

CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF SANTRI ON ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The study delves into the perceptions of santri concerning Arabic cultural elements in the teaching of the Arabic language within *Salafi* Pesantren. Employing a qualitative approach, the research investigates how santri perceive the significance of Arabic cultural values in the learning process and the broader implications for multicultural understanding. Data were gathered through interviews and questionnaires distributed to 42 respondents across 16 *Salafi* pesantren institutions in various regions of Indonesia, including Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. The findings reveal that santri generally recognize the importance of incorporating Arabic cultural elements into the language-learning process, as it aids in comprehending both the Arabic language and its cultural nuances. Some aspects of Arabic culture are perceived by santri as integral to Islamic teachings, influencing distinctive practices in their clothing and physical appearance. Despite these unique practices, the santri, living in a multicultural society, choose to integrate their daily lives with other communities, fostering harmony and embracing the multicultural diversity present in Indonesia. This study contributes valuable insights into the intersection of language learning, cultural values, and multicultural coexistence in the context of *Salafi* Pesantren education.

Keywords: Arabic Language Teaching, Contested Culture, Multiculturalism, *Salafi* Pesantren

ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini menganalisis persepsi santri terhadap isu-isu kebudayaan Arab yang terdapat dalam pengajaran bahasa Arab di Pesantren Salafi. Artikel ini mencoba menjawab bagaimana persepsi Santri terhadap nilai-nilai budaya Arab yang terdapat dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab dan implikasinya secara umum dalam memahami permasalahan multikultural. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara dan

kuisioner yang disebarakan kepada 42 responden dari 16 pesantren yang teridentifikasi berorientasi Salafi di seluruh Indonesia (Jawa, Sumatera, dan Sulawesi). Hasil angket dianalisis berdasarkan teori yang digunakan untuk menjawab permasalahan penelitian. Tulisan ini menyimpulkan bahwa para Santri secara umum memandang pentingnya pengenalan budaya Arab dalam proses pembelajaran karena akan membantu mereka memahami bahasa Arab dan aspek budayanya. Meskipun demikian, beberapa aspek budaya Arab dipandang oleh para Santri sebagai bagian integral dari ajaran Islam. Keyakinan ini membuat mereka tampil dengan cara yang khas, seperti menggunakan pakaian yang unik, dan cenderung berbeda dari penampilan fisik orang lain. Namun karena Santri hidup dalam masyarakat multikultural, maka mereka dengan suka rela mau memadukan kehidupan kesehariannya dengan komunitas lain, menjaga kerukunan, dan peduli terhadap kehidupan multicultural bangsa Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Kontestasi Budaya, Multikulturalisme, Pengajaran Bahasa Arab, Pesantren Salafi

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school (Pesantren) institutions in Indonesia serve as exemplary models of multicultural education. They embrace students from diverse regions, without discriminating based on their social, economic, or ethnic backgrounds. The curriculum adopted by these institutions is believed to be intentionally designed to incorporate the principles of multicultural-based teaching, as indicated by various scholarly works (Aly 2015; Suhartini 2016; Wekke 2015; Wekke, Islamil; Lubis 2018; Yunus & Wekke 2009; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). Currently, the application of multicultural values in Indonesian Pesantren appears to encounter no significant challenges and is widely accepted as an integral component of the dynamic multicultural education process.

However, the concept of multiculturalism is far from being straightforward. Numerous studies indicate that in certain societies, multiculturalism is perceived as a threat to established cultures (Moftizadeh et al. n.d.; Stratton & Ang 1994). In Western contexts, for instance, the government's acknowledgment of minority rights is viewed by a majority of Western societies as a risky policy. Many believe that recognizing minority rights could potentially pose a severe threat to democratic life in the West. Conservative groups, for instance, have accused the presence of Muslim immigrants in Western countries as a genuine threat to their way of life (Lappin, 2007). Consequently, perceptions of multiculturalism can vary significantly from one society to another (Brewer et al., 2013; Mastrovito et al., 2011; van Osch & Breugelmans, 2012).

In Indonesia, pesantren are characterized by their diversity and distinctive features. As previously mentioned, this study delves into the cultural harmonization as an expression of multicultural education within both traditional and modern pesantren. These institutions have long embraced the fundamental cultural values of Indonesian society since their inception. However, as pesantren have undergone growth and development, their cultural connections have evolved, aligning more closely with Middle Eastern Arab countries. This connection encompasses material-financial aspects, as well as religious, ideological, and cultural understanding (Yoyo, 2016). Referred to as *Salafi* Pesantren in subsequent times, this pesantren type endeavors to cultivate cultural relationships among students by integrating external cultural values, primarily from the Arab context, to shape a new identity and mindset. Unlike traditional or modern pesantren, which tend to adapt to local values, *Salafi* Pesantren typically emphasize a distinctive and unique culture (Fealy & White 2008; Inge 2017). Specifically, *Salafi* Pesantren often identify themselves with a Wahabi orientation (Rohmaniyah & Woodward 2012; Woodward 2017).

The Arabic language teaching program at *Salafi* pesantren plays a pivotal role in shaping a new cultural identity for santri. Despite the perceived stagnation and shortcomings in Arabic teaching methods in Indonesia (Delami, 2007), the Arabic language program in *Salafi* pesantren has garnered considerable attention, particularly among millennials. Notably, certain

Salafi pesantren offer complimentary Arabic language courses, targeting recent high school graduates. This program is meticulously structured with a duration of one to two years. Additionally, some *Salafi* pesantren actively assist in securing scholarships for further studies in Arabic-speaking countries, with a focus on opportunities in Saudi Arabia.

Considering the outlined phenomenon of *Salafi* pesantren, there is a necessity to delve deeper into the connection between Arabic language instruction and multiculturalism, focusing on the cultivation of cultural values among santri. This investigation aims to explore how external values, particularly those adopted during Arabic language learning, become internalized in the daily lives of the students. Santri, who bring diverse cultural values from their respective regions, are confronted with new sets of values during their Arabic language education in *Salafi* pesantren.

Past studies have highlighted the pivotal role of language in shaping the identity of a nation. Throughout world history, instances of new nations emerging or attempts to break away from existing governments often revolved around a shared linguistic identity among groups striving for independence (Rahman, 2002). Additionally, research has indicated that, in multicultural societies, the necessity of acquiring a foreign or second language is contingent upon government policies and the prevailing conditions within a country (Mallozzi & Malloy, 2007; Yoyo et al., 2020; Yoyo & Mukhlis, 2019). A case in point is Japan, where, despite the incorporation of English into the primary curriculum since 2011, practical needs for English proficiency among the Japanese population remain limited (Shimizu & Bradley, 2014).

Until now, research concerning *Salafists* has predominantly focused on the dimensions of *Salafi* ideology and their connections with Arab nations. Previous examinations of *Salafi* doctrine and movements have indicated their aim to implement shari'a principles or "pure Islam" on both individual and societal levels (Hidayat, 2014), with an inclination to avoid political involvement (Machmudi, 2008). *Salafists* are associated with various movement organizations, such as Laskar Jihad, on the movement level, but the structural level does not emphasize obedience to the movement's leadership (Hasan, 2006). On the ideological level, the *Salafi* movement exhibits three distinct patterns: 1) rejectionists, exclusive groups unwilling to collaborate with other Islamic organizations, including Laskar Jihad; 2) cooperations, inclusive *Salafist* groups willing to cooperate under certain conditions, such as those under the leadership of Abu Nida; and 3) tanzimi, *Salafist* groups formally establishing Islamic organizations like Wahdah Islamiyah in Makassar, South Sulawesi, and Harakah Sunniah for Islamic Communities in Bogor, West Java (Wahid, 2014). While studies on multiculturalism in Pesantren generally conclude that Pesantren has embraced multicultural principles, reflected in curriculum design (Akmaliyah & Ratnasih, 2017; Susanti, 2015).

METHOD

To achieve the objectives of the present study, qualitative method was used to produce an easy-to-read research picture (Oun & Bach, 2014). A phenomenological approach based on the researcher's experience and involvement in the object under investigation was carried out (Desjarlais & Jason, 2011; Pringle, Hendry & McLafferty, 2011). The purpose of this approach is to emphasize the emic aspect more than the aesthetic; namely, the available data is expected to produce a comprehensive picture of the object being studied. Two techniques: interviews and questionnaires were applied to collect the data regarding santri's cognitive awareness regarding their motivation and beliefs in the language being learned (Kalaja et al., 2015).

To explore information related to cultural aspects related to the teaching of Arabic at the *Salafi* Pesantren, this study used a questionnaire in the form of a Google Form which was distributed through the WhatsApp Group. Using Google Form, researchers obtained 42

respondents from 23 pesantren institutions spread across Java, Sumatra (Aceh and Bengkulu), Sulawesi, and West Papua who identified as *Salafi* or tended to have a similar ideology with *Salafi* Pesantren. In terms of age, the respondents ranged between 15 and 20 years. In addition to questionnaire, interviews were conducted with key people that could contribute substantial information for data collection process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic Language and Indonesian Muslim Identity

Historically speaking, since the arrival of Islam to the archipelago, Arabic has become a religious language used in various religious rites. In the historical context of language use in the archipelago, the Indian Muslim language was once spoken. Still, it was later replaced by Malay as the lingua franca language in the archipelago. In the 16th-18th centuries AD, Portuguese became an essential language for the commercial and cultural fields among the ethnic population of the archipelago. Still, since the 17th century AD, the Dutch took over the vital role of Portuguese, and slowly English became an important international language in the archipelago, especially after independence (Edzard et al., 2011). Meanwhile, Arabic cannot become a second language after Malay or Indonesian, although modernist Muslims have sought to realize such efforts (Bahafdullah, 2010).

From the 17th century onwards, some Muslim Nusantara scholars productively wrote their works in both Arabic and Malay. These scholars included Shams ad-Din as-Sumatrani, Nur ad-Din ar-Raniri, Abd ar-Rauf as-Singkili, and Muhammad Yusuf al-Makassari. These Arabic-language works show the urgency of the Arabic language in Islamic scholarship discourse since the beginning of the 17th century AD. Data from the national museum catalog in Jakarta indicates that there are more than a thousand Arabic manuscripts, including fifteen manuscripts in the form of poems and more than one hundred manuscripts in the form of the Quran and other important collections (Edzard et al., 2011).

However, according to Kaptein, Islamic scholars, mainly orientalists, paid little attention to the works of the Arabic-language Ulama from Nusantara. It is because these Arabic-language works are still considered less attractive to study compared to those produced by scholars from other parts of the Muslim World [the Arab World primarily]. The gap in the study of Arabic works written by ulama Nusantara has led to the lack of studies that comprehensively map the relationship between Islamic studies in Indonesia in general and the development of the Arabic language. Therefore, the Arabic language in early Muslim Nusantara scholars is essential. It is shown by the close relationship between the Muslim Archipelago and the main cities of Islamic education, namely Makkah, Medina, and Cairo. Second, there was a significant role of Hadromi Arabic in maintaining the use of Arabic until the 20th century AD (Kaptein, 2017).

The urgency of the Arabic language among Muslims in Indonesia was also firmly expressed by Indonesian Muslim scholars such as A. Hasan, the founding figure of PERSIS, who advocated mastering Arabic for anyone who wanted to study Islamic sources, namely the Quran and Hadith. In addition, the founding figure of NU, Hasyim Asya'ari, also shares the same view on the importance of Arabic for Indonesian Muslims. In addition, K.H Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, also had the same view of the urgency of the Arabic language. It is evidenced by several collections of books from Arab reformers deliberately brought by K.H Ahmad Dahlan to spread the ideas of ongoing renewal in the Middle East. The views of the renewal were transmitted through Arabic-language books. Even neo-modernist figures such as Nur Kholis Madjid also emphasized the importance of Arabic for the spiritual life of Muslims. However, the use of Arabic in ritual worship should also be accompanied by an attempt to understand its meaning (Kaptein, 2017).

In the context of subsequent developments, strenuous efforts by Indonesian Muslim scholars to write works on Arabic grammar or dictionaries occurred only in the 1930s. The first Arabic book written in Indonesian was the work of Mahmud Yunus titled *Learning Arabic*, published in the 1930s. Meanwhile, *Munjid* is still the primary reference for educated circles in dictionaries. Furthermore, the main work of a dictionary with a thickness of 1701 pages was born and written by Ahmad Warson Maunawwir with the title of his famous dictionary, *al-Munawwir: Arabic-Indonesian dictionary* (Edzard et al., 2011).

Apart from the urgency of Arabic in thought and intellectual discourse, the public also dramatically appreciates the Arabic language. It is indicated by the increasing number of names given to newborns with original Arabic or hybrid names (Javanese + Arabic or Arabic + Javanese) (Kuipers & Askuri 2017). The use of Arabic names among famous religious or specific entertainment figures also triggers the growing use of Arabic words. One popular Arabic name is Fahri, which has become very popular for naming babies since this name was the main character in the remarkable novel *Ayat-ayat Cinta*.

In Indonesia, the development and interest in studying Arabic is still relatively high even though it is lower compared to that of English. It can be proven by the continued emergence of Arabic language education, both formal and non-formal. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has also triggered the birth of various online Arabic language courses. In addition, the competition between Arabic and English in Indonesia is not too conspicuous compared to other Asian Muslim countries. In Brunei, for example, the tendency of young people to use English is very high and shifts the use of Malay among the younger generation. The emergence of Islamic novels such as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Negeri 5 Menara* deliberately exposes some of the vocabulary and even Arabic phrases used in the dialogue in the story. It also shows that the Arabic language among millennials in Indonesia is increasingly familiar (Zulkifli et al., 2020).

Regarding its use, Arabic in Indonesia has two categories. First, classical Arabic is used in religious books or called *Kitab Kuning*. Classical Arabic tends to be easier to understand because it uses familiar religious vocabulary such as *fiqh*, *morals*, *tasawwuf*, and others. Second, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), namely Arabic taught in schools, modern Islamic boarding schools, or universities. MSA is used both in conversation and textbooks. However, in its daily use, some Islamic boarding Schools have unique Arabic dialects based on the region. Some of them used mixing code between Arabic and local languages (Lesmana, 2019).

Cultural Issues of Arabic language Teaching in the *Salafi* Pesantren

This section discusses the students' perceptions of cultural content in learning Arabic language. The formulated questions are directed to issues that have so far been attached to the *Salafi* doctrine. Specifically, the questionnaire given to the respondents contained elements of questions that lead to 1) motivation to learn Arabic, 2) perception of the urgency of Arabic culture in learning Arabic, 3) perceptions about the possibility of applying Arabic culture in the Indonesian context, 4) perceptions about the most favorable Arab country for learning purposes, 5) perceptions about the sources of Arabic and Islamic textbooks, 6) perceptions about clothing, 7) perceptions about the comparison of conditions between Arab countries and Indonesia, and 8) perceptions about maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity. Those eight constructs compose the questionnaire. The result of each will be described.

Arabic Learning Motivation among the Santri

Motivation is an essential element of one's educational success. Motivation will be the primary driver during the educational process that a person goes through. In this context, the questionnaire provides answer choices to respondents consisting of reasons or motivations for understanding religion, further study, and other motivations, namely business or work. From

the questionnaire distributed to 42 respondents, 37 chose religious motivation, three chose motivation for further studies, and two decided on other motivations.

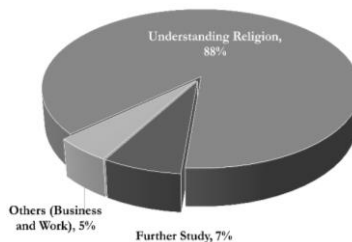


Figure 1. Arabic Learning Motivation

Figure 1 shows that, in general, respondents chose religious motivation as the main reason for students to learn Arabic. Respondents determined their motivation to learn Arabic to be able to understand Islam. It indicates that Arabic is still perceived as a religious language. An overview of this is also found in various previous studies that religious motivation is still a strong reason why a student is interested in learning Arabic. Research conducted on students at Madrasah Aliyah throughout the Bangka Belitung Islands showed that of all the questions that students responded, the inquiries related to religious motivation and understanding of the Quran showed the highest score compared to other questions (Syarifah & Sumar, 2019). In terms of learning environment at the Pesantren, religious motivation is also still the leading factor that students choose (Rahman, 2018).

In integrative theory, one of students' successes in learning a foreign language is the motivation to understand cultural aspects, including religion, that exist within the language being studied (Nailufar, 2018). In addition, in Asian societies such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, religious motivation in learning Arabic is a factor that cannot be ignored (Al Shlowiy, 2019).

Santri's Perceptions of Arab Cultural Aspects

Culture is one of the elements inherent in language because language reflects a society's culture. In some instances, cultural issues become sensitive in teaching foreign languages. In teaching Arabic, there are several criticisms and objections to the cultural content in textbooks teaching Arabic. This objection is caused by the assessment that the culture being conducted tends to lead to certain cultural discourses (Ubaidillah, 2014).

Based on the questionnaire given to 42 respondents about the urgency of introducing culture in teaching Arabic, 32 respondents stated the importance of introducing Arabic culture. As many as nine students said it was substantial, while the remaining one said it was unimportant.

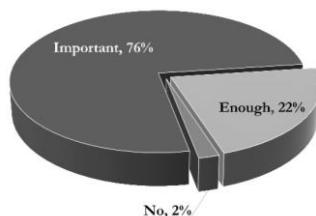


Figure 2. Perception of Arab Culture in Arabic Teaching

Based on Figure 2, the students generally agree that culture is an important part that needs to be introduced in learning Arabic. It goes without saying that communication and cultural exchange are essential and unavoidable in a global society. Therefore, understanding culture as an inherent language element is critical to learning. Even so, there are things that are pretty basic in the context of the Arabic language, namely, that culture is inherent in the

religious traditions of the Arabs. Thus, understanding the cultural context more specifically needs to be emphasized. At this level, the researcher then distributed the following questionnaires related to the issue of Arabic dress, specifically, *jalabiyah*, whether it is part of Arabic culture or Islamic shari'ah. Based on the questionnaire given, 29 people considered *jalabiyah* clothing as part of shari'ah, ten respondents saw that *jalabiyah* as not shari'ah because it was just a cultural product, and three respondents pointed out that they did not know what *jalabiyah* mean.

Furthermore, the researcher asked a questionnaire about the necessity and opportunity to practice Arabic culture in real life in the Indonesian context. The questionnaire results showed that 22 people considered it possible to practice Arabic culture in Indonesian society. Meanwhile, 17 people answered "yes," and three said there was no need to practice Arabic culture in Indonesian society.

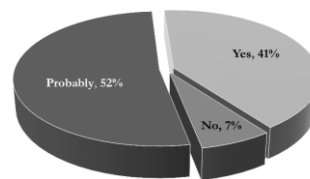


Figure 3. Perception of Arab Cultural Practice in the Daily Life

Figure 3 gives the impression that the Santri see it as possible or even obligatory to practice Arabic culture in the context of Muslims in Indonesia. This finding illustrates that students have a shallow understanding of culture. Culture, for them, is seen as an integral part of religion. In this case, because Islam originates from Arab society, according to them, the culture found in the Arab community also needs to be adopted.

Next, the researcher tries to find out the hopes and choices of the students if they want to continue their studies in Arab countries. The questionnaire submitted leads to the will of favored countries for further analysis, namely Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, and specifically, provides an answer choice for Egypt. This questionnaire is constructed on the assumption that the respondents' choice of a particular country reflect their hope and belief. Based on the questionnaire distributed to 42 respondents, 25 people chose Saudi Arabia, ten people chose other Arab countries, and seven people chose Egypt.

In the following questionnaire, the researcher tried to ask whether Arabic language reference books must come from Arab countries or may be from other countries. Out of 42 respondents, 26 chose that the answers for reference books could come from any country, and 13 people chose that the answers for learning textbooks must come from Saudi Arabia. Three people chose that answers for reference books coming from other Arab countries. Meanwhile, in the last questionnaire, the researcher explored students' understanding and perceptions of efforts to maintain Indonesian culture's plurality and diversity. Based on the questionnaire given to 42 respondents, 38 people agreed to maintain cultural diversity, three people chose to disagree, and one person chose do not know.

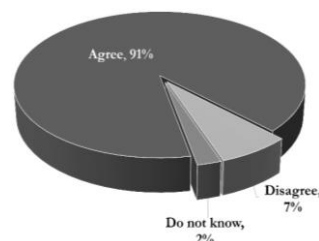


Figure 4. Perceptions about Maintaining Indonesia's Cultural Diversity.

Figure 4 shows that most respondents strongly agree with maintaining cultural diversity in Indonesia. This finding further emphasizes that even though they tended to admire certain cultures in the previous questionnaire, this admiration was carried within the framework of multiculturalism. It is proved by the fact that most of *Salafi* Pesantren integrate between their own curriculum (Saudi oriented) with Indonesian national curriculum. They try to eliminate public opinion that consider them as radical Islam (Muthohirin et al., 2022).

Arabic Language, Contested Multiculturalism, and Santri's Identity

The data obtained through the questionnaire show that students who learn Arabic perceive the cultural aspects of Arabic as necessary. In addition, they also tend to like Saudi Arabia as a destination for learning if they have an opportunity. Even though these findings are simple, the choice of something is certainly not without reason. Besides that, they unconsciously see *jalabiyyah* clothing as part of shariah. This acknowledgment seems to be due to the dress's massive iconicity, which can be found in Arabic textbooks such as *al-'Arabiyyah baina Yadaik*.

In an analysis conducted by Ubaidillah on the textbook *al-'Arabiyyah bayna Yadaik* (ABY), several indications were found that the book contained *Salafi* teachings implicitly packaged. Through semiotic analysis, he found several symbols of *Salafi* teachings within the Arabic dialogue texts, such as the prohibition on showing the faces of adult women, the ban on praying for women in mosques, and the prohibition on mixing men and women in public places. According to him, all of this is the *Salafi* teachings in ABY's textbook, considering that ABY's book is an Arabic textbook published by Saudi Arabia (Ubaidillah, 2014).

The actual teachings of *Salafi* are not only hidden in Arabic textbooks but are openly disseminated through various channels. According to Munip, since the beginning of the 21st century, it has been an era of translating Arabic books into Indonesian, one of which is the process of translating *Salafi* books into Indonesian. One site that provides translations of *Salafi* books in various languages is <https://www.islamhouse.com/en/>. According to Munip, Arabic textbooks that have been translated into multiple languages are generally aimed at introducing *Salafi* teachings and, in specific contexts attacking religious practices that they see as deviant (Munip, 2018).

In *Salafi* circles, a Muslim is considered good or bad based on his ability to speak in Arabic. According to *Salafis*, since Arabic is the language of the Koran, a good Muslim should master the language. At the level of identity, Arab iconic is indeed very attached. *Salafi* people generally have a different clothing identity from ordinary Muslims in Indonesia. Arab icons as a distinctive and formative identity of the Santri appear from their gesture of keeping a beard and wearing a robe both during prayer times and outside prayer activities (Wahib, 2017).

Arabic is used in everyday vocabulary, such as common pronouns *ana*, *antum*, *akhi*, *ukhti*, and others. This vocabulary is used as a communication medium and as an identity and pride for them. As stated by Stuart Hall, language is a medium for representing a person's ideology or a particular community (Hall, 2003). In this context, Arabic becomes the ideological representation of the Santri community. Besides that, adult *Salafi* adherents with Javanese names, such as Sumanto, will change their names to Arabic names, such as Abdullah, Ahmad, and others. At the socio-linguistic level, Arabic in this context becomes an ideology because it will strengthen social ties among *Salafi* adherents. Even among the Santri, names in Arabic and not in Arabic psychologically affect their self-confidence. Based on an interview with one of the students, he would prefer to be called *akhi* compared to his real name, which is not in Arabic.

Various websites affiliated with *Salafi* reveal different reasons why Arabic is essential for Muslims. The websites <https://rumaysho.com/> and <https://www.islampos.com/> show seven reasons for learning Arabic. Of the seven reasons, all these are religious-oriented, while non-

religious reasons are considered sunnah. The article entitled “The Importance of Learning Arabic for the Young Generation” presents why children should learn Arabic early to be more oriented toward religious motivation.

In the context of interactional life with a diverse and multicultural society, *Salafis* can adapt and choose to continue to live side by side with other residents. In addition, *Salafi* are not identical with those who live exclusively in specific environments. Still, modern *Salafi* activists have been able to adapt and enter various other educational institutions, including universities (Chaplin, 2018). This da'wah movement through *halaqah* or *daurah* on different campuses has made the *Salafi* movement widely accepted among university students. That is why even though they have a distinction in terms of identity and language symbols, they can adapt to the multicultural environment and life around them.

CONCLUSION

This research delves into the perceptions of santri regarding Arabic cultural elements in the teaching of Arabic at *Salafi* Pesantren. The study specifically examines how santri perceive the cultural values associated with learning Arabic and the broader implications for their understanding of multicultural issues. Generally, santri believe that Arab culture should be incorporated into the Arabic teaching process, although some may blur the distinction between cultural practices and religious doctrine. For instance, they may consider attire like the jalabiyah as part of shari'ah. Despite their overall orientation towards *Salafi* ideology, santri demonstrate a commitment to embracing and preserving the diversity of Indonesian culture. The cultural contestation among *Salafi* students is evident in their attire and use of Arabic vocabulary, serving not only as a means of communication but also as a distinct identity reflecting their ideology. Importantly, this distinctive approach to multiculturalism does not isolate them socially; instead, they exhibit adaptability to modern trends through various da'wah activities.

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