

Religious social literacy among UNESA's students with *pesantren* backgrounds

Adhitiya Prasta Pratama¹, Moh. Mudzakkir¹, Agus Machfud Fauzi¹

¹Departemen Sosiologi, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Negeri Surabaya

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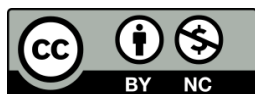
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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji literasi sosial keagamaan di kalangan santri alumni pesantren. Literasi sosial keagamaan merujuk pada kemampuan untuk memaknai dan menginterpretasikan dunia sosial secara religius, tidak terbatas pada aspek membaca dan menulis teks-teks keagamaan saja. Konsep ini dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori konstruksi sosial Peter L. Berger dan pemikiran Henry A. Giroux sebagai landasan teori. Pendekatan metodologis yang digunakan adalah studi kasus Robert K. Yin dengan analisis data kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang pernah mengenyam pendidikan di pondok pesantren memiliki literasi sosial keagamaan yang lebih baik daripada siswa non pondok pesantren. Hal ini disebabkan oleh pengalaman hidup di lingkungan pesantren yang kental dengan nilai-nilai dan ideologi Islam. Temuan ini mengonfirmasi peran penting pesantren dalam membentuk literasi sosial keagamaan siswa, yang menjadi bekal penting bagi mereka dalam memaknai realitas sosial dari sudut pandang agama.

Abstract

This study examines religious social literacy among pesantren alumni students. Religious social literacy refers to the ability to interpret and interpret the social world religiously, not limited to the aspects of reading and writing religious texts alone. This concept is analysed using Peter L. Berger's social construction theory and Henry A. Giroux's thoughts as theoretical foundations. The methodological approach used is Robert K. Yin's case study with qualitative data analysis. The results showed that students who have been educated in boarding schools have better religious social literacy than non-boarding school students. This is due to the experience of living in a pesantren environment that is thick with Islamic values and ideology. The findings confirm the significant role of Islamic boarding schools in shaping students' religious social literacy, which is an important provision for them in interpreting social reality from a religious perspective.

Penulis Korespondensi

Adhitiya Prasta Pratama

Departemen Sosiologi, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Negeri Surabaya

Jalan Ketintang, Ketintang, Kec. Gayungan, Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur, 60231

Email: adhityaprasta.20040@mhs.unesa.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic ideologisation seems to have a significant influence, especially for students who are alumni of pesantren. The reason is that religion-based education not only offers the ability to understand the world intelligently, but also to realise social life religiously. (Dasir, 2013). In the pesantren environment that they got before, students not only get academic knowledge, but are also equipped with strong religious values. Simply put, education in pesantren covers various aspects of life that are directed towards the formation of individuals who have high moral and ethical integrity. This allows pesantren alumni to not only excel intellectually, but also in living their daily lives by adhering to Islamic principles.

Historically, religious ideologisation in pesantren has had many important roles, especially in the formation of individual morals and character. Pesantren has long been an institution that plays a role in transmitting Islamic values from generation to generation. As Halstead (2007) states, there are three main lessons in Islam taught in pesantren, namely akhlaq, adab, and implementing the Prophet's sunnah. In the akhlaq section, it teaches about morality and ethics in daily life. While adab includes manners and politeness in interaction. Meanwhile, implementing the Prophet's sunnah means following the example of the Prophet Muhammad in all aspects of life.

The instilling of morals into students basically departs from the religious tradition of Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools have strong religious values, which become the main basis in the process of character building of santri. This religious tradition does not only involve aspects of worship, but also includes ethical and moral values that are applied in the daily lives of students. Herman (2013) assesses that pesantren function as a driving force for the development of Islamic traits and nationalism. In this context, pesantren play an important role as educational institutions that not only focus on academic aspects, but also on moral and character building. This makes pesantren one of the main pillars in moral education in Indonesia.

In addition, the pesantren world can also be used as a religious and cultural education institution. The pesantren environment, which is rich in religious traditions and cultural values, contributes greatly to the formation of noble character of students. Novian (2013) explained that the pesantren environment has a religious cultural base with its own character. This cultural base includes various aspects, ranging from a simple lifestyle, discipline, to respect for teachers and fellow students.

Anthropologically, cultural forms are at least divided into three explanations (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Firstly, culture as a complex concept consisting of ideas, notions and norms. This includes a deep understanding of how a society's values and beliefs are formed and transmitted. These ideas often form the basis for social group identity and provide guidance on how individuals should behave. Norms can be unwritten rules that are highly respected and upheld in everyday life.

Second, culture is interpreted as a form of activity and patterns of human action in society. This means that culture is not only limited to thoughts and norms, but also includes real behaviour and social interaction. These activities and patterns of action are seen in various aspects of daily life, such as ways of dressing, traditions, rites, and daily habits that reflect the culture of a group. Third, culture can be seen as the result of human work, passion, and taste. (Soekanto & Sulistyowati, 2019). In this context, culture includes all forms of human creativity, both material in nature such as art, buildings, and technology, and non-material in nature such as music, literature, and language. Thus, pesantren as a form of culture has meaning in its religious ideologisation, namely as a result of human work, taste, and spirit.

Faith-based education, particularly in pesantren, fosters unique literacy practices. Literacy, as Ibeng (2021) defines it, involves the ability to read and write, but in pesantren, it extends beyond basic literacy skills through engagement with *kitab kuning* classical Islamic texts covering disciplines such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and tasawwuf. These texts not only enhance santri's reading and writing skills but also shape their character and worldview. As Rahman et al. (2018) highlight, literacy is not merely technical but involves comprehension, analysis, and application, which pesantren education instills by integrating religious values into daily life.

Modern literacy, however, encompasses more than textual skills. It includes the ability to "read the world," meaning an understanding of social, cultural, and environmental contexts. Aronowitz and Giroux (1997) argue that social literacy is a tool for interpreting and critiquing societal structures. In pesantren, social literacy is embedded through religious teachings that shape santri's moral and ethical perspectives, equipping them with critical awareness of social issues.

The integration of religious and social literacy is evident among pesantren alumni in the Sociology Study Programme at Surabaya State University (Unesa). These students possess both academic knowledge and religious insights, allowing them to bridge social science with ethical and moral values. Pesantren education instills a strong moral foundation, making its alumni well-equipped to understand complex social phenomena. However, pesantren also plays a role in shaping religious perspectives, potentially influencing students' sociological outlook (Ubaidillah, 2019).

Despite the assumption that sociology students are skilled in analyzing social problems, the diversity of educational backgrounds, including pesantren, raises questions about their levels of social literacy. Not all sociology students at Unesa, particularly from the 2020 cohort, exhibit equal proficiency in understanding social dynamics. Factors such as educational background, personal experiences, and social environments shape their literacy levels. Religious social literacy is crucial as contemporary social issues increasingly intersect with religious values. This study seeks to assess the social literacy of Unesa sociology students and their contributions to addressing sociological issues within a religious framework.

Several studies have examined literacy among university students. Sari and Pujiono (2017) found that 60% of students at Yogyakarta State University read only for academic assignments, while 17% to 40% write as a hobby, indicating varying motivations for literacy engagement. Amelia and Ulumu (2019) explored digital literacy among students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, finding that most had a good understanding of digital technology for learning. Haruna (2018) studied gender literacy among Communication Science students at Alauddin State Islamic University, concluding that their understanding of gender issues remained low, highlighting the need for improvement. Adiarsi et al. investigated internet media literacy, finding that students who spend over five hours daily online have higher media literacy, demonstrating better analytical skills. While these studies focus on textual, digital, and gender literacy, *religious social literacy* remains underexplored.

This study examines religious social literacy among pesantren alumni in the Sociology undergraduate program at Surabaya State University (Unesa). Given their strong religious background, pesantren alumni offer a unique perspective on social issues. This research aims to understand how their pesantren education influences their interpretation of social realities and contributes to sociological analysis.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the approach used is descriptive qualitative method with case study as the main design. Case studies, according to Yin (1981) is a research method that has a

function to explore, investigate, and identify a social phenomenon in depth in an empirical and realistic context. In other words, this method allows researchers to gain a deep and holistic understanding of a particular phenomenon or case by studying it in its real and natural environment. Case studies are particularly useful in exploring complex phenomena, where there are many variables that are interrelated and influence each other. Through this approach, researchers can collect data from various sources, such as observations, interviews, documents, and artefacts, which are then analysed in depth to obtain a complete and comprehensive picture of the case under study.

In addition, Yin (2018) also emphasises that the case study method is a methodology oriented towards the formulation of "how" and "why" problems. This means that case studies are very suitable for answering questions that aim to understand the processes, dynamics, and reasons behind a particular phenomenon or event. By using case studies, researchers can explore how things happen and why they happen, as well as identify important factors that contribute to the phenomenon under study. In this context, researchers can collect rich and detailed qualitative data and conduct in-depth analyses to uncover patterns, relationships and meanings. Next, Stake (1995) Stake (1995) provides a more in-depth understanding of case studies, he sees them as propositional generalisations, researchers' summaries of interpretations and claims, and naturalistic additions. That is, in case studies, researchers do not only make propositional generalisations or summaries of interpretations and claims, but also add naturalistic elements, namely the researcher's personal experience in every research process. This makes case studies a rich and in-depth method, as it involves direct observation and thorough involvement of the researcher in the context under study.

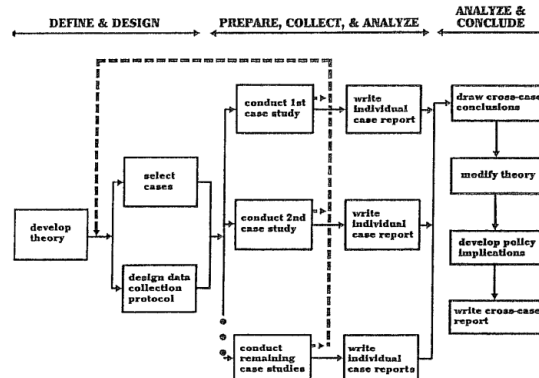


Figure 1. Diagram of the Case Study Method.
Source Yin (Case Study Research, Methods and Design, 2003)

Meanwhile, Schramm (1971) views case studies from a more specific perspective, namely as a method that seeks to describe, decide, and implement the chosen assessment. That is, case studies are used to describe in detail a particular problem or phenomenon, make decisions or conclusions about the problem, and then implement solutions or recommendations obtained from the study. Thus, the researcher's activities in using the case study method can be assembled holistically and presented with intense, structured, and systematic results. (Taylor et al, 2015).

After determining the use of the case study method, the next stage is its application, which involves several data collection techniques. Firstly, documentation plays an important role in verifying the accuracy of the data, starting from the validation of terms, devices, to specific details related to the case under study. Documentation is a supporting data source that can strengthen and prove the validity of information obtained from other sources. Secondly, for the interview technique, this research used a combination of open-ended, semi-structured, and centred interviews. Open-ended interviews allow researchers to explore

information in depth without being bound by rigid interview guidelines, while semi-structured interviews provide general direction but remain flexible in exploring relevant topics. Meanwhile, centred interviews focus on key aspects to be explored further. By combining the three types of interviews, the researcher was able to obtain as much in-depth data as possible from the interviewees. Finally, direct observation techniques were also used in this research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of Unesa Sociology students 2020 pesantren alumni

The 2020 cohort of Sociology undergraduate students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa) was the first to experience fully online lectures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Beginning their studies virtually on 11 September 2020, these students faced new learning challenges but also developed digital communication and collaboration skills. Despite the physical separation, they remained connected through digital platforms, creating a unique virtual academic environment. The shift to online learning provided students with opportunities to enhance their textual literacy. Studying from home allowed them more time to engage with lecture materials, write academic papers, and participate in discussions on digital platforms. This experience not only benefited their academic performance but also prepared them for a professional world increasingly reliant on written and digital communication.

A study of Unesa's 2020 Sociology cohort, consisting of 80 students from various regions, revealed that 74% had a strong interest in reading and writing, while 26% were more engaged in organizational and non-academic activities. For those passionate about literacy, online lectures became an opportunity rather than a barrier, enabling them to refine their reading and writing skills beyond class hours. This highlights that online education, despite its challenges, also serves as a platform for skill development.

Survey findings further indicate that textual literacy skills were not limited to students with a social science background but also extended to those from vocational, engineering, exact sciences, and religious education. This raises important questions about how different educational backgrounds influence literacy levels. However, this study focuses on Sociology students with prior education in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), emphasizing their nontextual literacy development.

Pesantren alumni possess strong religious knowledge, including the ability to read and interpret religious texts. However, nontextual literacy encompasses critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication in diverse social contexts. As Sociology students, they must develop both textual and nontextual literacy to analyze social phenomena critically. Investigating their literacy levels offers insights into how religious education shapes broader literacy skills, providing valuable input for pesantren and universities in designing curricula that enhance students' academic and analytical abilities.

3.2 Pesantren and textual literacy

Pesantren, as Indonesia's oldest educational institution, serves not only as a center for Islamic religious studies but also as a foundation for developing ethical, tolerant, and culturally rooted values. It provides holistic education that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions, shaping individuals who are academically competent and socially aware. Syirad (1999) emphasizes that pesantren is an arena for deep Islamic appreciation, where students internalize religious teachings in their daily lives. Through guidance from *kyai* and *ustadz*, pesantren fosters the formation of *insan kamil*—individuals who embody both intellectual and spiritual excellence.

Historically, the term *pondok* (boarding house) was adopted from the Arabic *funduq*, meaning a temporary lodging for travelers. Over time, it evolved into *pesantren*, which combines a place to live with a learning institution. Pesantren is characterized by three main elements: *kyai* as the leader and teacher, *santri* as students, and the dormitory (*pondok*) as both a living and learning environment. This structure distinguishes pesantren from other educational institutions. The emergence of pesantren in Indonesia is closely tied to the spread of Islam, particularly through Walisongo in the 15th and 16th centuries (Anam, 2017). The *kyai* played a central role, not only as an educator but also as a role model for students in understanding and practicing Islamic values.

One of pesantren's distinguishing features is its strong emphasis on textual literacy. Teaching methods focus on reading, writing, memorization, and comprehension of religious texts, such as the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic books), which cover various disciplines, including *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and linguistics. This intensive literacy training shapes a unique intellectual character among pesantren graduates. Unlike formal educational institutions, pesantren instills literacy skills as part of religious devotion and ethical development. This pesantren-based education has been experienced by many Sociology students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa), particularly those from the 2020 cohort. Field research indicates that most of these students have spent more than three years in pesantren, undergoing its rigorous academic and religious training. Their experience of reading, writing, and interpreting classical Islamic texts has significantly shaped their cognitive and analytical abilities.

Despite its traditional approach, pesantren contributes significantly to literacy development. It enhances students' ability to process written texts and engage in critical discourse. Rahman et al. (2018) suggest that literacy is not merely the technical skill of reading and writing but also involves critical thinking, analysis, and interpretation of information. Individuals with strong literacy skills are better equipped to understand and respond to social phenomena. Thus, pesantren plays a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and moral character of its students. While its primary focus is religious education, it also fosters literacy skills that influence students' perspectives on the social world. Understanding how pesantren alumni engage with literacy can provide valuable insights into the intersection of religious education and social sciences, particularly in how students interpret and analyze societal issues.

3.3 Religious social literacy among Unesa Sociology students 2020 pesantren alumni

Literacy is essential for all students but extends beyond textual comprehension to include gender, financial, digital, and social literacy. Social literacy, in particular, is crucial as it enables individuals to critically interpret and analyze social, cultural, political, and economic phenomena. Bloom (in Aronowitz & Giroux, 1997) argues that social literacy shapes individuals' critical character in both cultural and religious dimensions. A strong foundation in social literacy allows students to engage with societal realities, develop critical perspectives, and find appropriate solutions while fostering social awareness, empathy, and sensitivity.

This study examines social literacy among Unesa 2020 Sociology students who are alumni of pesantren. Their educational background in pesantren provides them with a distinctive perspective in interpreting social realities. Pesantren education emphasizes religious values, discipline, and critical thinking, shaping students to analyze social issues through a religious lens. This experience ingrains in them a strong moral foundation, influencing their understanding of social phenomena and their approaches to problem-solving.

Findings suggest that pesantren alumni maintain a critical stance on social issues while adhering to religious principles. Their experience in a pesantren environment, which stresses independence, discipline, and spiritual growth, significantly influences their worldview. Most students exhibit a comprehensive and religiously grounded perspective in addressing social problems. Their critical thinking is shaped not only by academic training but also by pesantren teachings that encourage reflection and ethical judgment. These findings highlight a strong relationship between textual and non-textual literacy. Literacy is not just a cognitive skill but also involves emotional intelligence and practical application. Az-Zahra and Bachtiar (2018) emphasize that literacy affects not only intellectual capacity but also social and moral decision-making. Literacy, therefore, is a multidimensional competence that extends beyond reading and writing to include critical engagement with information.

Cook-Gumperz (2006) further asserts that literacy levels directly impact an individual's quality of life. Higher literacy skills enable individuals to critically evaluate information, analyze problems from multiple perspectives, and make informed decisions. As society becomes increasingly complex, literacy development, particularly in the social realm, is essential for fostering responsible and analytical thinkers. Therefore, social literacy should be prioritized in educational institutions to enhance students' intellectual and ethical capabilities. The case of pesantren alumni in Unesa's Sociology program illustrates how religious education contributes to social literacy. As both students and former *santri*, they integrate religious and academic perspectives in their interpretation of social realities. Their social literacy is shaped by pesantren teachings, which provide a foundation for analyzing contemporary issues while maintaining religious values. The intersection of pesantren education and social literacy demonstrates how religious knowledge can influence intellectual development and critical awareness.

The theoretical framework of Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1991) helps explain this process. They argue that individuals construct social order through externalization—expressing thoughts and beliefs into the world. For pesantren alumni, this occurs through engagement with religious teachings, which shape their identity and perspective. Their religious social literacy is externally influenced by pesantren education and their interactions within the pesantren community. Berger (in Kurniawan, 2020) further explains that externalized knowledge must undergo objectification, where ideas gain legitimacy and intersubjective recognition. Within pesantren, religious knowledge is institutionalized and reinforced as a collective truth. Over time, these values become ingrained in students' consciousness and shape their perspectives beyond pesantren. The process of objectification ensures that religious literacy is not just personal but a socially accepted framework that continues to influence students' intellectual development.

The final stage, internalization, embeds these values into everyday life. Through internalization, students transform objective religious teachings into subjective beliefs that guide their actions. This process enables pesantren alumni to navigate the academic and social world while maintaining a religiously grounded perspective. Their religious social literacy results from a combination of external education, institutional reinforcement, and personal integration, shaping how they analyze and engage with societal issues. Ultimately, pesantren education plays a crucial role in shaping students' social literacy and critical awareness. The ability of pesantren alumni to interpret social issues through a religious lens provides insights into how religious education influences intellectual development. Understanding their approach to social literacy can help educational institutions develop more holistic literacy programs that integrate religious, cultural, and academic competencies, producing well-rounded, critical thinkers.

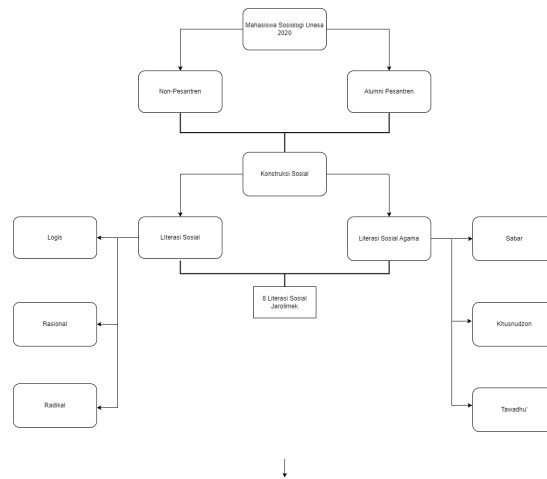


Figure 2. Chart of Construction of Religious Social Literacy of Sociology Students of Pesantren Alumni.
Source: Researcher

Borrowing the idea of Jerolimek (1971) that intellectual and religious characters in students must be in the same direction and in line. There are at least eight ways to describe it, the first is to identify and define a problem. In this context, the data obtained shows that the way to solve problems between pesantren alumni and non-alumni students has a significant difference. Pesantren alumni students tend to emphasise their religious side in solving a problem. This is inseparable from the influence of religious textual literacy that dominates during their education in pesantren. The strong religious textual literacy of pesantren alumni students makes them more inclined to understand problems with a religious approach. This approach does not necessarily eliminate their intellectual abilities, but instead becomes a strong combination in the problem solving process. Although intellectually also owned by non-alumni pesantren students, pesantren alumni students have an advantage in integrating religious values in every step of problem solving. This makes them more sensitive to spiritual and ethical aspects that are often overlooked in the process of analysing problems purely intellectually.

The second way to describe the intellectual and religious character of students is the ability to conclude a result clearly. Although pesantren alumni students only receive few formal lessons during their education in pesantren, they are still able to conclude a social problem openly, rationally, and logically. This indicates that the learning curriculum in pesantren is not solely focused on religious aspects. Instead, the students are also equipped with critical and analytical thinking skills that are needed in solving complex problems in society. The critical and analytical thinking skills possessed by pesantren alumni students are the result of an educational process that emphasises the development of spiritual intelligence as well as intellectual intelligence. Through learning classical (yellow) books that not only discuss religious aspects, but also cover various other disciplines, students are accustomed to analysing problems from various points of view. In addition, learning methods in pesantren that prioritise open discussions and exchange of ideas also help hone the critical and logical thinking skills of the students. With this provision, pesantren alumni students are able to conclude social problems clearly, openly, rationally, and logically.

Furthermore, the third way mentioned by Jerolimek is to analyse information appropriately. Basically, every student or individual must have sensitivity to the information around them. However, there is a slight difference in terms of information filtration between pesantren alumni and non-alumni pesantren students. Pesantren alumni students tend to be more careful in digesting and analysing the information received. This cautious attitude is not without reason, but is based on the provision they get during their education in pesantren.

They are equipped with the ability to filter information based on religious and moral values that have been deeply embedded in them from an early age. This process of filtering information based on religious and moral values makes pesantren alumni students have a stricter filter in receiving information from outside. They do not immediately swallow every information that comes, but will first analyse it with religious and moral glasses that they hold firmly. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they close themselves off from the various information circulating. On the contrary, they remain open to various information, but they will always filter it first before accepting it as a whole. This filtering process is important to ensure that the information they receive does not contradict their religious and moral teachings.

While the fourth point, distinguishing facts and opinions. As individuals who have two approaches to thinking, namely critical and religious, Unesa sociology students 2020 pesantren alumni are very careful in conveying and accepting facts. They have the ability to distinguish which ones are facts and which ones are opinions very well. This is due to their experience during their education in pesantren, when they were accustomed to being critical in receiving information, as well as filtering it with religious values. As explained earlier, pesantren alumni students will first filter the information received, in order to avoid misunderstandings. This filtering process is carried out with a critical thinking mechanism accompanied by religious values that have been deeply embedded in them. Thus, the information received is not only analysed rationally, but also considered from the point of view of religious ethics and morals. They do not immediately accept or reject information, but sort and verify the truth of the information before making it a fact or opinion. This process makes pesantren alumni students more selective and wise in responding to various information circulating in the community.

Fifth, in dealing with a problem, it is important to formulate the causal factors behind it. From the results of the field research conducted, it was found that of the total 59 students who have a high level of literacy, 13% of them are alumni of Islamic boarding schools. Students who have a religious education background show their own views when looking at the causality or cause-and-effect of a problem. When asked about this, they simultaneously answered that patience and *khusnudzon* (prejudice) are the main keys in dealing with every problem that occurs. The approach of pesantren alumni students is certainly different from non-alumni pesantren students who tend to see problems from a more rational and secular perspective. For pesantren alumni students, every problem that occurs cannot be separated from God's intervention and His will. Therefore, they emphasise the importance of patience in dealing with problems and always have a good attitude towards whatever happens. This belief stems from the religious teachings they received during their education in pesantren, which emphasised the importance of faith and devotion in facing every life problem.

Sixth, data analysis and synthesis. In this process, sociology students who have a pesantren alumni background are not inferior to sociology students in general. They are able to analyse data deeply and comprehensively, using various theories and methodologies, both sociologically and philosophically. Their ability to analyse data is no doubt, along with education in pesantren which emphasises skills in studying religious texts critically and deeply. However, what makes the data analysis of pesantren alumni students unique is their ability to dialectic between sociological, philosophical, and religious elements. Sociology students alumni of pesantren do not rely solely on sociological and philosophical approaches in analysing social phenomena, but also integrate religious elements in the process of data analysis and synthesis. This integration provides a more holistic and spiritually nuanced perspective in understanding complex social phenomena. They are able to see social phenomena not only from a sociological and philosophical point of view, but also from a

religious perspective that enriches the interpretations and solutions offered. This makes the analyses conducted by pesantren alumni students more thorough, while still considering the religious and spiritual values inherent in society.

Seventh, providing a different perspective. In the process of discussion and debate, sociology students who are alumni of pesantren are often able to provide a different perspective from other students. Sociologically, debates that produce new views are a sign of successful interaction and communication. However, the uniqueness of pesantren alumni sociology students lies in their ability to not only bring sociological perspectives, but also religious perspectives that colour the discussion. The combination of these two perspectives provides a new dimension in understanding the social phenomena discussed. The religious perspective of pesantren alumni sociology students plays an important role in creating a new conclusion (win-win solution) that does not only look at phenomena from the social side, but also considers spiritual and ethical aspects that are often overlooked in conventional sociological analyses. These aspects are often important factors in understanding the behaviour and social interactions of society, especially in Indonesia, which has a rich culture and strong religious traditions.

Eighth, dare to make decisions. One thing that is quite unique from pesantren alumni sociology students is their ability to make decisions. As students who have a duality of character, namely religious and critical, they often synthesise these two aspects in the decision-making process. For example, the logical attitude that characterises critical thinking coexists with an attitude of patience which is part of religious teachings. Similarly, a rational attitude goes hand in hand with a cautious attitude, and a courageous attitude is juxtaposed with an attitude of *khusnudzon* (prejudice). The combination of these various attitudes makes pesantren alumni students able to make decisions that are not only based on rational considerations, but also consider spiritual aspects and religious ethics. Finally, the ability to blend rationality and spirituality in the decision-making process provides a very important balance. On the one hand, they use logic and critical thinking to deeply analyse problems and identify the most appropriate solutions. But on the other hand, they also consider the religious and ethical values that guide their lives.

4. CONCLUSION

Basically, the educational atmosphere in Indonesia has the same vision and mission, which is to realise the nation's intelligence. However, not all formal education institutions have the same way of educating and shaping the character of their students. Formal-based education tends to forget the religious aspects of its students. Therefore, there is a special concern in looking at pesantren alumni students. In addition to the ideologisation of Islamic-based educational institutions, the influence of literacy is also the main staple of individuals in finding their identity, as a way for individuals to understand life.

By taking the research subjects of Unesa sociology students 2020 alumni of pesantren, this study concluded that there are two intellectual characters in students when understanding their social world, namely critical but also religious characters. This means that in addition to emphasising a logical, rational, and radical attitude, students also have a patient, positive, and calculating character. This study explains that students who have received education in pesantren have different social literacy compared to students who only study in formal educational institutions. In addition, there is a fundamental difference in how pesantren alumni students overcome problems, namely prioritising their religious character over their formality.

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