as a medium for promoting tolerance and social harmony. The findings are presented thematically to correspond with the core components of the research question and to provide a systematic understanding of how each element contributes to building an Islamic boarding school-based model of counter-radicalism education.

Implementation of moderation values in the curriculum

The Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School demonstrates a transformative approach to curriculum design by integrating Qur'anic values not only in a textual manner but also through a contextual and thematic framework. While classical religious sciences such as *tawhid*, *fiqh*, and *tafsir* remain central, the Islamic boarding school incorporates thematic interpretations *(tafsir maudhū'i)* that

address key values of Islamic moderation, including tolerance, social justice, and a contextual understanding of jihad. These themes are consistently framed within the Qur'anic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, providing students with a lens to understand scripture in light of contemporary challenges such as extremism and intolerance. For example, lessons on jihad are complemented by historical context and counter-narratives that emphasize its ethical and defensive dimensions, discouraging literal and militant misinterpretations.

This curricular integration aligns directly with the study's purpose of exploring how the Qur'an is positioned as a source of ethical and inclusive education, and addresses the research question regarding how Qur'anic values are taught to promote anti-radicalism. The curriculum fosters not only cognitive understanding but also moral and civic character formation, equipping students to engage critically and peacefully with diverse social realities (Marjani, 2023; Damayanti, 2024). One of the featured modules that forms a core part of the curriculum is "Islam and Citizenship," which instils in student an awareness of the importance of peace and social responsibility as part of faith. This module not only teaches normative values but also provides space for student to critically examine the relationship between Islamic teachings and the dynamics of national life. In an interview with RZ teacher Darul Amin curriculum coordinator, he emphasized,

> "We deliberately present thematic interpretations that raise issues such as jihad and tolerance with a contextual approach. For example, jihad verses are not taught as an invitation to physical war, but as a moral and social struggle. This is important so that student understand the essence of Islam which is full of mercy, not one that triggers violence or exclusivity."

In this interview, MF, a tafsir teacher, explains his approach to teaching Qur'anic verses that have the potential to be misunderstood. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and social context in interpreting verses, so that students are not trapped in a literal understanding that could lead to radical attitudes. MF teacher, the tafsir teacher, adds,

> "Every time we discuss a potentially misunderstood verse; we always relate it to the history of the revelation of the verse and the current social context. This is to form a complete and critical understanding, so that student is not trapped in literal interpretations that can trigger radical attitudes."

The experience of student also reinforces the effectiveness of this curriculum. AF, a senior student, stated,

> "The material in the Islamic boarding school teaches us that jihad is a struggle to improve ourselves and society, not just war. We are encouraged to think critically and understand the context of the verse, so that we are not easily influenced by extreme views."

Classroom observations at Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School show that tafsir is taught through a dialogical and contextual approach, encouraging critical thinking and fostering tolerance. The "Islam and Citizenship" module plays a key role in promoting character development and civic engagement, framing Islamic teachings within the inclusive concept of rahmatan lil 'alamin. By addressing themes like jihad, tolerance, and social justice through thematic interpretations and historical context, Darul Amin presents a moderate and compassionate view of Islam. This model

demonstrates that Salafi education can be both rooted in classical scholarship and responsive to contemporary challenges, serving as a platform for social transformation and inclusive religious understanding.

Table 1. *Implementation of moderation values in the curriculum*

Theme	Sub-themes
Transformational Curriculum Approach	Education is directed toward contemporary social realities, preventing narrow and extreme interpretations.
Moderated Centrality of Classical Sciences	Preserving the authenticity of Islamic tradition while fostering value-based innovation.
Emphasis on Islamic Moderation Values	Promotes an Islam that is peaceful, socially relevant, and inclusive.
Framing Within *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*	Provides a spiritual foundation to shape inclusive character and distance students from exclusivism.
Contextualizing Jihad as Ethical Struggle	Counters radical narratives and redefines jihad as a tool for self-development and societal progress.
Character and Citizenship Education	Strengthens identity as active, tolerant, and responsible Muslim citizens.
Teacher's Role in Thematic Interpretation	Teachers play a key role in fostering critical thinking and avoiding narrow literalism.
Critical Engagement with Misunderstood Verses	Prevents misuse of religious texts for violent or intolerant purposes.
Student Participation and Perspectives	Curriculum outcomes directly influence student mindset and character.
Dialogical and Contextual Teaching Methods	A progressive teaching methodology that supports moderation values.
Salafi Education's Responsiveness to Challenges	Opens new space for relevant and transformative Salafi education.

The curriculum analysed in this table shows the integration of Islamic moderation values through thematic, contextual, and dialogical approaches. While retaining classical sciences such as *tawhid*, *Fiqh* and *tafsir*, the curriculum is developed to be relevant to contemporary social challenges. Values such as tolerance, justice, jihad as an ethical struggle, and universal compassion are the main focus. The role of the teacher as a facilitator and the active involvement of the students demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach in shaping a peaceful, inclusive understanding of Islam that stays away from extremism.

Teacher's exemplary as living Qur'an

Teacher's exemplary is the main pillar in implementing the Living Qur'an approach in Darul Amin Salafi Islamic boarding school. The teacher in this Islamic boarding school do not only act as

conveyors of knowledge, but also as real role models who demonstrate Qur'anic values in every aspect of social interaction and daily life.

Open and dialogical attitude

In the learning process, the teacher shows an open attitude towards differences in opinion and understanding. They encourage student to ask questions even about sensitive issues, and guide patiently without imposing certain views. This builds an inclusive and dialogical learning climate, which is far from an authoritarian approach. As expressed by senior student AF in an interview,

> *"Our teacher never gets angry if we ask about sensitive matters, even about other understandings. Instead, we were invited to dialogue and given references. He is very patient and gives examples directly from the Qur'an."*

The conclusion from this statement shows that the teaching approach taken by the teacher is very open, dialogical, and grounded in authoritative references, particularly the Qur'an. By responding to sensitive questions with patience and encouraging healthy discussions, the teacher not only creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment but also embodies core Qur'anic values—such as patience, wisdom, and compassion—in the educational process. This approach fosters a rational and respectful understanding of Islam while positioning the teacher as a living example of the values they teach.

Strengthening teacher competence

In addition to the practice in the field, Darul Amin Islamic boarding school also systematically develops the capacity of teacher through regular coaching programs. Internal documentation mentions a monthly forum entitled "Becoming a Qur'anic Figure" which is held to strengthen the spiritual and pedagogical competencies of teachers. This forum provides a space for reflection and discussion on how to internalize Qur'anic values in teaching and social interaction. According to teacher HK, one of the teacher coaches, in an interview,

> "This program helps us to continue to improve ourselves, not only in terms of knowledge, but also morals and how to convey the message of Islam which is rahmatan lil 'alamin. We realize that teachers must be a real example for students."

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In an interview, HK teacher, one of the teacher coaches at Darul Amin Salafi Islamic boarding school, emphasized the importance of the teacher coaching program run by the Islamic boarding school. He said that this program not only increases the religious knowledge of the teacher, but also improves their morals and the way they convey the message of Islam which is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. According to him, teachers must be a real example for student, because teachers' exemplary behaviour determines the success of character education in Islamic boarding school. Hasan's teacher statement is in line with the concept of exemplary teachers run at the Salafi Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School, which is not only a companion activity to learning, but the core of the Islamic boarding school character education model. Teachers at Darul Amin act as Living Qur'an-figures who live and practice the values of the Qur'an in everyday life. Thus, student not only receive theoretical or textual knowledge, but also get real examples of how Islamic teachings are applied in social interactions and decision making. This approach strengthens character education based on Qur'anic values, so as to form a tolerant, open, and anti-radicalism student.

Table 2. *Teacher's role as the living Qur'an at Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School*

Theme	Sub-themes
Teacher's Exemplary as Living Qur'an	Teacher's example is central to Qur'anic-based character education, ensuring that values are lived, not just taught.
Open and Dialogical Attitude	Fosters an inclusive and respectful learning environment, helping students develop critical, tolerant, and rational Islamic understanding.
Strengthening Teacher Competence	Emphasizes that exemplary behaviour is developed through continuous training, enhancing the success of character-based education.
Qur'anic Character Education	This approach makes values tangible and applicable, forming students who are morally grounded, tolerant, and resistant to radicalism.
Rahmatan lil 'Alamin as a Foundation	Promotes a compassionate and universally beneficial understanding of Islam, encouraging openness, peace, and respect for diversity.

The table above explains that at Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School, teachers serve as Living Qur'an figures—not only teaching theory but also exemplifying Qur'anic values in their daily lives. Through open, dialogical attitudes and regular capacity-building programs, teachers help shape students into tolerant, critical, and anti-radical individuals. This approach emphasizes Islam as a mercy to all *(rahmatan lil 'alamin)* and places teacher role-modeling at the heart of Qur'an-based character education.

Discussion space and tolerance

Darul Amin Salafi Islamic boarding school consistently opens a wide and inclusive space for critical dialog through various routine activities, such as *bahtsul masail* (religious deliberations), classical

book discussions, and thematic study forums held every weekend. These forums are designed to encourage student to express their opinions and exchange ideas freely, especially regarding contemporary issues that are often a source of controversy, such as transnational ideologies, extremism, and socio-cultural diversity in society. In one of the *bahtsul masail* sessions observed, the topic of discussion was "How Does Islam Respond to Media Provocations?". In this forum, students were given the opportunity to express various critical views, followed by a mentor who used the Living Qur'an approach by interpreting Qur'anic verses contextually and relevant to media issues and their social impact. RZ teacher Darul Amin's curriculum coordinator, emphasized in an interview,

> "If we don't provide space for dialog, students can look for their own answers from the internet which are not necessarily correct or even dangerous. This is where the role of Islamic boarding school is very important - to be an open and critical learning house, not a doctrinaire one that closes access to thought."

The implementation of moderation values in the learning process at Islamic boarding schools is not only reflected in institutional policies, but also in the direct experiences of the students. These experiences offer concrete insights into how values such as tolerance, dialogue, and critical thinking are internalized in everyday educational practices. This opinion is reinforced by the experience of one of the students, SN, who stated,

> "Here, we are taught to dare to ask questions and express opinions, even when they are different. Teacher always supports us to discuss politely and based on the correct arguments, so that we are not easily influenced by extreme views."

Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School fosters a dialogical and tolerant learning environment that actively promotes Islamic moderation through regular academic forums like bahtsul masail and thematic discussions. These platforms encourage students to critically engage with contemporary issues such as extremism and socio-cultural diversity, guided by teachers who apply a contextual Living Qur'an approach. This method deepens religious understanding while preventing literalist or radical views. The school emphasizes freedom of thought, respectful dialogue, and critical thinking, reducing students' reliance on unverified information. Student testimonies confirm an open atmosphere for questioning and evidence-based discussion. Overall, Darul Amin exemplifies a transformative, inclusive Islamic education model committed to peace and relevance in today's context. The following is a thematic analysis table based on the text you provided about discussion space and tolerance at Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School,

Table 3. *Discussion space and tolerance*

Theme	Sub-themes
Open and Inclusive Dialogue	Creating an open learning environment prevents misinformation and supports critical, contextual understanding of issues.

Living Qur'an Approach in Teaching	Helps students connect religious teachings to real-world challenges, reducing literalist and extremist interpretations.
Encouraging Critical Thinking and Tolerance	Fosters respectful dialogue and critical thinking, strengthening tolerance and resilience against radical ideas.
Addressing Contemporary Social Issues	Prepares students to face real social challenges with informed, moderate Islamic perspectives.
Preventing Radicalism and Misinformation	Institutional role in guiding youth away from radical or false ideas through constructive dialogue and critical education.
Student Experience and Institutional Impact	Concrete evidence that institutional moderation values are internalized in daily educational practice, leading to tolerant students.

The table illustrates how Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School fosters an open and inclusive discussion space that encourages critical dialogue and tolerance among students. Through regular forums like bahtsul masail and thematic discussions, teachers apply the Living Qur'an approach to connect Islamic values with contemporary issues in a contextual manner. This approach helps students develop critical thinking skills, avoid extremist views, and face social challenges with a moderate and inclusive attitude. Student testimonials confirm that the learning environment supports freedom to ask questions and engage in respectful, evidence-based discussions.

Integration with local wisdom

One of the uniqueness of the Living Qur'an approach in Darul Amin Salafi Islamic boarding school is its ability to integrate Islamic values with the local wisdom of the Dayak people in Central Kalimantan. This integration is not just a formality, but a real effort to build social harmony and respect the cultural diversity that exists in the environment around the Islamic boarding school. The Islamic boarding school actively establishes good and collaborative relationships with traditional leaders and other religious leaders in Palangka Raya and its surroundings. This approach is in accordance with the principle of 'urf (tradition) in Islam, which emphasizes the importance of respecting the customs and habits of the community as long as they do not contradict the principles of Sharia. Thus, Islamic boarding school are able to act as cultural mediators as well as agents of peace in a plural society. In an interview with Kiai Haji MS, the caregiver of the Islamic boarding school, he emphasized,

> "We did not come here with a violent Islam. We preach with gentleness. We even learn a lot from Dayak culture about the wisdom of living together. We see Islam and local culture as two things that complement each other, not contradict each other."

This statement illustrates the open and adaptive attitude of Islamic boarding school in responding to the local socio-cultural context. This is also a concrete form of Living Qur'an which is not only memorizing the sacred text, but living the universal values of the Qur'an in the reality of everyday life.

Observations during the da'wah safari activities to the villages around the Islamic boarding school show how Darul Amin students respectfully participate in local cultural rituals such as ngajat dances or harvest ceremonies which are symbols of gratitude of the Dayak people. This activity does not obscure the student's Islamic identity, but rather shows an inclusive attitude and respect for cultural diversity. One of the students, Nl, said in an interview,

> "We were taught to appreciate Dayak culture because it is part of the beauty of Indonesia. By participating in traditional activities, we learn how Islam and culture can coexist without conflict."

Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School exemplifies a progressive Islamic education model by integrating Islamic values with the local wisdom of the Dayak community. This approach, grounded in the Islamic jurisprudential principle of 'urf (local custom), embraces cultural traditions that do not conflict with Sharia, fostering harmonious relationships with local religious and traditional leaders. Institutionalized cooperation through formal agreements supports religious moderation and multicultural education. Students actively participate in Dayak rituals, reflecting how Islamic teachings can coexist with and enrich local culture. This lived cultural appreciation helps develop an inclusive Islamic identity and positions Darul Amin as a model for intercultural dialogue, religious harmony, and community-based Islamic education in Indonesia's pluralistic society. The following is a text-based thematic analysis table on integration with local wisdom at Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School:

Table 4. *Integration with local wisdom*

Theme	Sub-themes
Integration of Islamic Values with Local Wisdom	Shows adaptive, respectful approach that blends religion with local culture to build peace and community cohesion.
Respect for '*Urf* (Local Custom)	Islamic boarding school acts as cultural mediator, applying Islamic law flexibly in a pluralistic society.
Collaboration with Local Leaders	Strengthens religious moderation and interfaith harmony through institutional partnerships.
Living Qur'an as Practical Values	Encourages applying Qur'anic principles in real social and cultural contexts, fostering inclusiveness and tolerance.
Student Participation in Local Culture	Promotes inclusive Islamic identity that embraces cultural diversity, serving as a model for peaceful coexistence.
Model for Intercultural Dialogue	Positions the institution as a role model for blending religious teachings with cultural diversity in a plural society.

The table shows how Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School integrates Islamic values with the local wisdom of the Dayak community. Guided by the principle of 'urf, the school respects local

traditions as long as they do not conflict with Sharia and fosters good cooperation with traditional and religious leaders. This approach brings Qur'anic values to life in daily practice, including students' participation in Dayak cultural rituals without losing their Islamic identity. The model promotes interfaith and cultural harmony and serves as an example of inclusive and tolerant Islamic education in a pluralistic society.

Discussion

Integrating islamic moderation into the curriculum of darul amin islamic boarding school

In the midst of globalization and increasing societal complexity, Islamic education must not only preserve classical scholarship but also remain responsive to contemporary realities. The Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School illustrates a progressive model by integrating values of Islamic moderation into its curriculum, offering a contextual and inclusive approach to religious education (Mala & Hunaida, 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023). This approach shifts away from rigid textualism by encouraging students to understand the Qur'an not just literally but within its historical, cultural, and social context *(asbāb al-nuzūl)*. For example, discussions around verses on jihad (e.g., QS. Al-Anfal: 60, QS. At-Taubah: 5) emphasize that jihad encompasses moral and social struggle rather than militant action, helping to counter radical interpretations (Qureshi, 2015; Rufaedah et al., 2019). This method encourages critical and reflective thinking as a core pedagogical principle (Khasanah et al., 2023; Zahara et al., 2024). The curriculum further incorporates universal values such as tolerance, social justice, compassion, and respect for diversity, rooted in the Qur'anic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation). These values are not only theoretical but practiced through modules like Islam and Citizenship, where students explore the intersection of Islamic teachings with democratic values and interfaith coexistence (Rofiqi & Haq, 2022; Djamaluddin et al., 2024). Dialogical forums such as bahtsul masail and thematic discussions on social media ethics and religious tolerance provide a safe and structured space for critical engagement. One such example involved a session on "Islam and Social Media," teaching students to verify information and use digital platforms as tools for peaceful da'wah (Slama & Barendregt, 2018). Cultural integration is also a hallmark of Darul Amin's approach. Through da'wah safari activities, students engage respectfully with the Dayak community's cultural rituals, like the *ngajat* dance and harvest ceremonies, reinforcing the idea that Islam can harmonize with local traditions (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025). This aligns with the Islamic legal principle of '*urf* (local custom), which acknowledges cultural practices as long as they do not contradict Sharia.

Central to this transformative education is the role of teachers as "Living Qur'an" figures, who not only convey knowledge but embody Qur'anic ethics in daily life—patience, openness, and compassion—especially when responding to sensitive or controversial topics (Badri & Malik, 2024). These practices collectively nurture students with open-minded, inclusive, and peace-oriented character, equipping them to become agents of positive social transformation in pluralistic societies (Mala et al., 2024; Zainuddin et al., 2025). Research confirms that such an approach can strengthen civic responsibility and act as a preventive measure against radicalism (Wasehudin et al., 2023). However, this study acknowledges limitations. It focuses on a single Islamic boarding school, which may not reflect the broader diversity of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Additionally, the short research duration limited the ability to observe long-term behavioural outcomes. The integration of local wisdom, while effective in Darul Amin's setting, may not be easily replicated in more

conservative or urban Islamic boarding school environments. These factors point to the need for future research with broader and longitudinal designs to evaluate the scalability and sustainability of this inclusive educational model.

Transformative teaching at darul amin embodying qur'anic values in salafi islamic education

The educational model at Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School exemplifies a significant transformation in Islamic pedagogy. Teachers are not merely knowledge transmitters but serve as moral and spiritual exemplars—a concept known as the *Living Qur'an*, where educators embody Qur'anic values such as patience, compassion, and wisdom in their daily interactions (Rafiq, 2021; Mujahid, 2021). Contrary to common stereotypes about Salafi rigidity, teachers at Darul Amin foster open, dialogical, and respectful learning spaces, even when handling sensitive or controversial issues (Syukri, 2023). This approach cultivates a safe and inclusive classroom environment where students are encouraged to ask questions, discuss, and critically engage with Islamic teachings. Such dialogical culture acts as a preventive mechanism against radical ideologies, which often emerge from rigid, unquestioned interpretations of scripture (Yusuf et al., 2023). During nightly halaqah sessions, for instance, teachers begin by reciting Qur'anic verses such as QS. Al-Hujurat: 13 and QS. An-Nisa: 36, then contextualize them to address contemporary issues like social division, misinformation, and intergroup conflict (Suryani et al., 2023; Halimah et al., 2024).

Teachers also use empathetic, inclusive language that is accessible to students from diverse backgrounds, fostering a participatory learning environment (Ilyas et al., 2024). This model positions Islamic boarding school not just as religious institutions but as alternative educational spaces that nurture tolerant, critically minded, and socially engaged youth (Armedi et al., 2024). The role of teachers as ethical role models is central to this model. By consistently demonstrating values like humility, tolerance, and openness to differences, teachers cultivate an environment that supports intellectual, emotional, and social maturity among students. This, in turn, prevents narrow-minded or dogmatic thinking that can lead to extremism (Afida et al., 2024; Araniri et al., 2023). At Darul Amin, teachers link Qur'anic teachings to real-world issues such as religious coexistence, rejection of violence, and the pursuit of social justice—making Islamic values relevant to modern challenges (Mustopa & Nasikhin, 2024; Afwadzi et al., 2024).

This shows that moderation-based Islamic education is not only embedded in the written curriculum but is embodied through daily pedagogical practices. Teachers become the foundation for instilling peace-oriented and inclusive Islamic values, thus enabling the Islamic boarding school to function as a holistic educational ecosystem where spiritual, moral, and social dimensions are fully integrated (Budiharso et al., 2023; Khosiin et al., 2023). However, this study is not without limitations. First, focusing on a single Islamic boarding school limits its generalizability, particularly to institutions with different theological or organizational frameworks. Second, while the research explores curriculum and pedagogical practices in detail, it lacks deeper insights into student reception and post-graduation behavioural outcomes. Third, the three-month research duration constrained the observation of long-term changes. Lastly, the Islamic boarding school's unique integration of Dayak local culture may not apply to more conservative or urban settings (Khosiin et al., 2023). Therefore, future studies using multi-site and longitudinal methods are recommended to evaluate the scalability, sustainability, and broader applicability of this contextual and inclusive model of Islamic education.

Dialogic learning and the living qur'an approach at darul amin: cultivating moderation and social intelligence in islamic education

To build an inclusive Islamic education responsive to social change, many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are adopting dialogical teaching models and collaborating with external actors. Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School exemplifies this transformation by integrating balanced religious and social discourse through partnerships with local academics and moderate Islamic activists (Fajri, 2024). These collaborations enrich classroom discussions and broaden students' perspectives on diversity and contemporary challenges. Researchers observed that during dialog sessions, teachers at Darul Amin actively guide respectful discussions, encouraging openness, empathy, and mutual understanding while discouraging exclusivism, fanaticism, or dogmatism—attitudes often linked to religious polarization (Sabetta, 2025). Students are taught to view diversity not as a problem, but as a blessing and intellectual asset. This inclusive approach strengthens their social character and prepares them to become socially engaged individuals and agents of change (Schwarz et al., 2024).

This model aligns with the Living Qur'an approach; wherein Islamic teachings are not confined to textual learning but are contextualized into dynamic and socially relevant practices. Darul Amin doesn't just focus on religious literacy—it emphasizes emotional intelligence and social ethics to combat extremism, intolerance, and community division (Mashuri et al., 2022). The school thus serves as a "laboratory of Islamic moderation", actualizing Qur'anic values through progressive, dialogical education. Despite its success, the study acknowledges several limitations. First, the research was confined to a single Islamic boarding schools, which may not represent the diversity of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Second, the focus was on curriculum and teaching methods, with less attention to long-term behavioural outcomes among students. Third, the short research period limited the ability to assess sustained changes or seasonal dynamics. Lastly, Darul Amin's specific socio-cultural context—marked by openness and moderate activism—may not be easily replicated in more conservative Islamic boarding schools' environments. These limitations suggest the need for future multi-site, longitudinal research to evaluate the broader impact and scalability of dialogical, moderation-based Islamic education models.

Integrating local wisdom and Islamic values

Islamic boarding schools serve a dual role in transmitting Islamic teachings and shaping students' character to live peacefully within a pluralistic society. In culturally rich regions like Kalimantan, adapting religious education to local wisdom is particularly relevant. Darul Amin Islamic Boarding School exemplifies this through its strategic integration of Islamic values with the local Dayak culture, fostering inclusive and tolerant religious understanding (Fannani et al., 2023). By harmonizing universal Islamic principles with respected local traditions, Darul Amin creates a contextual educational model that avoids dogmatism and promotes dialogue, helping prevent radicalism (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). This inclusive approach views diversity as a strength and positions Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*—a source of mercy and peace in a multicultural setting. Darul Amin's model respects customary practices that align with Sharia, thus strengthening social harmony and preparing students to engage with ethnic and religious diversity (Nadiyah et al., 2024; Musthofa et al., 2025). Through this, students gain practical, real-life understanding of how Qur'anic teachings apply to contemporary social challenges like globalization and conflict (Widana et al., 2023). This locally grounded model also serves as a form of internal de-radicalization, providing moderate and peaceful

interpretations of Islam (Muqit et al., 2024). Darul Amin functions not only as a religious school but as a centre for social empowerment, producing students equipped to be agents of peace and tolerance. It offers a replicable example for other Islamic institutions seeking to promote harmony through cultural integration (Siddik et al., 2025).

Despite its promise, the study has methodological limitations. It focused on a single Islamic boarding schools, limiting generalizability across Indonesia's diverse Islamic education landscape. The research also prioritized curriculum and pedagogy, offering limited insight into students' long-term behaviour or wider social impacts. Additionally, the three-month observation period restricted the ability to assess sustainable change. Lastly, Darul Amin's cultural openness may not translate easily to more conservative or urban settings. Therefore, future research should adopt multi-site and longitudinal approaches to evaluate how culturally responsive Islamic education can effectively promote moderation and social harmony on a national scale.

Conclusion and Recommendations/Implications

This study set out to explore how the integration of Qur'anic values within the curriculum and educational practices of the Darul Amin Salafi Islamic Boarding School contributes to the development of a contextual and inclusive anti-radicalism education model. Guided by the research question—how Qur'anic values are internalized through curriculum design, teacher roles, dialogic spaces, and local cultural integration—the findings reveal a holistic and transformative approach to Islamic education rooted in moderation and social harmony. The results show that Darul Amin has successfully implemented a progressive curriculum grounded in Qur'anic values, particularly through thematic interpretations that frame sensitive concepts like *jihad* within the ethical and inclusive paradigm of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Teachers serve as Living Qur'an figures, modelling tolerant behaviour and facilitating character education through daily interaction. The presence of open discussion spaces further encourages critical thinking and inclusive attitudes among students, while the integration of local Dayak wisdom reinforces the Islamic boarding school's commitment to multiculturalism and peaceful coexistence. Collectively, these elements affirm that Islamic boarding school-based Islamic education can offer a powerful, internal, and authentic response to the challenges of religious radicalism.

Future research may explore the comparative implementation of similar models in other Islamic boarding school with different theological or cultural orientations, or longitudinal studies that assess the long-term impact of this approach on alumni engagement in civic life. In addition, further studies could delve into student perspectives in more depth, particularly how they negotiate between traditional texts and contemporary realities in shaping their personal and religious identities. Such inquiries could broaden the applicability and refinement of contextual anti-radicalism education rooted in Qur'anic ethics. The implications of this research show that Islamic boarding school as religious educational institutions have great potential in preventing radicalism through contextual curriculum, character building through exemplary teachers, and the development of critical dialog spaces. An integrative approach with local culture can also strengthen social cohesion and create an Islamic education model that is relevant to the challenges of contemporary society.

Disclosure statement

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